

Gibson County Utility District Adopts Sensus FlexRead to Boost AMR Efficiency and Prepare for AMI

In 2022, Allyson Horner was facing a dilemma. As General Manager of Gibson County Utility District (GCUD), she'd overseen the deployment of an AMR system back in 2006—a project she considered her “baby.” But now, nearly two decades later, the vendor behind that system was exiting the gas market. Endpoints in the field were beginning to fail, the software was no longer reliably updated, and support was dwindling. Replacing the entire system—hardware, software, and infrastructure—would require a huge capital outlay and likely trigger rate increases for GCUD’s 10,000+ customers. It was a scenario Horner was determined to avoid.

Fortunately, GCUD’s long-time distributor partner, Equipment Controls (ECCO), had a timely recommendation: A new AMR solution from Sensus that could read both Sensus SmartPoints and the Neptune R900 endpoints that GCUD had already deployed across its system. It was the lifeline Horner needed—modern, cost-effective, and perfectly suited to extend the life of GCUD’s existing infrastructure while setting the stage for future upgrades.

Challenge

GCUD’s challenges weren’t hypothetical—they were happening in real time. The utility had Neptune endpoints in the field that were starting to reach the end of their lifespan. The vendor was shifting focus away from gas utilities, and the existing mapping and software systems GCUD needed to rely on were no longer being updated or supported well. Meanwhile, customer service, billing and meter reading operations still needed to function without interruption. GCUD didn’t have the budget to rip and replace. Horner and her leadership team needed a solution that could work with what they already had in the field, integrate smoothly with their billing software, and provide a foundation that would support their growth and desire to move to AMI in the future.

Located in Gibson County, TN
 Founded in 1953



Solution

ECCO's recommended solution, an early version of Sensus' FieldLogic FlexRead, literally saved the day. "To be honest," says AMR Manager Robin Sharp, "I was anxious about moving to a brand-new program. But after [ECCO] explained it, it made so much sense—the fact that we could still read our older AMR units out in the field, add new AMI units in the future, and not have to change our billing formats—as soon as she explained that, I was 100% on board!

FlexRead allowed GCUD to continue reading its existing Neptune endpoints, while also supporting Sensus SmartPoints for new meter installations. The transition required no changes to GCUD's billing software, and—thanks to the Sensus Professional Services Team—the deployment was configured and reading within an hour. According to ECCO's Stephen Hunter, it was "a real feather in the cap"—a fast, clean migration from the old system to the new.

Training required to get started was minimal. The cloud-based platform updated routes and mapping data in real time, replacing the slow, manual processes of the past. And built-in troubleshooting tools gave field crews and billing staff the ability to resolve issues quickly and independently.

Results

The impact was immediate. With better route management and software, GCUD was able to reduce the time it takes to do a complete read of their customers' meters by almost 50%. The process was faster, more efficient, and highly scalable.

But most importantly, the entire transition happened without customers noticing a thing. "There was no downtime," Horner says. "I remember the day they showed up to work on the installation. I went to lunch and came back and they said, 'OK, we're up and running.' I was so surprised it happened so fast!

Looking Forward

GCUD's customer base has grown by 5% in the past three years, with gas consumption rising 9%. As the utility continues to grow and evolve, FlexRead offers the flexibility to transition gradually toward AMI, without the need for costly overhauls. "That's one of the things that was attractive about FlexRead—it works on the same Sensus platform that we'll use when we're ready to put up some towers, move to AMI, and become even more efficient," says Horner. For now though, she and her team couldn't be happier—FlexRead has been the right technology, at the right time—backed by the responsive support of ECCO and Sensus every step of the way.

"What advice would I give another utility [considering FlexRead]? You do it yesterday. It's just the simplicity and flexibility of it."

Robin Sharp,
Office Manager & AMR Manager, Gibson County
Utility District



**System Operational
Achievement Recognition
American Public Gas Association**

GCUD received a 2025 APGA SOAR Award for operational excellence.

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