



Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative Makes a Successful Switch to SurvalentONE ADMS

**Case
Study**



Survalent.

Switching to Survalent: the Best Option for Bluebonnet

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative distributes electricity throughout 14 counties in central Texas, a 4000-square-mile territory bounded by the cities of Austin, Houston, and San Antonio. The utility is one of the largest electric cooperatives in the state, servicing 96,000 meters and maintaining 44 substations. Bluebonnet currently employs nine ADMS operators and a manager at its control center in Bastrop.

About four years ago, Bluebonnet went shopping for an ADMS solution to replace the basic SCADA system it had been using since 1983. One of Bluebonnet's main requirements for the new system was a strong DMS component that would enable them to establish self-healing feeders in densely populated Austin suburbs and important commercial/industrial areas.

Bluebonnet eventually selected a vendor and implemented their software, but it soon became apparent that the new solution was not a good fit. For example, Bluebonnet was unable to activate FLISR in any part of the network. With the system failing to meet key expectations, Bluebonnet made the difficult decision to replace it after only two years.

Successful Changeover to SurvalentONE ADMS

During the search for a new ADMS, Bluebonnet contacted several SurvalentONE FLISR users, who spoke highly of the system. The utility investigated further and concluded that switching to Survalent would make good operational and financial sense.

"We laid out our plan for implementing the SurvalentONE ADMS, along with the return on investment (ROI) scenario, and management agreed that this was our best option moving forward," said Ronnie Bludau, the IT manager at Bluebonnet.

Survalent worked closely with Bluebonnet over a six-month period to implement a new SCADA system and set up FLISR in select service areas. WebSurv and SurvCentral were also installed, giving Bluebonnet's technical services personnel read-only web and mobile access, respectively, to the ADMS for the first time ever.

Bluebonnet used Survalent's Operator Training Simulator (OTS) to calibrate the FLISR system before going live. "We did extensive testing in the OTS, applying faults in different areas to see how FLISR would react. Once we were comfortable with the way it was set up, we put it into production," explained Bludau.

Bluebonnet considers the FLISR system to be a game-changer for restoring power faster in high-profile sections of the network.

As part of the ADMS implementation, Survalent built templates for Bluebonnet's field devices and showed the control center manager how to import the associated DNP points into the database. MultiSpeak was used to share fault data, substation status, and downstream device status with Bluebonnet's third-party outage management system (OMS).

Survalent also helped Bluebonnet set up the Rotational Load Shedding (RLS) application, making it easier to satisfy regulatory requirements laid out by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) with respect to load shedding during brownouts.

“Survalent’s onsite System Specialists were very knowledgeable. When they left, we were up and running — there were no issues at all. It was a smooth implementation and the system is very stable,” summed up Bludau.

Survalent: A Smart Choice

Bluebonnet took a huge risk by discarding its ADMS after only two years, but Bludau is confident they made the right decision.

“SurvalentONE ADMS is easy to configure and upgrade, and the value is outstanding. Support is also great—you actually get a live person on the phone to help solve problems. Survalent’s System Specialists still assist us from time to time, answering specific questions about how the system is set up,” he explained.

According to Bludau, Bluebonnet’s team of operators readily adapted to the new ADMS during four days of onsite training provided by Survalent. After using a basic SCADA system for years, they appreciate their newfound ability to see downstream devices, pinpoint fault locations, remotely reconfigure the network, and perform more accurate load forecasting. Survalent’s user-friendly SmartVU interface makes it easier for them to find data and perform actions, a marked improvement over the previous two systems. The operators especially like working with Survalent’s photo-realistic device templates and being able to preview switch orders before operating the SurvalentONE FLISR system.

Bluebonnet’s technical services group is equally pleased with the new ADMS because it is revolutionizing how they approach many tasks. Now that they enjoy remote access to the ADMS via WebSurv and SurvCentral, they can perform inspections, maintenance, and troubleshooting in the substations more quickly and efficiently.

The changeover to SurvalentONE ADMS has even benefited Bluebonnet’s IT department because six fewer servers are now required to operate the system, reducing the maintenance effort.

Next Steps

Bluebonnet has just completed a pilot project with Survalent’s Dynamic Voltage Regulation (DVR) application. The utility is exploring the potential financial benefits of using DVR to reduce load, especially during the summer months when ERCOT operates its Four Coincident Peak (4CP) energy conservation program. Bluebonnet is also planning to implement SurvalentONE FLISR in several additional service areas, further enhancing the reliability of its electric network.

Control your critical network operations with confidence

With Survalent, you can control your critical network operations with confidence. We're the most trusted provider of advanced distribution management systems (ADMS) for electric, water/wastewater, gas, and transit utilities across the globe.

Over 600 utilities in 30 countries rely on the SurvalentONE platform to effectively operate, monitor, analyze, restore, and optimize operations. By supporting critical utility operations with a fully integrated solution, our customers have significantly improved operational efficiencies, customer satisfaction and network reliability.

Our unwavering commitment to excellence and to our customers has been the key to our success for over 50 years.

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