

CarinaPoint™ Technology a Hit with 4-County

How do you change someone's opinion about your product when he is downright against it? Prove to him that it works! That's just what Carina Technology did with 4-County Electric Power Association's Meter Shop Foreman, Bob Edwards.

Edwards was not the least bit interested in Carina's Automatic Meter Disconnect (AMD) which is integrated into its CarinaPoint™ Technology, but upper management decided to purchase 100 units for a trial run.

"We looked at several different companies, but they didn't have all the bells and whistles that Carina offers," explained Cliff Wall, 4-County's Manager of District Operations. "We realized that we needed those bells and whistles."

"We felt like Carina's product gave the flexibility and features we needed," added Chief Financial Officer Marcus Stone. "These were not offered by the other companies."

The results have been satisfying for both Stone and Wall and have changed Edward's opinion completely.

"I've had to eat a little bit of crow," Edwards confessed. "I'm now convinced that Carina was the best way to go."

The utility decided to try the units out first with those customers who are habitually late with their payments and



Bob Edwards attaches a Carina AMD to a customer's meter.

those whose meters are difficult to access. These meters can be read, disconnected, and reconnected all through the Carina website. The results for 4-County have been very positive.

"We have a customer whose meter is behind a locked gate

and one who just doesn't want us on his property," Edwards explained. "Being able to read their meters is no longer a hassle."

Prior to enlisting the help of Carina, 4-County was using a pager-based system. Edwards explained that through this system they were unable to receive confirmation of the reconnects and disconnects.

"We had to send a man out to get visual confirmation, so it wasn't a very effective system," stated Edwards. "It also didn't work well in the more rural areas."

Through the Carina website, the utility is notified of disconnects or reconnects from the comfort and convenience of a computer. If the utility wants several people to be informed of the activity, notifications can be set up to be sent via email or directly to a cell phone.

Another problem that Carina's technology solved for 4-County was the safety issue. Edwards explained that their

employees sometimes face dangerous animals and hazardous conditions when at a customer site. Since no one from the utility has to actually visit the meters in order to read, connect, or disconnect, management need not worry about the safety of their employees.

Edwards is so convinced in Carina's capabilities that he believes 4-County should try out the AMD units on the meters at several apartment complexes near Mississippi State University's campus.

"The potential is tremendous. These units would save us a lot of money because students are constantly moving in and out of these apartments," explained Edwards. "Not only



Using the Carina webpage, Teresa Linley reads a customer's meter.

do we have to go out to disconnect the units once the student moves out, but then we have to reconnect for the cleaning crew and disconnect again. Once the new student moves in, we reconnect again."

Edwards has also been very pleased with the overall ease of the system and the customer service he has received. Carina representatives stayed with the utility for a few days to instruct 4-County employees on how to use the system. According to Edwards, it didn't take much time to learn how to install the units or use the website.

Teresa Linley, one of 4-County's customer service representatives, uses the Carina website on a daily basis and has described it as "very user-friendly".

"I love the system!" Linley stated excitedly. "It is has made my job a lot easier, because I can do everything right from my desk."

Linley also explained that 4-County services eight counties and that the system has greatly reduced difficulties with problem customers.

Not only is 4-County pleased with the product and customer service but they were also happy with the price.

"Carina was very accommodating when it came to the pricing," explained Stone. "We worked out a leasing option that fit within our budget."

As the only company currently providing this groundbreaking technology, Carina Technology, Inc. should be looking forward to a bright future with more satisfied utilities like 4-County.

"Carina is heads above everyone else," stated Wall. "If they continue to perform like they have been and continue the strong customer support, then I see a long relationship with them."