



UTILITIES

CASE STUDY

Absolute Secure Access Keeps the Internet on for Utility Workers

The 4-County Electric Power Association Reduced IT Support Tickets and Improved Operations for Field Workers with Absolute Secure Access

absolute.com



4-County Electric Power Association is a not-for-profit electrical distribution cooperative serving 50,000 members in Northeastern Mississippi that has been providing affordable and reliable electricity since 1939. The more than 70 field employees employed by 4-County Electric drive vehicles equipped with everything they need to serve customers, including Internet-connected laptops that are critical to their productivity.

ABSOLUTE



Our rural environment had employees re-starting their connections all the time. This caused a lot of extra cycles and delays in service.

HAROLD CRITCHER,
IT ADMINISTRATOR,
4-COUNTY ELECTRIC
POWER ASSOCIATION

THE STORY

Dropped Connections Leads to Worker Frustration

4-County Electric Power Association, which serves more than 48,000 consumers/members in parts of nine counties in Mississippi, faced a serious problem. Cellular dead zones throughout the cooperative's rural territory would frequently cause employees to lose connections to critical applications. Field teams rely on Internet connections to access the utility's core work order system, which creates efficient work scheduling around events such as storm repair. Relying on a cellular connection to access work applications, the Windows 7 laptops workers were armed with, would often be unable to connect due to poor network coverage, bringing work order progress to a halt.

Some linemen grew so frustrated that they abandoned their crippled laptops, resorting to pen and paper until they had time to open an IT ticket. Faced with unhappy employees and a system that often could not serve its intended purpose, IT Administrator Harold Critcher and his team realized they needed a more reliable approach to keeping teams connected to the Internet while in the field.

SECURITY CHALLENGES



INSTANT-ON MOBILE
CONNECTIONS



REDUCED
IT SUPPORT TICKETS



IMPROVES
CUSTOMER SERVICE



THE SOLUTIONS

How They Did It

Seamless Connectivity Improves Productivity for Linemen

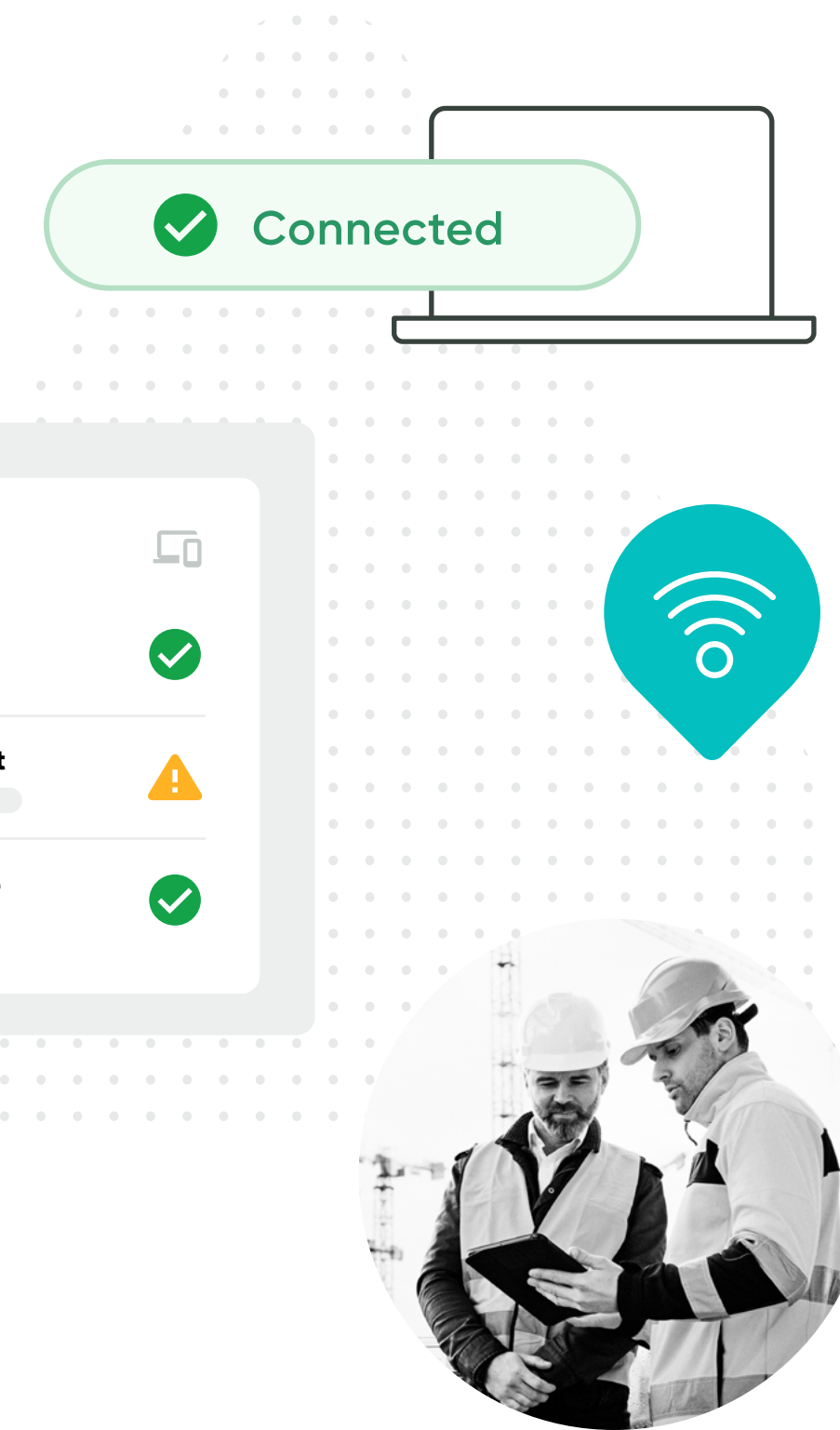
The utility selected Absolute Secure Access to keep employees productive regardless of the strength of the cellular signal. Linemen and other field workers now only need to start up their laptops once to get a connection that will last all day. From a user standpoint, the transition to Absolute Secure Access was seamless. Linemen didn't have to learn new steps to use it; in fact, they didn't even know it was there. They would just log in, and their applications would work flawlessly.

One Central Control Point Allows IT To Optimize, Manage, and Secure Connectivity

As 4-County proceeded with the Absolute Secure Access implementation, they also gained a central control point from which they could secure, manage, and optimize connectivity for the organization's critical work teams. Moreover, the client-server software was rolled out quickly and seamlessly. Absolute Secure Access has transformed 4-County service vehicles into fully functioning offices. Staff no longer come into the office in the morning to grab a clipboard and paper for fear of their electronic systems going down.

Secure Remote Access = More Time in the Field

Linemen also no longer need to come into the brick-and-mortar offices every day but just a couple of times a week to gather materials or attend safety meetings. "Absolute Secure Access enables our field workers to complete more maintenance items and more jobs, helping us better serve our members," said Critcher. That mobility has given the 4-County Electric Power Association more flexibility when planning for the future. "Absolute Secure Access really lets us explore possibilities we didn't have before. From reducing our offices to holding less inventory, we can look at many ways to save and provide better value and member service," added Critcher.



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All they noticed was connections were there every time they logged on. This quieted our help desk phones immediately.

HAROLD CRITCHER,
IT ADMINISTRATOR,
4-COUNTY ELECTRIC
POWER ASSOCIATION



THE RESULTS

Enhanced Operations Lead to Improved Customer Service

Absolute Secure Access has dramatically increased 4-County's ability to operate like its larger suburban utility counterparts. With cell coverage no longer a barrier to productivity, employees can focus their attention squarely on member service and satisfaction. For the 4-County team, Absolute Secure Access:

- ✓ Provides instant-on mobile connections with minimal user interaction
- ✓ Reduces IT support tickets
- ✓ Improves customer service
- ✓ Provides operational cost savings



ABSOLUTE®

Trusted by nearly 21,000 customers, Absolute Software is the only provider of self-healing, intelligent security solutions. Embedded in more than 600 million devices, Absolute is the only platform offering a permanent digital connection that intelligently and dynamically applies visibility, control and self-healing capabilities to endpoints, applications, and network connections – helping customers to strengthen cyber resilience against the escalating threat of ransomware and malicious attacks.

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