



## Information Flows for City of Arlington, Texas Water Utilities

### About Arlington Water Utilities

Arlington, Texas is a community of more than 370,000 people located midway between Dallas and Fort Worth. It's a manufacturing center and tourist destination, producing automobiles and industrial equipment and attracting more than 6 million visitors every year to its amusement parks, Major League Baseball, the National Football League, and other recreational assets. The City's Water Utilities Department can produce up to 140 million gallons of water daily to supply Arlington's residents and businesses.

### Situation

Arlington has been one of the fastest growing cities in the country, more than doubling in population between 1980 and 2000. The Arlington city government prides itself on the quality of the services it provides its residents, and works to provide the services at the lowest possible cost. The City's explosive growth made controlling costs a challenge. To maintain outstanding service in the face of rapid expansion and hold the line on costs, Arlington's Water Utilities Department looked to make its workers more productive.

### Solution

Giving water department workers access to information while they are out serving customers in the community reduced operational costs and improved worker productivity. Arlington replaced inefficient paper processes with a mobile work management solution using wireless network infrastructure provided by AT&T. Mobile workers now receive their daily work orders via tablet PCs equipped with wireless data cards. They are also using their mobile device to access internal databases to obtain information about water lines and other aspects of the city infrastructure.

### "Can Do" Attitude Boosts Growing City

Arlington, Texas was established as a struggling frontier fort in the 1840s when Texas was still a republic. Named in honor of Robert E. Lee's birthplace in Virginia, Arlington became a city in 1875 after the Texas and Pacific Railroad located a train station there. Over the years Arlington has been an agricultural center, a horse racing and gambling center and a popular vacation spot because of its famed mineral waters. Today millions travel to Arlington each year to tour historic buildings, watch the Texas Rangers baseball team, ride the coasters at Six Flags over Texas, or attend one of the community's four colleges and one of the City's latest attractions, the Dallas Cowboys state-of-the-art football stadium.

### Arlington Water Department Facts

- **Business Needs**

Improve customer service and increase efficiency for mobile workers

- **Wireless Solution**

AT&T provides a mobile work management solution providing personnel access to work orders and information sharing via the AT&T 3G Network

- **Business Value**

\$269,000 in annual savings due to increased worker productivity and a decrease in operating costs

- **Industry Focus**

Municipal utility

- **Size**

Serves a community of 370,000 residents



City Mayor Robert Cluck, M.D., says Arlington was built on two words: “We can.” In a letter to constituents on the City’s Web site, Cluck writes, “We can and will have the safest neighborhoods in the [Dallas/Ft. Worth] Metroplex. We can and will bring good jobs to our city. We can and will make our city operate efficiently.”

Arlington’s Water Utilities Department is working to achieve the operational efficiency the mayor envisions. The department is charged with producing high quality water and safely disposing of wastewater in a cost-competitive manner, while continuously improving service to customers and planning for future needs. It provides water and sewer services to more than 98,000 residential and business accounts spread across 100 square miles.

The department’s mobile workers handle about 90,000 work orders each year involving everything from establishing or ending service at customer locations to checking the condition of the City’s 2,600 miles of water and sanitary sewer infrastructure; making repairs or replacements when necessary. As the city of Arlington expanded, more than doubling in size between 1980 and 2000, departmental work orders increased dramatically. Officials looked for ways to save time and money while serving Arlington citizens.

### Giving Mobile Workers an Edge

To this end, since late 2002, the department has used the AT&T wireless network to provide a mobile work management solution to its workforce. The solution increases efficiency by providing dispatch functionality to Arlington’s Water Utilities Department. Mobile data computers were installed in department vehicles to make it easier for workers to receive assignments such as servicing water meters, investigating problems with sewers and responding to citizen requests. The mobile work management process used the City’s 800 megahertz radio system until 2004, when officials decided to upgrade to wireless computer networking.

The AT&T 3G network now connects tablet PCs in Water Utilities vehicles to power the City’s dispatching and work order applications. The network enables the City to run a customer information and mobile dispatch system that links the Arlington Water Utilities Department with repair technicians, meter readers and other workers in the field. This solution provides real-time links with the office, significantly reducing costly and error-prone paper shuffling and allows for the management of work when and where it happens.

Julie Hunt, Director of Arlington Water Utilities, said the department strives to reduce costs, improve customer service and increase productivity. “Implementing this mobile technology is a project that accomplishes all three of these objectives,” she noted. “The ability to review and update work orders in the field has had a significant impact on our operation. We are serving our customers with current information and reducing our costs.”

Paul McCutcheon, Water Information Services Project Coordinator for the department, agrees. “The city of Arlington is very customer-oriented and making sure our water utility customers receive quality service in a timely manner is very important to us,” he said.

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**“Reducing the amount of time our workers spend on non-productive tasks, like driving to and from work sites spread throughout the city and filling out forms once they get back to the office, improves our customer service without forcing us to ask for budget increases.”**

– Paul McCutcheon, Water Information Services Project Coordinator,  
City of Arlington, TX

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Thanks to the AT&T wireless solution, Arlington’s Water Utilities Department is better equipped to serve the City’s customers. Workers now get up-to-the-minute information about the status of outstanding work orders, so they can be instantly re-routed to avoid unnecessary trips. “For example, if an individual or business has a significant outstanding balance on their water bill they will be notified that service is going to be interrupted on a specific day,” McCutcheon said. “Let’s say that a customer comes in at 9 a.m. on the day their water service is to be interrupted and pays the past due bill. We can update the work order within three to five minutes, and our workers out in the field get those changes immediately and won’t travel to that customer’s location.” This situation occurred over 700 times in 2008. Thanks to the mobile solution, city workers save a trip, and the customer’s water continues to flow.

As workers complete assignments at a customer’s residence or business or perform an inspection of a water line or pumping facility, they can upload the results of their work into the department’s operational systems in real-time. “Now, once employees have finished work at one customer site, they can fill out their notes and comments, upload them to our central office and be on their way to their next assignment,” he said.

### Efficiency is Up, Costs are Down

Arlington’s mobile work management solution not only frees city workers to complete work at other locations, but reduces the amount of unnecessary driving the department’s workers must do. “With fuel prices the way they are now, that’s really helping us keep our operating costs under control while adhering to the City’s commitment to reduce its carbon footprint as part of an aggressive green initiative,” said McCutcheon.

Officials calculate that the real-time access to data provided by the mobile devices and the AT&T 3G network saves the department an estimated \$269,000 per year by increasing the productivity of its field workers and reducing operating expenses.

Arlington Water Utilities recently upgraded the tablet PCs to access the robust AT&T 3G Network. The upgraded wireless solution gives workers enhanced mobile broadband performance to keep workers connected with the City's mobile work management system, the Internet and email, and basic mapping information with an increase in bandwidth McCutcheon says.

This added bandwidth not only supports more reliable connections and faster downloading of data, but gives Arlington the option of adding GPS (Global Positioning System) capabilities to the tablet computers. This would allow mobile workers to access real-time maps showing their location as they drive, which could further reduce the time and fuel required to reach their destination. Eventually, McCutcheon hopes to extend the wireless solutions to other applications such as the City's GIS (Geographic Information System) database, which could automatically plan a worker's travel to help

reduce the amount of time and fuel they use. The solution will also help operators find and dispatch the mobile workers closest to a customer's site.

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"Reducing the amount of time our workers spend on non-productive tasks, like driving to and from work sites spread throughout the city and filling out forms once they get back to the office, improves our customer service without forcing us to ask for budget increases," says McCutcheon. "AT&T wireless data services help us deliver superior water service every day."

**For more information contact your AT&T Representative or visit us at [www.att.com/wirelessgovernment](http://www.att.com/wirelessgovernment).**

#### Important Information

Coverage not available in all areas. Availability, security, speed, timeliness and uninterrupted use of service are not guaranteed. Eligible wireless rate plan with compatible device required. Not all features available on all devices. Additional hardware, software, services, Internet access and/or special network connection may be required. Additional terms, conditions and restrictions will apply – for complete solution details, see applicable service agreement, rate plan brochure(s), coverage maps and applicable third-party terms and conditions. Actual results may vary. Information and/or offers subject to change.

