

Las Vegas Valley Water District

Leveraging the multifunctional use of existing iPhone devices, LVVWD adds Itron's new Field Tools mobile app to simplify field operations and reduce new equipment purchases.



OVERVIEW

The Itron Field Tools mobile app has allowed for our Field Technicians to use their iPhones as a multifunctional device. The Field Tools App also allows us to upgrade with minimal involvement from our IT teams. Testing the application prior to the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) release allowed us to provide feedback making the acceptance level high for our end users. The App is easy to use enabling for quick, simple and minimal training in a virtual meeting environment. The Itron Mobile Radio also helped eliminate previous issues with antenna breakage on the FC300 handheld.

One of the challenges we faced over the discontinuation of the FC300 hardware was that it minimized our effectiveness in diagnosing and troubleshooting endpoints in the field. The handheld along with Itron FDM Tools is used on every field activity completed by LVVWD Field Services personnel to ensure that our billing reads are accurate. Also, the FC300 was used to convert ERTs to fixed network when the drive by method was not appropriate. This is what led us to Itron Field Tools, Itron Mobile Radio and iPhone/iOS as our solution of choice.

Our organization would have had to implement changes as a result of the discontinuance that we were not willing to make. We confirm the accuracy of the visual meter read versus the output from the endpoint when completing our field activities. This ensures accurate billing reads for our customers.

When we began searching for an alternate solution, we knew that we wanted a unit that produced the same outcome as the FC300 and FDM Tools. The vision was also creating multi-purpose use cases for company-issued devices (iPhones). Our goal was to find a product that was easy to use and easy to train so that our end user acceptance level would be high.

We found exactly what we set out to find, Itron's Field Tools Mobile app along with the Itron Mobile Radio. We chose Itron because they are our sole provider of endpoints. We have a great relationship with Itron and when they asked us to help design the App, we jumped at the opportunity.

The project was initiated in 2019 and the deployment began during spring of 2020 under pandemic conditions. The roll out took less than a week due to the ease of use and simplified training even in a remote learning environment, enabling all field technicians to be successful with the app on their iPhone paired with Itron Mobile Radio.

CUSTOMER

Las Vegas Valley Water District

SERVICE TERRITORY

The LVVWD service area includes the City of Las Vegas and Unincorporated Clark County, as well as the communities of Laughlin, Searchlight, Blue Diamond, Jean and Kyle Canyon all located within Southern Nevada

GOALS

- » Replace aging equipment that is no longer supported with new and improved technology
- » Multipurpose use of iPhones to decrease amount of purchased equipment for field personnel
- » Continuing to assure accurate bill reads and data for our customers

CHALLENGE

- » FC300 no longer supported
- » New solution adequately replaces previous equipment to fulfill necessary requirements
- » End User acceptance

SOLUTIONS

- » Itron Field Tools
- » Itron Mobile Radio
- » iPhone/iOS

BENEFITS

- » Field Tools fits our business needs due to our involvement in the development of the App
- » Equipment is less expensive
- » Apps are easy to update

We partnered with Southwest Gas in the Las Vegas area to help Itron test the app and recommend design elements. Itron provides the necessary Hosted-Managed Services supporting our operations, including Field Collection System (FCS), Field Tools, and Itron Analytics.

We chose Itron because it's compatible with our existing meter population and Itron's data capabilities. We can view hourly data in Itron Analytics from our drive-by system, which allows us to run reports to determine proactive maintenance needs and support our ongoing water conservation efforts.

The results are primarily based on end-user acceptance of the Field Tools App and the Itron Mobile Radio performance. Since we subsidized the FC300 which was used within our field group for

about 8 years, we required a solution that performed basic daily functions with exceptional results; this has been achieved. Both criteria are up to par per our needs.

These results have benefited our operations by improving the ease of performance versus the previous FC300 handheld. The end-user roll out/training was seamless, despite being rolled out under pandemic conditions with the project manager on work-from-home status.

The Field Tools and IMR solution has allowed our business to seamlessly roll out a new tool to our personnel during the pandemic which is now complete. The benefits achieved were basic functionality that we suggested for the APP. These included the ability to read, check and program an endpoint. We are looking forward to Itron adding more functionality and features into the app as it matures, and we are excited for the future.



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