

Improving Regulatory Compliance with Esri's ArcGIS for Mobile



Avista Utility, serving nearly 326,000 gas users in the northwest USA, last month started using a mobile leak-survey app to improve the company's auditing records, resulting in stronger data and faster service. The Leak Survey app, a configuration of Esri's ArcGIS for Windows Mobile, helps field workers survey more than 7,500 miles of natural-gas distribution pipeline by using a ruggedised mobile device. The app also works offline and syncs when the device enters a networked area.

The app replaces the 8,000 annually printed maps previously used to inspect and maintain pipeline and investigate problems as part of a mandated annual leak survey.

Converting from a paper solution to digital data collection will reduce manual errors and increase efficiency with regulatory compliance, and is expected to increase the trust relationship with auditors, Avista project manager Emmet Skaar said.

Office

The app works in conjunction with several office map viewers, such as a dispatch and a correction viewer, configured with Esri's ArcGIS Viewer for Flex. Supervisors view the data in near real time. The instant visibility of field data lets supervisors respond immediately to situations such as identified leaks or surveyors having trouble entering a location. The supervisors can also assign and monitor work orders from the office.

The elimination of paper-based surveying cuts printing costs and prevents errors due to lost paperwork, illegible handwriting, and invalid data collection. This will lower the audit risk, as paper forms can be time-consuming to search through or simply filed out of order, Skaar said.

The proactive move to comply with annual leak-survey regulations also shaves weeks off Avista's response time, thanks to personnel no longer being needed to input the paper survey records. Errors in the field-collection process can be caught and corrected in near real time by the vendor, Skaar explained, instead of two to four weeks later, when corrections are significantly more difficult to achieve and require Avista personnel to accomplish.

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