



Networkfleet® Improves Johnson County Fleet Operations and Saves \$15K in Fuel Costs

Summary

After implementing a GPS-enabled wireless fleet management system from Networkfleet, the Johnson County Highway Department improved operations and efficiency, saving more than \$15,000 in fuel costs the first year.

Problem

Johnson County, Indiana was established in 1822 and is home to more than 100,000 residents. The second fastest growing county in the Indianapolis metropolitan area, Johnson County offers urban amenities using the latest technology while maintaining a friendly, hometown attitude.

In early 2009, the Johnson County Highway Department put this forward-thinking approach to work. Using knowledge acquired at the Department of Public Works in Indianapolis, Director Gary Vandegriff initiated a program aimed at improving performance of the vehicles assigned to his department.

“Our primary reason was to pinpoint areas where we could improve fleet performance and thus reduce fuel costs and wasteful usage of vehicles,” said Vandegriff.

Solution

After viewing a demonstration of Networkfleet given by a colleague at the Indiana Department of Transportation, Vandegriff formulated a plan. Like other GPS-based fleet management systems, Networkfleet collects and transmits data wirelessly from a global positioning system (GPS) and provides alerts and reports regarding vehicle location, speed, stops/starts, idle time, and odometer readings. However, Networkfleet’s capabilities extend well beyond others.

“I saw right away that Networkfleet had other advantages,” said Vandegriff. “I had kept up with GPS technology since the mid-1990s, so I knew what the technology could do. What cinched the decision to buy Networkfleet was the systems’ direct connection to the vehicle’s onboard diagnostic computer.”

Vandegriff installed Networkfleet on his own sedan plus 15 Highway Department vehicles, including ten heavy dump trucks, one mini-van, one Ford F250, and three pickups. Immediately, the department began using Networkfleet to manage operations and fuel consumption. Armed with four years of data on fleet fuel usage (diesel and unleaded), Vandegriff knew he had a good baseline for comparing performance and costs before and after implementing the solution.

“Managing fuel consumption involves tracking and controlling operation of your vehicles,” said Vandegriff. “Thanks to Networkfleet, I now have fuel and idle reports, which are delivered to me automatically every Monday. If idle time is above the four-year trend average for a given vehicle, I can drill down immediately to determine the context and take reasonable action.”

Results

As shown in the following graph, diesel fuel usage for 15 vehicles declined from 7,098 gallons in January 2009 to an average of 4,931 gallons per month for the remainder of the year. This compares to the 5,555 gallon-average per month for the previous four years. Unleaded fuel usage also declined during the first year as compared to the four-year monthly average.

“At an average \$1.85 per gallon for diesel and \$1.80 per gallon for unleaded gas, we calculated our fuel consumption savings at nearly \$15,000 for the first year,” Vandegriff said. “Most of the savings was due to operational efficiencies such as reduced idling time, odd-hour use, and speeding.”

Even though Vandegriff’s primary interest was not the GPS functionality of Networkfleet, he soon discovered how valuable it was to be able to track vehicle locations.

“We didn’t implement Networkfleet to keep careful watch on everyone,” he said. “But the ability to track where our employees are and where they’ve been has saved us money and helped us back up our employees when an erroneous claim is made.”

For example, Vandegriff received a call from a customer during a blizzard, claiming that the Highway Department wasn’t providing the level of service necessary to keep roads clear. Using Networkfleet, he was able to show that they had been plowing appropriately but heavy winds and back-to-back storms had undermined their efforts.

“Based on plowing times, locations, and weather patterns in the area, I could also explain to the customer that as soon as we removed the snow, it came back, making it appear we weren’t doing our job,” Vandegriff explained. “Without Networkfleet’s data, we wouldn’t have been able to prove otherwise.”

Results

- *Saved \$15,000 in fuel costs by monitoring and reducing idle time, odd-hour use and speeding.*
- *Exonerated employees and resolved customer complaints by verifying vehicle activity times and locations.*
- *Reduced diesel fuel usage by more than 2,000 gallons per month in the first year.*

