



Texas Electric Cooperatives Saves Big With Binary's Customizations

"I investigated a few third party solutions that would permit us to consolidate our invoices in order to streamline our invoicing and cash receipts process, but each of them had some limitations that would not allow us to create the type of invoice we needed or maintain the billing history in our database. When I approached Binary Stream with my challenge, [they] immediately understood my dilemma and presented me with a workable solution."

*~ Constance Quigley,
Business Analyst, Texas
Electric Cooperatives*

Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC) is a statewide organization dedicated to representing the interests of cooperative electric utilities in Texas and the member- consumers they serve. Established in 1941 and based in Austin, TEC today represents 64 electric distribution cooperatives and the state's 11 generation and transmission (G&Ts) cooperatives.

Since 1946, TEC has supplied member systems with utility poles. Its treating facility in Jasper, Texas, is the only cooperatively-owned wood-preserving plant in the nation and produces more than 145,000 poles annually. TEC Utility Supply & Service repairs, manufactures or salvages more than 35,000 units annually for member systems.

With multiple locations throughout Texas, TEC's Georgetown location mainly services electrical equipment (transformers) from cooperative members and non-members. "As you could imagine there could be hundreds of transformers on a single truck from a single location, and each transformer has a unique ticket because these products are serialized items. So billing our customers on a job-by-job basis would cause both our and [our customer's] accounting departments to go insane," says Constance Quigley, Business Analyst at TEC. Using Great Plains' Service Call Management module, TEC manages truckloads of electrical equipment that would arrive daily, resulting in the creation of service tickets for each item to be repaired. A limitation of the Service Call Management module in Great Plains is that it only creates one invoice per service ticket; however, each of TEC's customers would send multiple items each week, resulting

in hundreds of invoices per customer each week. Before TEC implemented Binary Stream's custom solution, TEC's accounting department was overwhelmed with repetitive labor, consolidating the billing information into invoices manually. Averaging over 1000 service tickets per month, TEC needed a solution that could streamline their invoicing process. TEC searched for a solution that could consolidate a day's billing into a single invoice per customer and that would allow their accounting department to apply cash receipts in a streamlined approach.



"After a software customization project for us had gone off the rails in a lengthy bungled manner, with a few computer consulting firms contributing to the wreck, it was Binary Stream Software who finally rescued the project. Their people are a joy to deal with, and we were able to realize the benefits that were promised to us so long ago. We wish we had found them first."

*~ Ron D. McTaggart
C.A. Controller,
Connors Drilling Ltd.*

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The Choice Becomes Clear

After searching for a solution and finding that other offerings in the market were limited in terms of functionality, TEC contacted Binary Stream to inquire about Binary Stream's custom application development services for Great Plains. With Binary Stream's proprietary methodology of delivering enhancement solutions and in-depth knowledge of Great Plains's core functionality, Binary Stream immediately diagnosed and prescribed a solution (called Sales Document Consolidation™ today) to TEC. TEC's requirements were easily understood and Binary Stream delivered the solution on time and on budget.

In order to achieve the functionality that TEC requested, Binary Stream modified Great Plains' SOP module, allowing TEC to merge multiple invoices by customer name, customer PO number, and customer address. Once the customization was installed, TEC's accounting department immediately began to see the results and improvements in processing time.

Their accounts receivables department also received exemplary results as they could then easily apply cash receipts to invoices. The whole process of transferring billing information onto an invoice was streamlined instantly.

In order to achieve such results, Binary Stream's methodology to customizing Great Plains involves integrating a Rapid Application Development (RAD) and traditional software development approach in order to reduce the time and cost of customized solutions. With an extensive portfolio of customized projects, Binary Stream was able to use an array of existing code to develop TEC's custom solution, which has now been further enhanced to become a standard product named, the Sales Document Consolidation™. Through the use of existing code, TEC did not only receive a solution that dramatically reduced operational costs for a specific process, but they also received a custom solution that was cost-effective.

Return on Investment

As Binary Stream continues to develop solutions that are driven by market demand, companies like TEC can benefit substantially as illustrated in this case study. Once TEC installed the Sales Document Consolidation™, they immediately saw the benefits as the solution saved their accounting personnel days of processing time each month. The reduction in labour time needed to process invoices allowed TEC to see

a return on investment within three months. Not only did TEC receive a stable and efficient solution, they also received the solution that fit well within their budget.

"Our customers are very pleased with our format, and our accounting department [has] saved all the time that would be required to manually consolidate these invoices and apply cash receipts to all of them individually," says Constance.