DocStar®

IGNITING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

SUCCESS STORY

West Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation

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Future-Minded Utility Powers Progress with Smart, Easy-to-Use, ROI-Creating Content Management Solution

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES	• Outdated, unwieldy and siloed legacy systems • Inefficient paper-based processes stunt productivity • Unacceptable cycle times for AP and procurement • File cabinet storage created a risk of loss
SOLUTION	• DocStar Content Management • DocStar Intelligent Data Capture (IDC)
BENEFITS	• User-friendly, scalable solution cut PO issuance time by 80% • Estimated $250,000 in potential document loss mitigated • Annual savings of $100,000 due to efficiency gains and cost savings

From Antiquated to Agile

A rural, community-focused electric cooperative, West Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation (WKRECC) delivers reliable, affordable and sustainable energy to more than 32,0000 members across Western Kentucky.

WKRECC had a cumbersome, legacy document management system that was difficult to use, expensive to maintain and could not integrate with other company systems. Paper-based processes had become difficult to scale and important data, stored in file cabinets, was at risk of loss in a natural disaster. But productivity was the ultimate casualty. The purchase requisition process was slow and time-consuming, invoice approvals took too long, documents were hard to find, and staff spent too much time on manual tasks.

Heather Foley, VP of Administration & Finance at WKRECC, summarized, "We needed to modernize to serve our members better."

Erin Elliott, Accounting Manager at WKRECC added, "At the same time, a member of our accounting team was retiring. It was an opportunity to be more efficient with a smaller staff."

Foley and Elliott launched a paperless document automation project and researched several content management systems. Only DocStar and Intelligent Data Capture (IDC) made the shortlist. Elliott recalled, "The DocStar workflows were so easy and provided the flexibility to customize to match our business."

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Heather Foley

VP Administration & Finance, West Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation

Paper Jam to Seamless Stream

"Implementation was a seamless process," Elliott shared, "We had been afraid we might have to run the systems in parallel for a while, but it was clear almost immediately that wouldn't be necessary."

With DocStar deployed, thousands of documents were migrated, ensuring all content was accessible in one location, and key business-critical workflows were digitized and automated. Along the way, DocStar was integrated with CSA, WKRECC's billing and accounting software provider.

The solution automatically captures and extracts data from invoices received via email for AP invoicing, reducing data entry and providing a central digital repository for invoices and related documents. Automated workflows work to code, approve and post to the utility's ERP system. Foley noted, "Previously, our AP team was inundated with paper invoices but now with DocStar we have reduced our processing time from 10 days to four days and manual data entry has dropped by 85%. By automatically capturing data, operational efficiencies have skyrocketed."

DocStar also solved the problem of remote access. Elliott observed, "We live in a mobile world. With DocStar, it's easy to keep processes moving when staff are out of the office—and still do things right." In fact, cycle times for invoice approvals shrunk by 67%.

Previously, purchase requisitions and orders would move on paper from desk to desk, a manual process fraught with potential issues and frustrations. Custom electronic forms now allow users to initiate purchase requisitions, which are routed for approval based on predefined rules. Once approved, POs are automatically created in WKRECC's ERP system and emailed to suppliers. "POs are being issued 80% faster, accelerating the pace of business," Elliott shared.

With all customer records stored digitally, documents such as service applications and agreements, correspondence, bank drafts, paperless billing forms and other member records are available for instant access by customer service representatives (CSRs). This has significantly increased operational efficiencies for WKRECC employees.

Driving the Bottom Line

Foley emphasized, "We estimate we saved 1,000 hours annually with DocStar and IDC. Cost savings of $50,000 from reduced paper usage, document storage, and legacy system retirement, and improved employee satisfaction scores by eliminating tedious manual tasks and enabling remote work."

In addition, adopting DocStar allowed WKRECC to retire its legacy system, which cost $25,000 a year in maintenance fees. "When you factor in the efficiency gains and other cost savings, we estimate the total annual benefit to be in the $100,000 range. That's a strong ROI," Foley highlighted.

DocStar and IDC have also eliminated duplicate work. The smaller flow of documents makes it easier to review them and catch errors.

"It also equips managers to be more accountable with budgeting, which provides leadership with more accurate financial data," Foley described. "That's critical because it's our members' money, and we need to ensure that we're spending the money the right way all the time." She also appreciates that with improved financial control and visibility, audit preparation time has been reduced.

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Energizing Transformation

"While change will always meet some resistance, DocStar is so user-friendly and so common-sense driven that adoption was simple," Elliott said. The team is rightfully proud that the initial objectives of reducing manual effort, improving process visibility, accelerating cycle times, advancing disaster recovery posture and enhancing member service have all been soundly achieved.

The successes have also positioned WKRECC to extend the benefits to other tasks, such as automated expense reporting and credit card statement processing. Additionally, other departments within WKRECC, including Human Resources, Legal, and Operations, are also exploring leveraging DocStar and EDI, as the company continues its digital transformation journey.