

Case Study: Yosemite National Park

A Path to Efficiency

Able Software's Utility Star Platinum system helps Yosemite National Park achieve unprecedented efficiency through advanced business process integration and reporting analysis.

Yosemite National Park embraces a magnificent scenic mountain-and-valley area, which was set aside as a national park at the end of 19th century. Yosemite National Park provides billing, customer service and maintenance of water, sewer, electric and trash collection services to about 700 accounts in California, 125 of which are commercial customers.

Therefore the Yosemite National Park started to seek after an integrated utility billing system that is robust, flexible, scalable, and expands their IT capabilities. In the beginning of 2004, the Yosemite NP selected Able Software Company to provide them with this next generation IT solution.

The Dire Situation

Yosemite has been using an in-house developed billing software for years. The system did not provide any integration or automation to many of the everyday work process. The work orders were recorded and kept manually, bill calculations were done in Excel sheet with frequent errors, and the meter reading process was also not integrated electronically to the billing system. Furthermore, the system did not provide any means of effective energy tracking and cost analysis. The outdated, inadequate, and difficult to access system was identified as a problem in 2003.

case study profile

Company

Yosemite National Park

Vendor/Technology

Able Software Company from Irvine, California

Challenges

- Achieve integration for all facet of the business process, this includes work order management, AMR units, customer information, billing, service address and meter maintenance.
- Energy tracking and cost analysis.
- Regulation specific reporting needs.
- Special large commercial account management.
- Complex rate structure implementation.
- Electronic archiving.
- Scalability for future growth.

An Enabling Solution

Able Software's Utility Star Platinum system provided Yosemite the integrated IT solution it was looking for. The software provided advanced work order management, and integration to the meter reading handheld solution. Utility Star Platinum also provided Yosemite with an advanced customer information management where billing, usage, movement histories are all recorded and stored permanently. Utility Star Platinum's sophisticated account setup system provided the perfect solution to setup service address with multiple meter connection at different physical locations. Utility Star Platinum also provided true energy tracking and cost analysis ability through its unique data storing architecture and reporting ability. After implementation, Yosemite is able to track in great detail how much energy is used at each location, and how much each area is costing the utility. This enables Yosemite to quickly run cost analysis and identify any inefficiencies right from the system.

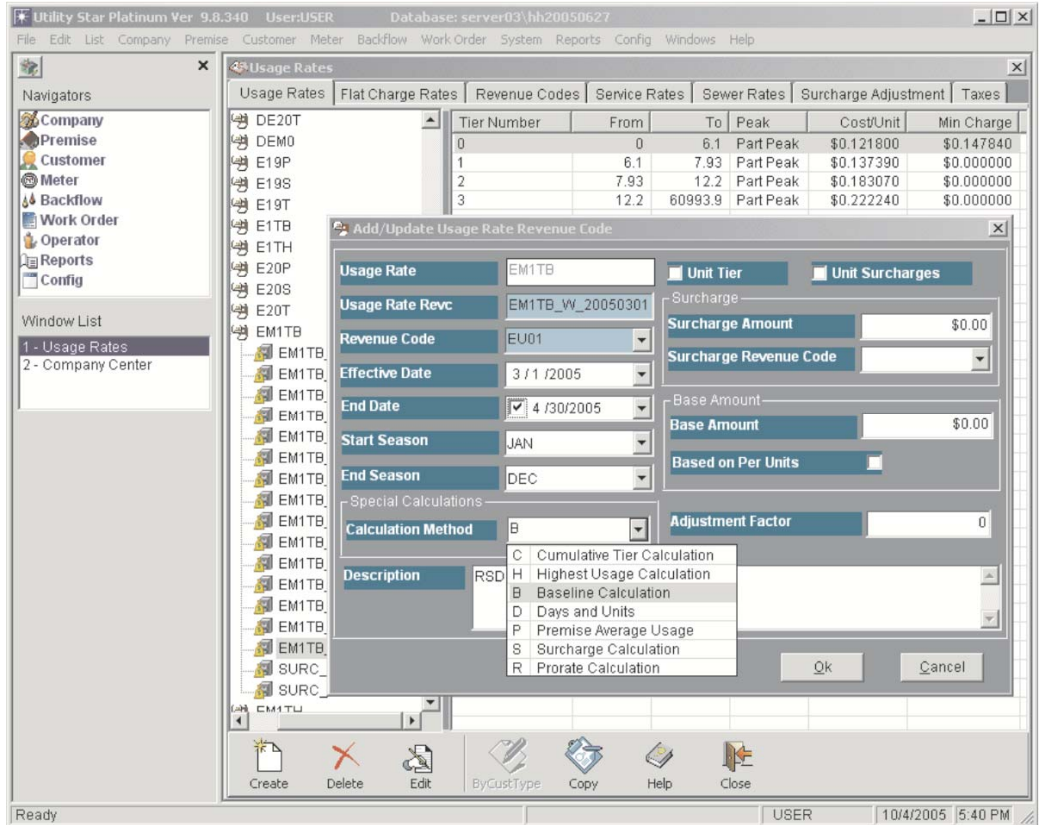
Beyond what Yosemite NP originally looked for, Utility Star Platinum also provided additional features such as:

- Meter inventory system
- Preview billing to eliminate incorrect bills.
- Customizable criteria for determining unusual reads.
- Ability to re-print all past bills exactly the way it was sent to the customer.
- Productivity enhancing features such as multi-window support, customizable default values, and user definable data entry validation rule.

Other features provided by Utility Star Platinum that Yosemite NP can easily take advantage of at any time are:



- GIS data management
- Built in Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system.
- ACH interface
- Lockbox interface
- Automated credit card payment processing.
- Advanced point of sales (POS) payment processing.
- Internet bill presentation and payment processing.
- Web-based executive reporting tools.
- Built in general ledger reporting, and interface to 3rd party account packages.
- CASS interface to 3rd party software.



Benefits

1. Cost effective. The total integrated solution provided by Utility Star Platinum eliminated the need for many other side systems.
2. Increase customer satisfaction because all the information needed is right at the fingertips of the park employees.
3. Improved efficiency because all facet of the business process is tied together in one central system and database.
4. Advanced and customizable reporting feature along with the unlimited history storage provides invaluable tool for future planning, as well as meeting all reporting criteria.
5. Integrated work order management help keep staff on -task.
6. Built in error checking, usage analysis tools minimize user errors.
7. Advance software architecture ensures scalability as the utility company grows.
8. Complex rate configuration and customizable business policy implementation allows the utility company the freedom to run their business without limitation from the software.

Complex usage rate structure and flexible tier manipulation support ensures that Yosemite National Park can handle all kinds of rate calculations determined by the California Public Utility Commission. Seasonal rate activation support also makes seasonal rates an ease to maintain. All this means minimizing billing calculation errors and saved man-hours.

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