Energy Intelligence: Managing Fixed Assets

A distributor uses CMMS to track repair history, mileage, and idle time of its delivery fleet

What would you do if you had to manage maintenance for all the accumulating assets of an industry giant that thrived on acquisitions? That question befell the fixed asset management team and Jane Sears, fixed asset manager for the Commercial Fuels Division of Parkland Fuel Corporation, Canada's largest independent distributor of fuel products.

By implementing a CMMS (computerized maintenance management software) solution called Bigfoot, Parkland was not only able to help centralize and standardize maintenance for its assets, including the cardlocks, trucks, service vans, propane tanks and office buildings, but the company was able to significantly lower maintenance costs and reduce capital budgets.

Parkland Commercial Fuels sells bulk fuel, propane, heating oil, lubricants, agricultural inputs, oilfield fluids, and other related products to thousands of industrial, commercial, and residential customers across Canada through an extensive national network of local branches and cardlock sites.

Parkland's branches dispatch their trucks to deliver fuel products to cardlocks, some of which sit at remote locations like the end of a wharf on Prince Edward Island, or to its rented propane tanks located in the oil fields of Alberta, or to massive tanks sitting atop flatbed trucks. They also deliver diesel fuel to trucking companies, and heating oil to residential and commercial properties.

Parkland acquired a lot of companies, including Bluewave Energy where Sears worked, and each company had different processes for maintaining their own equipment. When something broke the local branch would get it fixed; there was no centralization of maintenance or repair vendors.

Singing From the Same Songbook

With thousands of fixed assets to keep track of, Parkland needed an efficient maintenance strategy and process to know what needed servicing, by when and by whom. Sears wanted a maintenance management system that would notify the FAA team when maintenance checks were due without having to think about it.

Today, Parkland tracks all of its branch assets with Bigfoot CMMS, a web-based solution that automates asset maintenance operations with capabilities that include preventive maintenance scheduling (PMs), ad hoc work order and repair scheduling, asset life cycle management, and more. The fixed asset management team follows up on PM schedules and work orders.

“Bigfoot has been a major ‘asset’ to our asset management,” says Bill Sanford, Executive Vice President of the Commercial Fuels Division. “Besides day-to-day operations, Bigfoot helps with capital budgeting based on tangible data and history. We can see the value of retiring old equipment and the ideal timing for maintenance. Bigfoot allows our team to do forward planning.”

Bigfoot helps Parkland keep track of each branch, with each of its assets, even notifying the team when property lease renewals are due.

Since Parkland outsources much of its repair work, it depends on Bigfoot to report on the frequency, quality, and cost of actual work that got completed by contracted vendors. Based on repair data, operations can determine whether to replace or renew outside maintenance contracts.

Bigfoot also allows Parkland to view past due outsourced work orders on individual branch assets, and follow up with designated vendors until the work is completed and paid for.

Operationally, Bigfoot can simplify the administrative work required by the operations team so they can concentrate on serving customers. For example, if a British Columbia cardlock is malfunctioning, the branch manager simply submits a work order through Bigfoot to the fixed asset administrator who dispatches the preferred vendor to fix the pump and manage the work order through to completion.

Parkland also uses Bigfoot to track the number of propane tanks being rented and at which customer sites at any given time. PMs are scheduled in the system for re-painting tanks to protect the metal, and for checking leaks and other regulatory safety compliance inspections specific to each Canadian province.

Because Bigfoot captures all activity related to asset repairs and keeps a running history, Parkland can prevent duplicate repairs and unnecessary costs. By maintaining the vehicle’s repair and invoice history, it tracks when new tires were last purchased and whether it is time to replace them rather than relying on the drivers to determine whether it is time for tire replacement based on the odometer reading.

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