

Austin Utilities Increases Resilience and Reliability with Cloud-Based SCADA to Drive Automation

“AspenTech was able to offer a robust solution for our electric utility that could also apply to the water and gas utilities we operate.”

— Jonas Morehouse, Information Systems Specialist, Austin Utilities

> \$100,000 USD

Saved in upfront CAPEX

CHALLENGE

Austin Utilities faced challenges around maintenance that required extra staff and complicated system upgrades and also raised cybersecurity issues.

SOLUTION

AspenTech OSI monarch SCADA™ was selected to support Austin Utilities' evolution to an intelligent electric, gas and water network.

VALUE CREATED

- Saved over \$100,000 USD in upfront CAPEX compared to a virtual machine (VM) server replacement.
- Increased system maintenance efficiencies by eliminating the staffing need for software patching updates.
- Enhanced cybersecurity with industry-leading standards.
- Improved utility operations and customer experience by providing actionable data for reporting.



Overview

Located in southeastern Minnesota, Austin Utilities is a community-owned, not-for-profit electric distribution utility that also provides water and natural gas. It serves more than 12,000 customers in the area.

For years, Austin Utilities had used an on-premise SCADA system, but they were looking at upgrading to improve resiliency and operational excellence. Specifically, they wanted to explore options that would address current challenges with heavy maintenance requirements that required extra staff and long and complicated system upgrades while also raising cybersecurity concerns.

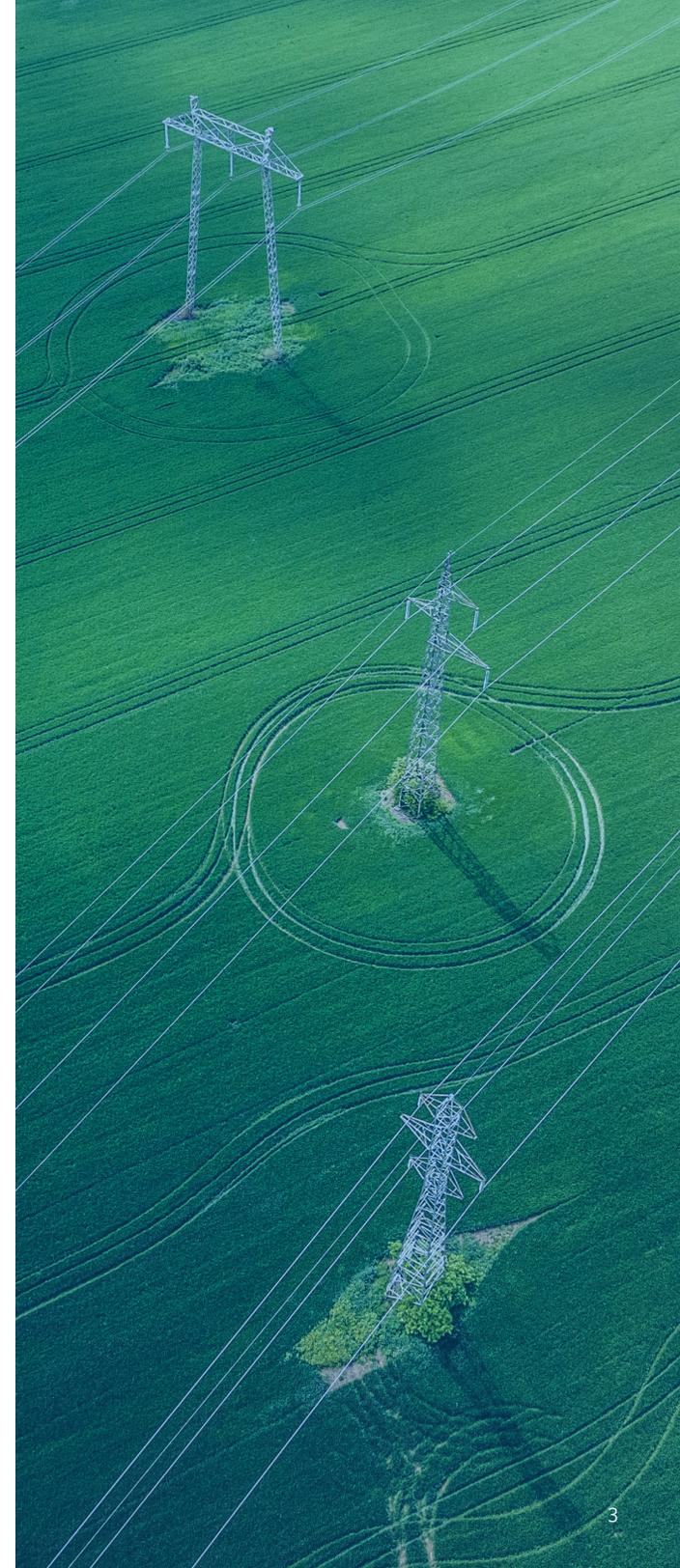
In addition, they wanted to set a foundation to grow into advanced applications that could enable automation from field to control room and protect against grid disturbances. They wanted to be cognizant of budget, optimize available labor resources, remove the IT maintenance burden and ensure operators were adequately trained and supported.

Finding the Right Solution

Austin Utilities sought a solution that would support their evolution to an intelligent electric, gas and water network that provides more reliable, safe and secure service for their customers. The two options considered involved migrating from physical servers to either a virtual machine (VM) server or a cloud-hosted solution.

While evaluating, Austin Utilities determined that transitioning to a VM or cloud-based system would each represent a similar spend over a 7-to-8-year period. However, the VM server option represented an additional initial investment of approximately \$100,000 above the cloud-hosted solution.

Another factor that Austin Utilities considered was that the cloud-hosted option aligned with other recent cloud architecture models that they had adopted for non-OT systems. Due to all the benefits offered, Austin Utilities decided to proceed with AspenTech OSI monarch SCADA.



A Holistic Solution with Best-in-Class Cybersecurity and Seamless Implementation

From an economic perspective, Austin Utilities determined that there would be additional cost savings realized from not having to patch and update the system manually on-site, but rather have this handled by an outside party. From a cybersecurity standpoint, they noted that this arrangement meant that experts would be handling their security requirements and expressed confidence in this mitigating potential vulnerabilities.

“The AspenTech OSI monarch platform meets the highest cybersecurity standards, and they continue to stay current through experience with customers governed by NERC-CIP,” said Jonas Morehouse, an information systems specialist at Austin Utilities. “This helped our

IT decision-makers in recommending their cloud solution from a cybersecurity perspective. When you put these tasks in the hands of people that do them for a living, there tends to be a better outcome.”

From an implementation standpoint, the pre-cutover testing went very smoothly. Any minor issues identified were easily remedied through a programming fix, which resulted in the actual cutover progressing with no failbacks or issues.

“We could not be happier with how quick the implementation went and how painless it was,” Jonas Morehouse added.





Value Created

Austin Utilities has realized a number of key benefits by implementing AspenTech OSI monarch SCADA. Beyond saving over \$100,000 USD in upfront capital expenditure compared to a VM server replacement, this solution has:

- **Increased system maintenance efficiencies** by eliminating the need for in-house staff to perform software patching updates.
- **Enhanced cybersecurity** with industry leading cyber-security standards, which are more stringent than required by Austin Utilities.
- **Improved utility operations and customer experience** by providing actionable data for standard reporting on metrics across the board.

“Because the AspenTech solution is deployed on the cloud, it enhances our ability to prepare data used to develop specific metrics and promote visibility to track reliability,” said Marc Oleson, IT director at Austin Utilities. “We want to ensure that we are not gathering data for the sake of gathering. Instead, we want to use data across our systems to provide actionable insights for the leadership team and operators and ultimately deliver meaningful benefits for our customers. We appreciate AspenTech working through forward-thinking solutions, being open with us in conversations and helping us customize and simplify solutions to provide us with the best value.”





About Aspen Technology

Aspen Technology, Inc. (NASDAQ: AZPN) is a global software leader helping industries at the forefront of the world's dual challenge meet the increasing demand for resources from a rapidly growing population in a profitable and sustainable manner. AspenTech solutions address complex environments where it is critical to optimize the asset design, operation and maintenance lifecycle. Through our unique combination of deep domain expertise and innovation, customers in asset-intensive industries can run their assets safer, greener, longer and faster to improve their operational excellence.

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