

# NW Natural

Getting the most impact for GIS technology investments



## PROJECT AT A GLANCE

### Project Type

Operational utility solutions

### Location

Portland, Oregon

### Applications

Serves as the foundation for an intelligent network infrastructure that improves efficiencies, increases safety and enables smarter business decisions

### Solution Implemented

ArcFM™ Network

## CUSTOMER BENEFITS

- Increased accuracy of information
- Highly configurable and easily adapted for multiple uses



NW Natural is headquartered in Portland, Oregon, and delivers natural gas to customers in Oregon and southwest Washington. NW Natural builds, maintains and operates the local natural gas distribution system, and in recent years their growth rate has exceeded the national average for local utility distribution companies.

## Challenges

NW Natural began utilizing GIS technology in 1983. Since then, NW Natural has internally designed its own data model and generated custom programs and tools to handle day-to-day processes. However, because of the customized platform it took a lot of time and resources to operate and maintain the system.

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David Blan, GIS supervisor at NW Natural

"It got to the point where our IT support was using 90 percent of their time maintaining all of our custom-built programs and tool sets," said David Blan, GIS supervisor at NW Natural.

"We needed to start thinking about using industry standard tools that could be implemented out of the box to do the same work more efficiently, and require less IT support."

## Solution

Schneider Electric partnered with NW Natural to integrate ArcFM™ Network into its operations smoothly and efficiently — ensuring that proper solutions deployed to optimal scale and functionality — giving NW Natural the most impact for its GIS technology investments.

With its open architecture, the ArcFM Network system is highly configurable and easily adapted for multiple uses, and can be paired with existing GIS technology. "I've been quite impressed with the out-of-the-box configurations and custom programming that allows us to make better use of our data models," said Blan.

## The Bottom Line

ArcFM Network serves as the foundation for an intelligent network infrastructure that improves efficiencies, increases safety and enables smarter business decisions for all types of utilities.

"ArcFM Network has allowed our IT department to focus their time on enhancements for the system instead of spending the vast majority of their time simply maintaining custom programs. We are now able to move forward in making our data models a better tool for the entire company," Blan explained. "It also allowed us to work more creatively and focus on configuration instead of devoting valuable resources to custom-designing programs for each and every step in our GIS system."

By using ArcFM Network, it takes less time and resources to maintain and manage utility data.

"One of the benefits in part of our implementation was moving to a standard data model from the homegrown data model we had before."

NW Natural is currently testing the full range of functions available with the ArcFM Network solution including troubleshooting, engineering analysis, planning and reporting. These additional features will help increase efficiencies in other areas of operations.

"We are already seeing positive results in some of the testing that we're doing with the ArcFM Network solution, which we are planning to use as an easier function with a more efficient response time for a number of our operations," noted Blan.