

Polycom Video Powers Communication for Sierra Pacific

Fast-growing energy company saves hundreds of thousands of dollars a year with video conferencing

Sierra Pacific Resources is the investor-owned holding company for Sierra Pacific Power Company and Nevada Power Company. The two power companies merged in 1999 to create one of the fastest growing energy companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Today, Sierra Pacific Resources provides electricity to 843,000 electric customers throughout Nevada and northeastern California; Sierra Pacific Power also provides natural gas to 110,080 customers and water to 70,663 customers in the Reno-Sparks area—to serve more than 1 million customers combined. With a service area that covers over 54,531 square miles of Nevada—the fastest growing state in the U.S.—Sierra Pacific's vision is to create a premier distribution, transmission and energy services company.

Building an Infrastructure Energized to Meet Any Demand

Part of a rapidly evolving industry in a region of the country where growth is exploding, Sierra Pacific Resources works hard to stay a step ahead, meeting the business challenges faced by most organizations: ensuring continued profitability, meeting regulatory requirements, serving customers' changing demands and fostering collaboration between employees.

As Chuck Benton, network analyst at Sierra Pacific Resources, explains it, the company's progressive approach to business and innovation requires that technology solutions be in place before business challenges arise. "Our business challenge was to provide network resources that could meet all the demands of a merger between Nevada Power and Sierra Pacific Power, as well as the demands of any new applications and functionality needed after a merger," Benton said, "except we didn't know those things when we built our Enterasys network and incorporated Polycom video conferencing systems. We just

knew that we needed a network and a system that were ready for anything."

Polycom Video Conferencing System Adds Exciting New Capabilities

Sierra Pacific Power deployed a new network in 1997 and it was expected to support video. Sierra Pacific Power looked to Polycom to provide the video conferencing tools it needed. "We decided very quickly on Polycom," states Benton. "The solution is transparent to switched Ethernet, IP addressable and virtually plug and play. We keep our Polycom ViewStation® units on carts, and our end users roll them wherever they're needed. They find them very easy to use."

"Our choice to deploy Polycom video was very forward-looking," Benton adds, "because when Nevada Power and Sierra Pacific Power merged two years later, we had a network and high-quality, interactive video communications that could easily facilitate collaboration between the sites in Las Vegas and Reno."

The end result: With the appliance-based ViewStation systems enabling video conferencing in company facilities, the need to travel became a thing of the past. "The solution is extremely cost-effective," Benton said. "In the first year of implementation, we saved \$277,000 on the travel expenses that would have been incurred by employees traveling between our facilities."

Today, 40 Polycom systems enable between 8 and 12 video conferences each day over T1 lines between facilities. "Because we are a merged company, conferences are held frequently so management and employees in different locations can communicate with each other," Benton said. "This video conferencing capability is a new tool in the toolbox of everyday business."



CHALLENGE

Facilitate seamless communication between sites of newly merged electric company while keeping travel budget under control

SOLUTION

Polycom ViewStation® video conferencing systems

RESULT

\$277,000 savings in the first year alone on travel expenses that would have been incurred by employees traveling between facilities

"Video conferencing capability is a new tool in the toolbox of everyday business."

Chuck Benton, Network Analyst,
Sierra Pacific Resources



Connect. Any Way You Want.