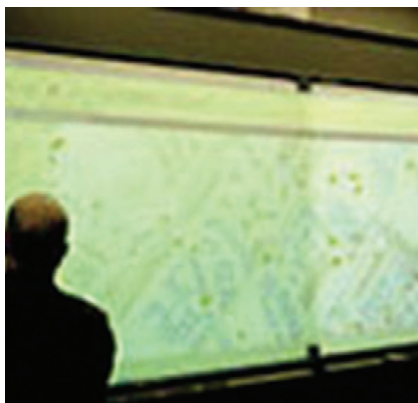**SMART**™

Utilities Department Streamlines Response Time
City of College Station Utilities – College Station, TX, United States

An installation at College Station

"Before our SMART Board interactive whiteboards, we used out-of-date maps and diagrams to plan our work. This made it hard to provide staff with usable data, especially during major power outages."

Augie Palmisano, Utility Dispatch Operations Superintendent

When 30,000 people rely on you 24 hours a day to provide their water, electricity and sewer services, you can't afford to make a mistake. Whether it's an emergency or a standard maintenance call, City of College Station Utilities' staff must have access to the latest information in order to pinpoint and respond to service issues as they arise. After years of data management problems caused by outdated electronic and paper maps, the city purchased two SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards to illuminate quicker, more accurate routes of response.

Emergency planning now more efficient

"Before our SMART Board interactive whiteboards, we used out-of-date maps and diagrams to plan our work. This made it hard to provide staff with usable data, especially during major power outages," explains Augie Palmisano, Utility Dispatch Operations Superintendent. "There was always the danger that important features like new electrical switches or fire hydrants could be missing."

By using the interactive whiteboards mounted in the dispatch center with two NEC® projectors and ArcView® mapping software, staff can plan major projects or respond to emergencies more efficiently. Palmisano recalls a traffic accident where a vehicle knocked down power lines, cutting off electricity to hundreds of people. Using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, dispatchers zoomed in on the affected map area. Instantly, they could see which customers were affected, identify circuit lines for the area and plan the fastest way to reroute power. Staff wrote notes over these files and captured them in SMART Notebook™ collaborative learning software to improve their emergency response.

With SMART products, planning major projects such as power line shutdown and rebuilding is streamlined. Management can display a work-site map on the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, take a screen capture of the relevant map section and record strategy notes. Dispatchers and crew then gather in front of the interactive whiteboard and go through the step-by-step procedure that will take place.

"This keeps everybody safe so there are no injuries, and we make sure we kill power to the right neighborhoods and circuits," explains Palmisano.

Data management becomes more accurate

In the past, crew members carried cumbersome books of paper maps that could be up to two years out of date because manual revisions were difficult and time-consuming. During a job, the crew scribbled diagrams and notes on their maps for the drafting department, which would then decipher the annotations and add them to the system.

Now, with SMART Notebook software installed on their laptops, crew members can take screen captures of map sections and add notes or drawings as they work. The files are then saved with all the new information and submitted for updating. "It's much more efficient and clear," affirms Palmisano.

Since their purchase two years ago, SMART Board interactive whiteboards have been used daily, around the clock. They decrease the time it takes to update maps, improve planning and emergency response, and provide staff with accurate data – results that prove updating can be easy when you have the right tools.

SMART Technologies
Toll free 1.866.518.6791 (U.S./Canada)
Phone +1.403.228.5940
smarttech.com