



## Utility Company Grows With Help From Venture's Professional Services

### Executive Summary

#### Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW)

- Serves more than 430,000 customers in Shelby County, TN
- 2,000+ employees
- 40+ physical locations

#### Challenge

- Upgrading and expanding outdated network without hindering services

#### Solution

- State-of-the-art Metropolitan Area Network (MAN)
- Venture's NetWatch Remote Monitoring and Management Services
- Regularly scheduled engineering visits
- 7/24/365 technical support

#### Results

- Successful implementation and maintenance of a MAN, with a refresh conducted every 12 to 18 months to ensure MLGW's network keeps up with organizational needs
- Reliable network performance that achieves MLGW's 99.95% uptime objective

As the largest "three-utility" company in the U.S., Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW) relies on its enterprise-class mission-critical network. Although it's been in business for more than 50 years, it claimed its current title of the largest "three-utility" company in the U.S. back in 1998, which is around the same time its partnership with Venture Technologies, Inc. began. "We couldn't get along without them," says MLGW Computer Hardware Specialist Bret Thomas.



"As our connectivity requirements and the number of critical applications grew, it became very apparent that we needed expert advice regarding the best way to extend our network," recalls Thomas. Amid a big stack of applicants, 10 or 12 were qualified enough to make it to the interview process. Some of the companies that applied for the contract were big names. It was an intense three-month process. "Venture certainly wasn't the largest candidate, but they impressed us with their experience level and amount of time and interest they invested in our company, and their keen attention to detail. We knew we wouldn't be a big, important customer to some of the other applicants, but Venture made us feel like a valued, special customer right off the bat," he explains. "They really took an interest in understanding our current network infrastructure and pain points."

"Our service area doesn't extend outside of Shelby County, TN so we didn't need to expand past the county line. However, we did need to cover more than 40 locations with a commitment of 99.95 percent uptime. After sitting down and extensively discussing the needed capabilities, uptime and scope of the project, Venture developed a three-step plan for designing and implementing a state-of-the-art, Cisco-powered Metropolitan Area Network (MAN). Eighteen months and more than 40 location visits later, we had a very robust and scalable network that would continue to meet our requirements well into the next decade," says Thomas.

"After this project, we leveraged their consulting and technical services for several other projects. In 2003 Venture relocated our entire data center—including more than 200 servers—to a location 25 miles away on the east end of Shelby County," recalls Thomas. "They did everything. They hired movers, rented the trucks, moved everything, set it all up at the new location and tested it."

"As we've grown and added more advanced systems to our network, we've realized that we need help managing these systems," says Thomas. "We were already a subscriber to Venture's NetWatch remote monitoring and management services, but we needed additional on-site services. We didn't want to hire another full-time employee, so to meet this need, Venture suggested a contract that would allow us to have one of their highly-skilled engineers on site one day per week. Today, we have a Venture technical resource on site four days a week. Plus, under the contract, Venture provides remote and on-site response 7/24/365. The best part of this arrangement is that we can leverage a systems engineer one week and a network engineer the next, depending on our needs. We have access to their entire arsenal of resources. We tell them what type of project we're trying to complete and they send over a certified expert in that area. This service has been invaluable."

