

United Piping, Inc. Success Story



The Challenge: How to closely manage and keep track of valuable assets in a dynamic, changing environment.

United Piping, Inc., needed a solution to track hundreds of valuable assets moving in and out of central facilities to the field. Important concerns included security of assets to avoid theft and the accurate accounting of assets in real time to improve overall efficiency of operations.

The Solution: RFID based software and hardware from Allyn Technology Group and IDENTEC SOLUTIONS, Inc.

United Piping, Inc. (UPI) is a general contractor, specializing in construction of new and modifications of existing facility and pipeline construction for the oil and gas industry.

From challenging pipeline integrity digs up to 48" diameter, to pipeline sleaving and recoating to hydro-excavation services, UPI specializes in a wide range of pipeline repair and replacement applications, making it one of the top pipeline construction companies in the Midwest. They manage many different and valuable assets for use in support of such large field projects, from generators to trailers, excavators and all types of equipment. The movement of these assets is constant and locations are always changing. Physical counting and verification of the inventory at all work sites and at the main warehouse is difficult, time-consuming and prone to error. Also, many of the employees have access to the storage yard and can remove relevant assets as needed, especially on construction projects with critical milestones and time constraints.



At the same time, UPI was concerned about potential theft and loss of equipment, given the amount of activity, the different people moving assets in and out constantly and the accurate accounting of assets for management of operations, repairs and maintenance, and availability planning.

What was needed was a solution that could track the movement of assets in real time, all the time, report their status for immediate viewing on the company's computer screens and pinpoint all assets with accuracy and reliability using maps designed for easy identification and reporting.

The solution was supplied by Allyn Technology Group (AllynTech) that included the use of active, UHF RFID technology from IDENTEC SOLUTIONS, Inc., with small readers and rugged tags that could be attached to all important assets. RFID technology is managed by AllynTech's Cellara™ Asset Visibility System which provides pinpoint location of assets, their status and actionable event data is presented to computers and integrated with the UPI enterprise system software.



Solution Description:

Getting visibility into warehouse and field locations

RFID tags were attached to assets with values ranging from \$1,000 to over \$250,000 (including some large excavators). Employees can pick up the needed assets in trucks and trailers and delivery them to construction sites. The high activity of such operations exceeded the ability of manual tracking with clip boards and required too much labor time to constantly keep track of what is happening and where things are going.

RFID readers were strategically located to reach all the tagged assets in the storage facilities and would monitor the movement in and out of the yard. As important, readers located in trucks and other vehicles read all the tagged assets at the various work sites and in all kinds of conditions: cold and snow in winter, hot and muddy in summer.

Tagged assets can be 1,500 feet away from the reader and thousands of tags can be read in seconds, whether moving or hidden behind other assets or deep in snow. After the initial installation of the system at UPI, one of their 6,000 lbs. excavators accidentally ran over one of the IDENTEC tags and it was still operational!

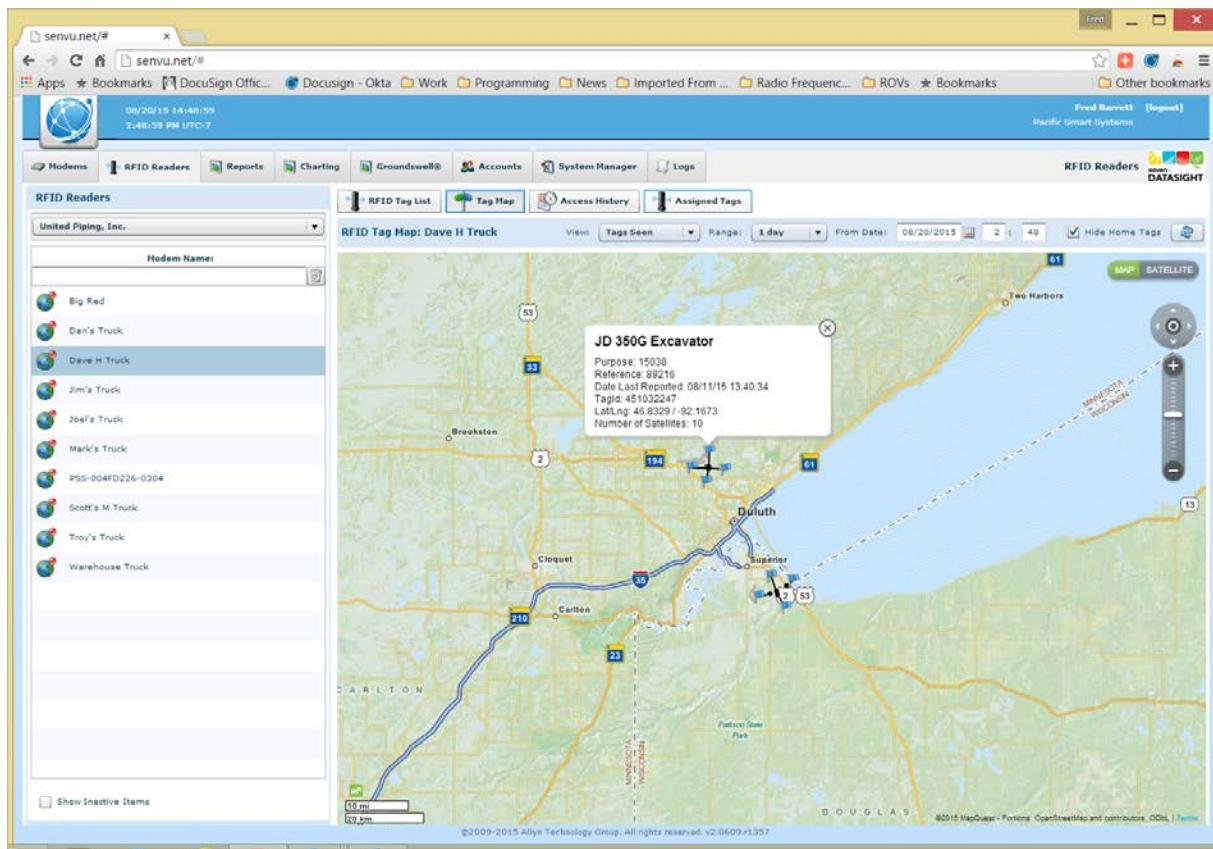




Mapping Visibility in Real Time



AllynTech's Asset Visibility System software gets automatic updates from the IDENTEC SOLUTIONS' tags and readers. AllynTech's Cellara AVS coordinates the data management and populates UPI's map with locations of all assets and vehicles. Operations managers can now click on a map pin and get the location of the asset. In the case of any truck, they can access the history of activity – all the tagged assets moved by individual truck – for a specific day or over a range of dates. In addition, the user defined business rules will be managed to provide timely alerts, alarms and escalations.





Benefits of the Solution: UPI, Inc., gains security and efficiency in operations at multiple sites.

UPI, Inc., after months of use, can confidently confirm that the AVS from Allyn Technology Group works “extremely well” and gives them substantive improvements in keeping track of their key assets.

Scott Sertich in equipment control describes the solution this way: “Overall, it is just great. The pins or tabs show where my trucks are and where my asset are with a very effective map. I love the system and its performance.”

Tracking the assets at the warehouse and at the project sites is key to operational security and efficiency. This is especially true when a project is complete and the expected return of all assets is made or their relocation to other projects is made – all done without losing track of them.

Even in locations where live communications are not possible, Cellara’s Store-and-Forward operation continues the vigilance and reports as soon as communications are available, keeping a complete history of the shipment intact.

Scott also verified that he and others can receive alerts when things don’t go as planned. In one case, Scott said, “just after the solution was installed and was up and running, I learned one of our 24-foot trailers was missing in the yard. Upon investigation, we learned one of the trucks came and got the trailer and did not report it.”

Scott said that it would have been some time before they would have noticed this with the old system and then it may have been too late. So, overall, Scott simply said he “loves the system”.



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