

WEBFLEET SOLUTIONS HAS HELPED US GROW FROM 8 TO 23 TECHS

Dan Poulin, Vice President of Operations & Service, Pine Tree Food Equipment



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Providing Maine & Northern New England with quality repair service for commercial cooking equipment since 1989

Location tracking & backing up their billable services

Better customer service, cost savings & business growth

The Company

Pine Tree Food Equipment has been providing quality repair service for commercial cooking equipment since 1989. The company has grown over the years and currently employs 35 people and has three locations in Gray, Brewer and Saco, Maine. Pine Tree has been a member of the Commercial Food Equipment Service Association (CFESA) since 1989, and became a CFESA certified company in March 2009. Pine Tree's 21 service technicians are state licensed in gas, steam, refrigeration and electric appliance service and installation serving thousands of customers across the state of Maine, from supermarket chains, to food franchises to convenience stores and gas stations.

The Challenge

Before implementing Webfleet Solutions for fleet management, Pine Tree's dispatch team were forced to use old-fashioned phone calls to pinpoint the location of service technicians. "Our customers would call and want to know when a tech would be arriving on site, or our dispatch team would want an estimate from the guys on how long they'd be out on a call. Everything was based on guesswork and there were a heck of a lot of calls back and forth to track people down," says Dan Poulin, Vice President of Operations & Service for Pine Tree Food Equipment.

In addition, the firm frequently faced questions from customers about their billable services. Customers wanted detailed accounting of a technician's arrival and time spent on site. Without any way of documenting and time stamping each service call, Dan and his team had no way of backing up their billings other than relying on a service technician's word.

The Solution

Pine Tree began using WEBFLEET in 2009. Initially, the firm leveraged the fleet management solution's GPS capabilities for location tracking. Over time, however, Pine Tree expanded its use of the WEBFLEET platform to predict a technician's estimated time of arrival on job site, to timestamp time spent on a service call, to



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monitor and track driving behaviors such as excessive speeding and idle times, and to provide maintenance notifications to drivers. “Webfleet Solutions has saved us so much time and paperwork,” says Poulin. “We are now able to give more accurate ETAs to our customers and answer customers’ questions related to time spent on service calls. Those efficiencies alone probably paid for the system in the first year.”

The simple concept of maintenance reminders has offered a huge business boost for Pine Tree. “In our business, your vehicle is your lifeline. If you don’t have a vehicle on the road, you are unable to work. We drive our vehicles up to and beyond 300,000 miles and when they are well maintained, you can do that.”

Through integration with their dispatching system, Pine Tree’s dispatch team can send work orders directly to service techs via the PRO 7250 driver terminal. “With one touch of a button, we can send a service call out to a driver. The driver then acknowledges the job, completes the call and updates the work order with their notes. All that information flows directly back into the dispatch system.”

Drivers were initially wary of the WEBFLEET system, but after six months found they couldn’t live without it. “They freak out if the system ever goes down,” chuckles Poulin. “Some use it to find the best routes to their destination. Others use for traffic alerts or to find the best gas prices. Everyone sees value.”

Dispatch uses their integrated dispatch system and WEBFLEET to optimize routes, which helps to increase efficiency and contributes to better customer service. “They have the WEBFLEET screen open constantly, so can see driver locations. This means they can take advantage of a driver’s location to get to a customer’s door faster. For instance, they might get a service call, and note that a driver is passing through the town at that moment and able to swing by. It saves our drivers from doubling back and the customer gets help more quickly.”

Overall, Pine Tree has realized a huge customer service advantage from using Webfleet Solutions. “On average, our guys do 4 to 8 service calls a day,” says Dan Poulin. “Prior to using fleet management, we were getting through those calls, but it was a 12 hour day for my guys, which meant we were paying \$400 to \$500 a day in overtime, plus associated fuel costs. “Now, our technicians are back to working an 8 hour day. For a small business, that’s a significant cost savings -- especially when gas prices were almost \$4 a gallon.”

Poulin also believes Pine Tree’s use of Webfleet Solutions has helped the business grow. “Before Webfleet Solutions, we were 6-8 technicians. We’ll soon be at 23 and we’re opening a third location. “Our productivity and efficiency has gone way up.”