

NetX MDU Case Study:



Kamson turns to NetX to save on its multi-family energy costs

Kamson Residents Are Treated As "VIPs" - Very Important People

Kamson Corporation is one of the Northeast's premier apartment ownership organizations. Kamson owns and manages 100+ multi-family properties across four states with a total of over 15,000 apartment homes. To remain a leading property manager, Kamson ensures that each resident is comfortable and satisfied in their home. Yet, many of their properties are of older construction, having been purchased from other owners. What's more, some properties are structured so tenants pay for their own utility bills, while for others, the bills are paid by Kamson as part of the rent. Billy Murphy, the Head of Facilities, has worked for Kamson for 20 years and is responsible for their building's infrastructure. In June of 2016, Kamson executives asked Billy to explore ways to save energy costs. They especially targeted the need to reduce wasted energy for those tenants where Kamson paid the utility bills.



Results

Tenants were receptive to the new approach and now had good reasons to keep their windows closed. Boiler usage dropped from 100% utilization to 50%, and to a little as 15% utilization on a mild winter day. In addition to saving tens of thousands of dollars in energy costs, maintenance and repair costs were reduced. Network Thermostats provided Billy with "rock solid" communications, connections for integration with their boilers, datalogging, and real-time data needed to proactively reduce energy usage. The pilot was so successful that these new thermostats were approved and scheduled in a total of 20 properties by the end of 2019. Kamson views Network Thermostat as a partner in this remarkable story and has expanded the partnership to include using Network Thermostats to enable a sub-metering strategy to convert all of its buildings to tenant-paid billing.

Challenge

In buildings where heating costs were a fixed part of their rent, the tenants didn't know how much energy was wasted and they didn't really have a reason to care. For example, in the winter, some tenants were found to have raised the thermostat to 80 degrees or higher while having the windows open. The boilers were operating 24x7 just to keep up with the energy demands. This also increased the maintenance and repair costs for the boilers and required their replacement earlier than necessary. Billy's first attempt to solve this problem involved spending large amounts of time, energy, and money on a Z-Wave thermostat solution. He was hoping to be able to control minimum and maximum heating set points for his tenants. Billy was frustrated with the spotty effectiveness of the technology and the ongoing need to reset the wireless connection between the devices. This technology also failed because it could only handle a fraction of the thermostats in a building without breaking down. In 2018, Billy desperately needed a more reliable solution and he needed it fast.

Solution

When Billy's first attempt to produce robust energy savings failed, he began to explore other alternatives. In this process he had a conversation with Jerry Drew, the CEO of Network Thermostats (NetX), and discovered a solution that appeared to be what he was seeking. Jerry proposed a pilot test to answer Billy's questions:

- Is there a reliable way to centrally control the thermostats in each apartment?
- Is there a way to substantially reduce energy waste?
- Can the the useful life of the boilers be increased while their maintenance costs are decreased?

Billy agreed to the pilot program and had Jerry's networked thermostats installed in the dead of winter in 2018/2019 to prove its claims. Billy set the maximum heating temperature to 72°F, while permitting the tenants to override this range by a few degrees for a small time window. The results from the winter pilot were nothing short of spectacular.

