Case Study
Scott County

How Scott County Improved their Preventive Maintenance Compliance Through FleetFocus Notifications

In 2016, the fleet for Scott County, Minnesota ran into a problem: their Preventive Maintenance Compliance (PMC) reporting for all equipment in the County was low – very low. They conducted research and discovered that there were two departments that were significantly lower in PMC and were skewing the numbers downward: the Highway Maintenance and the Sheriff's Departments. They were averaging about 15%-20% on time compliance between the two departments. Scott County set out to discover why, starting with the Sheriff's Department.

The Challenges

After research and internal auditing, they discovered issues with their setup. Jason Allen, Systems Administrator for Scott County, said, "We realized we might have had the software a little bit wrong from the beginning. Essentially, they weren't fully optimized to monitor their assets and provide notifications when needed."

Being a Sheriff's Department, they have unique assets to track, including 25 squad sheriff cars, 5-6 of which run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition, each vehicle racks up approximately 200-350 miles a day.

Through their review, they identified key challenges to overcome:

Challenge 1

Their first challenge was that their equipment class for preventive maintenance (PM) purposes was due at the 400 mile mark. Due to the vehicles' high daily mileage, Mr. Allen realized, "that 400 mile leeway – even a day and a half without stopping in the shop could leave that vehicle out of compliance already."

Challenge 2

Scott County employees also identified a communication gap between the Sheriff's Department and its maintenance shops. As PM would come due, the shop technician or parts manager would send an email notice to the driver of the vehicle, essentially saying, "Let's get the PM scheduled." As one can imagine, drivers in the Sheriff's Department are very busy with cases, off-hour shifts and other procedural work, which sometimes led to delayed responses to the PM emails. Based on their established PMC mark, these vehicles would end up violating the PMC during the gaps in communication.

Inspiration at the AssetWorks Academy

Their first introduction to a more efficient method of managing PMC through FleetFocus came from an in-depth class at the AssetWorks Academy in Indianapolis, taught by Diana Francis, Lead Technical Support Representative at AssetWorks. Mr. Allen said, "I took the Notifications class and really became intrigued with it – how could this work for us?"
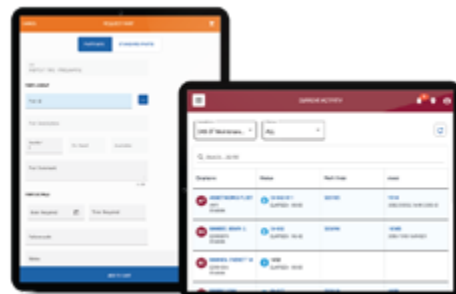
Academy attendees from Scott County enjoyed the class and scheduled time in the HUB computer lab with Karlee Undercoffler, Customer Care Manager at AssetWorks, to go through the process and to set the Notifications up in MAXQueue to see how it could work for them. They followed up the class and HUB meeting with some additional research and decided to implement the recommendations and best practices in 2018.

Improving the PMC

After implementing the new changes, their Sheriff's vehicles would come due for PM after about 1000 miles, which gave the drivers a significant amount of extra time to schedule their shop appointments. In addition, it gave the shop technicians more time to work on their everyday tasks with the reduced amount of PM scheduling emails to send out.

Realizing that more could be done, Scott County also fully implemented the FleetFocus Notifications tool for the Highway Maintenance and Sheriff's Departments. Since they would keep the same drivers for the same vehicles every day, they decided to assign the driver to the system as well. The alerts would notify the driver that it estimated their PM would be due in the next 5 days, and it warned them to plan ahead and schedule a maintenance appointment. When considering the challenges of getting new users to adopt the changes, Mr. Allen had some good news, "It was a relatively easy process of getting everyone onboard."

An additional later email would inform the officer that the PM will be due very soon and that they need to schedule it right away. The earlier they decide to the schedule, the better chance they have of getting the best time and date for them. Finally, the staff supervisor would approve the time slot so the appointment can be scheduled.

A Team Effort

The Scott County team consisted of a number of hard-working, dedicated professionals who sought to optimize their fleet processes to save time and money for their County. In addition to Jason Allen, Keith Blank, Shop Coordinator, Aaron Kotila, Shop Supervisor, and Troy Beam, Transit and Fleet Manager, all made significant contributions to the success of the rollout with FleetFocus Notifications.

Mr. Blank sets up all of the PM's with the departments and runs the parts room. He attended the AssetWorks Academy in Indianapolis with Jason and also learned about FleetFocus Notifications and how they could use it to enhance their processes. He works directly with the Sheriff's office to set up all of the notifications and coordinate all of the appointments within them. Mr. Beam noted that with Mr. Blank's help, "It [the system] works great and he gets a lot of compliments from the staff about the effectiveness of it."

In order to assist Scott County in its PM success, Mr. Kotila's expertise was critical to shop acceptance and PM adjustment. He runs the shop and the maintenance workers. He is the person responsible for assigning the PM's to the vehicles in the software and he works with Mr. Allen on a regular basis regarding PMC for the County.

A Smooth Adjustment

As a precaution, Scott County initially tested this change with just a few officers to ensure that it would work as they were expecting. They were met with enthusiastic results – the officers enjoyed the freedom it brought and thought the new processes would work for their department. Mr. Kotila noted, "After starting the notifications, Keith, our Coordinator for the shop, had some communication with the operators and their Sergeants on the Notifications process asking for some slight changes and after a few adjustments… we heard positive feedback on how the process was working and as I monitored the PM compliance report it was showing proof that the process was working."

With success on their heels, they decided to roll the changes out to the rest of the Sheriff's Department. To further ensure its success, the Scott County team took it upon themselves to draft their own customized training document for the officers to reference during the adjustment.

Surprisingly, there were no major challenges for implementing Notifications to the Sheriff's Department. The system administration team needed to visit the head sheriff with the information that they learned at the AssetWorks Academy. Essentially, they told him that their process would remain the same, but they can now notify him and his officers ahead of time. Mr. Allen added

that now officers could "schedule at a date and time that works for them, instead of the shop staff saying, "hey, we need you at this place at this time.""

When asked what the benefits of this process might be, Mr. Beam had a lot of positive things to say. "One of the other things that we are finding that is beneficial for us is that we are teaching all the departments how to utilize and monitor their access to the software and the notifications system," he said, "so they can physically go in and maximize their use of the tool as well."

While the Sheriff's Department saw immediate success with very few challenges, the Highway Maintenance Department had some additional hurdles they needed to overcome. Their trucks regularly traveled to multiple locations, where they might be far away from the shop when PM came due. In addition, they used different drivers for different vehicles, so they couldn't use the trick that the Sheriff's department did to assign the driver in FleetFocus. As a result, they decided to assign the supervisor as the operator for all of their vehicles so that he would be notified for each vehicle. From there, he would do all the assigning on his own, well in advance of the PM ultimately coming due.

> **This process has made it so much easier for shop staff," added Mr. Allen, "the supervisor can manage the alert for them well in advance of the PM coming due."**

Results

After implementing this change with Notifications, Scott County monitored the situation and statistics for some time. When they reported on it again, they found significant results: communication for the shop time and scheduling improved dramatically since there was no more manual email creation from a supervisor. Not to be outdone, the PMC reports that were originally at 15%-20% were now up to 89.9%. In fact, success permeated throughout the departments countywide. "Since we started the notification process, we went from about 40% to 87% compliance overall in all county vehicles," noted Mr. Beam.

Delivering Success

With the success they have experienced already, they decided recently to roll out the ideas to additional departments. The Sheriff's Department is the only one that uses the same vehicles every day, so the other departments each needed their own tweaks to the solution, much like the Highway Maintenance Department. Some departments, like Taxation and Environmental Health have department vehicles where a department representative is assigned. These users can see that PM is coming up for a vehicle and they will prevent staff from using it when it is scheduled to go in for maintenance.

Like most fleets, it is important for Scott County to report on their services. Scott County Delivers is a continual improvement initiative that allows the County to take a look at their data at the service, not the department, level. This review allows the community to see their services through the spectrum of programs, processes and departments that contribute to the County's goals. For the fleet, on-time performance for PMC is an important statistic.

When they presented on the successes with communication and PMC, it was through a televised review to the Scott County board. Mr. Beam said, "We had a huge, overwhelming acknowledgment of how well we succeeded in our performance efforts." They received additional appreciation for their ability to they increase their performance with the same strong fleet management system they already had.

Moving forward, they plan to teach the other departments how to utilize notifications and learn the software so they can use it as a tool for themselves.

In addition, Scott County Delivers includes priority-based budgeting where they ensure that each department delivers what matters. With the Notifications addition, Scott County could happily report their PMC increased from 40% to 87% overall for all county vehicles.

To learn more about the fleet management software mentioned in this case study, visit assetworks.com/fleet.