

Rugged mobile power

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The Rugged Mobile Power Unit (RMP) builds on the latest technology in field generators Advanced Medium Mobile Power Sources (AMMPS). The RMP has significant operational benefits for all military services including reduced logistics footprint, improved mobility and transportability in addition to significant operations and maintenance cost savings. The RMP has a full line of generator sets ranging from 5 kW to 60 kW.

For utility leaders in 2024, the energy transition is top of mind. Experts predict that to reach 100% carbon-free electricity in the U.S. by 2035, annual installation rates of renewable infrastructure in the coming years need to nearly double compared to 2023. That means the already limited utility workforce is not only taxed with maintaining current infrastructure but also rapidly preparing us for the renewable energy of the future.

What makes this even more challenging is that today's power grid and utility infrastructure are aging, and unpredictable weather patterns are increasing. Older equipment can't always withstand a harsh snowstorm or multiple days of 100-plus-degree weather. To keep these grids up and running, utility workers are in a constant loop of maintaining, repairing, and replacing equipment while also modernizing and expanding the grid to create a more sustainable ecosystem.

These are four ways rugged mobile technology like laptops and tablets will help the industry balance both current and future demands of transitioning to renewable energy with a limited workforce.

Rugged mobile technology can work just as hard as a utility technician -- they are both meant for the harsh conditions of utility fieldwork. Rugged devices also help digitize and automate manual tasks, like reporting. Traditionally, reporting involved carrying around paper forms, manually entering the necessary information, physically taking the form back to the central office, getting supervisor approval, and filing it in the right place or sending it to the appropriate customer or regulatory agency.

Renewable energy initiatives often take technicians to remote locations -- including some hours away from the reliable connectivity found in populated areas. That can present a challenge when the job depends on easy access to digital plans, CAD drawings, and GIS.

Rugged mobile devices are built for these conditions and offer multiple connectivity options to remote workers so they can communicate critical information in real-time, even when they"re in a remote solar field. For example, when in range, a device could use a traditional 4G network but then transition to Wi-Fi 6 or private LTE when in more remote areas or in need of faster connection speeds.

These devices also come standard with FirstNet(TM), CBRS Private Network, and dual SIM for maximum flexibility and reliability, especially during severe weather and outages when standard connectivity may be



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limited.

Modernizing the grid includes enhancing security and sustainability, especially as it becomes more connected and cyberattacks and malware become an increasing threat. Just as workers wear gloves, boots, and goggles to stay safe in cold weather, they need mobile technology with safety features like fingerprint readers and multi-factor authentication to minimize risk.

Accessing secure information is especially important for utilities, as data is collected and referred to in real time to inform in-the-moment decisions. For example, secure information about which areas of a grid may be failing helps utility companies know where to deploy technicians, who also need to be able to access that information securely on their mobile devices to quickly address the issues and prevent or reduce the severity of outages.

While we need technicians out in the field servicing our essential power infrastructure and modernizing grids, none of it would be possible without IT teams working behind the scenes. Utility IT teams wear many hats. They seek out the latest hardware and software solutions, like rugged mobile devices, so technicians have the best technology to support their essential jobs. Then they must prepare devices for the technicians, distribute them, and maintain them throughout their lifecycle. This takes a lot of time and resources.

However, with IT labor shortages expected to continue, IT teams may find themselves with more work to do than they have the hands for. To combat this, utility companies should seek out a technology partner that offers value-added services to streamline the deployment of rugged mobile devices and extend the device lifecycle. Panasonic Connect does this in three ways:

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