

## Checking in with North Myrtle Beach

Nearly two years ago, we reported that we helped our 33 year veteran customer in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, solve a long-time communications problem. We converted their system from three decade old 450 MHz radios, to new VHF radios in the 200 MHz range. We discovered a powerful voice transmitter had been causing severe interference and was hobbling their system. It was similar to many UHF systems that performed smoothly for years, but had seriously deteriorated.

We performed a study and found a new, robust VHF frequency in North Myrtle Beach. We then rehabbed 71 sites with upgraded hardware, software and new radios. The difference was like night and day. But we wanted to check back and see if those initial benefits had persisted over the months. Happily, North Myrtle Beach Utilities Superintendent, Ralph Norris, had just the response we hoped for.

“It’s been great! It took all our radio problems away,” Norris said of the upgrade. Before the change, he described so many off-line alarms that his personnel couldn’t react.

“We had to ignore some alarms because we had the same issues at certain locations over and over and over. We just couldn’t always respond.”

## DFS Technical Certification Program

*How well does your SCADA system work for your utility? Do you and your coworkers have the training needed to get the most out of it?*

Recently, Data Flow Systems’ Training Department passed a milestone when it accredited the 100<sup>th</sup> Certified DFS Technician. There are now 104. The goal of any technical training program is to provide capability through education and credentials. A graduate certificate is a one-time recognition that is earned through course attendance and testing. A certification is a continuous recognition that is earned through training and accumulated experience. A certified technician must recertify periodically to maintain their technical status.

In the past nine years, 12 individuals have achieved the highest tier of certification: DFS Master Technician. The first to reach this level was Mark Nosek of St. Mary’s County Metropolitan Commission, Maryland. The most recent certified Master Technician is Ross Keith of Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District. Master Technicians are certified by completing all DFS training requirements and certifications, a process that may take four years or more to complete. A Master Technician is requalified free of charge for as long as certification requirements are met. These individuals also receive free training in all DFS equipment groups including new products.

There are five different levels of certifications for those seeking expertise in DFS SCADA technology: DFS Maintenance Technician, centered on preventative maintenance; RTU Technician, aimed at the RTU equipment group and RF troubleshooting; TCU Technician, concentrating on the TCU and RF troubleshooting; HSS Technician, focused on HSS equipment and screen building and; DFS Master Technician, covering all equipment groups, PLCs, ladder logic, etc.

A SCADA system cannot deliver its peak performance unless the operator is knowledgeable enough to coax the most advantageous features from the system.

To see a complete description of courses and certifications, or to arrange training for you or your personnel, call or email our Training Technician, Bill Johnston ([training@dataflowsys.com](mailto:training@dataflowsys.com)) or visit the training section of our web site by clicking [training](#).

There aren't many DFS users who have seniority over the city of North Myrtle Beach. We first worked together 33 years ago in 1987 and they have been steady, faithful customers ever since. Serving and working with Ralph Norris has always been our honor and pleasure.

At DFS, it's our Systems Engineering group that tackles the custom, one-of-a-kind projects that so many utility customers require. Water and wastewater plant operations, master pump stations and high-service pumps are a few of the unique challenges they meet.

Travis Wrzesniewski, a PLC programmer in our SE department, recently created a time-lapse video of the creation, installation and testing of one of seven control panels that, along with RTUs installed in the field, are part of a water plant project that is currently in progress.

You can view Travis' video [here](#).



Customer Service is our way of marketing.