



Iowa HVAC Company **Boosts Productivity and Savings With Fleet Management**

Brothers Scot and Todd Geisler are fifth generation family owners of Geisler Brothers Company. Now in their 127th year, the brothers recently purchased Universal Climate Control (UCC) to add to their growing field service enterprise. Geisler Brothers handles residential and commercial HVAC with locations in Dubuque and Coralville, Iowa. Since day one, this future-focused company has always made mobile workforce communication a top priority.

Since the days when walkie-talkies first came on the scene, the Geislers have been evolving their communication processes as technology evolves. This vision has led to the growth of their combined companies to over 120 staff and field service personnel, and an expanded list of offerings that now includes roofing, custom sheet metal, fabrication and duct work.

The Geislers' employees start their day early, heading in to pick up their assigned fleet vehicle at 6:30 a.m. and arriving at the job site by 7 a.m. Throughout the day, there may be multiple stops at the shop and the parts store, as well as checking on site crews and making deliveries. It's a process with many moving parts and a lot of driving around, often in rural parts of Iowa. With 30+ trucks making multiple stops at locations across the state, the Geislers were beginning to feel overwhelmed. They needed a way to manage the process as efficiently as possible, and to make sure their drivers had efficient driving habits.

Customer Profile

Company Owners:

- Scot Geisler
- Todd Geisler

Affiliated Companies:

- Geisler Brothers Company
- Universal Climate Control

Locations:

- Dubuque, Iowa
- Coralville, Iowa

Solutions:

- Fleet management
- Mobile timekeeping

Favorite Features:

- Route optimization
- Vehicle tracking
- Idle time reports

That's when they approached their local U.S. Cellular® rep about a fleet management solution. It was a natural place to start, since the Geislers already had a long-standing relationship with U.S. Cellular for business phone service and gave it high marks for reliable network coverage. "Some of my friends have other services," explains Scot Geisler, "and they drop calls more frequently and don't get the reception I do in certain places." Backed by their confidence in the network, they were open to hearing how they might benefit from technology for their fleet.

Initially, the Geislers considered fleet management because they were concerned about how drivers were navigating their busy routes and scheduled tasks. They soon discovered fleet management could do much more than improve driver productivity.

Fleet management passes the test

The Geislers started their evaluation with a demo of the fleet management software, provided by U.S. Cellular's solution partner, GPS Trackit. Then, the brothers put it to the test in the field. They installed tracking hardware on a few of their vehicles in the field and made sure they were capturing the data they were hoping for on software that allowed them to see real-time data in the office and on their mobile devices.

Pleased with the results and the cost of the system, the owners elected to update the bulk of their fleet. Each of their

vehicles is slightly different in make or model, which made the connections slightly different, so some initial guidance was provided by GPS Trackit on the first couple of vehicles until the fleet was up and running. Final implementation was easy, and all the tracking units were installed in about a week.

Results quickly exceed expectations

Once the fleet management system was fully operational, the Geislers immediately started seeing real data points that helped them accurately identify fleet and driver inefficiencies. But they soon noticed that what began as a way to track some of the basics, like when field service employees arrived or left a job site, was doing much more than that. It grew into a tool the business partners relied on for more complex tasks like identifying maintenance trends, performing predictive maintenance and optimizing driver routes.

For example, the system provides notifications when an oil change or other vehicle maintenance is due, as well as a notification when an engine warning light comes on, so they can take immediate action as necessary. UCC also uses fleet management reporting to make its payroll more accurate by logging the time employees spend at each job site.



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— Scot Geisler
President, Universal Climate Control

A positive score for drivers

UCC has noticed a positive impact on driving habits and communication with their field service crew since implementing fleet management. Field service technicians tend to be on time for arrival and departure at the job site. They pay closer attention to organizing their routes so that drivers closest to the next destination make the trip and drive fewer miles. Most often, they make improvements on their own. "We just tell them, 'Hey, we're monitoring this,' and that's generally all we need to do to get the guys to pay attention to it," says Scot.

Another hidden expense shared by many fleet operators is idle time, when field service employees sit for long periods of time with the truck engine still running. The Geislers discovered this habit in their fleet as well, and they were able to use the data delivered by fleet management to reduce idle time. Making simple adjustments in this driver habit can result in big savings. For example, reducing idle time alone has been shown to save up to 600 gallons of fuel in one year for a fleet of 25 vehicles.¹



Driver Scorecard

The Driver Scorecard is a handy feature that lets field service employees see how they're doing from day one, and then work toward steadily improving their driving habits independently, without involving management.

The Geisler Brothers Put Popular Field Service Management Features to Use



Vehicle Tracking

Monitor fleet activity, speeds, alerts and location with GPS-powered tracking.

Result: Improved driver communication



Vehicle Maintenance Logs

Set preventative maintenance schedules, with alerts when service is due or a warning light is triggered.

Result: Increased ability to track trends that predict vehicle replacement needs



Route Optimization

See where all your vehicles are and what they're doing; dispatch and route more efficiently.

Result: Better customer service



Driver Education Tools

Empower drivers with reporting that allows for self-correction and rewards for efficient driving.

Result: Less need for management oversight



Mobile Timekeeping

Eliminate the need for manual recording by tracking up to three drivers' time on the same vehicle tracking unit.

Result: More accurate time cards and payroll



Idle Time Reports

Get automatic reports on how much time each vehicle spends parked with the engine on.

Result: Decreased spending on fuel

“ This solution gives us the ability to track our vehicles. But more than that, it helps us communicate with our drivers. Knowing where they are allows us to plan their day in a way that’s better for them and us. ”

– Scot Geisler
President, Universal Climate Control



Embracing the future

When you’ve been in business as long as the Geisler family, you develop great perspective. Scot Geisler fondly remembers the early days of the company, and its first step forward into the world of two-way communication via walkie-talkie. Since then, walkie-talkies have been exchanged for cell phones. Rolls of paper blueprints have been replaced by newly deployed Tablets for field service personnel, who use them to access large blueprint files on-site.

Fleet management is the next step forward for UCC. And they indicated they wouldn’t feel comfortable moving forward with anyone but U.S. Cellular. “We looked at other carriers – did some cost analysis and comparisons. U.S. Cellular came out on top,” says Scot. Their new fleet technology will help the Geislars continue to thrive and stay competitive through proactive vehicle maintenance, fuel savings and improved driver productivity – keeping their customers happy in the process.

**To see how U.S. Cellular® can help, call 1-866-616-5587
or visit uscellular.com/business/fleetmanagement**

We offer fleet management solutions for businesses of any size, backed by the U.S. Cellular network – purposely built where you do business, in both urban and rural areas.

References

1. NexTraq. “Five Ways to Reduce Fuel Consumption Using GPS Tracking.” <http://vertassets.blob.core.windows.net/download/dee5ef8d/dee5ef8d-fc21-4448-9b7c-dab58114a711/>