

J.O. Combs Unified School District Saves Millions Through Operational Modernization

Located just southeast of Phoenix, Arizona, the J.O. Combs Unified School District is perhaps one of the most innovative and progressive districts in the country.

First and foremost, J.O. Combs is committed to providing safe, comfortable, and productive learning environments for its students. But they have embraced the opportunity to modernize their district operations by pursuing green, sustainable, and energy-efficient initiatives that have led to significant energy savings and improved productivity across the district.

Here's how it happened.

Key Challenges

"In a region where daily temperatures can exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit, buildings must be kept cool and comfortable for occupants," notes Karla Slovitsky, Director of Business Services at J.O. Combs. "We looked carefully at our district's needs and utility costs, and a bigger picture formed - that we needed a more comprehensive approach to addressing these needs today and into the future," Slovitsky continued.

J.O. Combs brought in MidState Energy, an energy services company that creates pathways to eco-friendly building and system optimizations through performance contracting and guaranteed energy savings. "We knew we wanted to consider energy cost savings through our principle provider, Salt River Project, but also understand the cost savings opportunities that could result from water, solar, lighting, and other initiatives," Slovitsky explained.

Solution

MidState Energy, part of Veregy, offers an integrated building software platform that empowers organizations to anticipate, communicate, and operate as a harmonious smart building. A key component of Orchestra is FMXfacilitymanager, a facility and maintenance management solution that is purpose-built for K-12 organizations like J.O. Combs.

Combs

J.O. Combs Unified School District

Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

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– Richard Dobson, Director of Support Services



Achieving success.

The district's energy savings and sustainability projects kicked off and began delivering results after just a few months. Having taken on modern, progressive approaches to saving energy costs and becoming a more sustainable organization, leadership turned their attention to modernizing operations. It became clear that a new approach to facilities and maintenance management was needed to replace the district's previous system. Ensuring that all of the initiatives taken on were delivering on their goals was the starting point, but leaders wondered what operational improvements were possible.

"Since 2008, we have used a competing solution to the capabilities offered by FMX. But in short order, it quickly became apparent that the FMXfacilitymanager product was much easier to use and was more comprehensive to address all of our needs," explained Richard Dobson, Director of Support Services at J.O. Combs. "Furthermore," Dobson continues, "the transition from our other system to FMXfacilitymanager could not have been smoother and easier. The team at FMX are experts in the needs of school districts like ours."

"Since implementing FMXfacilitymanager, we find it encompasses everything we do—from facilities management to equipment maintenance to event scheduling, and more—all in the same system that is easy for everyone across the district to use," Slovitsky noted. "If we have an evening of events, FMXfacilitymanager can help us coordinate with an event rental company, turn on the air conditioning ahead of the event, and turn it off afterward. It helps us track resources used, inventory consumed, and communicate with everyone involved, both internal and external to the district. It's been a game-changer, and we're just getting started," Dobson adds.



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Results

Due to the success J.O. Combs has achieved since implementing Veregy and FMX, the district anticipates \$700K annual savings in energy cost and improved operational efficiencies. They're also experiencing a 50% reduction in work order processing time with efficient approval, dispatch, and resource tracking support in FMX.

The team has also been able to consolidate event scheduling and facility rental management, which has allowed the district to capture revenue while providing community services to the region. Users have seen an increase in productivity across the district due to greater communication and collaboration.

