

# Solutions at Work: Reliant Energy Wholesale Group



**Products:** ToolHound Online

**Client:** Reliant Energy Wholesale Group, a division of Reliant Energy, is a leading provider of electricity, natural gas and energy services in the U.S.A. With a portfolio of electric power and co-generation plants in the Northeast, Midwest, Southeast, Texas and the West, Reliant has 20,000 megawatt of power generation capacity in operation, under construction or under contract.

**Challenge:** Like any power generating facility, plants in the Reliant system experience routine outages for scheduled maintenance and forced outages due to mechanical failure that require immediate response. A single Reliant maintenance shop in Brookville, PA issues all the tools required for maintenance and repairs for some 25 plants from New York to Oregon and south to Florida. Some tools are drawn from satellite tool cribs that are moved where and when needed.

Mobile teams set up offices at each site during an outage. While one single power plant can have as many as eight tool rooms, many plants lack the required tools. The Brookville shop sends tools to other power plants for outage work and then they are returned to the issue location, so tools can be anywhere at anytime.

The Reliant Wholesale Group originally tracked tool movements on paper, but with an inventory of more than 5,000 tools, that "became too big of a task," according to tooling coordinator Jim Reynolds. The maintenance shop then used a software program supported by the Reliant main company for tool tracking. But the volume of tools, locations and tool movements required by the power plant division alone resulted in the Wholesale Group being directed to find another program to track its tools separately.

**Solution:** Reynolds, now also co-administrator of Reliant's ToolHound system, searched the market with his co-administrator for a new tool tracking product. "At the time we needed to change over our tool tracking, ToolHound was the best product we could find on the market to fit our needs," says Reynolds. He and his co-administrator transferred the data from the company's Excel based program to ToolHound and co-manage the system together. When the Company was reducing staff, the administrators decided to switch to ToolHound Online because it required less support.

"Both ToolHound and ToolHound Online have benefits," says Reynolds. "But we like the Internet based program because of the growing number of sites that we support. Others have been trained to use the program on-site to establish which tools have been sent. They can now track and ship the tools from location to location. With so many locations we are constantly moving tooling to meet everyone's needs."

Reliant's Wholesale Group currently has more than 5,000 tools, vehicles and computers tagged and tracked on ToolHound and continues to add new tooling daily.

**Results:** "When the program is used properly, the cost saving is immeasurable when you need to find a tool for a job," says Reynolds. "We also use it to track all of our vehicles and the maintenance on them. This was always difficult to do before ToolHound because they are traveling to so many different locations. We also feel using the program has improved the safety of our tools and trucks because the maintenance is being done on a regular basis.

"I would recommend ToolHound to others, it has been a great help to us. And if you are tracking tools at remote locations, I think ToolHound Online is perfect. We can access the program from any site that has the Internet, and have even been able to answer questions from home when people call looking for a specific item."



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