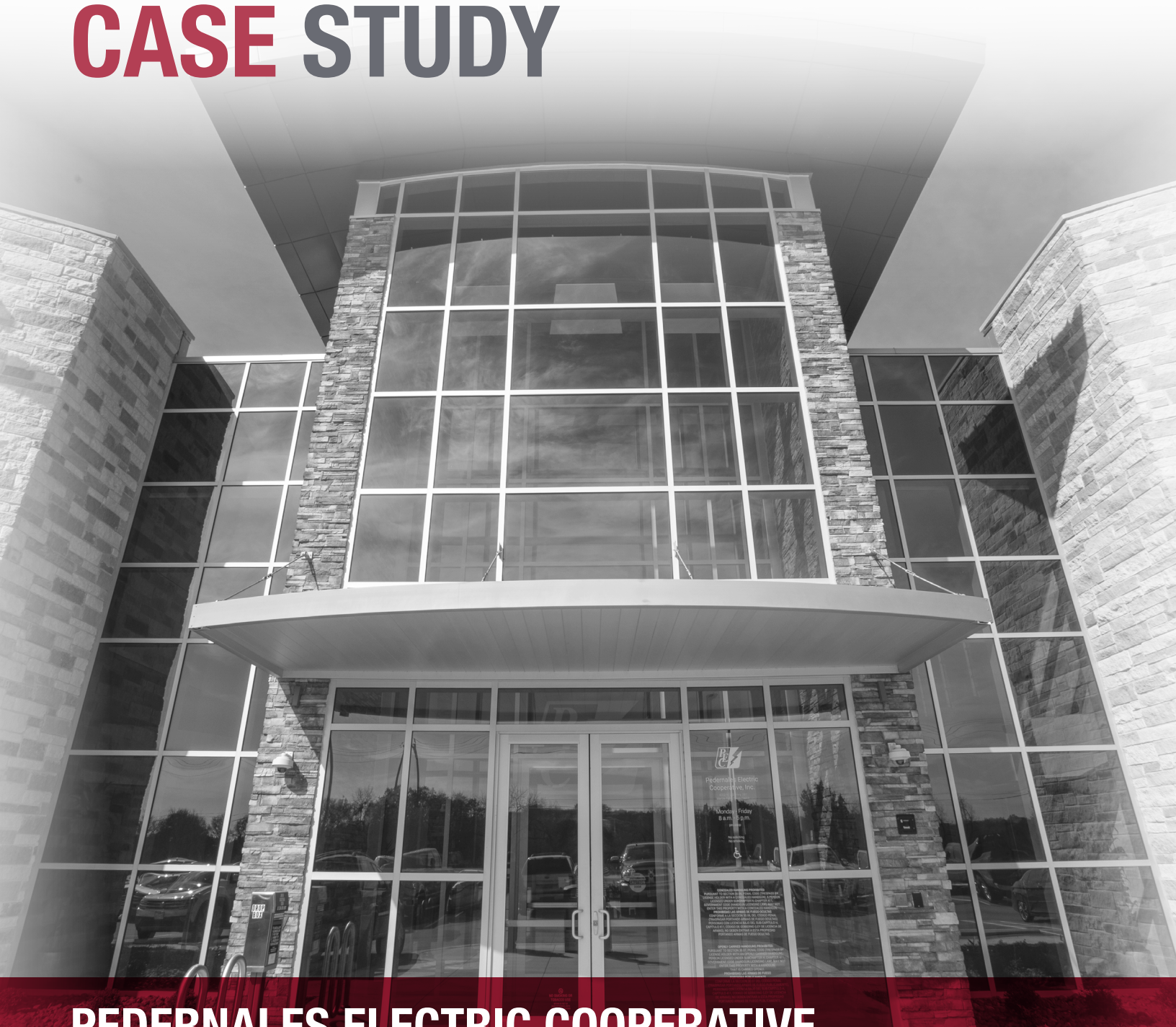# NISC™
CASE STUDY

PEDERNALES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

SUMMARY:

Pedernales Electric Cooperative, the largest electric distribution cooperative in the United States, has experienced annual cost savings of more than $2 million and decreased call volume resulting in improved quality of member interactions following implementation of NISC's iVUE® enterprise software in 2014. It was NISC's largest iVUE deployment to-date.

Kendra Smith, Pedernales Electric Cooperative

From the smallest of Members to the largest, NISC products and solutions have a proven track record of meeting our Members' needs while providing an outstanding return on investment.

> " **The relationship is a big part of why we went with NISC and why we see a bright future with NISC.**
>
> Lawanda Parnell,
> PEC chief information officer

The very largest of those Members is experiencing the benefits after more than three years of utilizing NISC's iVUE® enterprise system. Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC), headquartered in Johnson City, Texas, employs about 800 people and serves about 264,000 members across 8,100 square miles. It's the largest electric distribution cooperative in the United States.

PEC has experienced significant cost savings and operational gains utilizing NISC's enterprise software since its implementation in 2014. The project stands as NISC's biggest deployment of its iVUE software to-date.

PEC'S CHALLENGES

PEC serves a large and diverse service area within a region called Texas Hill Country, which fans westward from Austin, Texas. PEC's membership is growing rapidly: From 2017–2018 alone, the co-op grew by nearly 15,000 members.

On top of navigating rapid growth, PEC has historically faced exorbitant consultant and paper costs and underwent frequent integrations and testing of several third-party applications.

"We needed something that was easy to use, especially for the employees who have direct contact with members. We wanted an easy mobile bill payment solution for our members, and we wanted something that would drive our contractor costs down and our total cost of operation down. The good news is, we got all of those things when we got iVUE," said Lawanda Parnell, PEC chief information officer.

"We are very happy overall with the iVUE system," said DeLisa Evers, PEC director of support services for member relations. "I have heard members and agents say they wouldn't go back for anything.

THE NISC DIFFERENCE

NISC's iVUE enterprise software provided the scalability, integration and self-service options that are benefiting both PEC and its membership.

► **Cost savings**

- Elimination of consultants/ contractors surrounding previous enterprise software = savings of about $1.5 million per year

- Paperless service orders and more electronic bill opt-ins = savings of about $50,000 per month/$600,000 per year

► **PEC–member interactions**

- Better navigation and information access = 5–6 minutes per call, down from 15–17 minutes per call

- Reduced member call volume: 25,000-30,000 calls per month with use of CallCapture IVR and SmartHub, down from 65,000-70,000 using live agents

Lawanda Parnell, Pedernales Electric Cooperative

They feel it's the best solution we could have to meet our needs, so they're very happy with it."

To further demonstrate NISC's commitment to the new partnership, the cooperative asked NISC account manager Linda LaTourelle to relocate from Minnesota to Austin, Texas, to serve as onsite project liaison for one year during the conversion.

"It was very nice having Linda onsite," Evers said. "Her making that personal commitment to be away from her family for that long to come in here, learn our processes and culture, and then translate that to NISC to help make this implementation successful—I don't know that we could ever repay that."

MORE THAN $2 MILLION IN ANNUAL SAVINGS

PROJECT TAKEAWAYS

From each conversion and implementation project, NISC seeks lessons that can be applied to future projects for the benefit of the entire NISC Membership. As part of this particular project, NISC staff was challenged by PEC's large geographic service area and eight district offices.

"When we take a Member live on a product, we want to have someone in each of their district offices to be there for assistance that week," said Doug Remboldt, NISC vice president of Member Support. "We were able to develop a process whereby we identify those resources early and make assignments to ensure we have all the right people available to be in every office. I think that greatly improved the project and it's now part of our standard practice going forward."

"PEC has some fantastic project management resources and subject matter experts within each of their areas. They really engaged with NISC and helped us refine our processes to allow us to serve Members of this size more efficiently going forward, whether that's from a software perspective, project management perspective or a technical configuration perspective," Remboldt said.

A TRUE PARTNERSHIP

NISC emphasizes relationships built on communication, cooperation and doing the right thing, always.

"We can reach out to NISC if we have the slightest hiccup on the system and they've been very timely with their response," Evers said. "And just new functionality—if there's something that we need the system to do that it doesn't, they always take it into consideration and explore the possibility of creating that functionality. So, it's definitely a partnership and joint effort to make the system as good as we need it to be."

"The relationship is a big part of why we went with NISC and why we see a bright future with NISC," Parnell said. "It's hard to describe the true worth of our partnership with NISC, because it's hugely important to us."

> "We are very happy overall with the iVUE system. I have heard members and agents say they wouldn't go back for anything.

DeLisa Evers,
PEC director of support
services for member relations

To learn more about NISC's commitment to Members, or for more information about our iVUE enterprise software products and services, please visit www.nisc.coop or email sales@nisc.coop.