

A severe thunderstorm that knocks out phone service for dozens of your customers and damages delicate electronic equipment is every interconnect company's worst nightmare. For Nashville-based STI, just such a thunderstorm was the catalyst for rethinking its approach to power and line protection.

A Wake-Up Call

Put yourself in Gene Stone's shoes. You've just been promoted to director of operations at one of the largest interconnect companies in the southeast. Your charter is to increase profitability by minimizing service contract costs.

It's your third day on your new assignment. You arrive at your office to find 48 emergency service requests from customers whose telephone systems have been knocked out by a thunderstorm. It takes your entire service team 6 days working 14 to 16 hours a day to put these customers back on line.

It's every interconnect company's worst nightmare. But for Nashville-based Southeastern Telecom, Inc. (STI), this episode was a wake-up call for telephone system power protection.

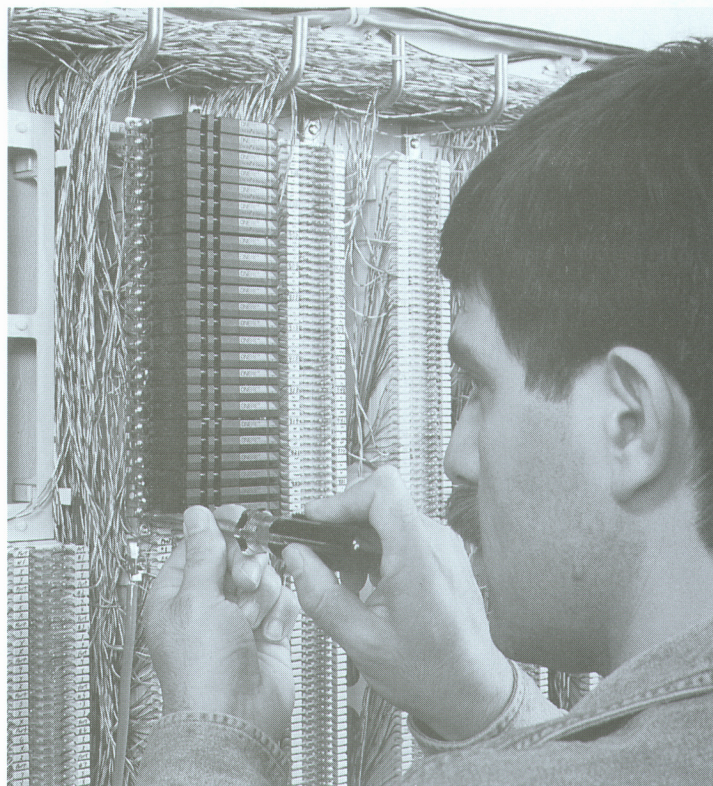
Once service had been restored for those 48 customers, Gene Stone went looking for a way to prevent

history from repeating itself. Calls to various industry contacts eventually led him to ONEAC Corporation, a leader in the development of power protection systems based in Libertyville, Ill.

"The ONEAC representative was here to help almost immediately after I contacted him," recalls Stone, now vice president of operations at STI. "After checking out the situation, he offered to install power protection systems in ten problem sites as a trial. I was especially impressed by the fact that they did this trial at their expense and that they let us choose the sites and evaluate the results."

The sites Stone selected had a history of service problems, not just weather-related problems. In just 90 days, service calls to customers participating in the trial dropped by a whopping 62%.

Stone was quickly convinced of the benefits of



power conditioning as well as uninterruptible power supplies (UPS). "We started out with a concern about lightning damage. At first we didn't understand the problem with transients — how they can damage telephone equipment over a period of time. We now know that all kinds of everyday things like fluorescent lights, motors in manufacturing equipment, and elevators can dramatically affect electronic equipment and cause problems with phone systems."

Based on the results of the 10-site trial, ONEAC power protection systems were automatically specified

for all new STI telephone system installations. Within one year ONEAC power conditioning was a requirement for all STI service contracts.

STI also followed up with selected accounts to educate customers on the benefits of adding power protection to their current systems. STI demonstrated its belief in the importance of power protection and its commitment to customer service by passing through the cost of these upgrades with no markup. According to Stone, there were no customer complaints about the relatively modest upgrade costs. Customers understood the benefits.

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real life

A few years later STI once again became an ONEAC test site. This time the issue was telephone line protection. Although conditioned UPSs and power conditioning systems helped solve power problems, telephone lines had problems of their own. ONEAC was in the final phase of developing its telephone line protection systems and invited STI to be a partner in field trials. Stone gladly obliged.

All it took was seeing the results from three or four test sites to convince Stone that ONEAC telephone line protection should also be a standard feature of STI systems. He explains his rationale this way: "Phone systems are always connected to both power lines and telephone lines. Phone lines can pick up just enough extra electrical interference to zap trunk cards in the phone system.



These problems are especially common during severe weather, but components are constantly bombarded with this type of interference, and they're more likely to fail as a result. The combination of power and telephone line protection can extend the life of system components almost indefinitely — assuming of course that components are undamaged to begin with."

Stone reports that including telephone line protection in STI systems increases installation costs by less than 1%.

Since that thunderstorm blew through Nashville, STI's average service response time has dropped from two days to about two hours for routine service calls and less than one hour for emergencies. The company's total customer base in the Nashville area alone has grown from 1,500 accounts in 1987 to about 4,000 today. Efficiencies produced by ONEAC power and telephone line protection systems have helped STI service more than twice as many customers in a fraction of the time with

the same number of service technicians.

"We strive for zero service calls," says Stone. Thanks in part to power and line protection, STI is getting mighty close to that goal.

Founded in 1973, Southeastern Telecom, Inc. is a full-service telecommunications provider serving 8,000 customers across the country. In addition to its corporate office in Nashville, STI also maintains offices in Memphis and Knoxville, Tennessee; Greenville and Columbia, South Carolina; and Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. STI is Tennessee's largest private telephone and communications company and the 12th largest interconnect company in the country.

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What ONEAC's Total Protection Package Can Mean To You

Combining ONEAC Power Conditioners or UPS's and OnLine tip and ring protection, the Total Protection Package virtually eliminates damage to communications systems caused by electrical transients. Your service organization will benefit from reduced hardware failures and fewer "no trouble found" calls.

Your company's investment in ONEAC's Total Protection Package will rapidly be repaid through greater customer satisfaction, fewer service calls and less downtime.

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