



IMPROVING FACILITIES MANAGEMENT—AND CUSTOMER SERVICE—AT WATAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS

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Watauga County Schools is located in Boone, North Carolina and is made up of eight K-8 elementary schools and one high school, all serving a population of 4,700 students as well as teachers and staff.

When Jeff Trexler joined Watauga County Schools as its new Director of Facilities and Maintenance, he inherited facilities management application that wasn't quite getting the job done. For example, the tool didn't offer search or filter capabilities—forcing maintenance technicians to scroll through every work order to find their own. While most technicians learned how to deal with this issue, it still contributed to wasted time and lost productivity.

Trexler also suspected that the ownership costs were too high, both in terms of licensing costs as well the inefficiencies it caused, and quickly resolved to find a better solution.

“I had just come from a position where I helped a customer find a facility management application that managed 1,700 locations and more than 37,000 pieces of equipment,” he says. “I knew that there were better solutions out there, and I was determined to find a facility management platform that would work for us.”

A commitment to service that stands apart

Trexler began a research process that evaluated many other solutions in the market, but when the dust settled, only one vendor stood out: the App-Garden.

For Trexler, there were several reasons why he picked the App-Garden and its Facility Tracker solution. “First, it's nice that they are also based in North Carolina and are only 60 miles away,” he explains. “But what stood out about the App-Garden was the team's commitment to service. It was clear that they truly valued us and our business and that if we ever needed help, we could pick up the phone and immediately talk to someone. This was an important consideration, and the App-Garden overdelivered.”

Facility Tracker

School District: Watauga County Schools

By the numbers: 8 K-8 elementary schools, one school, and more than 4,700 students

Challenge: A legacy facility management application that contributed to wasted time and effort

Solution: Facility Tracker

Benefits: The entire facility and maintenance department is now 25-30% more productive

Jeff Trexler

Director of Facilities and Maintenance

*“Our goal is to provide a **high-quality, safe, and effective** learning environment for all of our teachers and students. I can say with **complete confidence** that **Facility Tracker** helps us meet this goal.”*

It was an important connection since it showed a common set of values. “We pride ourselves on providing great service to anyone needing our help,” says Trexler. “We immediately realized the Facility Tracker solution would give us an efficient way to make sure the work gets done to provide this service—and the entire App-Garden team would support us every step of the way.”

Three weeks to adoption—and value

Once the decision was made, Trexler’s team moved quickly to implement Facility Tracker, add users, and give them the training they needed to start using the new solution. They started by following a clear, step-by-step implementation process, but after just three weekly sessions, Trexler was confident enough to jump in and finish the installation himself.

“Their service team did such a great job training us and giving us everything we needed to be successful,” he recalls. “For example, they developed customized videos to walk us through situations that were specific to our organization. I knew that they would continue to give us all the information we needed, but I quickly realized that Facility Tracker was so intuitive and user-friendly that I could do it myself.” His instincts were reinforced by early feedback from Watauga’s maintenance technicians and other employees using the system. “I was able to add 30-40 users and immediately get them up to speed,” Trexler says. “I knew we were successful when we added a plumber who’s been working at the school for more than 30 years—someone who is not necessarily a fast adopter of technology—and he started using the tool right away. It just shows you how great of an application Facility Tracker really is.”

New benefits, new results

Facility Tracker has overcome all the limitations of the previous system and has given the entire facilities and maintenance department a better way to perform important work. Trexler reports that maintenance technicians love how user-friendly the system is. “They either just accept work orders that are sent to them, or they can quickly go into the app, get all of the information they need, and quickly get to work,” he explains.

Facility Tracker also works with mobile devices, so work orders and tasks can be sent directly to employees’ phones along with clear prioritization levels and other details. Watauga County Schools is even experimenting with functionality that will allow users to take a picture of a particular issue and attach it to the work order before submitting it. This will help technicians determine how to address the issue, decide what tools to bring, save trips, and ultimately, resolve problems faster.

According to Trexler, overall speed has been one of the biggest benefits to using Facility Tracker. “We had a situation where one of our principals had a real emergency, so we were able to prioritize our work and be on site in just an hour or two,” he says. “This principal told us that she had never seen such a fast response in her 15 years in that position. We just couldn’t have done this without Facility Tracker.”

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A better future, delivered today

When asked to describe how he sees his school’s future with the App-Garden, Trexler doesn’t hesitate. “We’re there now,” he says. “Our goal is to provide a high-quality, safe, and effective learning environment for all of our teachers and students. I can say with complete confidence that Facility Tracker helps us meet this goal.”