



Multiple Utility Applications One Powerful Portal

Danville Utilities Case Study

SilverBlaze

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Danville Utilities Case Study: Multiple Utility Applications One Powerful Portal

Danville Utilities provides a variety of services including electric, natural gas, and water to over 48,000 residences and businesses in a 500-square mile service area. Its 145 employees also manage and provide broadband fiber services and waste collection for the City of Danville. Danville Utilities is committed to safety, energy conservation, and superior customer service across their service portfolio.



The Challenge:

Give Customers The Power

To Independently Manage Custom Utility Profiles

Providing a wide range of services to both commercial and residential customers presented Danville Utilities with a complex challenge: create an engaging and easy-to-use self-service dashboard that would adapt to each customer's utility profile, whether they were a business with several services or a residential customer with a single utility.

This dashboard needed to allow customers to not only view their account details but empower them to become partners in utility conservation. The ideal solution would analyze customers' usage, help them make connections between events and behaviors and their energy consumption, and give them actionable information to help reduce their usage.

There was also a need to reduce call volume to Danville's interactive voice response (IVR) system, which was often overloaded with customer calls during power outages. Before the completion of this project, Danville customers would have to call the IVR system to receive information about where the power was out and how long it would take for the power to come back on.

In addition Danville Utilities wanted to give their customers the convenience of securely paying their bills online at any time, without having to re-enter billing or account information in another application.

Danville Utilities set a lofty goal: bring six disparate applications together in one portal to give customers complete insight into and control over their utilities, and do it on an aggressive timeline with a set budget.

The Solution:

A Single, Powerful, Easy-To-Use Portal
For Multiple Utility Applications

SilverBlaze

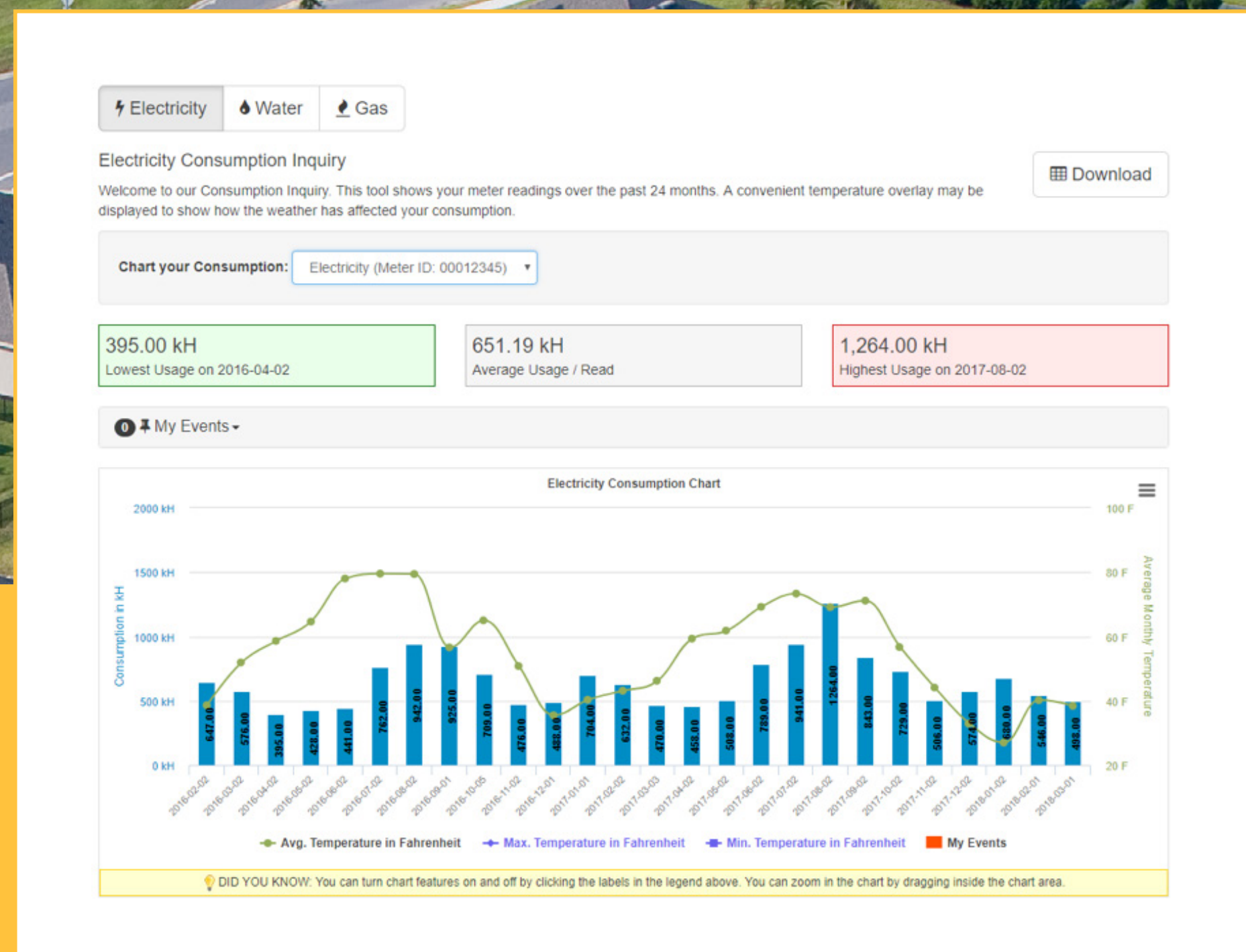
The screenshot displays a user's account page in the SilverBlaze portal. At the top, it shows account details for account number 00000012-0000012321, including the address (0 MAIN STREET, DANVILLE, VA 24540), name (DANVILLE CUSTOMER), and pay plan (Variable Pay - Auto Draft). The current balance is \$191.43. Below this is a navigation menu with icons for Dashboard, Transactions, Bills & Payment, Consumption, Compare Usage, Outages, and Profile. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'My Current Bill' showing a current balance of \$191.43 and a pre-authorized payment plan; 'My Alerts' indicating no outages; 'My Recent Usage' for Electricity, Water, and Gas, showing a decrease in electricity usage from 546.00 KH to 498.00 KH; and 'Why was your consumption less?' which attributes the decrease to a shorter billing period (28 days vs 30 days) and a lower average temperature (38.7F vs 40.2F). There is also an FAQ section and a 'View History' link.

Considering a project of this complexity—integrating multiple utility applications in a smart and functional way while achieving a number of customer satisfaction oriented goals led Danville Utilities to SilverBlaze. All of their functionality requirements could be met by the SilverBlaze Customer Portal software, a robust and engaging platform capable of integrating multiple utility applications and all associated data into a single elegant solution.

Danville had an extensive list of features to be included in the customer experience. As an electric, water and gas utility provider they required rich features that would engage customers to become partners in utility usage and champions of conservation. The portal dashboard and features needed to adapt to the customer account type. For example, a commercial water only customer would see a different dashboard and features from a residential electric, water and gas customer. The portal home page/ dashboard needed to provide an intuitive and informative snapshot of key information with actionable tasks and services.

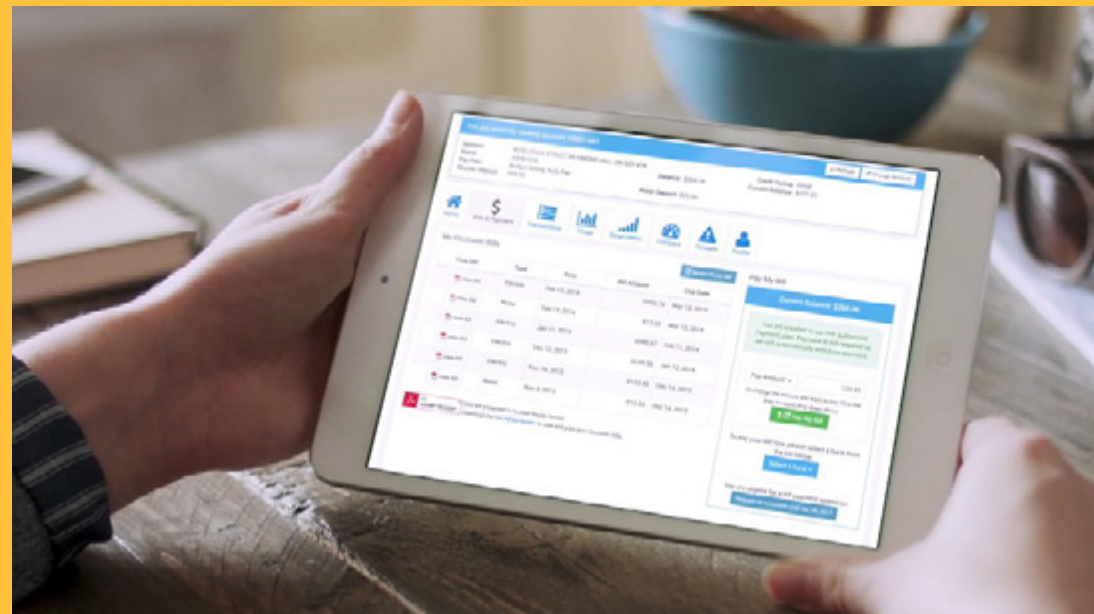
With the SilverBlaze Customer Portal, Danville Utilities was able to:

- 1 Give utility customers access to a dashboard that adapted to their account type, and showed them the information they needed to manage both their utility account(s) and their utility usage. Data is fed to the dashboard in real-time from all business applications Danville uses.
- 2 Give customers increased ability to manage their own accounts, including setting up billing and usage alerts, granting guest access to their accounts, linking multiple accounts, and reviewing billing and payment history.
- 3 Seamlessly and securely integrate self-service applications with their existing payment system, allowing customers to easily pay their bills online.
- 4 Deploy a live outage map and receive outage reports from/push outage notifications to any internet connected device.
- 5 Give customers the reporting and analytic tools needed to not just view their consumption, but truly understand how their behavior affects consumption with actionable insights. Customers can analyze, compare, and download their usage history, see how events such as installing a heat pump or low-flow shower head affect consumption, and set up usage notifications to help achieve their energy conservation goals.
- 6 Achieve higher customer satisfaction, reduce time spent receiving outage reports and administering customer accounts, and streamline internal processes






Danville's project was especially complex due to the number of applications that needed to be integrated into the final product:



- Advanced Infinity V4 Customer Information System (CIS) and Billing Solution
- ElectSolve CentraVU Smart Meter Master Data Management (MDM)
- i2SMS Mobile Messaging Platform
- MTI Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System
- Paymentus Online Payment Solution
- Advanced Control Systems (ACS) MultiSpeak - Outage Management System (OMS)

The Danville project was especially innovative with the introduction of a centralized integration middleware platform and extensions to their IVR and the introduction of SMS texting. In addition, the Outage map makes use of Google maps and real-time OMS outage notifications over a MultiSpeak interface.

Customers are now able to report outages via the IVR system which, in turn, submits the outage directly to the OMS via web services and integration points. Customers can subscribe to outage notifications where the OMS will send outage alerts to the SilverBlaze platform which, in turn, sends SMS text notifications to customers. Customers can view the outage map, generated with an overlay of real-time outage indicators showing the number of customers affected, estimated restoration times and streets affected.



All of these applications are brought together in Danville's implementation of the SilverBlaze Customer Portal, enabling real-time data retrieval and multiple channels of communication with minimal delay.

This project was delivered within seven months and entirely on budget.

Project Success Factors:

There were 3 major contributing factors to the success of the Danville project:

- 1** Project Management & Planning: The SilverBlaze and Danville teams, along with all associated vendors, devised a realistic and achievable project plan with built-in flexibility to accommodate delays in working with such a diverse group of players. Weekly status meetings and project tracking ensured work efforts were reviewed, planned and adjusted as the project rolled out.
- 2** Talented Resources: Danville, SilverBlaze and each of the vendors assigned extremely capable staff to the project. The right people were available at the right times and on the requirement meetings. This aspect of the project was a significant contributor to keeping the project moving forward and overcoming any hurdles encountered along the way.
- 3** Vendor Collaboration: Each of the vendors worked very well together and had a common goal to collaborate in a productive and professional manner in order to deliver a best-in-class solution for the Danville team. (1) continued improvements to electric outage communication, (2) increased awareness of utility consumption information to help customers reduce their utility bills, and (3) continued improvements to customer satisfaction.



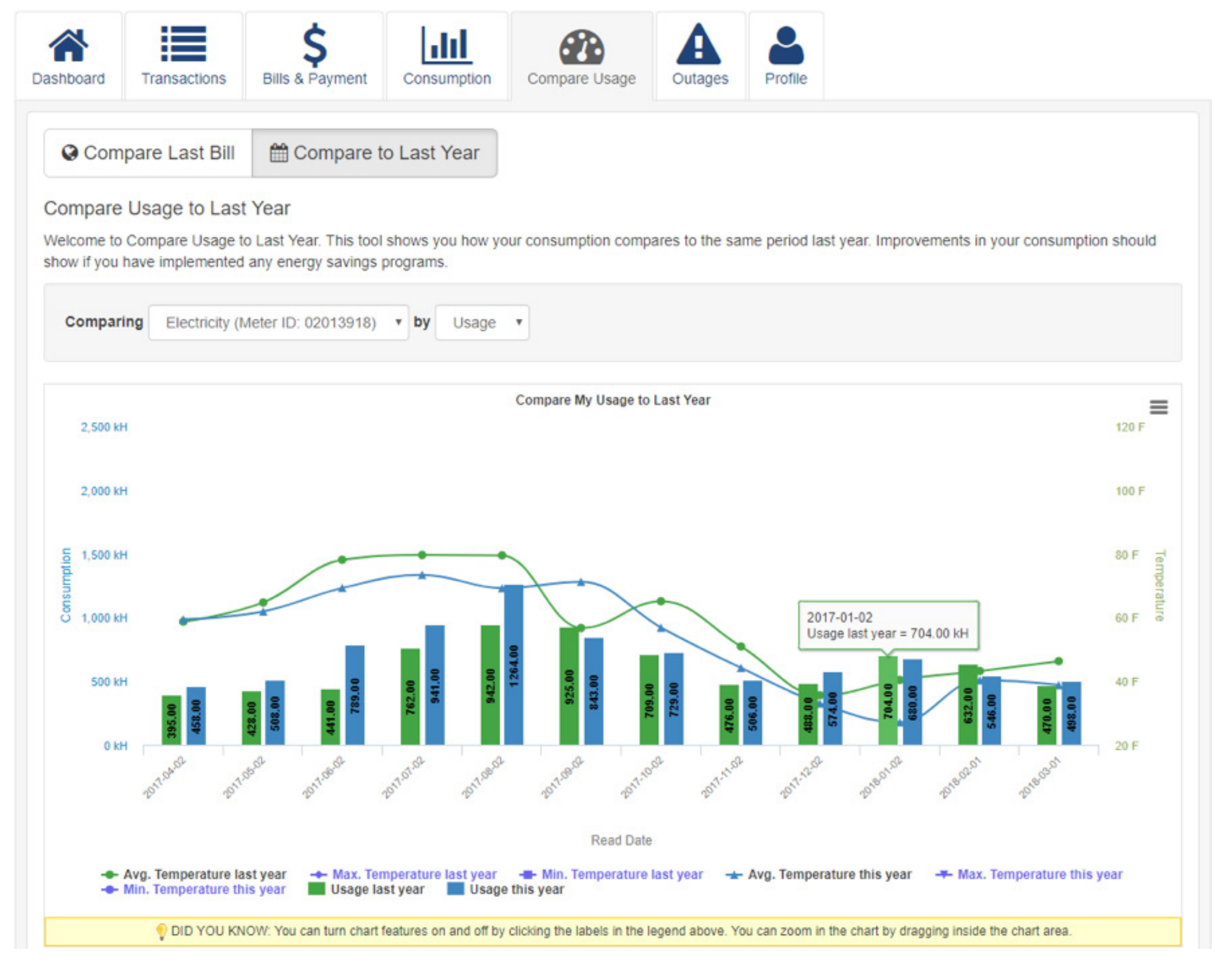
Delivered Results

The SilverBlaze Customer Portal gave Danville customers convenience and certainty with respect to their utility consumption and provided measurable benefits to Danville Utilities.

After deployment of the live outage map, calls through to the IVR reduced and customer satisfaction increased.

Improvements to the online billing system paid off in terms of both customer satisfaction and revenue. Utility customers were happier using a fully integrated billing and payment system, and the number of payments made in full and on time noticeably increased.

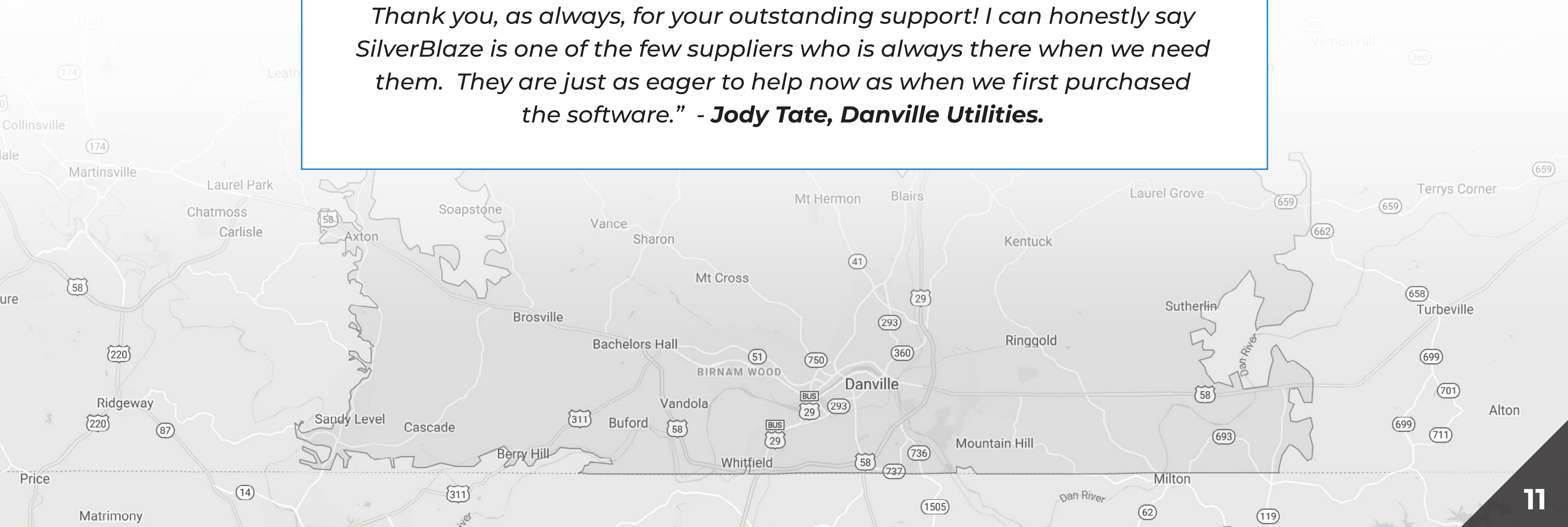
Over time, Danville Utilities aims to reduce utility costs by helping their customers educate themselves about energy consumption. The use of real-time consumption data with interactive analytic tools puts the power in the hands of the consumers, and knowing how their own behavior affects their bill creates more satisfied and empowered customers.



Testimonial

“Working with SilverBlaze has been like gaining specialized, internal resources at our municipality. They provided a highly scaled team, with the flexibility, agility and capability of creating an all-inclusive, easy-to-use web portal for our utilities customers. From Project Management, Design, Implementation, and Launch, they have always been right there to provide us with the knowledge, assistance, and recommendations that made this venture such a success.

*Thank you, as always, for your outstanding support! I can honestly say SilverBlaze is one of the few suppliers who is always there when we need them. They are just as eager to help now as when we first purchased the software.” - **Jody Tate, Danville Utilities.***



See the SilverBlaze Customer Portal in Action:



Hearing about how our platform has benefited other utility providers is helpful, but discovering for yourself how the SilverBlaze Customer Portal can help your utility succeed is something you have to see to believe! That's why we'd like to invite you to experience a live demo. When you schedule your free demo with one of our product experts, you'll learn the answers to all of your questions, including:

- How will the portal work with my utility?
- What do web self-service portals look like?
- How extensive are the available customization features?
- How will my utility benefit from the portal's features?
- Will the portal be easy for my employees to manage?
- How easily will it integrate with the systems I already have in place?
- And anything else you need to know!

Schedule Demo **1.866.305.1911**

The SilverBlaze Customer Portal solution is designed for public, private, and municipal utility providers throughout the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. Our platform offers features that are integral to successful Conservation and Demand Management Programs - delivering increased customer engagement, positive ROI and improved customer satisfaction.



Prepare for the future!

The SilverBlaze Customer Portal, designed for public, private, and municipal utility providers, improves customer satisfaction and delivers positive ROI results.

The SilverBlaze Customer Portal provides utilities with customizable, easy-to-integrate, high-value solutions that enable customers to interact with their utility providers when it's convenient for them.

SilverBlaze

**Contact us to learn more, or
to schedule a live demo of the
SilverBlaze Customer Portal.**

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