

THE

May 2025

UTILITYSOURCE

Products and Services for Today's Electric, Telecom, and CATV Utilities

**Copper Labs Unveils
New Utility Portal to
Provide Detailed
Grid-Edge Visibility—
With or Without
Smart Meters**

**Transformers
in Circular
& Linear
Economies**

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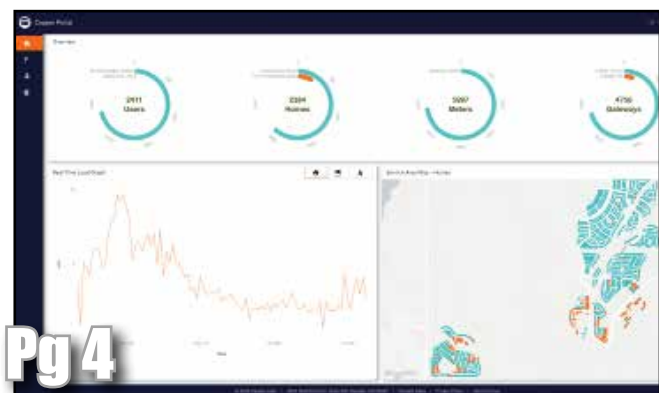
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THE UTILITYSOURCE

Products and Services for Today's Electric, Telecom, and CATV Utilities

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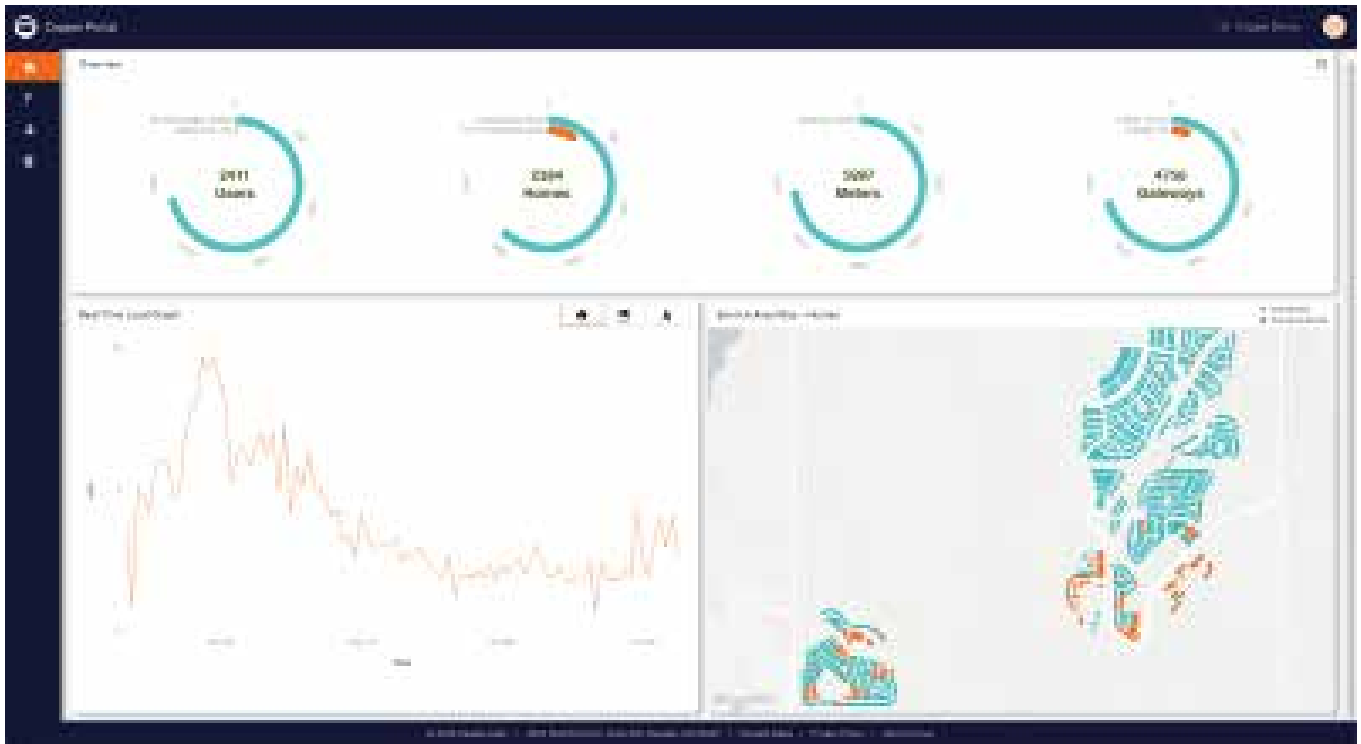


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Copper Labs Unveils New Utility Portal to Provide Detailed Grid-Edge Visibility—With or Without Smart Meters

Copper Labs, a utility hardware and software company whose patented solutions enable true interoperability for electric, gas and water meters, announced an upgraded web-based portal that provides unparalleled grid-edge visibility and deep customer engagement. This centralized and user-friendly resource lets utilities see near-real-time data from existing meters in their territory in a filterable map-based interface, allows for sophisticated and personalized customer outreach, and makes it easy to create behavioral load flexibility events in the moments that matter most.

“Virtually all other grid-edge solutions currently face significant hardware limitations, including reliance on expensive smart meters and the widespread use of proprietary communication networks,” says Dan Forman, CEO of Copper. “Utilities shouldn’t be held captive by a single meter type or vendor to get the visibility they need. Copper is the only solution that unlocks data from a wide array of meters, uses robust existing broadband networks, and facilitates a practical and cost-effective path to digital transformation for all utilities.”

Because Copper’s portal can uniquely bring together data from a mix of different meter types, vintages, and vendors, it offers unprecedented new opportunities to better understand the impacts of electrification pathways down to the customer level, support distributed energy resource (DER) adoption and management, and accelerate integrated electric and gas system planning efforts by making it easier to compare consumption data across resources. “With our powerful new portal, utilities can



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easily see trends across their territories or focus on particular areas of interest, such as neighborhoods where growing EV adoption may strain local distribution transformers,” says Forman.

When paired with its consumer-facing mobile app, Copper’s portal provides a unique channel for customer engagement. With sophisticated and customizable filtering capabilities, utilities can target priority or income-qualified customers, or use AI-driven algorithms to find customers with EV charging or large HVAC loads. They can then send personalized messages to drive program participation, provide education on new time-varying rates, or share other relevant information. The portal also makes it easy for electric, gas, or water utilities to create behavioral load flexibility events so customers can choose to help alleviate peak demand challenges. This approach can help utilities improve reliability and resiliency while enabling deeper decarbonization efforts, expanding customer choice, and empowering consumers with actionable data-driven insights.

Copper is actively working with major utilities across the country, and its solutions are challenging the business-as-usual model of expensive metering infrastructure upgrades. As Forman notes, “by collecting better data from existing meters and enabling true meter interoperability, we’re providing unprecedented grid-edge visibility, improving customer engagement, and allowing meter vendors to quickly prove out the expected benefits of new technologies through small-scale demonstration projects instead of waiting years for standard territory-wide deployments. Ultimately, Copper is putting utilities back in control with a more flexible, centralized, and lower-cost approach.”

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Transformers in Circular & Linear Economies

Nathan Stenzel & Ben Gulick



Let's look at typical examples of how these two systems play out in the transformer world.

Typical Linear Economy

It is common to remove transformers from service for reasons other than failure. In some cases, the primary voltage may change. Utilities update sections of their distribution network from time to time. In other cases, building expansions need a bigger utility service. This requires a larger transformer. In both situations, the end of the transformer's service life has nothing to do with its condition. Such units are often discarded with the majority of their lifespan intact.

Sometimes a component inside a transformer fails. Examples include bushings, tap changers, or switches. Component failures require repairs which take the unit out of service. In some cases, the entire unit is discarded or set aside. Rather than repair the faulty component, the transformer is replaced with a new unit.

A linear path discards a transformer when it no longer serves its original design. Regardless of how much life is left. For some products, this is understandable. It makes less sense for goods with a low level of obsolescence (like transformers).

Typical Circular Economy

In a circular economy, the same scenarios hold true. Utilities may make voltage changes at the grid. Larger transformers end up replacing smaller ones. Transformer components sometimes fail. The difference is how the transformer is treated after it comes out of service. Rather than going to the scrap yard, the unit gets repurposed elsewhere.

If the transformer taken out of service is of no further use to the end user, it goes to someone who can use it. Users don't want the hassle of selling or repurposing surplus units. The task of repairing, testing, and shipping adds cost and time. But companies like Maddox make this easy. Maddox buys these sur-

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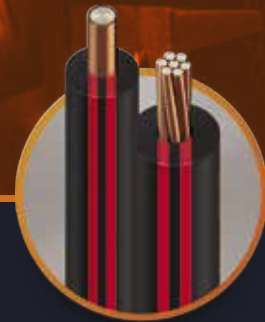
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Maddox and the Circular Economy

At Maddox, we recondition used transformers to get them back into service. A used transformer sitting in a warehouse or field is no good to anyone. Not when it could be back in service supplying power to a new project. Using existing transformers provides relief to the already-slow supply chain. It also makes efficient use of our nation's

scarce raw materials. Both support the circular economy.

Let's look at the two main ways Maddox does this.

Transformer Reconditioning

Reconditioning transformers allows Maddox to increase its stock of deployable units. This reduces pressure on new manufacturing. It also promotes the most efficient use of materials, allowing them to reach their true end of life.

Many people choose to recycle, instead of recondition, their old or unused transformers. Recycling costs time, energy, and money. Like building new transformers. Recycling increases the availability of recycled materials for new products. But, it also increases the demand for the same product just taken out of service. At Maddox, we buy units headed for recycling for 5x their scrap value. We then recondition these units and redeploy them on the grid.

Reconditioning processes are easier on the environment too. Transformer reconditioning consumes less energy and emits less greenhouse gasses than new manufacturing.

Repair and Field Service

Beyond reconditioning old units, Maddox also offers repair and field service. This means we can keep transformers out in the field serving our customers longer. Saving them money and time spent waiting for a new replacement. Supporting the idea of a circular economy.



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We also have field service teams equipped to travel to your location. They handle minor repairs and testing on site. Saving you the logistical cost of transformer removal and shipment.

Conclusion

At Maddox, we promote a circular economy. We work to ensure transformers reach their full potential out in the field. Before scrapping your old transformer, call Maddox. And if you're looking for a transformer for your next project, we've got you covered.

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Underground Safety

1. Follow excavation standards

One of the best ways to ensure utility construction safety is following excavation standards. Official standards designed by organizations like OSHA and the U.S. Department of Labor are required in the workplace for a reason — they work. You can use these standards as a roadmap to ensure minimum safety measures are in place.

For example, OSHA standard 1926.651 outlines all the requirements for the excavation process. This standard includes the basic step-by-step process for a safe excavation as well as some best practices. You can always contact OSHA for more information or guidance on a specific standard.

One helpful feature in OSHA standards is the soil classification index — an appendix of the 1926 set of standards. Soil classification is vital for understanding your job site and preparing for any geological risks that might be present. Additionally, the type of soil you're working with can impact the ground-penetrating detection techniques you need to use to locate any existing buried infrastructure accurately.

2. Always verify the estimated location

Tracking down the estimated location of under-

ground utilities can be frustrating and time consuming, but it's critical for ensuring safety. If you simply start digging with an approximate location in mind, you risk accidentally breaking a pipe or powerline, causing injury or damage.

Always complete the standard process for verifying the exact location of the underground utilities your team is excavating or working on. This usually requires contacting the original installer, identifying the estimated location and confirming it using detection equipment. Try to time location verification with clear, dry weather since soil dampness can interfere with ground-penetrating radar accuracy.

When in doubt, use the standard 811 hotline to contact Call Before You Dig services. Remember to leave plenty of time to verify the dig location since getting the right personnel and equipment on-site can take a day or two.

3. Prioritize safe trenching practices

Trenches are necessary for underground utility work, but they can be a serious hazard without the proper precautions. Observing the necessary trenching best practices is essential for ensuring underground utility construction safety.

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For example, shielding and shoring are vital to verifying trenches are stable enough for your team to work in. Shoring may still be necessary even if you have shielding equipment like trench boxes in place. Take concerns about soil stability seriously, even if you must install more supports.

Make sure your team is highly aware of their surroundings at all times, as well. Seemingly simple oversights can lead to severe accidents, such as entering a wet trench or moving a suspended load over a canal with workers inside. Remind workers to keep all their equipment at least two feet away from the edge of the trench to prevent items from accidentally falling in.

4. Ensure safety equipment is easily available

Every industry pro knows the importance of safety equipment. However, you may have team members who aren't experienced yet or cannot afford good safety gear. Likewise, an experienced employee could easily have an accident that leads to a piece of their gear breaking.

It's always a good idea to keep some safety equipment on hand in case anyone needs it in situations like this. Make sure your team knows you have safety equipment available, as well. This will reduce a worker's anxiety about asking to borrow a hard hat or gloves.

Readily available safety gear also makes it more difficult for workers to pass off PPE non-compliance. Remind your team that failing to wear all of their protective equipment can be life threatening. For example, studies show 70% of falling accidents involved a worker lacking PPE.

Encourage your team to invest in their own safety equipment. However, it's always best to have backup gear available so you can always put safety first.

5. Pay attention to weather

Weather is one of the most important factors in underground utility construction safety before and during on-site operations. Rain, snow, sleet, frost and high humidity all impact site safety and soil conditions. You need to pay close attention to weather patterns to make sure everyone can

work safely.

For example, if you conduct trench shoring while the soil is frozen, the holes may become unstable and cave in when the ground thaws. On the other hand, if you dig, shield and shave a trench while the dirt is excessively dry, you may need more moisture to maintain stability.

Sudden changes in weather pose a particular hazard. For instance, heavy rain overnight can completely flood a trench or make the soil too damp to dig safely. If wet weather transitions to freezing temperatures, you can end up with icy canals. Both scenarios are too hazardous to approve on-site operations for the day.

Delays may be frustrating, but project leaders must pay attention to weather conditions. It's not worth risking your team's safety to try working through a bit of rain.

6. Use technology to monitor safety

There's been a lot of innovation in the underground utilities and construction industry in recent years. One of the exciting developments to come out of that innovation is IoT safety monitoring equipment. IoT devices can be extremely helpful, particularly at large job sites where visual monitoring is challenging.

There are a wide variety of IoT tools available that you can use to automate safety monitoring. For example, the mining industry is using IoT air quality sensors to detect hazardous fumes and pollutants in tunnels. Similarly, you can use IoT sensors to monitor soil conditions so you can remotely check your job site before calling in workers for the day.

Ensuring underground utility construction safety
Underground utility construction safety is all about awareness, preparation and wise decision making. Implementing the safety measures outlined here can help you ensure your team is always safe on the job. Top priorities in underground utility safety include trench stability, weather, soil conditions, PPE, effective safety monitoring and accurate location estimating. •

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Sunbelt Solomon: Powering the Future with Tradition and Innovation

In the evolving world of power distribution and electrical infrastructure, Sunbelt Solomon stands out as a leader blending decades of expertise with forward-thinking innovation. Formed through the merger of two industry powerhouses — Sunbelt Transformer and Solomon Corporation — the company has positioned itself as a comprehensive provider of equipment and services that keep the world energized.

A Legacy of Excellence

Both Sunbelt and Solomon built strong reputations individually, serving utilities, industrial companies, and commercial operations across North America. Their 2020 merger combined over 90 years of experience in the sale, rental, repair, and recycling of electrical transformers and related equipment. This union allowed Sunbelt Solomon to offer one of the largest inventories of new, reconditioned, and rental transformers in the country. From distribution to power transformers, regulators, reclosers, and switchgear, they provide essential equipment that keeps industries running smoothly.

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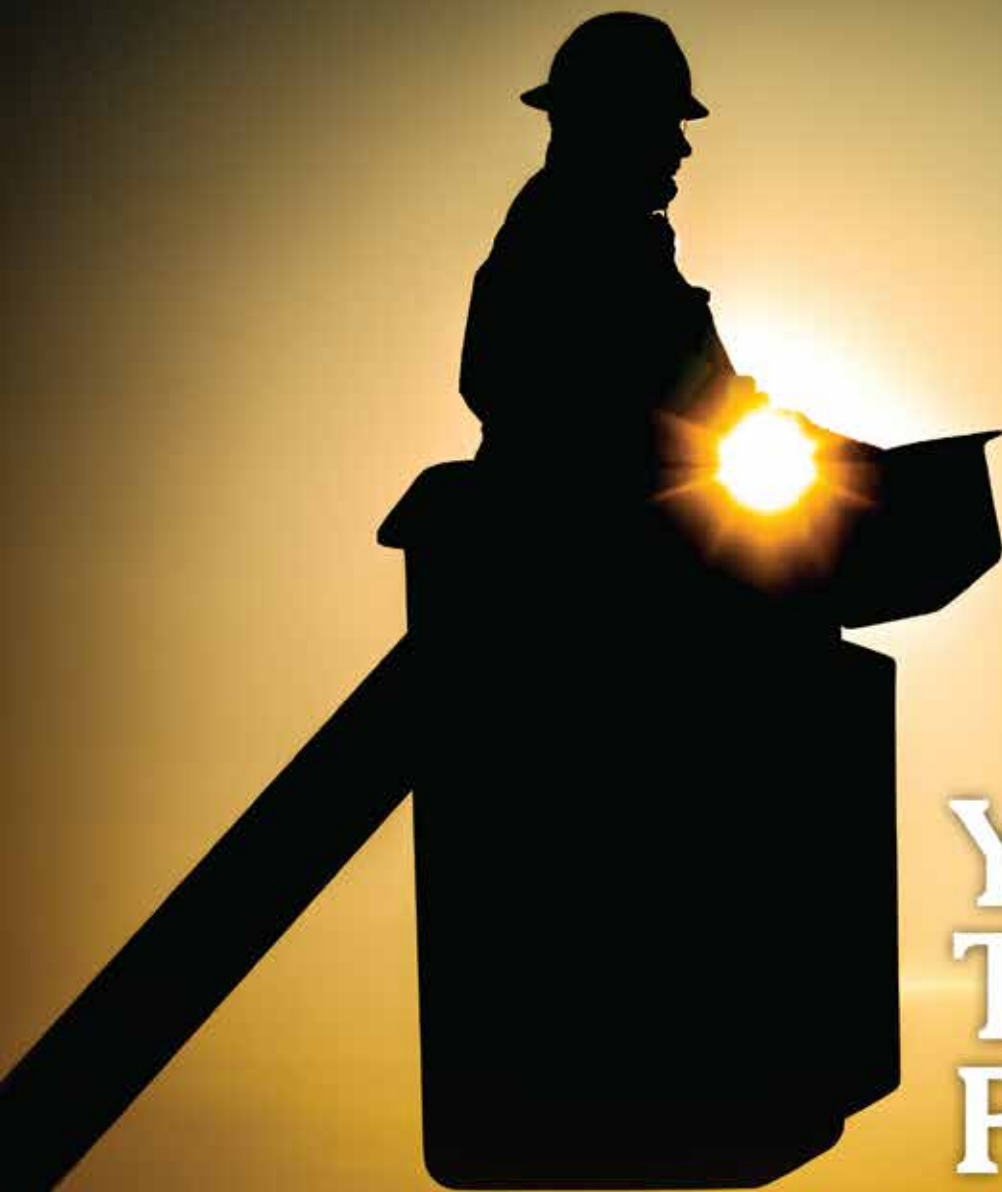
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Sunbelt Solomon is committed to sustainable business practices. Through its recycling programs and efficient repair services, the company reduces waste and promotes the reuse of valuable materials. This focus on sustainability not only benefits the environment but also helps clients meet their own ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) goals.

In addition, Sunbelt Solomon embraces technological innovation, using advanced testing equipment and predictive analytics to ensure their services are both reliable and forward-thinking.



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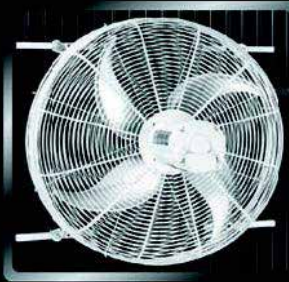
With facilities and field teams strategically located across the United States, Sunbelt Solomon delivers responsive, knowledgeable service wherever it's needed. Their coast-to-coast footprint ensures that critical electrical infrastructure is supported — from small rural co-ops to massive utility companies and Fortune 500 industrials.

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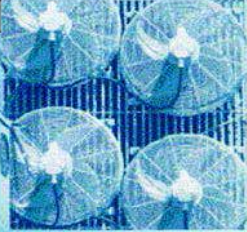
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