

Introduction

Background

This report is the third in the general series of fleet benchmarking surveys that Chatham Consulting, Inc. has conducted since 1995 of the utility industry. Their purpose has been to obtain the latest information available on and broad trends in utility fleet operations, including: management, maintenance, economics, statistics, technology, processes, strategies, best practices and other data. Besides these surveys, Chatham Consulting has conducted "Special Surveys" that focus on one or two specific fleet issues, such as the "Vehicle Specification and Application Survey" that we conducted in 1999 and the "Bottom-Line Fleet Costs Survey" that we conducted in 2000.

Confidentiality

All these surveys are built on the premise that the identity of individual company response data remains confidential. As a result, we have been able to obtain the necessary trust of the study participants so that they can provide their fleet detailed data in confidence.

Since both the study participants and Chatham Consulting have expended a great deal of work, **we request that the information contained in this report be treated as confidential and proprietary information of Chatham Consulting, Inc. Moreover, we request that this information not be re-**

leased to outside parties without the written permission of Chatham Consulting, Inc.

Cautionary Note

It should be noted that the information presented in this survey should be used as a guide and not as a substitute for good judgment in evaluating a particular utility's fleet operation. Instead, the survey results should be used in conjunction with an analysis of an individual utility's operations environment, customer requirements, cost accounting methods and other factors to assess fleet competitiveness and identify potential areas needing improvement.

Maintenance and Repair Units (MRUs)

An important part of this survey was the application of maintenance and repair unit analysis to develop the latest performance ratios on the use of fleet resources. This simple to use, but extremely powerful management tool, is a form of vehicle equivalency for comparing fleets of different size and mix regarding their organization size, facility requirements and costs. This technique is described in detail later in this report.

Median Values

Unless otherwise noted, we used medians rather than averages (or means) to summarize most responses. This avoids potential distortions caused