

Powering Forward: How a Major Retailer Keeps the Lights on in California

When there's no power coming through the electric wires, can you get it delivered on wheels? And track its whereabouts on an app? That's exactly what one major national retailer did in California.

In fact, this retailer with thousands of store locations nationwide is no novice when it comes to outage preparedness. The company decided over a decade ago that when power outages occur, the show must, and will go on. Now with an entire department dedicated to power resiliency, this retailer is always prepared. It was no exception when almost one year ago in October 2019, PG&E announced rolling blackouts in California.

This retailer's partner of choice? PowerSecure, the nation's largest microgrid developer and provider of clean back-up power. PowerSecure delivered a fleet of several dozen 1,250 kW PowerBlock Mobile units to the retailer's California locations to ensure that the power would stay on at the stores and distribution centers.

PowerBlock Mobile is a modular, movable power-generation solution that provides clean power where customers need it. As the only portable power source that exceeds all of the U.S. states' clean energy standards, it can be transported, turned on and kept on for as long as the power is needed by the customer, for up to twelve months.

In total, the mobile PowerBlocks kept the stores and distribution centers fully operational for more than 1,900 hours in October, during two waves of rolling blackouts that lasted several days to a week. Not only did the systems keep the lights on, but data on the systems' GPS location, functionality, performance, fuel use and system load were monitored in real-time by PowerSecure's centralized PowerControl room and shared with the retailer's resiliency teams, for extra peace of mind.

The retailer has also been utilizing PowerSecure's stationary systems in retail stores and distribution centers for over a decade, focused on markets where weather-related events cause above-average rate of outages. In fact, US customers on average lose power for only 214 minutes a year but driving this overall average is that some customers lose power for many days, while others never lose it.

What's next? Interest in PowerSecure's mobile and stationary units have been sky rocketing across California and other markets as large corporate customers rethink their energy strategy and the importance of energy resiliency.