

The widespread ATM network gives Alabama Credit Union a competitive advantage that draws new members.



As the Alabama economy grew in the 1990s with an influx of automobile manufacturers and suppliers, Alabama Credit Union expanded its network of off-premises ATMs to serve its growing membership base. It was one strategy the credit union implemented to focus on member convenience.

The credit union installed Triton ATMs at automobile manufacturers' and suppliers' factories through its work with Triton Systems value-added reseller Financial Equipment & Data Corp., also known as FEDCorp.

The credit union also added ATMs in nearby convenience stores and restaurants, as well as at the local university. The widespread ATM network continues to give Alabama Credit Union a competitive advantage that draws in new members, says Steve Swofford, the credit union's president and chief executive.

"We want to focus on convenience and member service," said Swofford. "We put our ATMs in places where we don't have branches convenient for our members."

Today Alabama Credit Union has about 40,000 members, and approximately 35 of its 50 ATMs are located at sites where the credit union does not have branches.

All of Alabama credit union's off-premises ATMs, and most of the in-branch machines, are Tritons, Swofford says. Triton ATMs' reliability and ease of service have made them obvious choices for the credit union, especially given the credit union's strong off-premises presence. In locations such as factories, where volume demand can be high, reliability could make or break the credit union's reputation.

Additionally, the relatively low investment Alabama Credit Union had to make in the hardware has helped the credit union quickly realize its return on investment. The low cost of the machines, coupled with the existence of several high-volume locations and surcharge income, means Alabama Credit Union's off-premise ATMs are profitable, revenue-generating lines of business.

And though some of the machines do turn a profit, because of surcharging, Swofford says he's more interested in the name recognition the credit union gets.

"The main reasons we place ATMs are for member convenience and branding," he said. All of the off-premises ATMs are branded for Alabama Credit Union, and some are available to members without surcharge fees.

FEDCorp and Alabama Credit Union carry the ATM branding even further, with a small fleet of mobile ATMs that are rolled out for special events, such as University of Alabama home football games and the National Shrimp Festival in Gulf Shores, Ala.

While the mobile ATMs don't generate huge profits, Swofford says, the mobile setup does put the credit union's brand in front of thousands of current and potential members, in addition to making cash withdrawals as easy as possible during special events.

"As a credit union trying to break into new markets and increase market presence, we really value that," Swofford said.



The RL5000^{XP}, featuring Triton's PC platform running Prism™ 912 emulation (Prism NDC coming soon), is a surprisingly affordable stand-alone ATM with a stunning 10.4" LCD display and a simple HTML interface for customized screen content.



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