

INDUSTRYINSIGHT

Compiled by WWD editorial staff



AMR Technology Advances the Industry

AMR and the newer AMI technology provide efficient solutions for reduced staffing problems

Bruce A. Bharat is product marketing manager of Advanced Meter Reading (AMR) and Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) for Elster AMCO Water, Inc. With all the recent success of AMR technology in the water and wastewater market, WWD spoke with Bharat about the technology's challenges, solutions, new products and AMR's impact on the industry.

WWD: What new products/services did Elster AMCO offer at AWWA ACE07?

Bharat: We displayed evoValve, which is a remote-valve-actuation technology, and evoTrak in-home display units, as well as advanced hybrid-register technology and solid-state, fluidic-oscillator residential meters.

WWD: What sort of impact do you feel these products will have on the industry?

Bharat: The excitement generated with our initial customer offerings has been incredible. The water industry has been longing for an AMR/AMI product that provides true migrate-ability (mobile to fixed with a single endpoint), advanced functionality beyond meter readings, remote valve actuation that they get with evoValve and the in-home display units with evoTrak.

WWD: What are some of the larger AMR-related issues affecting the industry?

Bharat: Increasing efficiency with fewer human resources, conservation, increased revenue and cash flow, proactive customer service and liability.

WWD: How can these problems be solved?

Bharat: Reading meters every day without sending personnel into the field allows utility personnel to focus on value-added services. Data logging allows the utility to track usage and enforce water restrictions in times of drought. Time-of-use billing allows a utility to reward customers who modify their usage to utilize off-peak time; evoTrak allows the end customer to easily monitor their usage according to TOU cycles; evolution saves gas and environmental pollution by reducing or eliminating the need to have utility vehicles carry out unnecessary reads or shut-offs.

With problems in proactive customer service, customer complaints can be resolved in real time, immediate reads and data logging can be done over the

phone, and data is available for end-user access via the Internet.

WWD: Do you have any advice for municipalities that have not yet invested in AMR?

Bharat: Utilities must not simply look at AMR/AMI as a way of improving reading efficiency. Today's utility must take a holistic look at its metering infrastructure. The meter has been accurately described as the "cash register" of the utility. Elster AMCO Water believes that the future of the water industry demands that utilities look at meters as the "interface node" between themselves and the end-user.

Maintaining the AMR/AMI investment is of paramount importance. Most of North America's 54,000-plus utilities are not in a position to fully implement a fixed-network AMI system. Therefore, true migration of a system from AMR to AMI is needed.

Many of the more rural utilities will have areas of their system that are not conducive to a fixed network. Therefore, the ability to have a hybrid AMR/AMI system is desirable. Utilities will benefit from AMR/AMI systems that empower them with data from the end user. The utility benefits by increased revenue, truly efficient customer service and improved conservation.

WWD: What percentage of municipalities in the U.S. have implemented water-related AMR?

Bharat: We believe that AMR has approximately 25% saturation in the market; however, that is not to say that there is only 75% of the market remaining to be upgraded to AMR/AMI. Many of the early adopters of AMR purchased systems with very short battery lives. As a result, we feel that many of these initial adopters will soon be upgrading their systems to a new AMI-enabled system. **WWD**

For more information, contact Bruce A. Bharat, product marketing manager at Elster AMCO Water, at 352/368-4669 or by e-mail at bruce.bharat@us.elster.com.

For more information, write in 1111 on this issue's Reader Service Card.

LEARN MORE

For additional articles on this topic, visit: www.WWDmag.com/lm.cfm/wd100711

USDA Grants \$8.8 Million for Illinois Water Systems



At the Farm Progress Show in Decatur, Ill., Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making available \$8.8 million for a water treatment plant to serve members of EJ Water Cooperative.

As part of the announcement, Johanns, along with Illinois USDA Rural Development Director Doug Wilson, presented an \$8.8 million ceremonial check to Chairman of the Board Delbert Mundt, Board President Diane Aherin and Chief Executive Officer Bill Teichmiller. The check represents USDA Rural Development's support this year to help EJ Water become one of the fastest growing rural water systems in Illinois. It serves a population of nearly 20,000 in seven counties, sells water to seven community water systems and interconnects with three others.

Court of Appeal Rules in Favor of Water Companies



The Court of Appeal, First District, in California determined a key legal issue addressing the circumstances under which water utilities are liable in alleged contamination cases in Groundwater Cases, 2007 Cal. App. LEXIS 1405. As the first case to directly address the issue, the court decided that exceeding the drinking water standard (known as an MCL) is not a basis for liability. Liability could apply, if at all, only if a water utility violated the drinking water statutory and regulatory framework, and refused to obey an order of the Department of Health Services to not use a particular resource (e.g., well) for supply. Even if such a showing is made, plaintiffs must still prove a causal relationship between the exposure and the alleged personal injury and property damage.

According to Thomas H. Clarke, Jr., a partner at Ropers, Majeski, Kohn & Bentley who represented the city of Pomona's water utility: "This is a landmark decision and a major win for water utilities. It is the first time the courts have examined in great detail the liability of water companies in third-party contamination cases. This opinion places the onus on where it should be—on those entities that caused the contamination."

Chicago Selects InfoWorks CS for City-Wide Sewer Model



The city of Chicago's Department of Water Management and its consultants CDM, MWH and CH2M Hill will use InfoWorks CS from Wallingford Software to create Chicago's first city-wide hydraulic and hydrology trunk sewers models.

InfoWorks CS was chosen because of its data management capabilities and its adaptability to meet particular hydraulics and hydrology modeling needs of the Chicago area.

InfoWorks will assist in developing a better understanding of the trunk sewer system's hydraulics and will play an important part in future planning of facilities and the analysis of alternative options. The Department of Water Management supplies potable water and sewer services to the city of Chicago. There are some 4,400 miles of combined sewers in Chicago's gravity-based system. This is linked to deeper large sewer systems—maintained by a treatment agency—that intercept flows and convey them to treatment works.

Esalen Institute Selects Living Machine for Wastewater Treatment



Worrell Water Technologies, LLC (WWT) announced that the Esalen Institute has selected the newest generation Living Machine wastewater treatment system for its Big Sur, Calif., facility. WWT is partnering with Integrated Water Services, Inc. (IWS) of Avon, Colo., for the onsite construction of the 7,000-gpd Living Machine.

WWT's patented Living Machines are ecological wastewater treatment systems that utilize natural processes operating in wetland environments and enhance these processes with hydraulic and computer systems. This technology is designed to treat a wide variety of wastewater for reuse, using no chemicals and only a small amount of supplemental energy, while having no odors or exposed water surfaces. The wetland vegetation promotes a complex and stable ecosystem providing nearly complete nitrogen removal and advanced BOD and TSS removal. Water treated by the Living Machine system is ideal for agricultural irrigation, landscaping or certain industrial processes.

Colleen Stiles Named Water For People CEO



The Water For People Board of Directors unanimously approved the appointment of Colleen Stiles as Water For People's chief executive officer. Stiles was selected from a field of nearly 100 candidates and brings significant nonprofit and corporate leadership experience.

"Colleen has impressive experience and an exciting energy that will serve Water For People well as we grow and continue to increase our impact in the developing world," said Fred Elwell, president of the Water For People board of directors. "I am confident that all of Water For People's supporters will be as impressed as our board is with her dynamic leadership style and commitment to our mission."

Stiles holds an M.A. in communications, magna cum laude, from Wake Forest University. She earned her B.A. in communications and sociology, cum laude, from the University of Minnesota.

City of Longmont Receives EPA Award for New Water Treatment Plant



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency presented a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) award to the city of Longmont, Colo., for construction of a new 30-mgd surface water treatment plant.

The city of Longmont was provided a \$15 million DWSRF loan at a low interest rate and \$42 million in other funds to construct the new surface water treatment plant, along with raw water and treated water transmission mains, doubling its previous capacity. In addition, the town of Lyons used a \$5 million DWSRF loan to connect to Longmont's water treatment plant, abandoning its old plant in the process.

The city of Longmont now provides drinking water services to a population of approximately 80,000. Longmont also has an extensive water conservation program, which has the goal of reducing per capita levels below historical levels. **WWD**

News compiled by Neda Simeonova

FOR DAILY NEWS UPDATES VISIT WWDmag.com