SmartSights

CASE STUDY | WATER TREATMENT

Llano's Water Treatment Gets an Upgrade

LOCATION
Llano, Texas

INDUSTRY
Water & Wastewater Treatment

WEBSITE
cityofllano.com

CHAMPION
Josh Becker

Deep in the heart of Texas lies the scenic city of Llano. Home to more than 3300 residents, Llano is notable for sourcing its clean drinking water from its very own downtown, spring-fed river.

Water, Water Everywhere

Responsibility for treating and monitoring this water as well as the city's wastewater falls on the shoulders of just a handful of city employees. With a large treatment plant, as well as miles of water distribution and wastewater pipes to monitor and maintain, a staff member must be on call day and night.

In addition to this, the old monitoring system used to provide only a few generic alarm notifications with limited location data. Each time an alarm would be triggered, a crew member would have to go into the plant to determine the nature of the alarm as well as where it was coming from before taking action.

After incorporating SmartSights WIN-911 alarm notification software, Llano staff no longer have to go into the plant to get precise information. Off-duty crews get email and text alerts immediately with all the pertinent info required, resulting in faster resolution of issues and less overtime costs for the city.

Doing More with Less

Compared to a large city, Llano's water department does a lot with less. With just six employees, it maintains 53 miles of water lines, 22 miles of wastewater pipes, 36 lift stations, a 3 million-gallon-per-day surface water treatment plant, an activated sludge plant, and 5 storage tanks at 3 separate locations.

Conditions monitored in the water network include electrical power, tank levels, flow rates, pressures, chemical feed rates and levels, and more. A change in any one of these conditions can put water quality at risk, which is why a fast response to alarm events is crucial.

Mobile Alerts Cuts Tech Response Time by More than Half

Before WIN-911, delivering on that promise was a constant challenge. One reason for that was the fact that Llano's old system had only a handful of alarm channels available and thus notifications were quite generic. For instance, when a wastewater plant alarm was triggered, a technician would have to drive out to the control room to see what kind of alarm it was and where it was coming from. In those days, a typical alarm response would take up to 40 minutes.

Visualization software shows real-time monitoring of Llano's lift stations and wastewater treatment plant.

A More Robust Response from Wonderware and WIN-911

Today, Llano's water department uses an AVEVA Wonderware InTouch SCADA platform coupled with WIN-911 software to more precisely monitor all the city's water and wastewater systems. That precision, says Utilities Director Josh Becker, is a key factor in ensuring the right people get to the right spot at the right time.

"We recently had to deal with a major lift station failure, where WIN-911 notified us of which of our 36 stations was in alarm and specified it was a power failure. This allowed our staff, while in route, to alert electric crews to also be in route to restore power. That's a situation where direct notification of the location and exact problem prevented an overflow."

With the help of SmartSights WIN-911 alarm notifications, says Becker, response times have been slashed from an average of 40 minutes to less than 10 minutes. "Being able to specify which alarms go to which crews allows the proper person to be notified, lessening the cost of overtime."

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>
> ***Josh Becker***
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> *City of Llano*

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