

# **RACO**

**REMOTE ALARMS AND CONTROLS**

RACO Manufacturing and Engineering Co., 1400 62nd St., Emeryville, CA 94608 (510) 658-6713 800-722-6999 FAX (510) 658-3153

## **CHATTERBOX® SAVES \$10,000 FOR NY STATE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT**

The Wastewater Treatment Plant at Oneida, New York, is now running at higher efficiency thanks to their CHATTERBOX® autodial alarm system.

The CHATTERBOX system is programmed to monitor power failure and high sewage wet well level at the wastewater treatment plant, which is unattended at night. During periods when the plant is not staffed, the alarm system is in place to call for help if either of the alarm conditions are met. Units are set up to call a list of phone numbers until the alarm is answered.

According to Gary Cole, Chief Operator of the treatment facilities, "The autodialer has been very cost effective. We've eliminated one shift and many hours of overtime with our CHATTERBOX." He added, "It let us save \$10,000 last year through reduction in the time that our plant is staffed."

When the facility is unattended, the CHATTERBOX is set up to call a preprogrammed list of phone numbers until one of the numbers is answered. When an alarm call is completed, the CHATTERBOX reports the station identification and alarm condition in plain English. Acknowledgement of the alarm is accomplished simply by pressing a button on the called phone.

Cole stated, "We didn't have much trouble this year, but last year we had six power outage and high flow alarms. Operating personnel were called by the CHATTERBOX units and told that emergency conditions existed. Designated staff members were able to get to the facilities in time to take remedial action."

Cole added, "The CHATTERBOX helps us get to the trouble faster. We can also call the system to get more information about the alarm condition and arrive at the scene better prepared." The CHATTERBOX systems,

which are manufactured by RACO Manufacturing and Engineering Company, of Emeryville, California, represent a higher level of technology in the autodialer field. They are completely solid state and can do much more than just dial phone numbers.

**"Instead of making a physical check of our facilities, we simply call in for a status report."**

In addition to phone calling, the new-generation autodialer has a status-checking capability. The user can call in at any time to hear a voice message giving the present status of monitored functions. Oneida's Cole says, "Status checking is an excellent feature. Instead making a physical check of our facilities, we simply call in for a status report. I can anticipate trouble by calling in for a level check when a storm suddenly comes up. This gives us extra time before an alarm condition occurs."

CHATTERBOX continues calling even if an alarm condition returns to normal-intermittent short duration alarm conditions do not go unnoticed. Once tripped, calling is continued until acknowledged. Nuisance calls are avoided by varying the alarm response times. If an alarm condition returns to normal mode before acknowledgement, the message is appended with "now normal."

Cole added, "The CHATTERBOX is a 100% improvement over our previous equipment setup. The CHATTERBOX replaced a tape dialer that could only call one number. We've also had several personnel changes. We simply reprogrammed new phone numbers into the system without having to call for factory service."

Solid-state autodialers do not require audio tape loops that can break or wear out.

All voice messages are pre-programmed by the user and stored in the system's non-volatile memory. Service personnel do not have to be called in to change phone numbers or voice messages. The CHATTERBOX unit is user-programmable at the system console or from any telephone.

Although not used by the Oneida facility at this time, a computer printer interface can be provided for the CHATTERBOX. This provides data logging with a date and time stamp of all system activity.

The CHATTERBOX has other built-in capabilities for optimum reliability and dependability. It has an autocall feature to verify operation of the alarm system and telephone links. Numbers are called at a pre-programmed interval—usually every 24 hours—to ensure that the system is functioning properly. The unit also warns if the alarm switch is off or if no phone numbers are entered for calling. A built-in microphone permits a called party to listen to local sounds as well as having a two-way conversation with personnel at the auto-dialer site.

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