

## CASE STUDY

# ORION®

## Radio Frequency System



*Badger Meter's ORION® Radio Frequency System*

## Badger Meter Helps Sandpoint, Idaho's Transition To AMR Succeed In Harsh Winter Conditions

*By: Dave Marsh*

When the Federal Government offered to help the City of Sandpoint, Idaho fund the upgrade of its water treatment plant in 1997 there was a big string attached. The city would have to convert its non-metered water system to a metered system. This would be a major change, affecting virtually all aspects of the water system's operation.

One of the primary objectives the city set for its new meter system was making the changes without adding new personnel... a tall order considering its Department of Public Works would have to begin reading meters and billing customers for the water they use. To achieve this Sandpoint turned to state-of-the-art Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) technology.

"We currently have eight people and we didn't want to have to add to the staff to read the new meters," said Kody VanDyk, Public Works Director. "We knew we wanted to go with AMR... it was merely a matter of which system. I spent quite a bit of time evaluating alternative AMR systems, and in the end we adopted Badger® meters equipped with the TRACE® system because it was the best system available at the time."

Badger Meter technology addressed VanDyk's issues, but one of his most significant challenges was solved by Badger Meter customer service. With the old non-metered system, billing customers was a relatively simple matter of dividing up the water department's costs among its users. However converting the billing to the new meter system was no small task. "When we converted to a radio read system we had to make our old billing system work with the new meters. We made it very clear during the bid process that, although this would be difficult, it had to work," said VanDyk. "It took Badger quite a bit of work to transfer the meter readings into our billing system but Badger followed through on its commitment. Customer service was very good. They were smart, responsive, and they made it work. They also came to Sandpoint to train us for a week, which was great."

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SANDPOINT CASE



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## *Case Study: Badger Meter Helps Sandpoint, Idaho's Transition To AMR Succeed In Harsh Winter Conditions*

VanDyk has been very pleased with Badger Meter, which is why Sandpoint recently decided to upgrade to Badger Meter's new ORION® AMR System to obtain additional features.

"We really like the features of the ORION system. We can read meters from the car while driving past customer locations. And the Global Positioning System (GPS) capability enables us to quickly locate meters under deep piles of snow," said VanDyk. "If we need to turn off a meter because of a

water leak we can zero right in on where it's located under the snow. The ORION system is accurate within three feet and it enables us to find the meter right away."

Sandpoint has become so efficient using the ORION system that it's now contracting with other area water districts to read their ORION Systems. "Other water Districts around here are converting to ORION so we will read their meters for them. It's great. They don't have to add any people and it helps us cover some of our costs," said VanDyk. "We have

one small community about ten miles away and we can read its ORION AMR system within an hour. We go there, drive through the subdivision, read the meters, come back, download it, and send out the results to their water department."

Back in 1997 when Sandpoint converted to a metered system it faced some complex challenges. But by teaming up with Badger Meter, the conversion has gone smoothly and Sandpoint has benefited from AMR technology. ■