

CASE STUDY

Badger[®] ORION[®]

Radio Frequency System



Training on installing the Recordall[®] Transmitter Register (RTR[®]) devices, left to right: Bryan Knight, Ruben Reyna, Albert Barcenas, Rudy Olivas, Luis Cordova

Yuma, AZ adopts Badger Meter's ORION[®] System to help manage its precious water resource

By: Dave Marsh

Throughout its history Yuma, Arizona has grown in dramatic spurts. In 1859 gold was discovered just north of Yuma and the area grew very rapidly. However, when the gold strike fizzled so did Yuma's growth. In recent years Yuma's growth is again exploding. During the past decade it has been among the five fastest-growing communities in the country. But today's growth is being driven by a different kind of gold... an endless supply of golden sunshine and the Colorado River, Yuma's source for drinking water. Many western communities value scarce ground and surface water like liquid gold.

Yuma is a desert city that has grown to over 80,000 residents. Although it has perpetual rights to Colorado River water it uses only 50% of its allocation. Nevertheless, its dramatic growth motivated city leaders to upgrade its water system with technology so it can continue to deliver a reliable supply of drinking water at the lowest rates possible. Yuma's new Badger[®] ORION system manufactured by Badger Meter features state-of-the-art automatic meter reading (AMR) water meters that enable Yuma to accommodate growth and provide even higher levels of service without adding staff.

"The City of Yuma has been growing at a tremendous pace. We had reached the point where we were having to consider hiring an additional meter reader to keep up with growth, but we realized that would be a short-term solution," said Beatrice Dorries, Customer Service Field Crew Leader. "In a few years, we'd face the same dilemma. That's why we decided that now was the time to implement an AMR system. We wanted compatibility with our current meters and current meter reading system, a system that would grow with us, and a proven product backed up by a company that would be with us for the long haul."

Badger ORION AMR technology will significantly improve the productivity of Yuma's meter readers. With its old system Yuma meter readers could read about 650 meters a day walking their routes. With AMR technology, meter readers can read from a vehicle as they drive down city streets.

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YUMA CASE



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Water system planners also were impressed with two advanced features of the Badger® ORION system... data profile and leak detection. Data profile gathers detailed information on customer water usage on an hourly basis. Other water utilities have found the data to be useful in resolving billing disputes, and for helping customers conserve water and reduce costs. But Dean Rauscher, Utility Systems Manager, recognizes data profile will serve an additional, more strategic role. "We expect these features to assist us in the future to better analyze consumption trends and further assist in projecting future growth areas."

Leak detection will flag an account if there is a 24-hour period of continuous consumption. Even if a leaky toilet is experiencing a constant cycle of filling up and shutting off it's going to show up. "This will be a big benefit to our customers who are anxious to find out early that they have a leak, and to help resolve high bill questions," said Dorries. "With new increased water rates coming soon, our customers need to have means to identify leaks and over-use. We're confident this feature will pay off for that reason."

Although 99% of Yuma's 27,500 installed meters were manufactured by Badger Meter, Yuma considered other meter manufacturers in a rigorous competitive bidding process that would ensure it obtained the best system from the most reliable

supplier. Suppliers were graded on criteria such as: Response to the Statement of Work, Cost, Timeliness, Warranty and Maintenance Agreements.

References were also carefully investigated. "We interviewed several utilities using the Badger ORION and other AMR brand products, and also conducted site visits for first-hand viewing of different AMR systems," said Dorries. "The results of these interviews were crucial and used as part of the criteria when the RFP bid responses were scored. The Badger Meter ORION Premium Mobile Reading System was offered as part of Northrop Grumman's response to the City of Yuma's RFP. The product met all of the expected criteria and offered some added features beneficial to customers. The references were all positive, with the users highly satisfied with their systems. It was the consensus of the Evaluation Committee that the proposed ORION system met all of the City of Yuma's requirements in every aspect and therefore recommended the bid be awarded to Northrop Grumman as the top ranked firm."

In the old west gold was the most valuable thing pulled from the rivers flowing out of the mountains. Today it's water. After a comprehensive analysis Yuma has adopted Badger Meter technology to manage its claim. ■



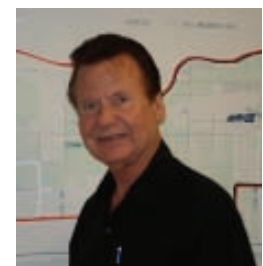
Installing the RTR®



Training on laptop reading with the Badger® ORION® system, left to right: Arturo Aguilar, James Lugo, Rudy Olivas



Beatrice Dorries, Meter Services Program Coordinator



Dean Rauscher, Utility Systems Manager