

## **Rohnert Park-A Vintage Success Story for Vintage Water Works Supply Corporation**

Vintage Water Works Supply of Healdsburg, California along with West Valley Construction of Redwood City, was the successful low bidder for the Rohnert Park Automatic Water Meter Reading System initial deployment. Vintage Water Works has been distributing water meters, pipe, valve and fittings for 24 years now and continues to bring innovative solutions to their customer base in Northern California. Rohnert Park is a community of 42,000 people nestled in the heart of Wine Country.

Rohnert Park is installing 5/8 x 3/4" residential meters along with the Itron 50W-1 ERT's for reading with the advanced Itron Mobile Collector automatic RF drive by reading system. West Valley Construction is doing the installation and has installed up to 300 new meters and ERTs/day, starting in October and completed by the end of February 2003. West Valley came to Vintage with the experience of having installed over 50,000 meters at a long list of customers.

To win this project, it was the goal of Vintage to bring meaningful solutions to each group within Rohnert Park that had a vested interest. This included meter readers, maintenance, engineering, finance, and IT departments.

The first group that needed to be won over was the meter readers. They were looking for a technology to take a city with no meters to one with best meter reading system on the market. This group quickly came to realize how easy the Itron would make their future meter reading. The Itron reading system assures the longevity of their investment while fairly allocating the assessment of usage to assure an equitable billing to their customer base. This system allows them to read up to 1000 meters/hour.

Next, Vintage needed to convince engineering that their solution was not only easy to install, but was easy to maintain and repair as needed. Here Vintage delivered a solution that included preprogrammed ERT's and meters that could be barcode scanned into a user-friendly database called MeterTrac. In addition, Vintage filed for a patent on a new Brace Bracket, which facilitates the installation of ERT's, or radio transponders, under the lids in the meter boxes while improving the RF performance by making each installation identical.

The Brace Bracket is a device that allows the mounting of the Itron 50W-1 pit ERT on the bracket, which sits on the lip of the Christy pit box. Dennis Rumble, West Valley Construction Manager, stated " *The bracket insures that each and every installation is exactly the same yet is flexible enough that the installer can set the ERT wherever it is most convenient in the box and at the same time allows for easy removal should a meter repair be needed.*" A typical AMR upgrade installation of a Badger/Itron system takes less than sixty seconds with this new bracket.

The next key element was to convince Finance and IT that Vintage's system for managing the meter serial numbers and ERT ID's was effective. To do this Vintage has taken the handling of AMR product to a new level. Vintage has developed a trademarked MeterTrac barcode software system for managing inventory, keying into a database both ERT ID and meter serial numbers and then matching them up with the customer account numbers. When the process is complete, the data is delivered to the customer's finance department for direct input in to their billing system.

The best proof though comes from the comments made by the personnel of Rohnert Park-William Stephens-Public Works Manager “I especially appreciate the great service that we have received from Jeff Cook of Vintage Water Works. From my perspective, regular and accurate communication is the foundation of a good project. This is something that we have been receiving beginning with Jeff's first day on the job!”

Walt Ryan-Water System Supervisor “The Itron equipment rated number one with every utility and organization the staff met.”



Kristina, Utility Services Specialist, and Deborah, Finance Service Manager, discuss the Itron MV-RS software implementation during training.

Dennis Rumble-Foreman for West Valley Construction-“ West Valley has installed over 50,000 AMR installations and the Rohnert Park project is going smoother than any because of the ease of installation of the ERT using the Vintage Brace Bracket. In addition, we don't have to do costly data input in the field as Vintage is helping to manage that as well.”



Dennis Rumple, Assistant District Manager for West Valley Construction, stands in front of a Vintage WWS trailer used for staging of AMR installation at Rohnert Park



Brad Rosacchi, Mike Bracewell, Dave Newsome, Kristina, Warren Naumann, and Mark Sharp of Rohnert Park are excited at having finished Itron handheld and mobile meter reading training.