



Ventura County Waterworks District 8 & the City of Simi Valley

E-CODER® and R900® RF Help Data Go Deeper in Ventura County

Home of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, the City of Simi Valley, California is nestled amid canyons in the blazing desert 37 miles northwest of Los Angeles. The majority of the City's water is provided by Ventura County Waterworks District 8, serving approximately 26,000 metered connections – 22,000 of which are now read by the Neptune® R900® System.

In the 1990s, the City added encoder technology and touchpad reading to its manual data collection to increase efficiency. When radio frequency (RF) technology was released in the latter part of that decade, it provided the opportunity to improve meter reading safety and access to hard-to-read meter applications – both of which were problems, said Deputy Director/Waterworks Services Chip Townsend, “especially in the canyon areas without sidewalks.”

During this same time, Simi Valley experienced explosive growth which continued through the early 2000s, when it was one of the fastest growing communities in the U.S. To stay ahead of this expansion, the City began a transition to Neptune RF automatic meter reading (AMR), budgeting nearly 2,000 installations per year of ProRead™ absolute encoders paired with R900® meter interface units (MIUs).

According to Water Operations Supervisor George Lawton, the City has handled installation in-house and experienced correspondingly greater AMR efficiencies as implementation has progressed. “In addition to more accurate meter reading and far fewer re-reads, we've achieved tremendous efficiencies in meter reading time, freeing up time for maintenance,” he said. “It took five meter readers 20 days in 2002 to read our entire system. Today, even though the number of services is nearly double, we only need two meter readers to read all 25,000 services in the same number of days. This has allowed us to reallocate staff into more value-added activities.”



CUSTOMER

The City of Simi Valley, California

SERVICE TERRITORY

The City serves approximately 26,000 metered connections in southern California.

SOLUTION BENEFITS

Improved system performance and cost savings through proactive leak, tamper, reverse flow detection

More accurate meter reads, fewer re-reads

Greater reading efficiency frees up personnel for other value-added tasks

Now reading twice the meters with a third of the personnel in the same time

Since 2011, Simi Valley has been converting its register population to the E-CODER® solid state absolute encoder. The E-CODER's leak, tamper, and reverse flow detection capabilities have led to improved system performance, proactive leak identification, and customer notification to reduce water loss and costs. "Gone are the days of looking for the spinning red triangle showing current flow through the meter – and still not having a good idea of what the actual problem could be," Lawton said. "With Neptune, we've gone from reactive to proactive."

System implementation is 90 percent finished, with a projected completion date of June 2016.

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