

What pump reliability really means

Having worked in the water industry for more than 30 years, Geoff Slater knows that when pumps don't work properly it costs time and money. Sometimes a lot. In his current role as Wastewater Treatment Manager with the Municipality of the County of Colchester in Nova Scotia, Canada, Slater is responsible for 34 pump stations serving 36,000 people. He now deals exclusively with Xylem for pumps, monitoring equipment and service.

"In all my years of working with Xylem and Flygt, I've found the products to be dependable and long lasting, while the service at all the branches has been both consistent and reliable," says Slater. "This is why, in my last two positions, I have sourced all my pumps and pump-related products exclusively from Xylem."

Before taking up his current role with the Municipality of the County of Colchester, Geoff Slater spent five years working as Manager for Environmental Operations in the Public Utilities Commission for the City of Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario. Prior to that, he had held various roles in Operations with water and wastewater companies across the Province of Ontario.

Over the years, Slater has come into contact with a wide range of Xylem products, from Flygt wet and dry well submersible pumps, Flygt submersible mixers, Flygt dry pit submersible pumps, Flygt jet aerators, Flygt Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) and monitoring equipment, as well as Sanitaire air diffusers.

"If you look at the pump market, Xylem really sets the standard. Every major city in Canada has a Flygt distributor who is responsible for sales and rentals and, perhaps most importantly, for service and maintenance," says Slater.

"For me, it makes a huge difference that, when a problem does arise, I deal directly with a representative of the manufacturer," he continues. "My contact from Xylem is not only based nearby, he also has a far greater stake in me and is therefore more inclined to try to solve my problem. This makes a huge difference compared with dealing with a distributor who has to take my question all the way back to the manufacturer."



Mr. Geoff Slater, Wastewater Treatment Manager,
Municipality of the County of Colchester, Nova Scotia.

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Case: Municipality of the County of Colchester

In his role as Wastewater Treatment Manager, Geoff Slater is responsible for five wastewater plants and a total of 34 pump stations, serving some 36,000 people.

In 2012, one of the pump stations was constantly clogging. Instead of having to replace the pump, Xylem Sales Representative, Jim Macdonald, suggested retrofitting the existing pumps with Xylem's "N" impeller. Since the "N" conversion kit was installed, the station has gone from requiring call-outs two to three times a week to needing service at most once a month.

While the initial deal was worth CAD 2,500 to Xylem, Slater admits that its value to the county is significantly higher.

"The cost saving has been humungous and the county now has a pump system that is more energy efficient and costs less to operate," says Slater.

"The conversion has also afforded us the time we need to plan for our future expansion needs," he adds. "The 'N' impeller is now the standard spec for all pumps purchased by the municipality and, as only Xylem offers 'N' technology, this effectively means that all future pumps will come from Xylem."

Case: Public Utilities Commission Services Inc., City of Sault Ste. Marie

As the Manager for Environmental Operations, Geoff Slater oversaw two large wastewater plants - one Conventional Activated Sludge Plant and one Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) Plant. The equipment at the plants included two Flygt recycle mixers on VFD's, 16 Flygt mixers, as well as 15 Flygt and Xylem pumps.

"This was my first direct experience of working with Xylem," says Slater. "In my previous roles, I knew we had Flygt equipment and I knew the products were reliable because Maintenance was not reporting a lot of problems, but this was the first time I'd had hands-on responsibility for the products."

Slater refers to his time at Sault Ste. Marie as "a real success story." In accordance with the PUC's service and maintenance contract, Xylem carried out a yearly inspection of all its pumps. This review took place for one week, once a year, at which point any maintenance needs or repairs were identified and addressed.

"I don't remember a Flygt pump ever breaking down in my five years with the PUC," says Slater. "We used the Xylem service as due diligence and it worked incredibly well for us. The Province of Ontario is very risk focused and tends to invest in preventive maintenance. As a result, we never had any unwelcome surprises."



Some models of our N-Pump submersible family

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