

The Meter Setter



RENOVATION RENEWS FACILITY

Colorado Springs Upgrades their Meter Testing Facility

Meter testing is important to ensure water meter precision and accurate utility billing all over the globe. Colorado Springs Utilities understands this and recently renovated its entire testing facility. With approximately 140,000 meters in service and annual testing of 7,000 meters, meter testing consumes a great deal of time and effort. Robert Wilford Jr., Senior Measurement Engineer at Colorado Springs Utilities, had the idea to fully automate the water meter test shop.

Wilford said, "I started to investigate in 2012 and knew it was possible to automate the shop and save time for the technicians." He asked a professor at his alma mater, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, to recommend Mechanical Engineering students to work on the project. With the help of the engineering students, the meter shop was redesigned and completely automated with Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) modules.



The newly renovated shop (photo courtesy of Colorado Springs Utilities)

According to Wilford, the PLCs "allow the technician to run tests on multiple benches at one time while

completing other tasks within the shop." He noticed that technicians previously had to remain in the shop to monitor the testing cycles. Today, the system allows technicians to place a meter on the test bench, input the information into a computer, and start the test. The technician can move on to other tasks since the water will automatically shut off at the conclusion of the test. The automated system can test twice as many meters in a day and narrows the margin of error to ensure the accuracy of every meter. With the newly automated system providing accurate meters, the percentage of lost water has decreased as the automation ensures accurate and consistent meter testing.



A Ford Meter Box test bench in the shop (photo courtesy of Colorado Springs Utilities)

If you would like to automate your meter testing facility, Ford Meter Box offers flexible options to partially automate with the Ford Auto-Stop or fully automate with the Ford Automatic Measuring System (AMS). Congratulations to Colorado Springs Utilities for its commitment to innovation and excellence in the waterworks industry!



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