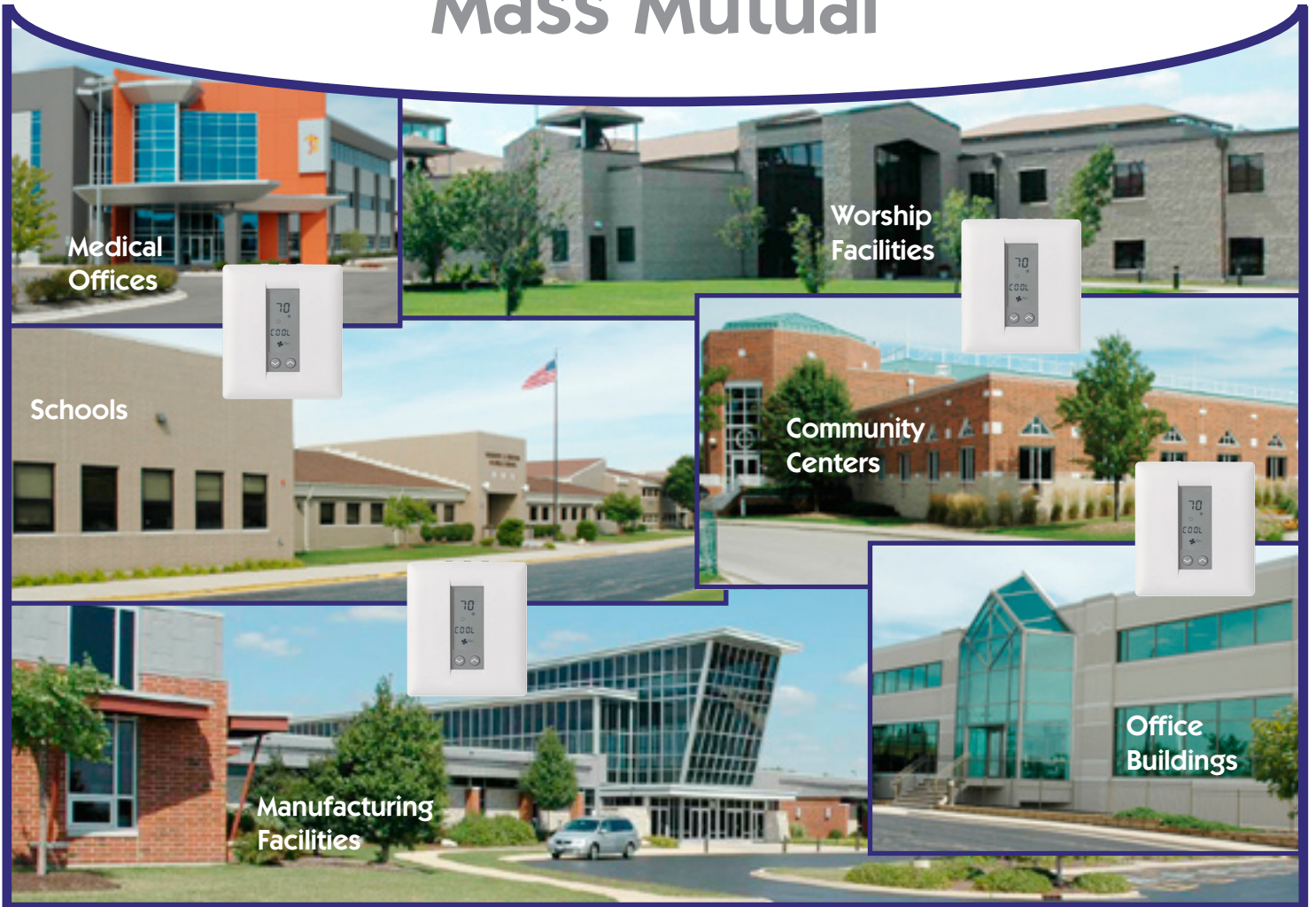


Mass Mutual



Network Thermostats, Zoning, and New HVAC Equipment Revitalize Old Building

Triple GreenSM
Save Time • Save Energy • Save Money

Another NetworkThermostat Solution
Net/X™ Thermostats are compatible with nearly all HVAC equipment to provide the ultimate in energy savings for any retrofit application.



FRIENDLY CONVERSATION

It all started on a plane. Bruce Thornton and Jay R. Eagan were members of the same club and found themselves on the same plane returning to their home base of Lubbock, Texas, so they sat together. Naturally, conversation turned to business. Thornton is the owner of Bruce Thornton Air Conditioning, and Eagan is an insurance agent with Mass Mutual and had previously been in charge of the Lubbock office. But there was more to Eagan than just insurance. He also owned the building where Mass Mutual had its offices.

During the conversation, Eagan mentioned an ongoing problem with the heating and air conditioning in the building. He said the agents were constantly complaining of being too hot or too cold. Thornton told him he would drop by and see if there was something he could do.

“What I found was a train wreck,” said Thornton. “The boiler looked like it was the original one installed when the building was built in the fifties. The air conditioning system was newer, but not much. The place had about 50 offices and only 10 zones. I told him we would have to replace everything, and he gave us the go ahead.”

NETWORK THERMOSTATS RECOMMENDED

Thornton proposed using Carrier gas/electric rooftops for heating and cooling, pointing out that they would be considerably more efficient than the antiques they were replacing and would save him money over time. To solve the zoning problem, he recommended Net/X™ thermostats from NetworkThermostat, and additional zoning.

“The job took two months,” said

Thornton. “We had to work around the employees, so it wasn’t easy. The only thing that was easy was putting in the thermostats. I’d seen a demonstration of them by our distributor, Robert Madden Industries,” said Thornton. “They looked like the ideal solution for small businesses that couldn’t afford and didn’t need the high-end, expensive building automation systems. Unlike programmable thermostats, these could be controlled from a personal computer. You don’t have to walk all over the building to change set points.”

“We’ve been handling the thermostats for a while now and people are starting to get the idea how they work,” said Rick Ennis, Carrier sales manager in West Texas for Robert Madden Industries. “We did a demo at Bruce’s business and he saw the value right away. We’ve also been going to Engineering groups (MEPs) and school districts. They’re very good for schools where they use the facilities at different times for sports, dances, parent teacher meetings and so on. The maintenance guy can program the thermostats to operate normally when there is an event in the evening or to drop to an unoccupied temperature when nothing is happening. It’s a great energy saver.”

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Jerry Drew is the developer of the network thermostat system used at Mass Mutual and the president of NetworkThermostat, the company that produces them.

“It all started when I was working as an engineering manager at Texas Instruments in weapons systems development and doing consulting work on the side on automation HVAC systems for high end residences,” said Drew. “I realized

that there was a serious need for something that could fill the void between individual thermostats and expensive building automation systems. I reasoned that there had to be a market out there in high end residential and light commercial like schools, banks, retail, churches, and so forth – areas where the cost of BAS could not be justified.” He came up with the idea of networking thermostats and controlling them through a personal computer. We introduced our first network thermostat product at the Home Automation Association Show (now the CEDIA Show) in 1995.

EASY TO USE

“We also designed the system to be very easy to use and maintain. Since then, we’ve made all of our improvements backwards compatible to the original versions so that the building owners can add, change, and move thermostats at any time without having to buy a new building automation system. There’s no built-in obsolescence with the Net/X™ system. In fact, many of our installations have been as replacements for building automation systems that were outdated or not supported after only a few years.”

How well do the new thermostats work?

“It’s part of my job to manage all the thermostats in the building,” said Debbie Holt, Eagan’s administrative assistant. “And it’s so easy. After they were installed, Thornton and Net/X™ came in and helped us customize our Windows program so it fit our needs. They even put a modem in so the support staff at Bruce Thornton Air Conditioning or Net/X™ can check our thermostats from their offices. And now when one of the agents complains, I can check on his thermostat’s condition with just a few keystrokes.

One agent called last week and said it was 80 degrees in his office. I checked on my computer and told him it was 73 degrees and he stopped complaining. We program each thermostat so the person in each office has a few degrees of latitude, but they can't set their thermostat to 60 or 80 degrees."

"That was my first installation of the Net/X™ thermostats and they were so easy to install," said Thornton. "Where they once had 10 zones, now they have 50. This is the ideal system for small to medium commercial buildings. We've already got an installation scheduled for a local church. It's much more affordable than any building automation system and more convenient than programmables."

You should look into network thermostats if...

- You have been under pressure to reduce energy use
- Your system relies on locked manual thermostats
- Your system consists of labor-intensive programmable thermostats
- You want remote control of all offices in your building
- Your current control system requires extensive computer skills and can only be operated by a few people on staff
- You have rejected a building automation system because it is too costly



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