

Food, Lumber, Detention



Network Thermostats Bridge Gap in Energy Management

Computer Controlled Thermostats Offer
Significant Energy Savings

Triple GreenSM

Save Time • Save Energy • Save Money

Another NetworkThermostat Solution
Different facilities managers find different reasons to choose Net/X™ thermostat systems. "It's as close as you can get to building automation without the cost."

NETWORKTM
Thermostat

ANALYZING THE PROBLEM

The Wasserstrom Company is one of the largest suppliers of equipment to the food service industry. They number among their clients Wendy's, Boston Market, Long John Silver's, KFC, and the Macaroni Grill. In this highly competitive business they know they have to keep their efficiency honed to a fine edge and they pride themselves on being innovators in the use of the latest technologies.

The only place they have had a problem has been in energy efficiency.

"When I came on board I inherited years of frustration centered around network thermostats," said Wasserstrom's facility manager Chris Coffman. "My predecessor had done the right thing in looking for a cost-effective way to control energy use. It's just that it didn't work. They knew that a building automation system would be too expensive for their needs and that programmable thermostats would be too time consuming. Network thermostats were the ideal solution. We just chose the wrong manufacturer.

"When I looked over the history of the system it was a record of failure after failure. The manufacturer had even sent out an engineering team who couldn't make it work. Essentially what we had was a bunch of expensive manual thermostats. But the idea of networking made sense, so I decided to see what options I had."

SIMPLE INTERNET SEARCH

Coffman did an Internet search and found a young company named NetworkThermostat in Texas that specialized in communicating network thermostats.

"I called and spoke to the owner, Jerry Drew, who had led the development of the product himself. When I detailed our problems, he had answers for each one and an explanation why those problems wouldn't happen with his product. Jerry was an engineer himself and was able to explain things in terms I understood. It was convincing enough that I went to my boss, told him I would like to try their product, and got the go ahead."

DRAMATIC RESULTS

"After the disappointments we had with the other manufacturer we were naturally cautious," said Coffman. "But everything Jerry had told me was true. The thermostats performed flawlessly right out of the box. And installation was a snap. All we needed to do was connect two wires and install the point-and-click software on Windows."

Ultimately Wasserstrom installed 24 network Net/X™ thermostats in their 250,000 square foot headquarters facility, with more planned for other manufacturing and warehouse facilities around the country.

In a letter to Jerry Drew, Coffman wrote:

"We have had your system on line for several months and are very happy with the results. The ability to call remote locations and check status, re-set thermostats and reprogram for special events and holidays is a great time and money saver. We look forward to reviewing other facilities to add to our 'network' to reap even greater benefits."

Coffman estimates that the new network thermostats have reduced energy consumption at these facilities by 20 percent.

Contractors have started to discover

network thermostats as well. Vic Donsbach, President of Lone Star Mechanical in Seguin, Texas has been using Net/X™ products for about a year.

"I've installed them in a four million dollar house and a commercial motor cycle sales operation and have been very pleased with the easy installation and point-and-click programming. It's as close as you can get to building automation without the cost. I'm planning more installations this year and wouldn't hesitate to use them anywhere, large or small."

SIMPLE PHILOSOPHY

The idea of network thermostats is relatively new. Their first product was introduced in 1995.

"We were the first to exhibit network thermostats at a trade show," Drew said, "and we've been increasing our product line ever since."

NetworkThermostat I currently offers six lines of network thermostats, a variety of remote sensors, and two network controllers for any size installation. They have recently added Internet and LAN access to their system.

"It all started when I was working as an engineering manager for a defense contractor and doing consulting work on the side for automating high end residences," said Drew. "Eventually I was offered the opportunity to design and install a system and before I knew it I had my own fulltime business."

The one stumbling block that Drew had in his new business was finding a reliable way to control heat and air conditioning.

"It was an expensive building automation system or nothing. So

I decided to design my own," he said. "My goal was to make it so easy to use that anyone could install it, even a home owner. There's one competitor out there that requires the technician to install chips depending on the application. What's a residential HVAC technician doing putting in chips?"

You can imagine the problems that can create. In any case, judging by the comments of my customers, I succeeded. In fact, many of our applications have been as replacements for systems that didn't do the job."

The other benefit Net/X™ offers is flexibility. Their thermostats can be configured in any combination from just a few points to as many as 8,000.

LUMBER COMPANY, TOO

One small application was a lumber company in Fort Worth, Texas. Bill Bunting is an aerospace engineer with background in electronics and programming. His wife manages Fort Worth Lumber.

"She's a real technophobe," he says. "I'd already been doing their computers, so she asked me if I knew a good way to conserve energy in their new sash and door operation that was under construction. So I began looking around. I had some experience with programmable thermostats at home and figured there should be a happy medium that came between them and building automation, which they definitely couldn't afford. I hopped on the Internet and found NetworkThermostat.

"I liked their hardware right away. Just two wires to connect and very attractive. What we were looking for was remote access (the employees

are always messing with the current thermostats) and something that would be easy for my wife to use without being too techie. They had all of that with the simple point-and-click software. The other issue was price, and we were pleasantly surprised. They weren't much more than upscale programmables."

The new facility is up and running now and Bunting figures his energy savings to be between 10 and 15 per cent.

"The savings certainly justify the cost," he said. "Next, we'll look into retrofitting the rest of the place."

EVEN YOUTH DETENTION

Michael Topp had a different problem. He is the facilities manager at a juvenile detention center.

"In a place like this, you definitely don't want your guests to be fiddling with the thermostats. Locks don't do much good because a lot of these kids know their way around locks. This is an old facility and we wanted some way to save on energy. I had some extra budget money and had heard about network thermostats so I did a web search and found NetworkThermostat.

"After talking to Jerry Drew I decided to try some as an experiment and installed 12. They have worked great. I can even change the settings from home. They're saving us enough money that I am going to get 35 more and put them throughout the whole facility. I think I'm going to frustrate a lot of our young guests."

Network Thermostats appears to have found themselves a sizable niche.

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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