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NEWS

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PVSC ENTERS DIGITAL AGE WITH TABLET DEPLOYMENT

Inspectors use of Surface 3 Tablets out in the Field Enable Better, Broader Operations



NEWARK, NJ – Each year, inspectors from the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC)’s Pollution Prevention (P2) Unit visit over 6,000 district-wide commercial establishments, as part of their ongoing efforts to keep harmful pollutants from discharging into the sewer system and local waterways.

The work can be time-consuming and laden with paperwork. Now, P2 inspectors will have a new tool to quickly and efficiently conduct their inspections in “real-time” thanks to the deployment of six new “Surface 3” portable PC tablets, loaded with the custom designed P2 mobile application software. The digital age has transformed many industries, and the wastewater industry is no exception. Tablet devices allow users easy access to applications for tracking data, creating reports and storing information in ways that were implausible a decade ago.

“This latest technological enhancement is a huge achievement for PVSC and its customers,” said Michael DeFrancisci, Executive Director. “With the implementation of these new tablets, our Inspectors are truly mobile – allowing them to gather, report and complete their work on site. The tablets will save time, money and paper, and that bodes well for our stakeholders.”

Last fall, a pilot project commenced in conjunction with PVSC’s MIS department to determine what capabilities were compatible with the inspectors’ work. Tablets were brought into the field for a trial run, and inspectors were able to test a number of applications on site. After months of trialing and working out the bugs, the tablets were deployed in February and are now fully operational.

Prior to the use of the Surface 3’s and the aforementioned software, the inspectors did not have remote access to the P2 database; they filed manual inspection reports, and then entered the data into the P2

database upon return to the office. Now, with the addition of these tablets, the Inspectors can obtain real-time information regarding each customer while in the field. This will cut down paper usage by approximately 80 percent in the unit.

“As part of our annual inspections, our team is engaged in gathering important information from businesses and Industrial Users to ensure that they are in full compliance with PVSC Rules and Regulations, as well as state and federal laws,” said Herb Skinner, Director of PVSC’s Inspection and Compliance Bureau which houses P2. “With the addition of these new Surface 3 tablets, we can now conduct our inspections quicker, better, and in a more environmental-friendly way.”

Customers will now electronically sign off on the inspection form, confirming what the inspector recorded at time of inspection. The tablets also enable the Inspector to take snap shot photos of business licenses, grease-capturing equipment, kitchen layouts, silver recovery cartridges, etc., expanding their capabilities and consolidating equipment.

The acquisition and use of the tablets will not increase PVSC’s budget or affect rate-payers or customers.

“I’m pleased to see this new technology being used throughout the service area. Inspections are now being performed more efficiently, and are providing electronically-stored documentation that can be uploaded into our database. And, a case history of each facility will be available to staff at the click of a button,” said PVSC Commissioner Kenneth J. Lucianin.

Given the successful launch of the Surface 3 tablets, PVSC is evaluating the implementation of these Surface 3 tablets in other areas of PVSC’s operations such as the Connections Unit and the Industrial Monitoring Unit of the Bureau.

“The digital age has arrived at PVSC. The future of tablets in mobile operations is limited only by the imagination of those using them. Inspectors now have more time in the field to conduct their inspections, which enable them more flexibility and functionality when dealing with our customers,” said Thomas Tucci, Jr., PVSC Commissioner.

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In order to protect and preserve local streams and rivers from water pollution, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission operates one of the country's oldest and largest treatment plants for the wastewaters of northern New Jersey, serving over 1.4 million people in five counties.