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County of Santa Clara Installs Innovative Wireless Thermostats to Save Energy Costs in Existing Buildings

Project reduces energy, reduces greenhouse gases, perfect for Green Economy

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF.—Most commercial buildings built before the year of 2000 have pneumatic thermostats that require manual adjustment. That means that someone has to manually lower and raise the thermostat to adjust the temperature. The County of Santa Clara operates 11 million square feet of existing facilities, with an annual energy cost of \$15 million. In the current economic climate, with a loss of tax revenue and growing budget deficits, the County of Santa Clara is looking for ways to lower costs. The County has found one solution by looking to the entrepreneurial vision in its own Silicon Valley backyard – wireless programmable pneumatic thermostats made by Cypress Envirosystems, a local Silicon Valley start-up company and subsidiary of Cypress Semiconductor Corporation.

“The wireless thermostat installation took only eight days and was one of the easiest, fast and most cost effective energy efficiency improvements we have ever made in our buildings,” said Jeff Draper, Manager of Building Operations. “We installed 350 wireless thermostats for a total project cost of \$175,000.”

The Cypress Envirosystems WPT product allows the County to control and remotely track HVAC usage, which in turn allows the County to enroll two additional buildings into the PG&E Demand Response Program. This program requires participating entities to reduce energy use during peak periods such as on hot summer days. The County has received over \$300,000 in participation incentive rebates from PG&E for enrolling in the Demand Response Program and implementing the wireless programmable thermostats and other improvements at 19 facilities with over 1.5 million square feet in total.

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County of Santa Clara Installs Innovative Wireless Thermostats, Page 2

The County's participation in these energy reduction programs has many economic benefits:

1) participation incentive rebates as mentioned above; 2) costs savings associated with "load shedding"; 3) dollar rebates based on actual load shed; and 4) overall reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

"Adopting green technology solutions as part of our energy retrofit program, such as these inexpensive programmable wireless thermostats, is not only the best bang for our buck, it will also achieve the best result and help grow local jobs," stated Supervisor Liz Kniss, President of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors.

"The County hit a triple with this program," said Vice President of the Board of Supervisors Ken Yeager. "Not only will it help reduce the amount of greenhouse gases the County emits, it also pumps money into the local economy while reducing overall operating costs. It is a win-win-win situation."

The County of Santa Clara faces a situation similar to many other property owners in the nation. According to industry analysts, 70-80% of existing buildings in the United States have antiquated pneumatic thermostats. The County wanted to deploy the Auto-Demand Response program at large facilities housing critical services and at detention and health facilities which operate 24/7. Two of the targeted properties included 333 and 373 Julian Street, leased by the County from Sobrato Corporation. These facilities provide social services for child welfare, adoptions, foster placement, elder abuse and other critical programs.

Cypress Envirosystems offers a pneumatic wireless thermostat that can easily replace a conventional non-communicating pneumatic device. The Cypress solution can be retrofitted to replace an existing conventional, pneumatic thermostat in about 15 minutes, creating minimal disruption to the building occupants. Conventional direct digital control thermostats typically cost around \$2,000 to \$3,000 per thermostat and installation requires building tenants to vacate the facility while electrical work is done. Installation of a conventional direct digital control system would have cost the County over \$880,000 and required at least six months to install.

For more information about Cypress Envirosystems, contact Samer Bahou, (408) 544-1081.

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