

Gaining Acceptance



Going green is all the rage these days. Whether it is constructing a wind farm, installing solar energy panels on a roof or simply switching to CFL light bulbs in a home, Americans are finding ways to tap renewable resources and conserve energy.

The push for energy conservation is good news for the water quality industry: The Water Quality Research Foundation Energy Savings Study showed that using softened water in a home improves energy efficiency and can save homeowners money on heating costs.

The industry has seen a push against traditional, salt-using water softeners in recent years, however, as several municipalities in California passed ordinances limiting or banning their installation. The city governments claimed the reason behind the regulations was concern over the effects of salt discharge from softeners on the local environment.

Several months ago, I posed a question to readers of the *Water Quality Products eNews* newsletter: If an ordinance banning traditional softeners was passed in your area, how would you advise customers who need or want softened water?

Readers' responses landed on all sides of the issues, but many replied that the answer was simple: They would recommend a salt-free water conditioning system or a physical treatment device.

Devices that fall into these categories have been around for years, but they remain controversial in this country, in no small part because, as Eric Yeggy of the Water Quality Assn. (WQA) points out in his article, "Sorting Out Scale Prevention" (page 16), there is no U.S. standard on the books to consistently certify that these devices are effective at reducing scale.

Anti-scale devices have long been in use in Europe, and a German standard was developed to certify their effectiveness. According to Yeggy, this standard did not take into account the typical flow patterns and heater types used in the U.S., however.

Despite the lack of certifications, anti-scale devices are present in successful U.S. applications. The article, "Scale Reduction Savings" (page 6), features one such application at an apartment complex that had such severe scale in its heaters and pipe that it was considering replacing all of the equipment. It opted to install an anti-scale device instead, and residents are now seeing much lower energy bills.

WQA is working to develop standards that will give anti-scale devices the support of certification. The association currently is working on a standard for electrochemical demineralization devices, and is teaming up with the International Assn. of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials to develop a standard for other types of anti-scale devices.

The development of these standards will not only help anti-scale devices gain acceptance, but also lead to the development of new scale prevention and removal technologies. With so many options available, the industry will be able to provide consumers not only with the treatment options they need, but the energy savings they desire.

Top Projects

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2012 *WQP* Top Water Quality Projects awards. Last year, we recognized five innovative projects in the December 2011 Reference Guide issue. If you have recently completed a challenging or unique installation, visit www.wqpmag.com to fill out the online award entry form. Entries must be received by Aug. 30, 2012, and winners will be featured in the December 2012 issue.

Kate Cline

Kate Cline, managing editor
kcline@sgcmail.com

coming up next month

The 2012/2013 *Water Quality Products* Buyer's Guide will feature a Products & Services Guide, as well as Product and Supplier Directory sections. Visit our website at www.wqpmag.com to view our online Buyer's Guide and for daily industry news updates.

Visit www.wqpmag.com/top-projects-nomination to nominate your Top Projects.

Scranton Gillette Communications Inc.
3030 W. Salt Creek Ln., #201, Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5025
tel: 847.391.1000 • fax: 847.390.0408

editorial staff

wqpeditor@sgcmail.com

Editorial Director Neda Simeonova
Managing Editor Kate Cline
Associate Editor Elizabeth Lisican
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Associate Editor Kristin Muckerheide
Associate Editor Nicole Bowling
Graphic Designer Dan Soltis

advertising & sales

Integrated Media Consultant Don Heidkamp
dheidkamp@sgcmail.com 847.391.1047
Classified Ad Sales Manager Donna Aly
daly@sgcmail.com 480.941.0510, ext.13
Reprint Coordinator Adrienne Miller
amiller@sgcmail.com 847.391.1036
List Rental Contact John Ganis
914.368.1024
Advertising Coordinator Lynette Hennessey
lhennessey@sgcmail.com 847.954.7968

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