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## Keeping an Eye on Fueling

Fuel dispensing equipment is vital for proper fleet operations.

By Paul Abelson



Bill VandenBrook, Madison's motor equipment superintendent, points out the pump module, which is part of the Automated Fuel Management System.

There's an old adage taught in colleges today: "That which gets measured, gets managed." Since fuel is the single greatest expense of any fleet's operation, managers must have an effective and efficient tracking system to determine if their department is within budget.

The heart of most fleets' measurement systems is their fuel dispensing equipment and software. Managers want to know many bits of information when the tank is refilled. These questions include: Who did it? When did it occur? What's the odometer and hour reading? And of course, how much fuel did it take?

It's from these small bits of data fleet managers can determine important operating statistics. How many miles-per-gallon does a specific equipment/engine configuration provide? Is too much fuel being used based upon general fleet activity? Is the right equipment being selected for use?

Some of the data collected at time of fueling can also help establish maintenance procedures. Fleet managers can establish mileage or hour milestone prompts to schedule vehicle inspection, oil and filter changes, and other important periodic services. These records can provide important reports regarding tracking driver/service hours. All of these efforts are designed to prevent breakdowns and ensure productive uptime and hence, preventive maintenance (PM).

In most concrete production operations, fleet managers have an average of about 100 pieces of equipment to track. Just imagine having 10 times that many vehicles to manage.

The City of Madison, Wis., operates more than 1100 vehicles, from fire apparatus and refuse collection trucks to police and executive cars. Madison's fleet consumes more than 1 million gallons of fuel each year.

## TCP'S NETWORK



To keep track of this fleet, Madison had a 20-year-old fuel dispensing system that relied on significant operator input.

The system used a dual key-card login that identified the vehicle being fueled and the operator doing the fueling. The system answered two of the important questions but lacked in other areas. Each operator was responsible for entering odometer or hour meter readings on a keypad at the pump. One managerial control on the input included the drivers entering a mileage or hour reading that was greater than previous readings before the fuel dispensing pump would operate.

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