

Remote Monitoring Systems Give NYC Housing Authority Uninterrupted Power, Reduced Labor Costs

In New York City, maintaining a close watch over power generation stations is critical to the successful and reliable transmission of energy to businesses and residences throughout the city. KeySpan Energy Management Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of KeySpan Energy Corporation based in Jericho, NY, plays a pivotal role in maintaining the crucial link between power generation and cogeneration sites and those who rely on these sites for their livelihood and life-style.

KeySpan Energy Management provides a full spectrum of energy provision services—from turnkey installations to operations and maintenance—throughout the boroughs of New York, including Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. Additionally, they provide 24-hours-a-day service contracts and remote monitoring systems to prestigious hotels, high-profile apartment complexes and prominent hospitals throughout the bustling city.

The Need for Remote Monitoring

At five boiler-plant sites in particular—four in Brooklyn, and the fifth in the Bronx—which are part of KeySpan's New York Housing Authority project, the energy service company uses Sensaphone remote monitoring systems to help manage environmental and security conditions. By keeping a keen eye on potentially crippling conditions, the Sensaphone system enables KeySpan to ensure the transmission of heat and power to these customers without interruption.

As a service provider, KeySpan has overseen the implementation of more than 250 Sensaphone units, including many Sensaphone Express systems, to

various boiler-plant sites throughout New York. In each instance, the Sensaphone units are used primarily to monitor environmental and mechanical conditions such as temperature, pressure, water incursion and power outage. However, these units also double as effective security systems. The systems are usually fitted to monitor chillers or boilers located at remote sites located far from the housing developments that depend on those sites. As part of the New York Housing Authority project, KeySpan supplied Sensaphone Express systems to a total of 57 buildings. The Sensaphone systems monitor a total of 22 boilers for steam and hot water levels; but the systems also monitor the plants for power outages and water leaks—conditions that could otherwise lead to interrupted service and tenant dissatisfaction.

Why Sensaphone

Without the Sensaphone monitors, these sites would require a human presence to monitor conditions via a labor-intensive, time-consuming walking route through each plant. At any one time, most of the boilers would in fact be unmonitored. The Sensaphone Express units continuously watch over facilities, sensitive to the slightest change in conditions that could lead to problems. Once the system recognizes an aberrant condition, it automatically dials out to pre-specified telephone numbers to alert the proper authorities of the situation. In the case of the New York Housing Authority, the system would alert the building superintendent, whose responsibility it would be to right the situation. Depending on the severity or complexity of the predicament, the super would either go to the site immediately or contact a technician to address and correct the problem.

For KeySpan Energy Management, the Sensaphone units have reduced their labor costs substantially. Prior to the installation of the Sensaphone units, KeySpan deployed a roving shift from 4pm to midnight. They have since disbanded the crew because of the reliability and cost advantage of the Sensaphone units versus human supervisory personnel. In addition, the New York Housing Authority has reduced their labor costs by restructuring the work schedule of their maintenance staff to coincide with that of KeySpan. A graveyard shift, from midnight to 8am was dissolved once the Sensaphone systems had been commissioned to watch over the remote sites.

Beyond Cost Savings

In addition to reduced labor costs, the Sensaphone systems have helped reduce the downtime of machinery, helped eliminate damage to expensive equipment, and, by way of alerts, averted potential disasters by immediately responding to any sounding alarms. In all, KeySpan Energy Management has reduced overall operating expenses by 30 percent. Another result of the Sensaphone installations, and an ancillary benefit to KeySpan, has been a 75 percent reduction in tenant complaints.

The return-on-investment, according Jessica Villalobos, KeySpan's maintenance coordinator for the operations and maintenance division, has been phenomenal. "The pilot project of these Sensaphone systems was a huge success because it eliminated seventy-five percent of our tenant complaints," she said. "Prior to the Sensaphone installation, the average response time from the initial tenant complaint was close to six hours. Sensaphone has made it possible for potential emergency situations to be addressed before tenants are disturbed in these buildings.

"The Sensaphone project has been so successful that the New York Housing Authority has restructured their service department and staffing exactly the way KeySpan Energy Management is structured. We've eliminated two shifts during the week and all shifts on weekends."

Decreased labor costs and reduced operating expenses may be the primary benefits to KeySpan as a result of their partnership forged with Sensaphone. On a larger scale, while the Sensaphone systems have increased KeySpan Energy Management's all-around efficiency, they have also substantially improved tenant satisfaction by allowing KeySpan to heighten the overall quality of service they provide. Their customers and energy-generation partners are happier as a result.

Sensaphone designs and builds active remote monitoring and early detection products for a wide range of markets that quickly and effectively provide alerts to problems at remote locations. Over 400,000 Sensaphone systems are in use today around the world with superior customer satisfaction.

Contact Sensaphone for the right solution and for pricing:
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