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Fuel efficiency depends on most accurate liquid-level measurement ...

MTS' LIQUID-LEVEL SENSORS NOW USED IN RAILROAD FUEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

CARY, N.C (May 16, 2006) — MTS Systems Corp. Sensors Division's liquid-level sensors are now being used by railroads to improve the efficiency of fuel management systems. The sensors replace outdated manual gauge- and fuel flow-reading processes that cost railroads time, money and personnel. The new automated fuel management systems provide railroads the ability to better manage fuel inventories and reduce labor demands.

“Not only are manual systems inefficient, they also introduce the possibility for inaccuracies, with the potential for misread numbers or reading delays that might result in data that wasn't synchronized with actual inventories,” said Adrian Totten, MTS Marketing & Sales Manager. “With the installation of automated fuel management systems, these manual readings are a thing of the past at many fueling locations. “

Previously, railroads used a manual process to read the gauges and fuel flow at all fueling locations. Typically, once a day, local personnel would read the receipt and issue meters on fuel lines and tank gauges at each fueling location, and then fax or phone the measurements to a central number at headquarters.

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Recently, a major railroad company's fuel management team sought a system that would provide improved information to better manage the staggering amount of fuel transactions that all railroads incur. The railroad company, one of the largest in North America, consumes more than 1.25 billion gallons of fuel annually to operate trains across its vast network. Fuel cost is the company's second largest expense, so investing in better fuel management techniques is part of its strategy.

A critical element of the automated fuel management system is the liquid level gauge that provides the data from within the tank. The gauge must provide the most accurate measurement possible and require minimum maintenance with convenient and easy-to-read monitoring. Because the tanks are outdoors, the gauges need to be resistant to atmospheric corrosion and wear from wind, snow, salt and other elements.

MTS's magnetostrictive level gauges provide many of the features required by automated fuel systems. The sensors consist of a flexible stainless steel pipe and electronics contained in an explosion-proof head. The pipe acts as a protective sheath for the magnetostrictive waveguide that runs the length of the pipe.

The technology works by sending an electrical pulse along the length of a magnetostrictive waveguide (inside the pipe) installed in the fuel storage tanks. A float installed with a magnet rests on the liquid level's surface and calculates the level inside the tank. The circular float easily moves up and down the pipe as liquid rises or lowers in the tank. A second float is capable of a second measurement of the water or interface liquid level in the tank as well. Five equally spaced digital temperature sensors (DT's) are used to determine the average temperature of the stored fuel for the most accurate fuel inventory levels possible.

A railroad's decisions about fuel supply are driven by data on fuel receipts, issues and inventories. The ability to access timely, accurate information on the Web about fuel inventories allows it to more closely manage those inventories and shipment schedules, and to time purchases and pricing to market price fluctuations. Management can also quickly identify changes in fuel demand at each fueling location, providing additional opportunities to minimize operating expense.

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“This new electronic monitoring system is a major step in bringing a railroad’s fuel storage facilities to world-class standards, enabling it to meet strict environmental and control requirements,” said Totten. “The new system reduces the manual labor required to obtain the fuel readings, provides more accurate readings of fuel inventories every hour, enables quick identification of trends and enables the railroad to be even more strategic in purchasing of fuel, allowing easy validation of theft or loss.”

For more information about liquid-level sensors, please visit the Web at <http://www.mtssensors.com/Liquidlevel.htm>.

MTS Systems Corporation is the world leader in magnetostrictive linear-position and liquid-level sensor technology. MTS Systems Corporation is a global operation, with facilities in the U.S., Germany and Japan. In the U.S., the MTS Sensors Division has an ISO 9001 facility manufacturing rugged and reliable Temposonics position and liquid-level sensors. With a strong commitment to research and development, product quality and customer service, the Sensors Division is constantly seeking ways to bring the highest value to customers.

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