Case Study

case 1 • 2012

FACILITY MANAGER FINDS PEACE OF MIND WITH A. O. SMITH iCOMM™ ELITE REMOTE MONITORING SERVICE

In the restaurant business, the adage "time is money" is more than just cliché; it's gospel. During a water heater failure, every second equates to money lost. For Maria Johnson, national director of facilities management for Pei Wei® Asian Diner, water heater failure just isn't an option.

"The water heater is one of those products that when it's down, you have to close your doors," said Johnson. "In the past we wouldn't know about a water heater malfunction until someone could not wash their hands or the dishes. Then we have to contact a contractor. It could take hours or days to repair. At that point, we are losing sales."

During Johnson's tenure with Pei Wei, the company began to transition from using a boiler and storage tank water heating system to the A. O. Smith Cyclone® Xi Gas Water Heater. In addition to benefits such as savings in energy costs and space, Pei Wei locations took advantage of an additional benefit offered by A. O. Smith, the iCOMM™ Elite Remote Monitoring Service.

The iCOMM monitoring service is the latest technology in commercial water heating that allows the user to interact with, proactively manage, and monitor their A. O. Smith products. Via the Internet, users can monitor their water heater's performance and make changes to its settings. In addition to remote access, the system alerts the user via text or email should a problem arise.

With 175 Pei Wei locations across the U.S., Johnson has a fleet of water heaters to look after, among other concerns. In the past, she had to rely heavily on store managers to keep her aware of any product failure or malfunction at each location. After a successful trial of the iCOMM service in Garland, Texas, and Rochester, Mich., Pei Wei locations, the service has been installed in approximately 25 stores.

Since installing the iCOMM service, Johnson has seen a significant increase in the efficiency at which even the smallest of issues are addressed and rectified.

"The iCOMM has been great when it comes to letting us know if there are any problems with the water heater, even before the store manager knows,"

Case Notes

Project:
Facility manager finds peace of mind with A. O. Smith iCOMM™ Elite Remote Monitoring Service

Location:
Pei Wei restaurants nationwide

Product:
iCOMM™ Elite Remote Monitoring Service

Product Highlights:

- *Access current and historical water heater data*
- *Monitor "live" water heater status using a Web browser*
- *Respond instantly to a leak detection notification*
- *Proactively manage fault alerts sent via text message or email*
- *Monitor your fleet of water heaters, regardless of location*

said Johnson. "A. O. Smith contacts the store and troubleshoots over the phone, whether it be as simple as resetting the water heater, or something more; we no longer discover issues by accident."

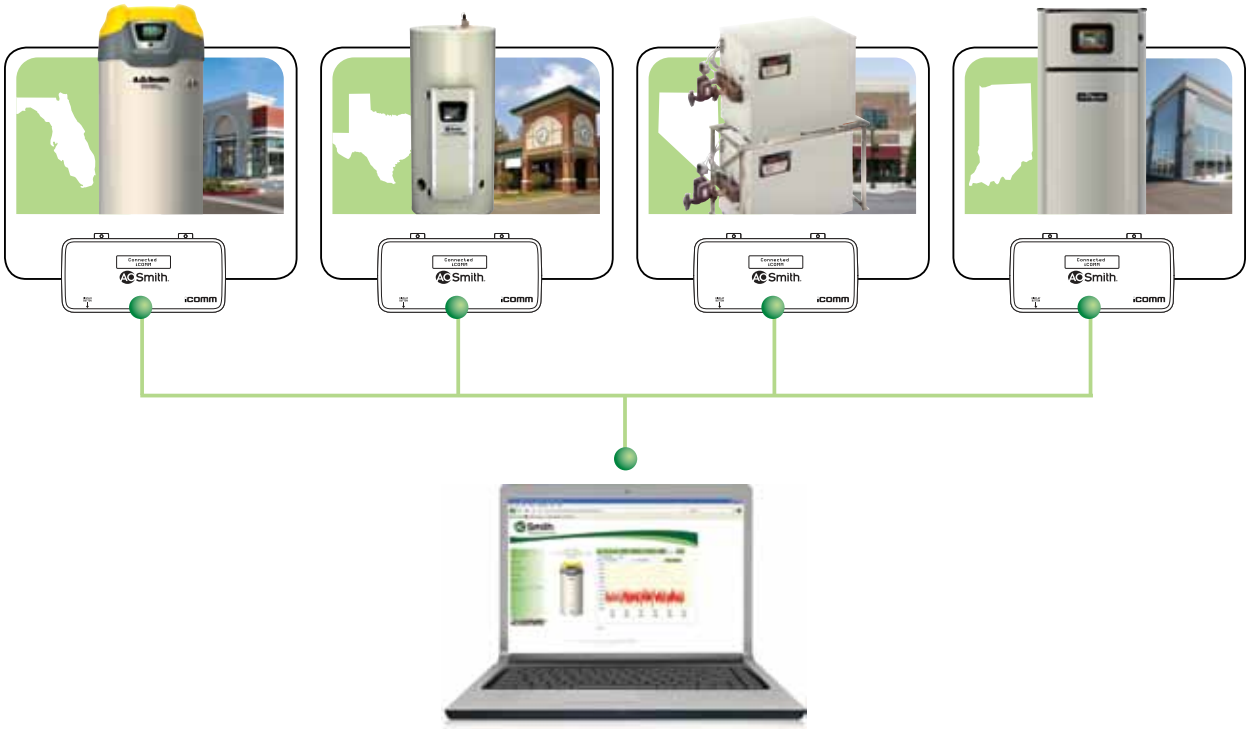
Johnson recalled a specific time when a store's water temperature had been set too high, which could lead to wasted energy and money.

"I get an email from A. O. Smith identifying any changes in a water heater, usually within the hour, detailing the issue. One time, an alert came through saying that the water was too hot. A. O. Smith contacted the store and instructed the branch manager on how to reduce the temperature. That, to me, is great. It's something that we might not have discovered for a long time."

It's cases like these that have established Johnson's trust in the iCOMM service.

"I definitely have greater peace of mind and more comfort with our use of iCOMM. It's faster than humanly possible. It allows the store manager to focus on running the store. That is vital to our staying open."

Part of P.F. Chang's China Bistro, Inc., Pei Wei Asian Diner is a chain of quick-casual restaurants that serve freshly prepared, wok-seared, contemporary pan-Asian cuisine in a relaxed, warm environment with friendly attentive counter service as well as the flexibility, speed and convenience of take-away service.



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