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RETROFLO WINS ACCOLADE AT INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION AWARDS

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UK-based manufacturer Retroflo has received a prestigious international award for its innovative pump control system. Selected as one of five finalists from a global field of industry entrants, the Retroflo RPC_2000 placed second overall in the US-based Pumps and Systems inaugural Product Innovation of the Year Award.

Developed in 2008 in the North of England, Retroflo's RPC_2000 has garnered two innovation awards in the UK, with the Pumps and Systems award marking its first overseas accolade. The new pump control system has been making waves across the water industry, eliminating persistent blockage problems and saving energy costs at pumping stations operated by the UK's largest water companies.

Pumps and Systems is considered the voice of the pump and rotating equipment industry in the US and provides news and technical information to over 40,000 industry subscribers. The Product Innovation Awards' Advisory Board studied each nominated product to ensure it met the criteria of being a significant improvement over current technology. Despite Retroflo's recent introduction to the US market, the judges were impressed by the potential of the RPC_2000 to have a major impact on the water sector.

The new system was extensively trialled and commissioned at several Northumbrian Water sites in 2008. The success of these sites led to take-up across the UK, with the RPC_2000 now in operation at Scottish Water, United Utilities and South West Water pumping stations.

The new control system has delivered on its pledge to virtually eliminate blockages, which is a very common and costly problem at wastewater pumping stations. Partial Blockages cause pumps to operate inefficiently, wasting energy and once choked require time-consuming and costly call-outs to clear. Of the greatest concern is the environmental damage that can occur when failed pumps result in spillage. Post RPC_2000 installations



have recorded a vast reduction in blockages, meaning enhanced environmental protection, fewer maintenance call-outs, reduced operating costs and much lower carbon emissions.

The improved performance from pumps operating efficiently has also resulted in a minimum 12 percent reduction in energy consumption costs at each individual pumping station. If you consider that Northumbrian water alone operated nearly 600 wastewater pumping station, the potential for savings across the industry is enormous. The RPC_2000 has low installation costs and can be retro-fitted to existing pumping stations without the need for major refurbishment works. This means that utility companies can expect a return on capital investment within 12 months of installing the system.

Understanding that every pumping station is different goes some way to explaining the philosophy behind the Retroflo system. The RPC_2000 was specifically designed to control pumping stations as a whole, rather than just the individual components within. It is this systematic approach that has brought rich rewards to a British innovation.

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