Alberta Transportation
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement

An ENCOM "Then and Now" Success Story

Then

The commercial vehicle inspection station near Radway, Alberta, traditionally sees heavy truck traffic morning, noon and night, thanks to its busy location at the five-way intersection of Highway 28, Highway 829 and Highway 63, the lone high-speed artery in and out of Fort McMurray's oilsands.

To keep things moving smoothly, the Alberta Transportation inspection station controlled five hard-wired flashing beacons, which instructed commercial traffic to either report to the scale house or bypass the operation, depending on availability and congestion.

However, harsh winter conditions had taken their toll on the report-light system.

"It was time for an upgrade, because with frost and other factors, they had some issues with the (power) lines breaking and needing to be repaired," says Dan McCormack, with Alberta Transportation's commercial vehicle enforcement division.

"We run solar(-powered) lights in other locations in the province, and they've been pretty successful, so that's what we decided to go with here."
—Dan McCormack, Alberta Transportation

Enter ENCOM

Alberta Transportation chose a collaborative project between ENCOM Wireless and Carmanah—the R838 Solar ITS Flashing Beacon—to resolve the situation in Radway.

The integrated solution uses an ENCOM CommPAK I/O 8K contact closure nestled inside a Carmanah solar-powered flashing beacon, creating a completely independent, completely wireless remote safety solution which can be turned on and off with the touch of a button.

Speaking of buttons, ENCOM specifically designed a new product—the CommPAK I/O 8M8 master controller—for the Radway project. Inside the station-house, the CommPAK I/O 8M8 features eight buttons to control as many as eight remote units independently.

"For this situation, (the ENCOM-Carmanah solution) was favourable," says Dale Kutz, Alberta Transportation's maintenance contract inspector for the Radway district.

"The alternative was to consider running (new) underground wiring... altogether, at that location, it probably would have taken about four kilometres' worth."
—Dale Kutz, Radway District

Bob Flese is the foreman of the crew for Carillion Canada Inc., an Alberta Transportation highway maintenance contractor, which installed the ENCOM-Carmanah wireless solution at Radway.

Flese was thrilled with the ease of installation.

"We had two people on the job, and to put five lights up, it took us an hour for each light. Not even that," says Flese. "The (ENCOM-Carmanah R838) left a good impression in our minds.

"On a job like this, we prefer this (solution) 100 per cent. It's a real headache running the electrical underground."
—Bob Flese, Alberta Transportation

About ENCOM Wireless:

ENCOM, based in Calgary, Canada, provides field-proven, cost-effective wireless data solutions for municipal and industrial clients, with applications in the areas of:

- Intelligent transportation systems
- Public safety communications
- Municipal corporate security and IT networks
- Waste and water management
- Electrical utilities
- Oil and gas

ENCOM Wireless
7, 640 - 42 Avenue NE
Calgary, AB Canada T2E 7J9
Phone: 403.230.1122
Fax: 403.276.9575
encom@encomwireless.com
encomwireless.com

Now

ENCOM's collaborative wireless solution provides unfailing peace of mind for Radway's commercial vehicle enforcement officers, who can close down one or more entry points to prevent traffic from backing up onto the surrounding highways and creating a potentially deadly situation.

"In our location, we see a lot of wide loads. We're pretty well the gateway to Fort McMurray, for the tar sands, so we see a lot of large equipment.," notes McCormack. "Depending on the weather, sometimes, or the size of the load, you may be in the position where you just have to shut off one lane of the highway to allow the other lane to continue on through.

"So we have that option." —Dan McCormack, Alberta Transportation

What's Next?

The R838 allows for portable activation from an optional secondary master controller, and boasts built-in flasher programmability through user-configurable settings.

All of which may be useful at the Radway inspection station in the future.

"That intersection is being looked at and (is likely) going to be upgraded. This way, we can move the signs wherever we want them."
—Dale Kutz, Radway District