

STAYING IN COMMUNICATION

Hands-free, wireless headsets from Sonetics help keep crews safe and optimize workflow

By Craig Mandli



Chris Nightwine, left, a regional manager for Sonetics, explains the technology behind his company's wireless communication system to a 2014 Expo attendee. (Photo by Craig Mandli)

Clear and effective communication among a work crew is essential, especially in high-noise and hazardous environments. Sonetics wireless headset systems answer that call, garnering their fair share of interest at the 2014 Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International.

"We consider it a safety product that also increases productivity," says Mark Jetton, Midwest regional manager for Sonetics. "Hands-free communication also decreases downtime, as users have the freedom to move around and are not restricted by wires or having to push buttons."

The systems incorporate FCC-licensed "full duplex" communication that supports real-time verbal warnings and continuous work collaboration, similar to a conference call. All workers on the system can simultaneously hear and be heard without pushing a transmit button, avoiding missed communications from shared channels and interference.

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To show off the range of the system, Jetton stood at one end of the Indiana Convention Center and sent another Sonetics employee to the other end. Despite the constant chatter amongst the thousands of peo-

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ple in the hall, the two were able to clearly communicate over the set.

"The wireless sets have a range of roughly 1,600 feet, or over a quarter-mile," says Jetton. "They are ideal for portable, vehicular or fixed-location use."

Options include an adjustable "mic gate" that allows headsets to be fine-tuned to suit different noise environments. Throat microphones allow for use when wearing face-masks or HAZMAT clothing. Head-

sets can be powered by 12-volt battery packs or in-car chargers to allow for use in remote areas. They are fully rechargeable, and once headsets are paired to the wireless base, they do not have to be recalibrated each time the system is turned on/off. Digital intercom units allow for the number of wire-

less headsets on one system to be expanded, enabling up to 40 users on a single system.

"One of the nice things about this system is its versatility across a lot of different mediums," says Jetton. "Any company that has a need for wireless communication among its employees can utilize our systems."

While Sonetics systems have been in use for years in mining and oil and gas utility applications, the 2014 Expo was the company's first

as an exhibitor. "We have a couple of hydroexcavation customers that actually suggested that we exhibit at this show," Jetton says. "We hadn't really looked at the pumping and drain cleaning market too much initially, but it really is a good match for what we offer."

Jetton was able to generate a lot of leads, including many who hoped to test the system with their equipment. "I spoke to drain cleaners who said the system should work great with two-man crews with one inside with the hose, while the other was outside with the vacuum truck flipping the switch," he says. "The attendees at the show actually brought up uses for the system that we hadn't been considering. That was a huge value to us."

Jetton says he looks forward to bringing the technology back to the 2015 show when it's rebranded as the Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show. "We're just entering this market, but I'd definitely say that it's 'so far, so good.'" 800/833-4558; www.soneticscorp.com. ♦