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ABB drives boost savings for Northumbrian Water

Tests showing higher than expected energy savings have convinced Northumbrian Water to standardise on ABB drives for much of its pumping needs. Five ABB Comp-AC drives, supplied by ABB Drives Alliance partner Slater Drive Systems in Newcastle, have been installed at the booster pumping stations at Fenham and Hillhead, saving Northumbrian Water over £7,000 in the first year of operation.

Bill Snaith, Technical Advisor for Northumbrian Water said: “We expected to see something like a 30 per cent saving but have actually achieved 40 percent.”

The Fenham booster station has three 30kW pumps, while the Hillhead station has two 30 kW pumps. Installed in August 1999, the 30kW Comp-AC drives control the pumps via a proportional controller. Northumbrian Water has measured a reduction in average energy use from 24.3 kW/hour to 15.49 kW/hour, a saving of 8.82 kW/hour. At 4 pence per kilowatt-hour, this equates to a saving over the year of £3,000 for the Hillhead booster station and a saving of over £4,000 for the bigger Fenham station.

Snaith presented these findings to the management of the Water Treatment Division and received an enthusiastic response. “We have now decided to standardise on ABB Comp-AC drives for all booster pumps and are looking for other suitable applications in sewerage. One promising application would be to use a Comp-AC drives to control the pressure in a sewerage treatment plant in order to maintain the correct oxygen content in the treatment vessels.”

As well as energy saving, the drives bring other benefits to the booster stations. “With the previous solution, we were seeing pressures of between 32 metres head and 43 metres head, with peaks of up to 45 metres head. The Comp-AC drives allow us to set the pressure to 26 metres head, reducing the incidence of leaks and bursts due to the lower pressure on the main.”

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