Coatesville company takes toilet tech to another level, helps local hotel save $3K a month

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The team at H20 Connected thought there must have been a mistake.

Just minutes after engineers finished installing hundreds of the company's new Leakalertor Pro "smart" toilet tank monitors at the Fairfield Inn in Exton, they got an alert that one of the toilets was running. Thinking it must be a software bug, since the alert came so quickly, they went over to the hotel and discovered the room had just been cleaned, and the toilet was, in fact, running. Since no guests were due in the room

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The Leakalertor Pro is designed to alert property managers to a running or leaking toilet before it racks up hundreds of extra dollars in water costs.

for another four days, catching the issue immediately saved the hotel from wasting more than 28,000 gallons of water, representing more than $300 in costs.

While the hotel has a regimented maintenance program, the Leakalertor Pro has since been able to save it about $3,000 a month by alerting them to leaky, running toilets as soon as they happen, said H20 Connected CEO Susan Springsteen.

The Coatesville-based company is now in production on the devices and delivering its first sales in the next six weeks after raising a $1.3 million Series A to build the Leakalertor Pro. The product, which is protected by numerous new patents, is the first of its kind in the market, Springsteen said, and offers managers of hotels, apartment buildings, office complexes, nursing homes and other large-scale properties the ability to save money by alerting them to toilet issues as soon as they

occur via a desktop web dashboard. The dashboard alerts include the exact location of the toilet, the specific issue at hand and how many gallons have been wasted.

"The number one reason for a high water bill is a running toilet," Springsteen said, as they waste between 4.5 to 5.5 gallons a minute. There are between 300 and 500 million tank toilets in the United States and Canada alone, she said, and cited Environment Protection Agency figures that show 20% of them are leaking at any one time.

H20's founders, Springsteen and Eric Canfield, spun H20 out of nth Solutions, the product development and manufacturing company they founded together in 2006. The partners broke off H20 as its own company so it could focus exclusively on water tech, and raise the funds it needed to develop and scale the Leakalertor Pro.

The idea for Leakalertor dates back to before nth Solution's founding, when Canfield was frustrated at the damage caused by his daughters' toilet repeatedly overflowing.

Over the years, they eventually developed the Leakalertor 6000, a small box that's placed on a toilet tank and displays a green light when it's working property, and flashes a red light when there's an issue that needs to be addressed. The product sells for $32.75 on Amazon and has earned 4.3 stars out of 65 reviews, but Springsteen said customers wanted something that could digitally alert them in case the light went unnoticed or unreported.

That's where Chariot Solutions come in. Springsteen and her team reached out to the Fort Washington-based tech firm about a year ago asking if they would be able to build software that could connect to the firm's existing hardware and firmware and create a device powered by the Internet of Things, or IoT.

"We needed not only to bring out [the device's data] and store it, but we also needed to make it actionable," she said. "You really want it to be packaged in a way where it tells you what to do."

Chariot's team built a proprietary central wireless gateway that collects the data and software that models it, detects anomalies in it and sends out alerts. A property

manager can use it to get texts that a toilet in a specific apartment building is leaking, and at what rate.

To Chariot's Chief Marketing Officer Tracey Welson-Rossman, the Leakalertor Pro shows that the hype of IoT and its ability to be implemented at scale to solve everyday problems is coming to fruition.

"It's this promise that is beginning to deliver," Welson-Rossman said.

Chariot has worked on IoT projects ranging from industrial to medical, she said, and their partnership with H20 points to how many different applications have yet to be invented. "There's other ways of looking at these devices to create more value."

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