Belimo Zone Valves Provide Instant Success at Boston Marriott Cambridge

As Director of Engineering for the Boston Marriott Cambridge, Robert Vass knows that each mechanical decision he makes for the hotel has 431 opportunities to fail. That's the number of guestrooms at the hotel, located in the historic Kendall Square district of Boston. So when it came to replacing the zone valves in the fan coil units in all the guestrooms during a major renovation, reliability was his first priority. Serviceability was a close second. With over 400 guestrooms, it's not practical to take a half day to service a single valve. After all, a hotel wants to fill its rooms with paying guests, not service people. To that end, Mr. Vass also wanted a valve that could be quickly and easily serviced by his own maintenance staff.

Medford Wellington Service Company, Inc. of Medford, Massachusetts was awarded the contract for replacing all the heating and cooling zone valves at the Marriott Cambridge. The existing valves were approximately 20-years old and had begun to fail regularly. When failure occurred, the best that in-house staff could do was replace the motor, since replacing the entire valve required cutting into the pipe and soldering in a new one in. Clearly, the hotel wanted to avoid this situation with future valves.

Tony Pasciuto of Medford Wellington Service consulted with HVAC controls distributor, Interstate Electric Equipment, to help him select new zone valves that would meet the hotel's criteria. This included a valve that could withstand the high shut-off pressures of the hotel's hydronic system. It also had to be readily available so that delivery could be easily coordinated with the hotel's occupancy schedule.

"We could have recommended several different valves," said Jeff Hurwitz, of Interstate Electric Equipment, "but we recommended Belimo for this job because of its reliability and availability. Also, Belimo really stands behind their products. As a manufacturer, they spend a lot of time and effort on research and development, so their good reputation is not just marketing based—it's based on fact."

New Valves Eliminate Complaints

The Belimo two-way electronic zone valves selected for the Marriott project incorporate an actuator with a simple push button for quick removal. To further simplify servicing, Medford Wellington put unions in front of each valve so that, if necessary, the valve body can be removed without cutting into the pipe. Maintenance staff can simply slip them on and off with a wrench; no soldering is required.

Approximately 1600 zone valves were installed at the Marriott Cambridge. Installations went quickly and easily, generally taking about ¼ of the time it took to service the old valves.

Robert Vass credits Medford Wellington's service and professionalism for helping to make the project a success. However, as with any hotel project, the ultimate yardstick for success is guest satisfaction. A sudden drop in guests' complaints indicates that Belimo was a smart choice for the hotel.

"Before the installations, the number one complaint we received from our hotel guests was about the heating or cooling," said Mr. Vass. "Now, I estimate that those complaints have dropped by 75% to 100%."

J20752 - 04/07 - Subject to change. © BELIMO U.S. Inc.

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