

The following commentary appeared in the October 2002 Supplement to the *ASHRAE Journal* entitled "BACnet Today".

A Technology Embraced



Steven T. Bushby, Chairman ASHRAE SSPC 135 - BACnet Committee

This special feature on BACnet provides a good opportunity to pause and reflect on how far we have come in the effort to develop a robust communication standard for building control systems that will be accepted around the world. When we began in 1987, most people in the industry thought we were on a fool's errand. It has been an extraordinary experience to be part of a process that has resulted in fundamental, sweeping changes in building automation and control systems around the world.

In 1995 when BACnet was published I knew that the process was nowhere near being completed. However, I did think that the pace would slow down. Having provided a solid base from which to build and knowing that it would take several years for the marketplace to absorb what we had already accomplished, I expected future development to proceed at a more moderate pace. It hasn't.

I had underestimated the enthusiasm of a core group of manufacturers who had decided to embrace BACnet technology, including some who had never been involved in developing BACnet and some outside the HVAC control industry. Serious and credible proposals for new capabilities began pouring in from BACnet developers, from "sister" standardization bodies in Europe and Asia, as well as ideas that had been placed on the back burner in order to get the original standard published.

BACnet committee meetings are now international events. We regularly have participants from Canada, Europe, Korea, Japan, and the United States. We maintain formal liaisons with CEN TC 247, the Institute of Electrical Installation Engineers of Japan, and ISO TC 205. As building control experts from around the world embrace BACnet because of its technical merits they have also embraced the openness of the ASHRAE continuous maintenance process. They travel the long distance to participate directly because they believe that BACnet is the way of the future.

The real test of BACnet's success however is in the marketplace. Today there are companies in twelve countries making BACnet products and 102 registered BACnet vendor identifiers. There is no end in sight to the growth and it appears to be accelerating.

The articles featured in this supplement provide an update on BACnet technology and glimpse of how BACnet is being used. The case studies not only illustrate the depth of BACnet's capabilities but also the fact that BACnet has become a worldwide success. These projects are merely an example of what BACnet has become but they stand as a real tribute to the many people whose time, talent, and efforts have made BACnet a reality.