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FOR YOUR INFORMATION
Idaho Business Review
Boise, Idaho
Wednesday July 5, 2017
by Anne Wallace Allen
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Idaho hotel owner is betting on a water-saving laundry machine that uses polymer beads

Revolutions are few and far between in the realm of hotel laundry. But a new washing technology that uses beads and saves water, created by a British company called Xeros, might be one.

Jerame Petry, the owner of three Idaho hotels, is the first in Idaho to adopt Xeros' water-saving laundry machine. He leased four of them in March for his hotels in Nampa and McCall. He expects they'll enable him to cut his water use in the laundry by 1.3 million gallons of water at the three hotels combined, and his laundry-related energy use by half.

Petry first learned of the Xeros technology through an article in Lodging magazine. The Xeros machines clean clothes with a small amount of detergent and water and with millions of reuseable nylon polymer beads that absorb stains and substances and will run about 1,000 cycles before they need to be replaced. The bead technology, developed in the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom, enables the clothes to be cleaned at lower temperatures than a conventional water-based washing machine and with less detergent, said Steve Mathis, a regional sales manager with Xeros who has worked with Petry.

Petry's leased machines are the first four in Idaho, though Mathis said he has customers leasing machines in Oregon, Washington and California.

"I am one to always try out the new technology and see if it works," Petry said. He added that he spoke at length with Mathis, whom he already knew, and did extensive research before deciding to try the Xeros machines.

"We realized it would decrease our carbon footprint, and that's kind of why we went forward with it," Petry said. He owns a Holiday Inn that opened in June in Nampa, and a Holiday Inn Express and Best Western Plus in McCall.

The hospitality industry has for years sought to become more sustainable, in response to consumer requests and in a bid to save money on traditionally large outlays for things like water and energy. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the hospitality industry (including institutions like jails and schools), is responsible for 15 percent of all the commercial water use in the country. That includes water used in restrooms, laundries, landscaping, and kitchens. Only utilities and infrastructure use more.

The U.S. Green Building Council has said the nation's hospitality industry spends \$4 billion on energy and uses 1.2 trillion gallons of water per year.

Reducing water and energy consumption in the laundry room is a huge opportunity for hotels seeking to become more sustainable. Most hotels are now working hard to promote their sustainable initiatives and some even have eco-friendly brands. Most got on board with saving water years ago by asking guests if they would

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mind re-using their linens for more than one day without washing. Leasing a Xeros machine takes that much farther, said Mathis .

"There really hasn't been an innovation in laundry for 60 years, so technologically this is huge," he said.

Petry's hotel in Nampa has 85 rooms, and his two in McCall have 85 and 66. At the smaller of the three, he said, he washes 180,000 pounds of laundry each year; at each of the larger, he washes more than 200,000.

With the new machines, staffing in Petry's laundry rooms stays the same. The washers cost \$600 per month each to lease, including maintenance and chemicals.

Petry said the machines enable staff to wash more linens in less time.

"It's an easy machine," he said. "All the beads come out of the linens and towels at the end of the cycle, which is pretty amazing. "

After the beads have done their job through 1,000 wash cycles or so, Mathis said, they are recycled for use in the auto industry.

"I think this is the wave of the future," Petry said.

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