

THE WHOLESALE[®]

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Product Development

Giving customers what they ask for Bradford White rolls out Accessory Packages for the ICON System

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During the highly successful launch of their ICON System™ gas control valve last fall, Bradford White noted that plans were in the works to roll out a line of Accessory Packages in the first quarter that would offer even greater versatility and benefits to wholesalers, contractors and homeowners.

According to Bradford White vice president-sales and marketing Bruce Carnevale, the ICON System's launch "has been a phenomenal success, going even beyond my expectations. I am hearing stories every day about

tion, resulting in few callbacks.

The ICON System allows homeowners to add on Accessory Packages that offer previously unavailable energy- and time-saving benefits. The first wave of these packages from Bradford White is now available. Among the features they offer are:

- More hot water for the money
- Energy savings
- Operational programmability
- Leak detection
- Automatic shut off of incoming water supply.

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contractors becoming Bradford White customers, primarily because they really like the ICON technology. And of course our reps and our wholesalers love it because it gives them something new to sell."

He emphasized that the valves are working extremely well, with rarely a technical issue. In fact, calls regarding the ICON to the Bradford White Service Center have been remarkably low — especially in light of its recent release. Carnevale credits the company's independent representatives and wholesale customers for doing an outstanding job in their training efforts, which have educated contractors and made them very adept at installa-

and exciting products to sell," said Carnevale. "All of these new packages tie in very simply with the ICON system to make it a seamless progression. It all really starts with the Accessory Module, which is mounted to the water heater and connected to the communication port that is built into the control itself. This module is what controls and powers all of our Accessory Packages."

A multi-color LED status indicator on the module monitors the Accessory Packages, while also offering diagnostic codes that signal leak detection, inlet shut-off valve status and a control fault. In addition, it activates an audible alarm if a leak is detected and is de-activated



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if a leak has been corrected. A mute feature is included to silence the alarm with the push of a button.

How they work

Let's take a look at each of these new Accessory Packages a little more closely:

• **Protection Package** — This package is designed to help mitigate damage that a water heater leak can cause. Among its features is an electronic leak detection sensor that attaches to the base of the water heater and triggers an audible alarm if a leak occurs. As an additional layer of protection, if the sensor detects a prolonged leak, it also sends a signal to the Accessory Module to interrupt main burner operation. This prevents the potentially unsafe condition of heating a less than full, or even empty,

tank. When the situation is corrected, the Accessory Module re-sets both the leak detection sensor and gas valve so normal water heating can take place.

"The system is designed so it doesn't make nuisance alarms," Carnevale noted. "In fact, it actually is set to sense

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and monitor a leak for 15 minutes or so before it activates the alarm. This avoids unnecessary service calls and

A new ICON in water heating

homeowner aggravation. Knowing this, the homeowner doesn't have to guess whether there is really a problem or not and if it is time to call a technician.

"Once the leak is detected, it will shut off the main burner operation, but keeps the pilot lit. We are very concerned about safety and our engineers and Honeywell did a remarkable job on these features."

Another feature of the Protection Package is a rubber dam that improves detection by collecting water when there is no drain pan. It is installed around the base of the water heater, and holds enough water to activate the sensor and alarm when a leak occurs.

- **Inlet Shut-Off Valve Package** — "For homeowners who want to take their leak protection to the next level, they can have their contractors install our automatic shut off package," Carnevale explained. "This automatically shuts off the cold water inlet after a leak is detected and confirmed, and gives homeowners peace of mind when they are away from their home, especially for long periods of time."

It can be mounted directly to the water heater, or at any point upstream of the water heater. Similar to the Protection Package, as soon as the problem is corrected, the Accessory Module opens the shut-off valve, which allows water to enter the tank and normal water heating to begin again.

- **Performance Package** — Homeowners can realize savings of up to 36% on their energy usage with this programmable control, which offers seven-

day programming for up to four periods a day (wake, leave, return, sleep).

"These controls are very easy to operate and allow homeowners to program their water heater much like they do their HVAC system," Carnevale said. "They can set it so the heater is running at the set-point temperature in the morning and then again later in the day, but not while they are away from the home or sleeping. The control can be mounted on top of the water heater or remotely somewhere in the home for easier access by the homeowner."

This control features a hot water capacity indicator, a read out of set point water temperature, diagnostic display codes for installation and troubleshooting, and a battery back-up for up to 30 days.

"The Performance Package really does two things for homeowner," Carnevale noted. "First, it increases hot water deliverability by 50% or more. The second part is the significant energy savings. Of course, the amount of savings depends on how the water heater is used and how long the homeowner is away. We accomplish this by using an integrated mixing device that allows the contents of the water heater to be stored at a higher temperature. The mixing valve then mixes in cold water from the inlet line until the water reaches the ideal temperature."

Among the features of the mixing device are a 1/4" NPT cold water port that can be substituted for a saddle valve when connecting an ice maker; an alternate 1/2" NPT hot water outlet

can be used for a dishwasher, washing machine or other high-temperature application; and a 1/2" NPT recirculation port, which is designed to eliminate any confusion when installing a recirculation line.

The IMD is factory set at 120°F; an added safety feature is a clearly marked, push-to-turn hand wheel that helps prevent the temperature from being accidentally changed. The unique design of the IMD significantly reduces mixing valve installation time versus a standard mixing valve — from an hour to as little as 15 minutes.

"These Accessory Packages really give the contractor something to sell and a whole new set of solutions they can offer the homeowner," Carnevale explained. "They are generating a huge amount of interest. Our wholesalers and contractors are really appreciative that we have come out with these packages, because it gives them a whole new revenue stream. In study after study, we are seeing that homeowners want reliable, simple-to-use tools like these that allow them greater control over their energy savings and hot water usage. And now our contractors are able to give their customers what they are asking for."

Carnevale noted that Bradford White is developing a Contractor Marketing Tool Kit, which includes videos that technicians can use to explain features and benefits to the homeowner while they are on the sales/service call. "Contractors have a lot to remember when it comes to describing the features of our ICON System and Accessory Packages, and

when you are making the same presentations over and over, you sometimes forget whether or not you have mentioned all the benefits," said Carnevale. "This gives contractors an easy way to make their presentations, and ensures that they provide homeowners with all the information they need to make a decision. We have also put together a consumer-focused brochure that contractors can leave with their customers or use in their other marketing efforts."

When asked about the type of response to the Accessory Packages that Bradford White is getting from its customers, Carnevale said, "The best description I can give you is excitement. There really is a high level of excitement surrounding the ICON System and the Accessory Packages. Our reps have training sessions going on constantly and we've also posted a video on our website that fully explains each of our Accessory Packages."

"Both Bradford White and Honeywell exhibited at the AHR Expo in late January, and I can tell you the interest in both booths for these packages — and the ICON System as a whole — was just outstanding. We had a standard 50-gallon gas water heater on display loaded with the ICON Accessories, and it drew a lot of traffic. Honeywell also had a display at their booth, and when I went by some of their folks told me it had been a hit at their booth as well. We really couldn't be more pleased with the level of interest and the orders we've been taking." ■

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