

TORO

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**Resort and Hospitality
Water Management
Customer Success Story:**
Gaylord Texan Resort

The Toro® Sentinel® Central Control System: *Impressive Control for an Impressive Hotel*

It is often said that “everything is bigger in Texas.” If the Gaylord Texan Resort is any indication, this may well be true.

Located in Grapevine, Texas between Dallas and Fort Worth, the spectacular Gaylord Texan opened in April 2004. The hotel immediately generated lots of excitement—partly because everything about it is so big.



With over 1,500 guest rooms and suites, the hotel itself encompasses 23.5 million square feet, (2,2 million square meters) highlighted by a magnificent atrium featuring 4.5 acres (1,8 hectares) of lush indoor garden under glass.

The exterior of the hotel is equally impressive. The property takes in 150 acres (61 hectares), most of which are beautifully landscaped with shrubs, trees, manicured lawns and more than 25,000 units of blooming color.

It’s all big...and so is the responsibility to keep it looking perfect.

“We have 38,000 sprinkler heads on the site, and 14 different controllers,” says Ann Maner, exterior grounds supervisor for the Gaylord Texan. “We had to find a company with the technology to run all of those, and that’s why we had Toro install the Sentinel system.”

For two years before the hotel’s opening, Toro engineers and technicians were on-site at the Gaylord to carefully implement the Sentinel system and its components, including a big drip irrigation network inside the atrium.

“The Sentinel runs it all,” says Maner, “and it’s just been a great system to work with.”

Customized Flexibility

Given the size of the Gaylord’s property, the variety of vegetation and the high expectations of quality, Maner and her staff have complex demands with little margin for error.

“Since this is a resort and convention center, it has to look pristine at all times,” she explains, “but you have to be able to work around things. In nice weather, you have guests who want to walk and jog and get out, so they can’t get sprayed. With the



Sentinel system, if I need to water specific parts of the hotel at 2, 3 or 4 in morning, I can pick just those areas to water at those times.”

This example is only one aspect of the Sentinel’s flexibility that appeals to Maner and the hotel.

“The system has so much flexibility,” she continues. “I can go into different controllers and different zones and program all of our blooming color to run every other day for a 10- or 15 minute soak cycle, and then come back in another two hours and water for 10 minutes. I can have the shrubs go one time a week, or three times a week, or three times a day, if I need to. Our 14 different controllers run over 400 different zones, and we can program those to run 16 or 17 different types of customized schedules at all different times of day or night, weekends or evenings. We can program just about anything you can think of with it.”

This level of flexibility is a big factor with an operation as varied as the Gaylord’s, and so is the Sentinel’s reliability. “Once you learn the system and get it up and running, it’s basically worry-free,” she says. “You know that on certain days the zones are going to run, and you don’t have to guess. I can set six weeks of programs and clusters, and send that all out at one time to these different units, and they will all be synchronized. Then it all runs. The convenience and dependability are just wonderful.”

Remote Capabilities Add Control

The Sentinel system also features hand-held radio controls—complete with two-way voice communication—that enable the user to run programs in the field, or make changes and upload them to the central computer. “I walk every inch of the property, 10 - 15 miles (16 – 24 km) a day on average, and the hand-held radio is a life saver for me,” Maner says. “I can walk up to any particular zone we have and turn on all the heads, adjust heads or locate any that have been broken by traffic or damage. We’ve had groups that set up tents, and they hammer stakes in the ground that sometimes go right through the irrigation. So, I’ll flag places where I see a problem, and we’ll make those necessary repairs.”

The remote-control capabilities of the Sentinel even go beyond the hand-held radio.

“You can run it off of a laptop computer,” Maner adds. “I could be in the Bahamas, plug into the Internet and pull it up. I can make sure everything is running, or correct issues or send out reprogramming features—the whole nine yards.”

The Gaylord’s Toro Sentinel also controls the drip irrigation in the hotel’s atrium, which has over 700 varieties of plants in 24 different

zones, as well as an outdoor vineyard. Another aspect of the system that Maner likes is that the Sentinel system helps to conserve water.

“We have to think about the amounts we use, and not have runoff water,” she adds. “The Sentinel lets you add a weather station with sensors all over your property that automatically communicate to the central controller. They’ll tell you if an area is too moist, so instead of putting out, say, 1,700 gallons (6,5 cubic meters) of water, it might only need 700 (2,6).”

The Gaylord Texan Hotel is truly a special place, and Toro is glad it uses a special control system to irrigate it efficiently.

“You can really customize it, and that’s one of the things that makes it such a great system,” Maner

concludes. “Working with it has been a good experience all around.”

