



## McDonald Wastewater Q&A

3 min read

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Welcome to our Application Highlight series! Throughout these posts, we'd like to show you some unique applications of RACO's product, how it's used, and who's using it. For the first post in this series, we interviewed one of our resellers and recently turned representative, McDonald Wastewater of Alabama.

McDonald Wastewater is a turnkey contract wastewater operations company based in Eastern Alabama. They offer their customers a whole suite of wastewater services including permitting, compliance, operations and maintenance. Early in his career, Steve McDonald saw a niche in the resorts and homes around Lake Martin, the largest reservoir in Alabama. With a passion for keeping Lake Martin

pristine, Steve began contract operating for the wastewater systems around the lake to, in his words, "Keep sewage out of Lake Martin."

What began as one contract on the side grew into many. After a few years, Steve had to decide whether to stay at his city job or make the leap into entrepreneurship. With the support of his wife, an entrepreneur herself, he took a leap of faith and hasn't looked back. Contract operations comes with plenty of challenges and RACO's AlarmAgent is one of the tools in McDonald Wastewater's toolbox. We sat down with Steve and his business partner Chris to learn more about them and how RACO supports their success.

### **How many systems do you operate?**

Steve: We operate around 26 treatment systems. But those systems and their lift stations have over 200 pumps combined.

### **What's the biggest hurdle you face as contract operators?**

Steve: Since COVID, the biggest issue we've faced is getting parts. Lead times for pump parts are sometimes six to eight months out, which makes operating challenging.

Chris: The other challenge we deal with is staffing! Finding people willing to get into a wet well and turn a wrench is tough.

### **How do you use the AlarmAgent in your day to day?**

Steve: We mainly use them to monitor our 200+ pumps, whether at lift stations or treatment plants. But we're planning to install them on blowers and other process equipment at our customers' package plants. The more information, the better. It makes our jobs easier.

Chris: Yeah, the AlarmAgent has made us considerably efficient. There are only four of us, so it allowed us to grow our business without hiring more staff. Plus, the

systems we operate are avoiding Sanitary Sewer Overflows. So we're happy.

### **Which AlarmAgent feature is your favorite?**

Steve: The main thing we love is access to the ETM meters. That's how we know what's happening when we're not there. The ETM meters have made us more efficient and saved us from SSO's, saving our clients money. I tell them, "You can either pay it in state fines or pay for the equipment to prevent it."

### **How is the AlarmAgent different from other products you've used?**

Steve: I'll be honest, my past experience with remote monitoring equipment left a bad taste in my mouth. When Chris suggested we start using RACO, I wasn't so sure.

Chris: He fought me tooth and nail!

Steve: Chris got me to try one AlarmAgent. The next thing I knew, we had five! Every operator should want one on everything they have. Plus, no one's support is as good as RACO's.

Chris: For example, we had some alarm issues a few months back. It was Sunday morning, so I called Kendall Rosbury (RACO inside sales extraordinaire) at RACO, expecting to leave a voicemail. She picked up the phone, helped me reboot the units, and fixed our problems in an hour. None of these other remote alarm companies have that level of support on a Sunday.

Steve: Yep, RACO has been with us from the beginning as our business grew. We consider their team like family.

Servicing the wastewater industry since 1948, RACO has adapted to the changing market environments and made sure to provide consistent value to its customers. A reliable solution you can trust, RACO's field tested AlarmAgent is the product that fits all your remote monitoring needs. Get notified of alarm conditions and analyze field data for a fraction of the cost of SCADA. From anywhere with web access, check on the status of your remote equipment using [AlarmAgent.com](https://www.alarmagent.com).

Interested in learning what the AlarmAgent can do for you? [Click here](#) and someone on our team will reach out!