

For Immediate Release

New Optical Rain Gauge Kicks the (Tipping) Bucket

Eden Prairie, Minnesota (January 12, 2010) - A new optical sensing technology appears poised to change the way rainfall has been measured for centuries. Opto-Electronic Design, Inc. of Eden Prairie, MN has developed a optical infrared sensor that measures rainfall, the Rain Tracker RG-10 Rain Gage. The new rain sensor is about the size and shape of a tennis ball, and uses beams of infrared light to measure rainfall hitting its outside surface. There are no moving parts in the new sensor, so, in addition to being a hundred times more sensitive than traditional "tipping bucket" style rain sensors, the RG-10 is nearly indestructible.

Rainfall is typically measured with the tipping bucket style of rain gauge that was invented in 1662. These work just as the name would imply: water collects in a large funnel and fills a bucket which tips when it reaches a certain weight. Along with water, however, the funnel collects dust, leaves and other debris, and mineral deposits, making it a maintenance item. Also, a tipping bucket sensitive enough to measure small amounts of rainfall is a delicate thing that may not be jostled. Other sorts of rain sensing technologies exist, each with other sorts of problems. In contrast, the RG-10 uses optical technology that was originally developed for automotive windshield wiper controls. Rain sensors for cars must be extremely sensitive and able to reliably withstand a harsh environment. This makes the RG-10 essentially maintenance free.

With this new rain sensing technology, systems that are now rare may soon become commonplace. For example, the RG-10 can serve as a maintenance-free sensor for skylights and windows that close when it is raining. Irrigation control can be made more precise, and meteorology can be made more mobile. The improved sensitivity of the RG-10 will make measurement of small amounts of rainfall possible. Weather reporters often report the rain as "a trace", rather than a giving an actual number, because the rain is simply not enough to tip the bucket in a traditional rain gauge.

The RG-10 is the invention of Rein Teder, president of Opto-Electronic Design and the inventor of much technology behind automotive rain sensors. Rein (yes, his name really is pronounced just like the precipitation his invention measures) believes that this new technology will enable any number of inventions that are simply not possible with current rain gauges. Opto-Electronic Design make automotive rain sensors for specialty applications. "People have been asking for this for years", says Mr. Teder. If sometime in the coming months you hear a weather reporter say that it has rained "four thousandths of an inch", and not "a trace", then it is likely that this new technology is behind the new-found accuracy. The single-piece price of the RG-10 is \$99.00, and more information is available at www.rainsensors.com.

For high resolution images, visit <http://www.rainsensors.com/press>

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