

FTS TODAY

A PERIODIC NEWSLETTER FOR FTS CLIENTS

www.ftsinc.com

Spring 2009

Announcing a powerful new concept in remote datalogging – the F6

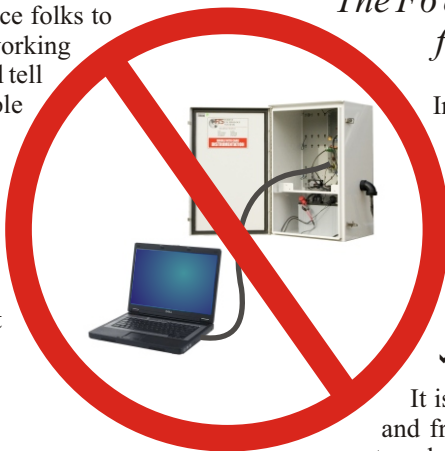
The F6 datalogger is the most important new product from FTS in fifteen years. Under development in R&D for three years, the F6 provides innovations that will change the way you work with your remote weather stations.

The new FTS F6 datalogger has many important new features – the two most important are:

- It can be ordered with the field-proven G5 GOES transmitter built right in, making it easier to install and maintain as well as lowering costs
- It has a built in 'touch screen' that eliminates the need to use a laptop computer in the field during installation or field maintenance sessions

Ask any remote weather station service folks to describe the most frustrating part of working with dataloggers in the field – they will tell you that is it working with portable computers.

- ⊗ Nowhere to set them up
- ⊗ Screens are difficult to see in bright light
- ⊗ Damage from rain, wind, or snow
- ⊗ Low batteries require constant monitoring and charging



The F6 has two waterproof USB ports, permitting the use of 'off the shelf' memory sticks for downloading data or transferring datalogger files.



The F6 eliminates the need for a laptop computer in the field.

Introducing the FTS Quick Touch System, a giant leap in datalogger technology. This is an industrial grade colour screen, designed for use in the outdoors.

- ✓ All datalogger functions are performed with a series of screen 'touches'
- ✓ No need for a laptop, connecting cable, nor utilities software
- ✓ See instant graphics of data and battery performance
- ✓ Simple and intuitive to use

It is now simple to transfer data and programming files to and from the datalogger. The F6 has two waterproof USB ports – plug in a USB memory stick and with a few button 'touches':

- ✓ Download all or blocks of logged data
- ✓ Download datalogger 'audit' and activity files
- ✓ Record field service information (date, what was done, serial numbers, etc)
- ✓ Upload new programming from FTS
- ✓ Program other station components (i.e. Radio Voice Transmitter or RVT)

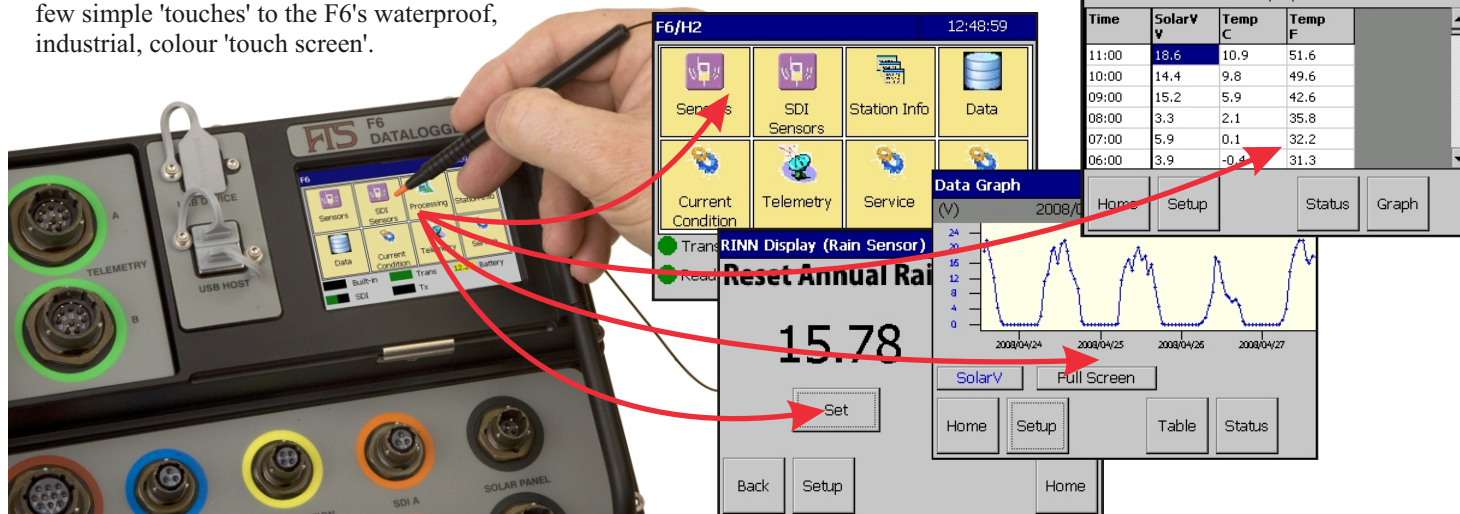
Both the NFDRS and Canadian Fire Danger Indices are supported

Check it out at www.ftsinc.com under Products/Dataloggers

More about the F6 inside...

All Datalogger Functions From the F6 'Touch Screen'™

All datalogger functions, from viewing graphical data, downloading data, to programming or editing the datalogger program, are carried out via a few simple 'touches' to the F6's waterproof, industrial, colour 'touch screen'.



What's New From the FTS Service Group?

They say the 'devil is the details', so it is a good thing that FTS Service Director, Steve Walker is 'detail guy'. With over 350 maintenance contracts throughout North America, and several FTS field technicians in the field at any given time, logistics are critical. The following are a number of questions that Steve's group receive almost every day:

- ✓ **How do I manage my station's 'Annual Rain Count'?** There are three methods:
 - Using TOOLBOX, download and edit the DLP (datalogger program)
 - Using TOOLBOX, go into the datalogger 'tags' and edit the Annual Rain Count tag.
 - Arrange to have the datalogger firmware upgraded, so it resets automatically every year at midnight on Dec.31 (or any other date).
 - Call us for more information on these methods.
 - With the new F6 datalogger, the annual rain count will be managed from the 'touch screen'.
- ✓ **What's the best way to secure cables to masts?**
 - Black cable ties (white are not as UV resistant), 12 - 16" apart run on the underside of tower frame members to avoid 'climbing' damage
 - Electrician's tape will do, but leaves sticky residue on cables and masts
 - Be sure to leave drip loops for the sensors
 - With trileg towers, keep the wind sensor cables clear of the 'scissor like' mast hinge.
- ✓ **Does our station have to be grounded?**
 - We recommend strongly that permanently installed stations be grounded. Use the same ground rod and clamps as for residential homes, and #4 stranded copper to the grounding lug on the back of the enclosure. All other components are grounded to this.
 - Grounding won't save the station from a direct hit, but will help it survive most 'near' strikes.



✓ Should I use a lubricant on the sensor threads?

- Yes. Use a light coating of lithium grease on any threads found on the station (wind sensors, sensor bolts, U-bolts, etc.) This will ensure you can remove them next year. Lithium grease is available in small tubes at almost any national hardware store.
- At sites near the coast or at high elevations, you should also use a self-amalgamating tape (like Scotch 3M Rubber) on the connectors (wind sensors, GOES antenna, etc). Then wrap the 'rubber' tape with a layer of common black electrical tape, to ensure the connectors are well protected. This will greatly enhance the life of your cable connectors.

✓ Can FTS install my station or station upgrade?

- Yes. FTS field technicians routinely visit clients' sites to either install, assist, and train the client's personnel on station installation, operation, and maintenance.

✓ Our folks need some training. Can FTS help? Yes! FTS offers a range of training options as follows:

- AOM Maintenance Contract: an FTS field technician visits your sites(s) once per year. While there (he/she) will be pleased to train your staff on the day-to-day operations of the station.
- FTS Training Workshops: if you believe there are a number of interested folks in your area, FTS will be pleased to conduct a full 1 or 2 day training session, including setting up both portable and fixed RAWS stations, and simulating annual service for each.

Please call for assistance with any service issues regarding your FTS weather station.

Message from FTS President David Illing

FTS is a pretty exciting place to be these days.

We have a lot going on with many truly innovative products and services, many new customers, and many network upgrades. With our quarterly newsletter and our updated web site, we promise to improve our communications with you.

Now having met with almost 40 customers in the field, a few things really stood out in our dialogues.

- how much earnest and mutual respect exists between our customers and FTS
- how much interest our customers have in hearing more from us about new developments and best practices
- how much trust is put into our fire weather product reliability and capabilities

- how little is known about our 15 years experience in Water Quality Sediment monitoring and our all weather and HydroMet capabilities and experience

I encourage you to check out our improved website (www.ftsinc.com), and ask about our latest generation datalogger. The new F6 sets new standards for dataloggers and eliminates the need for laptops in the field.

We strive to provide solutions with uncompromising reliability in uncompromising environments; at the same time we strive for greatness in ease of use. If we are not giving you (our customers) these things, or if you have any feedback for us, please give me a call or send me an e-mail. I'd enjoy hearing from you.

Please send any and all feedback to info@ftsinc.com.



'Fire Weather' isn't the only thing that FTS monitors!

Has someone from another branch of your organization ever asked if they can add other sensors to your RAWS stations? Do you have colleagues that do stream gauging, sediment/turbidity monitoring or water quality monitoring? We can likely supply whatever they need.

For the past 15 years, FTS has supplied hundreds of remotely deployed, hydrological and meteorological stations for non-fire related applications. In particular, the FTS Hydrology group specializes in easy to use systems with the following industry-leading products:

- ✓ **StreamWatch** – a turnkey sediment/turbidity water quality monitoring station for freshwater streams and watersheds. StreamWatch collects water sediment samples during turbidity events and comes fully integrated with the DTS-12 turbidity sensor, datalogger, GOES transmitter (or other telemetry), automated pump sampler, and sophisticated grab sampling algorithms.

- ✓ **StreamTrac** – a sophisticated Environmental Database Analysis and Management Software (EDAMS) Program, used to collect, graph, edit, analyze and process data sets from multi-parameter stream-side monitoring stations and early event warning.

- ✓ **DTS-12 Turbidity Sensor** – continuous real-time instream turbidity monitoring without routine calibration hassles and noisy data.

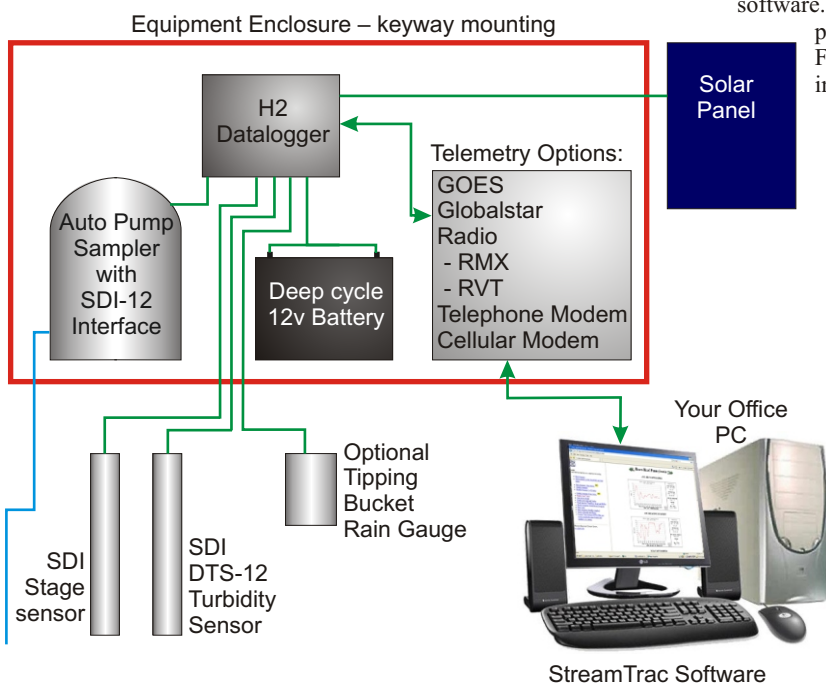
FTS systems employ technology recently endorsed by the USGS to establish sediment rating curves using the strong relationship between suspended sediment samples and turbidity. Combined with discharge, they provide the best estimates in the industry, for suspended sediment loads. FTS systems are used widely throughout North America among sediment monitoring groups.

FTS can meet most meteorological or hydrological monitoring requirements with our new range of plug-n-play Quick Touch dataloggers, telemetry devices, enclosures, sensors, and data information management software. As a turnkey manufacturer and full system integrator, FTS provides systems known for their ease of use and simple design. FTS combines our 'Making It Simple' design approach, with the industry's most comprehensive customer service capability.

Add these sensors to existing FTS RAWS stations:

- ✓ Soil moisture and temperature
- ✓ Snow precipitation
- ✓ Snow depth
- ✓ Snow weight (with water equivalency calculated)
- ✓ Water temperature
- ✓ Water level (with flow or volume calculated)
- ✓ Turbidity
- ✓ Multi-parameter sondes with:
 - ✓ Conductivity (with salinity calculated)
 - ✓ pH
 - ✓ Dissolved Oxygen
- ✓ Automatic water sample collectors

Please call for more information about any of these systems or sensors.



FTS is 'On the Road'

Over the next several months, FTS will be 'on the road' all over North America, attending fire conferences, trade shows, and client training sessions. If you know of an event that FTS should visit in your area, please call us.

Lexington KY	Association of State Dam Safety Officials	May 4/09
Vale, CO	National Hydrological Warning Council Conference	May 18/09
Quebec City, PQ	Canadian Water Resources Association Conference	June 9/09
Wilmington, NC	SGSF (Southern Group of State Foresters)	June 14/09
St. Louis, MO	NFFS (Northeast Forest Fire Supervisors Meeting)	June 22/09
Nashville, TN	American Fisher's Society AFS	August 30/09

G4 GOES Transmitter – Life Cycle Management

The venerable FTS G4 GOES transmitter, launched 11 years ago, is nearing the end of its maximum productive life.

The main GOES board was an OEM, manufactured by Seimac, Inc. Seimac have recently advised us that they consider this board to be obsolete and that they will no longer service them.

(The G5 GOES transmitter launched in 2004 was 100% designed and manufactured by FTS. It has proven to be an extraordinarily robust and reliable GOES transmitter.)

Over the past year, both the FTS Service Group and the NIFC Remote Sensing Fire Weather Support Unit in Boise, ID, have noticed decreasing reliability of the old G4.

Both FTS and NIFC maintain G4 spares pools to support their respective service contracts. At this time both pools have been significantly depleted. In the event of a G4 failure, it is unlikely that

FTS or NIFC will be able to supply a replacement G4 loaner.

If you experience a failure with your G4, here's what to do:

- ✓ Contact your maintenance provider and report the problem. If it is minor, it may be repairable. In this case, make arrangements to have the unit shipped back to FTS or NIFC. It is unlikely that a replacement will be available, so your station may be down while the evaluation is taking place.
- ✓ Request a new G5 replacement. Both FTS and NIFC maintain a pool of new G5 transmitters that can be sent on an emergency basis to replace the G4. These replacement G5's are not 'loaners' and must be purchased.

In summary, the sudden failure of existing G4's is likely not imminent. But it may be prudent to budget for a replacement G5 over the next year.

For more information, please contact FTS via any of the links below.

Need to ship components back to FTS?



The RMA serves two vital purposes:

- links your package to your 'job' when it arrives at FTS
- provides detailed shipping instructions for you, including a shipping 'label'

We also ask that you write your RMA number prominently on the outside of your package(s).

A client recently shipped us sensors to an incorrect address – the package has been lost by the shipper. Both we and the client are searching for them, and hopefully they'll turn up soon.

So we encourage all our clients to call for an RMA and instructions – before shipping anything back to the factory.

Anyone in our Service or Sales Group can quickly issue an RMA so please call us at **800-548-4264** for assistance.

For USA clients shipping station components back to the factory in Victoria, BC, FTS uses a freight-forwarder in Washington state. Its purpose – to essentially make the border 'transparent' to our clients. We've recently had to change this address.

When you contact FTS about sending in station components, we will issue an RMA number (Return Materials Author-ization) for your shipment.

FTS Has a New Website!

Be sure to check out the new FTS website – www.ftsinc.com
The old site served us well, but like the Paris runways, website fashions change too. And so has ours.

So we invite you to pop in and have a look around. There is a box at the end – please drop us a note and let know what you think.

Contact Details:

FTS Forest Technology Systems Ltd.
1065 Henry Eng Place
Victoria, BC, Canada
V9B 6B2

Phone: **800-548-4264**

Fax: **800-905-7004**

E-mail: info@ftsinc.com

Website: www.ftsinc.com *New*

FTS is an ISO 9001-2000 certified company.

For more information about ISO certification, see: www.iso.org

