



Special Edition Newsletter

City prepares to install Automated Meter Reading System

The City Council recently approved a \$5.1 million contract with Utility Technology Service, Inc. (UTS) for the installation and implementation of a city-wide automated meter reading (AMR) system using advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). The contract also includes the removal and installation of approximately 20,230 commercial and residential meters.

UTS will begin installing the required infrastructure later this month and their subcontractor, Professional Meters, Inc., will begin the process of removing and replacing meters beginning in October, a process that should take up to one year to complete.

“The benefits to our businesses and residents are numerous,” Rhonda Atkins, City Clerk, said. “With the AMR technology, the utility staff will be able to read all meters from City Hall without physically having to read on site. Because the system uses a FlexNet Advanced Metering System to transmit readings periodically to City Hall, the staff will be able to receive current information as needed,” Atkins said.

In addition, utility staff will have the ability to monitor water consumption and possibly catch a customer’s leak quicker, which will help with water conservation and create a savings to the customer. The system will alert staff in detecting malfunctioning or tampered meters. City officials state that the timely information capability, coupled with the ability for on-going analysis, can help both the utility staff and customer better manage water usage and keep costs down. As an added bonus the new meters are considered green and in compliance with current and future federal NSF-ANSI water standards.

Atkins stated that water meters are an integral component of the utility infrastructure and an overall meter upgrade is due. “Some of the existing meters have been in service for 30 years and may not be recording water usage accurately. With the new meters being representative of the latest technology, our customers can be assured that their meters will be read properly,” Atkins said.

Installation of commercial account meters will be first and begin in October. Officials state that it should take approximately three months for installation of the commercial meters. Atkins said that all commercial customers will be personally contacted prior to the installation.

Residential customers will begin receiving new meters in late fall. Notices will be mailed out to customers closer to the installation date expected for the area. The only inconvenience will be that the water will be shut off for a very short time during the installation.

Frequently asked questions about Automated Meter Reading (AMR)

- What is AMR? Automated meter reading, or AMR, is a method of using communication technology to read meters without having to access the customer's property.
- How does it work? The City of Midwest City's AMR system will use the Sensus iPerl , SR2 and Omni meters equipped with a small radio unit inside the meter box that is connected to the water meter. Through the FlexNet Advanced Metering System, the meter radio unit sends readings to regional collectors.
- Where is my meter? All water meters are located below ground in concrete or plastic meter enclosures with lids. Meter boxes are typically located near the sidewalk, curb or just off the roadway in the yard.
- Will there be a charge associated with this upgrade? No. There will be no charge to customers for the water meter change-out.
- Will I need to be home when you install the AMR device? No.
- What time of day will the AMR meter change-out take place? While most of the meter change-outs will take place between 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday-Friday it would not be uncommon to see employees working on the weekends.
- How will I know the person at my door is working on the AMR project? The City, through its contractor, is using Professional Meters, Inc. for installation. The meter technicians will carry identification cards, wear yellow shirts, and drive vehicles clearly marked with a PMI logo.
- Will my water be turned off? Yes. Before temporarily interrupting individual water services, crews will make every effort to ensure that doing so will not impose an undue hardship on the customer. Such efforts will include observing the meter to see if water is being used and knocking on doors to contact those who may be inside.
- How soon will I have water after the meter is replaced? Immediately.
- Will I see an increase in my water bill? It is not uncommon that a meter loses accuracy as it ages. If this is the case with your current meter, you may see an increase in your water bill as the new meter would be measuring the correct usage.
- Are there special instructions I need to know to care for the AMR meter? Yes. You are advised not to remove the meter box lid or to tamper with the meter or any apparatus inside the box. Use care not to mow directly over the meter lid. You are responsible for any damage that may happen to the meter. Fines or fees may be levied for any damage to city property. You are also asked not to park vehicles over the meter box.