

AUTOMATED METER READING

CITY OF LEBANON ELECTRIC / WATER UTILITY AMI PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is AMI? AMI stands for Advanced Metering Infrastructure. It's a system that uses wireless and fiber optic technology, just like wireless internet and cable TV, to send your meter reading information to the City. All electricity meters, and all water meters more than 15 years old, will be replaced with new meters as part of this project. The new meters that are installed will use the AMI technology.

Why change the meters now? This is the perfect time to make this change. Many of the City's electric and water meters have reached their useful life and need to be replaced. As meters age they become less accurate. It is much more cost effective to install the AMI system while the existing meters are being replaced due to their age. The AMI system will enhance the City's ability to run your electric and water utilities efficiently and at the lowest cost possible.

What benefits will I see from the new AMI meters? The new meters will allow the City to get real time electric and water consumption information on a regular basis. This will allow us to better serve our customers by proactively identifying potential problems such as water leaks. Currently, the City's meter reading contractors only read the water meters every other month. Because of this, if a water leak occurs at the property the high water usage may continue for several months. The new AMI meters will allow us and our customers to proactively identify abnormally high usage quickly so the situation can be addressed. The new system will allow customers to view their daily usage via a secure website if they choose to do so.

Will the new AMI system allow the City to control my in-home equipment and devices? No. You may have heard of "Smart Grid" electric systems where electric utilities have the ability to interact with in-home devices such as thermostats, etc. With the AMI system the City is installing, we will not be supporting the ability for the City to control electric and water consumption at the property through the AMI system. If a resident or business would like to install their own electric load management devices in their premises to improve energy efficiency, the new AMI meters have the ability to support this. However this would be entirely the property owner's decision and it would be their responsibility to purchase, install, and monitor such devices.

Is my personal energy and water consumption information confidential? Yes. The only information communicated is your meter number and your electric and water usage (the same information that was displayed on the old conventional meters at your premises). Second, your utility usage information will be safely transmitted over secure networks to and from the City. As is true now, your utility usage information will be protected and secure. The City must comply with federal laws regarding the privacy, protection, and disclosure of personal information.

How much is the AMI System costing the City? The cost of the entire AMI system, including the new meters, installation, and the communication infrastructure is \$2.1 million. Due to their age, many of these meters will need to be replaced anyway even if the City maintained the current manual reading system. Installing the AMI system will allow the City to eliminate our existing meter reading contract which costs the City \$132,000 per year, and capture an estimated \$225,000 per year in revenue that is currently lost due to existing meter inaccuracies and system water loss. In addition to eliminating the meter reading contract, the new AMI system will allow for a reduction in staff since meter consumption data can be accessed remotely instead of sending personnel to the property. Based on this data, the new AMI system has a rate of return of 7 years and *will save the City approximately \$2.0 million over a 12-year period.*

When will my new electric and water meters be installed? The City has identified a pilot project area along Columbus Avenue where the new system will be tested in the Fall of 2011. Upon successful completion of the pilot project, full implementation of the project will begin. We anticipate the project being completed by the summer of 2012. The new meters will be installed one neighborhood at a time.

How will I be notified of when my meters will be installed? You will receive written notice via a door hanger of when your water and electric meter will be installed in advance of the installation date. If your water meter is located outside of your building, you do not need to be home when your meters are installed. If you have extenuating circumstances and need additional information, you can contact the Service Department at 933-7200.

What do I have to do to be ready for my new meter installation? Please make sure there is free and safe access to your existing electric and water meters, and that no obstructions are in the way.

How long will I be without power or water during installation? Five to ten minutes is typical.

How should I prepare if I have life-sustaining medical equipment? Electricity will be shut off for about 5-10 minutes – but we recommend that you be prepared for longer just in case. If you have life-sustaining medical equipment that cannot be interrupted during installation, you need to have a back-up power source running during installation. Please call us at 933-7200 so we are aware of your medical equipment ahead of time.

What if I have a fire sprinkler system? To ensure the correct meter size is available, all customers with fire sprinkler systems are requested to call us at 933-7200.

What do I need to do after the meters are installed? All electricity-driven clocks and other timed devices will need to be reset after the electric meter installation; all appliances with battery back-up should function normally. When you first use your water, you might experience a "burp" of air and some residue at each outlet. If this happens, just run your water briefly until it flows normally.

Will my utility bill go up even if I'm using the same amount of electricity and water as before? Some bills will go down, some will go up, and some will stay about the same. The new meters are nearly 100% accurate, so customers with older meters may see an increase in their bill because the amount of power and water actually being used was under-measured in the past.

Didn't see an answer you were looking for? Please contact the Lebanon Service Department at 933-7200 or via email at sbrunka@lebanonohio.gov