

## LETTERS

### Status of SMLD's AMI upgrade

The Sterling Municipal Light Department entertained bids for an automatic meter interface (AMI) back in November of 2007 after researching various vendors and applications the previous year. In the summer of 2008, plans were being developed to integrate the AMI with our billing system, and a pilot program was started with about 100 of our customers. Then the Ice Storm of December 2008 hit and the project was halted until the disaster could be addressed and managed. The storm damaged a few AMI collectors and they were repaired during 2009.

In the spring of 2009, the project went through yet another challenge as our vendor, Arkion Systems Inc., was acquired by Mueller Water Products Inc. (a multibillion dollar infrastructure corporation developing electric and water meter information systems). After the red tape from the vendor acquisition, the SMLD was back on track with the project and informed its customers about AMI, what it was, and how it was to work at its Annual Open House. A customer educational seminar on Thursday, October 22, 2009 soon followed. This discussion focused on the new Smart Meter system benefits and what the Smart Meter installation meant for each of the SMLD's customers.

As a result, in November 2009 and January 2010 the initial pilot group (or Beta group) had to have their meters changed due to the vendor acquisition. Old meters and their reads were tracked, new meters and their reads were recorded, and all of the meters were calibrated. In addition, a complete secondary service inspection was conducted given the chance of potential damage from the Ice Storm of December 2008.

All along, Mueller Water Products, the SMLD, and its billing vendor managed code development, code integration, failsafes, equipment, training, testing, and quality assurance. The complete installation of all residential customer meters has not yet begun due to the management and the diligence of the SMLD team. When the integration is seamless and all systems are a go, then the SMLD team will give clearance for the installation. Customers will be sent letters, just as the pilot groups were. The communication will advise each customer of the week that the SMLD installation crews will be in their neighborhood. Technicians perform the meter upgrade between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. each business day and the process takes about 10 minutes.

Important to note, is that customer usage records were and will always be maintained throughout the processes above. Changes in usage (for example, adding a new appliance, additional occupants, etc.) will affect monthly kilowatt hours. Customers should look back to 2009 monthly usage as a comparison to 2010 usage. If any customer has a question about AMI or their usage, they are encouraged to call the SMLD customer service team at 978-422-8267 for assistance.

John Kilgo, General Manager  
Sterling Municipal Light Department



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For a letter from SMLD General Manager John Kilgo about changes at the Light Department, visit [www.sterlingmeetinghousenews.com](http://www.sterlingmeetinghousenews.com).