

AMI Installation Brings Information and Safety to Klickitat County

While installing advanced meters across KPUD's service territory, staff identified electrical risks for customers.

Klickitat PUD has nearly completed deploying its new advanced metering infrastructure. Since kicking off mass deployment in September 2023, we have successfully upgraded nearly all 14,000 meters across our service territory, marking a considerable step forward in the safety, reliability and operations of our electric system.

One benefit of the project is that KPUD staff had the opportunity to visit and inspect every metering service point across the district. As we completed the meter exchanges, our crews were able to inspect each service point, identifying safety hazards that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. This proactive approach allowed us to ensure customer and system safety while improving the operational reliability of our grid.

During these inspections, KPUD staff reviewed voltages on the PUD and customer sides of the meter base, verified equipment was whole and operational, and ensured metering functioned properly despite long-term exposure to the elements. Additionally, our crews updated maps of equipment locations and service description notes, providing better details for quicker outage response in the future.

A few dozen locations proved especially critical, as our staff identified broken meter base jaws where the meters plug in. This damage can cause partial power, voltage issues or arc flashes. They also discovered broken meter bases and decayed or burnt wiring, and alerted property owners to the hazardous conditions. Property owners were able to address these issues before they escalated into dangerous situations.

For example, while visiting a historic

commercial building, our team found extensive electrical issues at the meter base. Working with a contractor, we determined that hot wiring continued throughout the building. There was evidence of arcing, and the wiring had been overheating. Without the inspection, an electrical fire could have occurred. Working closely with the property owner, KPUD facilitated meter base upgrades while the customer repaired the internal electrical system, ensuring the building was safe before service was reenergized.

One of the key benefits of AMI is it enhances our outage management. Outage staff are now immediately notified of an outage, enabling them to quickly assess the affected area. This allows our customer service team to promptly inform customers that we are aware of the outage, advise on the impacted area and relay if crews are being dispatched. The system also provides valuable information about the outage's cause and scope, helping our teams prioritize response efforts and resources.

With AMI, we can distinguish whether the outage is localized to a specific line segment or substation or if it stems from the transmission system. This capability enables faster, more targeted restoration efforts, reducing downtime for our customers.

Our AMI system also improves KPUD's ability to manage impacts or electrical outages on our water and wastewater systems. We can confirm immediately if an outage affects one of these systems, allowing for the timely deployment of backup generators or other equipment. This ensures essential services continue to operate without interruption, safeguarding vital infrastructure throughout the



KPUD's newly installed meters provide the utility with real-time updates, allowing KPUD to quickly locate and respond to outages.

duration of an outage.

The operational benefits of AMI extend well beyond outage response. With the ability to remotely read meters and perform simple tasks like disconnects, reconnects and service transfers, Klickitat PUD staff no longer need to make as many field visits, increasing efficiency and reducing travel-related risks.

While AMI automatically detects outages, we still encourage customers to report outages by calling 800-548-8357 or accessing their account through SmartHub. If you see a potential hazard or the cause of an outage, such as downed power lines, your report helps our crews with real-time information, further improving response times. ■