

Making Your Life Easier

KPUD's new meter infrastructure gives customers simplified billing and informational features

Beginning in September 2023, Klickitat PUD began the transition to an advanced metering infrastructure, more commonly known as AMI metering.

In collaboration with Allegiant Utility Service, KPUD installed the majority of the meters. As of the end of July, nearly all KPUD's meters have been exchanged—less than 1% of the old meters remain. The utility is working closely with the remaining customers who have access issues or obstructions preventing meter exchanges.

The AMI project is unlike other projects undertaken in recent years. It affects nearly every department and required a unified utility wide approach. Countless hours were spent ensuring that KPUD understood all of the impacts and mitigated risks for all involved, especially for our customers.

The AMI implementation was developed to be seamless and have minimal interruptions for our customers. The AMI meter exchange process provided redundant reviews of the outgoing and incoming

meters. Pictures were taken for quality assurance, and were reviewed to ensure the information in the billing system was accurate, including the final read.

The AMI project provided a 100% customer meter review, which KPUD had never done before. The review let KPUD work with customers to ensure the integrity of our billing system going forward. Klickitat PUD Metershop personnel were instrumental in completing meter audits, which were required for our larger service meter exchanges.

With the old meter system, more than 60% of our residential customers are rural and read their own meters. Now, KPUD reads the meters for them and can ensure a consistent number of days between reads and avoid billing fluctuations caused by the timing of the reads. Customer bills no longer are estimates based on historic trends, which often required adjustments and made it difficult to identify when power was consumed. Now there are daily reads to help explain to customers when power is

used and to troubleshoot questions.

Customer and Accounting Services Manager Brandy Myers engages with customers on a daily basis. She says having daily use available has changed customer conversations in a positive way.

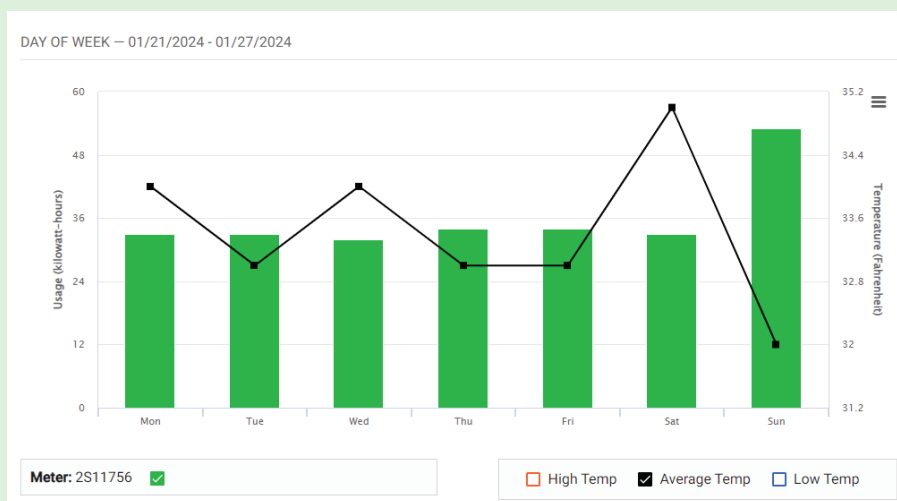
“With AMI metering, we are able to provide customers with daily usage, instead of total usage between the previous and present reads,” she says. “This replaces the monthly submission of a meter read, which as a rural customer, I too am thrilled about.”

She encourages customers to enroll in SmartHub, where this information is available in easy-to-read graphs. To continue to improve customer communication, the utility is reviewing use notification options. They will be available for customers to enroll in this fall.

Another customer benefit made possible by AMI metering is the ability to modify a billing cycle and the bill due date. Previously, KPUD grouped billing cycles to align with meter read routes. These routes were read monthly by a meter reader.



Daily use charts are available to customers in SmartHub. SmartHub puts your use information in your hands to make adjustments. The chart may be modified to include demand as well. Download or sign up for SmartHub today at www.klickitapud.com.



Now, customers can choose when they want their bill issued, and our meter readers no longer have to enter customers' backyards each month. Meter readers focus on service work, locates, collections and other duties. Customers have increased privacy and the utility has decreased the risk of accidents due to dogs and obstacles. KPUD still requires access to the meter, but it will be used less frequently.

Other customer benefits include quicker turnaround times for customer-requested transfer of service and reconnection of power. In most cases, these requests can be completed from the KPUD office, and an outgoing customer can request a final bill within a few minutes.

The AMI project met many of KPUD's goals, including our core value of customer focus. Customers have more options to manage their accounts. Customers can access their use data easily through SmartHub, a downloadable app. SmartHub lets customers access their detailed energy consumption data and, as a result, make informed choices about their energy use.

Within the website and app, customers have access to contact information changes, bill history, consumption history and much more. ■

Download or sign up for SmartHub today at www.klickitatpud.com.

Customers Praise New Meters

Interviewed by Gwendolyn Gilliam, KPUD summer intern

Many KPUD customers have been quick to sing the praises of the new AMI meters.

Templyn has been a customer of the Klickitat PUD for three years. Prior to AMI meters, Templyn had to deal with the nuisance of going out and reading her meter each month, just as many customers had to do. Whether in rain, snow or sunshine, she had to read her meter in a timely manner.

However, life often snuck up on Templyn, and remembering to read her meter consistently became a more troublesome task. As a result, she was faced with estimated meter reads that caused "bill surprises," as she called them.

Templyn was thrilled to learn about AMI meters on Facebook, prompting her to contact our customer services team and request an early installation. Templyn has been "thrilled since the AMI installation." Templyn says that AMI meters have given her "more consistent and accurate bills, and the meters are fabulous."

Philip has been a KPUD customer for nine years. Philip read about the AMI meters through a communication he received from KPUD in the mail and requested an AMI meter be installed.

Throughout the AMI installation process, he commented that he felt well informed. Philip mentioned that one advantage of having the AMI meter installed was that he "no longer had to call in his readings monthly."

Although he has read some false information online, Philip acknowledged that the meters are nonintrusive to the customer and expressed his interest in and gratitude for them. Philip also added that he is "thrilled for the opportunity to not have to read his meter anymore."



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