



# Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

## *fact sheet*

### ABOUT AUTOMATED METER READING

The City of Benicia's automated metering project involves the installation of highly accurate, state-of-the-art metering technology for residential and commercial water customers alike. New automated meters will be installed throughout the City beginning February 2017 and take approximately six months to complete.

An automated meter consists of a low-powered communication device that's attached to your new water meter. The automated meter transmits water usage information to the City's Customer Service Center – over a secure communication network.

In conjunction with the automated meter installations, the City will also offer Water Smart, a water conservation and budgeting tool for customers. Water Smart includes a Customer Portal, which is a free online water usage analyzer tool that enables you see your water usage anytime during the billing cycle. After registering and providing up-to-date contact information, you can elect to receive water alerts via a text message, e-mail or phone call. Notifications are provided if your water usage indicates a potential leak or abnormal usage.

### AUTOMATED METER BENEFITS

- **Reduction of water loss – supporting conservation** – through proactive identification of water leaks on the customer service lines as well as the City's water distribution system.
- **New online water management tools – Water alerts** – will help you manage your household water usage. You can also register to receive household water exception alerts (e.g., high consumption, continuous flow) via email or text message along with, current bill cycle information.
- **Bill-to-date information** will be made available on a daily basis, giving you greater control over your bi-monthly water bill. You can set a household threshold/budget for usage and be notified if your water consumption is trending to exceed, or surpass the threshold.
- **Save money** by knowing your daily and hourly consumption history, water usage comparisons by day, week, month, year and supporting information such as, weather trends. This enables you to better understand and make informed decisions about your homes water use and associated water bill.
- **Improved operational efficiency** will create savings for reinvestment in future improvements to the water system. Automated transmission of reads eliminates much of the requirement of “utility truck rolls”, reducing CO2 emissions, and reduces the City's carbon footprint. Moreover personnel will be deployed to other critical water maintenance tasks without the need to hire additional personnel.



*FAQs on reverse side*



## AMI FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q: How does the automated meter system work?**

**A:** The City will deploy the Neptune N\_Sight System, using a wireless fixed network system that has three components:

- *Meter Transmission Unit (MTU):* This radio unit is connected to each automated water meter and collects the customers meter reading each hour. Every six hours, it sends its information to a Data Collection Unit (DCU).
- *Data Collection Unit (DCU):* A total of 26 Data Collectors will be located throughout the city on City-owned facilities and City-owned poles. The DCUs collect the hourly meter readings from the MTU and transmit the meter readings to the City's meter reading database.
- *City Metering Database:* The City's billing system will use this information to calculate the amount of water used and create bills. The data collected daily in the meter reading database will be made available to customers through the Customer Web Portal.

### **Q: Why do I need a new water meter?**

**A:** Most of the current water meters in Benicia are not operating at 100 percent. They are old, some very old, and have exceeded their functional life and need to be replaced. As meters age, their accuracy begins to decline, resulting in unaccounted for water loss that exceeds industry and regulatory standards. The new meter will accurately reflect your water usage.

### **Q: What does installation of a new automated meter involve?**

**A:** A door hanger will be left 72 hours before the scheduled replacement. If your meter is running, the installer will do a courtesy knock on the door, explain the work to be performed and inform you that your water service will be briefly interrupted. The installation should take approximately 30 minutes, and often less. Follow up action is generally not required.

### **Q: When will the automated meter be installed on my home/business?**

**A:** The City will upgrade 9,580 water meters with a new automated meter. This includes all residential and business customers. Installations will start in February 2017 and run through August 2017. The City's contractor, Pedal Valves, has a dedicated hotline (707-373-1009) that customers can call to find out when installation is scheduled in your neighborhood or any other project questions.

### **Q: Do Automated Meter emit dangerous levels of radio frequency?**

**A:** Automated meters do not emit dangerous levels of RF. In fact, RF emissions from an automated meter fall far below federal limits. The RF exposure a person might encounter from an automated meter in a typical household setting can be of significantly less strength than the RF signals they are exposed to from common electronic devices found within the home, such as a cell phones, microwave ovens, Wi-Fi networks, and radio and television broadcasts. All equipment operates in compliance with state and federal communication standards.

*For questions about the Water Meter Replacement Project, please contact Christian Di Renzo, Assistant Public Works Director, at 707.746.4240 or [cdirenzo@ci.benicia.ca.us](mailto:cdirenzo@ci.benicia.ca.us).*