

News Release



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Tri-City Soon to Have Access to New State-of-the-Art Water Meter Technology *Infrastructure Project to Include Necessary Upgrades to Aging Water System*

Fremont, Calif. – The Alameda County Water District (ACWD) is investing in the future of its community by installing Advanced Metering Infrastructure, more commonly known as AMI. This new technology allows for remote reading of water meters for faster leak detection, an increase in customers’ ability to monitor, analyze, and compare consumption data from a user-friendly web portal, and creates an overall improved customer experience.

A multi-beneficial project, AMI advances ACWD’s effort on water efficiency and long-range planning to ensure a reliable supply of water in drought-prone California. More than three-quarters (76%) of ACWD residential customers have made behavior changes in the past five years to better conserve water¹, especially with the drought that wreaked havoc on California’s environment from 2012 to 2017. While ACWD has offered many conservation programs to support customers’ efforts, what residential customers have requested the most is a water use monitoring device¹—and now the agency is providing one. This new tool supports customers’ water efficiency efforts and reduces the agency’s carbon footprint with fewer trucks on the road since water meters will soon be read remotely instead of manually once every two months.

“We are proud to invest in our community with a technology upgrade that our customers have asked for to support their water-efficiency habits,” said ACWD Board President Aziz Akbari. “With smart meter technology, customers have more timely access to their water consumption data empowering them to make adjustments or fix leaks, as needed, he said. “Together, through this smart technology, we can work toward achieving ACWD’s water conservation goals and improving water supply reliability for our community.”

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¹From Saturday, October 26, 2019 to Thursday, October 31, 2019, Probolsky Research conducted a live-interview telephone and online survey among 400 Alameda County Water District customers. A survey of this size yields a margin of error of +/-5%, with a confidence level of 95%. Interviews were conducted with respondents on both landline and mobile phones (50%) and were offered in English, Mandarin (5%), and Spanish (3%) languages.

News Release

Page 2 Water Meter Technology

Installation Details

ACWD is partnering with Badger Meter and Professional Meters, Inc. (PMI) to install the AMI devices outside of customers' homes. PMI will hire up to 30 Bay Area-based installers for this project, bringing jobs to the region. Customers will recognize them because of their neon green uniforms and trucks with PMI/ACWD logos. Installers will also carry a photo ID badge and letter to authenticate their work on the project. Local, state and CDC guidelines will be followed, by performing daily health screenings, maintaining social distancing, and wearing proper personal protective equipment, that includes face masks, to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

During the installation process, water will be temporarily turned off for no more than one hour per home. No action is required from customers to ensure their installation happens seamlessly. Customers who will be the first to receive the AMI technology will receive a letter in late February. They will receive two additional notices – one will be on their doors 3-5 working days before the work, and a second when the work is completed.

ACWD will start the installation process in March 2021, which coincides with **Fix a Leak Week** (March 15 through 21, 2021), a nationwide campaign led by the US Environmental Protection Agency to inspire leak detection — dripping faucets or worn toilet flappers — and promote fixes. This fortuitous timing underscores one of the key benefits of the new technology — helping customers detect leaks faster. That's because the AMI technology will accurately read water consumption remotely on a near real time basis, helping to detect leaks with spikes in water consumption faster than the current, aging water meters. The new functionality's more accurate reading of water usage employs a device that utilizes encrypted cellular network communications. Full implementation in Fremont, Newark, and Union City will be complete by December 2023.

There are many benefits that customers will see with the new AMI technology. Some of these new enhanced customer service items will be leak alerts, online access to timely usage measurements, and usage alerts to reduce surprise bills. The new water meters will ultimately help customers to better monitor and manage their water usage, while promoting overall water efficiency. Plus, there will be cost savings for the agency tied to operational efficiencies created by the new technology. To learn more about the AMI project, join ACWD's virtual Community Information Meeting on March 10, 2021, at 6 p.m. For more information, visit www.acwd.org/ami.

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For more than 100 years, the Alameda County Water District has supplied water to the residents and businesses of southern Alameda County. ACWD supplies drinking water to the more than 357,000 people living in the cities of Fremont, Newark and Union City. For more information, please visit www.acwd.org.