

Frequently Asked Questions - FAQ's

Why is the Town converting its meters to new reading technology?

The Town approved the upgrade of its existing drive-by (AMR) system to a fixed and real-time reading network, referred to as Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), in May of 2019 following years of consideration, analysis, and planning. In the initial phase, a portion of the Town's meters will be replaced and the billing software will be integrated, so the entire process, from the meter to the bill, will be tested and verified prior to Town-wide installation. The Town will install meters and equipment manufactured by Mueller Systems, and manage the data through Mueller System's Mi.Net advanced and comprehensive meter data management system, thereby expanding the benefits of its existing metering equipment.

Why is the Town changing the way it reads the meters?

The enhancement of existing equipment will provide 720 reads during each billing cycle rather than 1 read every 30 days as is currently designed. This detailed usage will enable the Town to automate its meter reading process, provide improved customer service through data access, reduce leaks to promote resource conservation, and improve Utility operational efficiencies by capturing real-time meter reading data.

How does the new system work?

The Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system is made up of several advanced or more commonly referred to as "smart" components that communicate using wireless and radio frequency technology. Inside the meter box, a small radio is connected to the water meter that records and transmits a reading on hourly intervals to a collector. These data transmissions last only several milliseconds and are smaller data size than text. These network units will be mounted on top of the Town's water tanks and on the site of multiple Town-owned property locations. The collectors store all the reads and send batch uploads twice daily to the software accessible at Town Hall.

What is the technology that reads my meter and sends it to the Town? Is it safe?

The meters use wireless radio frequencies, similar to wireless Internet and cable TV, to send and receive information to and from the Town's Utility and Billing staff. The meters and communication system are regulated to meet all federal communications, safety standards and codes. There is no personal identifying information captured or transmitted by the meter.

Will my water bill increase?

The new meters are highly accurate and will measure customer usage on hourly intervals as compared to once every month. The benefits of improved and more accurate usage information to the Utility and customers will reduce wasted water through the enhanced system capability to send alerts and notifications such as stopped meter, customer leak detection, and utility distribution system leak detection.

Who is doing the work for the project?

The project is being managed for the Town by MeterSYS, a Raleigh-based advanced metering consulting firm, specializing in advanced metering technologies. MeterSYS will be responsible for overall management of the project along with the manufacturer Mueller Systems and the installation sub-contractor Atlantic Utility Solutions, Inc. Field personnel working on the project will carry proper identification and have successfully completed a background check. Field personnel will not need to enter residential property, nor will they be asking for any form of payment from customers.

Will I be without water during the field work?

Installation of your new water meter will cause a minimal disruption of service between 5 to 10 minutes.

Who do I contact with questions about the field work to my meter?

Contact the project hotline at 828-879-2128. For more information about the project, please visit the Frequently Asked Questions valdeseH2O.com.

About Radio Frequencies

What is Radio Frequency? How is it measured?

Electromagnetic fields, radio waves, microwaves and wireless signals are collectively referred to as Radio Frequency (RF) energy. RF energy is all around us. It's used in various electronics and appliances, including radio and television broadcasting, cellular telephones, satellite communications, microwave ovens, and radars to name a few.

Is there a health hazard associated with radio frequency?

According to several reputable organizations, including the World Health Organization and Utilities Telecom Council, there is no demonstrated cause and effect relationship between low levels of RF exposure and adverse human health effects.

How is RF regulated? Are there any safety limits on human exposure to wireless and RF fields?

Since 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has required all wireless communications devices sold in the United States meet minimum guidelines for safe human exposure to radio frequency energy. The limits established in the guidelines are designed to protect the public health with a very large margin of safety. In addition, federal health and safety agencies including the EPA, FDA, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) consistently monitor and regulate RF safety. When an advanced meter is transmitting, the exposure to radio frequency energy is more than 16 times lower than the exposure limit set by the FCC.