

Next Generation of Utility Service FAQ

What is the Next Generation of Utility Service?

The City of Wadsworth is undergoing a citywide upgrade of its water and electric meters in order to continue to provide our homes and businesses with the most reliable service. The new system will ensure accurate meter readings and notify us of any problem with your service that needs immediate attention.

What will this mean for my home or business?

The meter project will ensure that the City of Wadsworth has even more accurate and secure data on water and electric usage. This new system will eliminate, except in rare circumstances, the need to send a meter reader to your home or business or to estimate monthly usage.

How will this upgrade be implemented?

We will be partnering with a leading technology provider in the global energy and water industries, Itron Inc. (www.itron.com), to implement the new integrated system. After implementation, the City of Wadsworth will provide an even more efficient and reliable service.

What infrastructure will it use?

The electric and water meter improvements will take advantage of the City's robust telecommunications network, which has been in place since the mid-1990s, to ensure data is transferred securely from your home or business to a central collection point. Once in place, we will be able to accurately record your water and electric usage, in addition to managing outages in a more timely and reliable manner. The City will be immediately notified of a problem in real time before you or a neighbor calls it in.

How will this project be paid for?

For the electric portion of the project, the City of Wadsworth is fortunate to have received a federal grant to pay for 50 percent of the cost; the city's Electric Fund is responsible for the balance. The Water Fund is paying for the water portion.

How long will it take to upgrade the system?

Installation of the City's meters will take approximately one year to complete, beginning with the city's newer neighborhoods and homes. A schedule of installation routes will be available soon.

Tell me about the water meter upgrade.

Beginning on November 8, the City of Wadsworth will begin installing the new water meters in homes and businesses throughout our service area. Older water meters will be changed out entirely, and the communication capabilities on all meters will be improved. We have contracted with a private company, Vanguard Utility Service, Inc., to accomplish this task in as timely and efficient a manner as possible. Representatives from Vanguard will be knocking on your door to install your new water meter. If you are either unavailable at that time or away from your residence or business, the representative will leave a door hanger inviting you to make an appointment with the installer. The installer will be available on nights and

weekends in order to accommodate our residents' busy schedules. To schedule an installation for your home, please call (330) 335-2781.

Who is Vanguard?

Vanguard is the industry leader in meter testing, repair, recalibration, and installation for residential and commercial systems. The company has installed more than 500,000 meters across the country, including in Akron and Stow, and Vanguard will be a professional and knowledgeable partner. All Vanguard personnel will be carrying certified identification.

How long will the water meter installations take?

Each installation will take approximately 15-30 minutes. The upgrade will be rolled out through the coming year.

How do I make an appointment to schedule my water meter upgrade?

Installations will be done systematically, neighborhood by neighborhood, over the next 12 months. Look for a door hanger from Vanguard regarding the status of your meter. For more information on the scheduled upgrades, check the Mayor's *Trading Post* column each week or visit www.wadsworthcity.org and click on the "Next Generation Utilities" icon. For more information on Vanguard, visit www.vusinc.com or, to schedule an installation, call (330) 335-2781.

Tell me about the electric meter upgrade.

Beginning in December and rolling out in the coming year, the City of Wadsworth will be making upgrades to the electric meters in homes and businesses throughout our service area. City of Wadsworth personnel will be completing these installations. During your electric meter replacement, you will experience a brief power outage (approximately five minutes).

Who will be installing the new electric meters?

City of Wadsworth personnel will be responsible for changing your electric meter. They will knock on your door when they have arrived for the installation but, because installation takes place outside, you do not need to be present for them to do their work. You will receive a door hanger letting you know that the installation occurred if you were not home.

What if my home or business cannot be without electrical power without planning ahead?

If your home or business cannot be without electrical power without planning ahead, call (330) 335-2868 to schedule a convenient time. We will do our best to accommodate your specific needs.

With a more efficient system in place, will City employees lose their jobs, namely meter readers?

No fulltime meter readers will lose their jobs due to these efficiencies. Some personnel will be reassigned and other positions eliminated through attrition only.

Will the new meters impact my utility bills?

The meter installation coincides with the City's implementation of the biggest water system improvements project we've ever undertaken – the \$8 million construction of a pipeline from the Chippewa wellfield to our city treatment plant, plus a required water tower. That, along with the meter upgrades, will result in slight increases in the water portion of utility bills in 2011 – about 75 cents per month for the average residential customer. Both projects are designed to ensure long-term cost savings in operating the Public Service Department as well as positioning us for future growth.

Some users, especially those with significantly older meters, may see an increase in their utility bill following an installation. This is because the new meter will run more efficiently and accurately, which will allow us to improve service to your home or business. Older meters simply slow down and therefore do not record water use accurately.

What if any damage occurs during my meter installation?

As we replace some older water meters in the city, there is a chance some damage will occur during installation as a result of corroded or older pipes directly adjacent to the meter. If this happens in your home or business at the time of installation, the City of Wadsworth will make necessary repairs and will cover expenses related to those repairs.

Why were these upgrades not made sooner, especially on the older homes?

Rather than systematically upgrade older meters each year, to date we have made it our mission to fix any critical issues within the homes and businesses we serve. The City of Wadsworth has been focused on building the infrastructure needed for a system-wide upgrade for nearly 20 years and is now proud to provide all our customers with newer, more efficient meters.

With the new meters, will the City control my electric usage?

No. The City has no desire to control your electric use. The new meters will enable customers to monitor their individual energy consumption at different periods of the day. This may result in customers deciding to manage their use at peak times if they choose. The City may offer time-based rate programs in the future on a strictly voluntary basis, to allow lower rates at off-peak hours and higher rates for peak hours.

What is the value of a system in which the price of electricity depends on when it's used?

Electric power is a commodity and is priced based on the demand of its usage in any given hour of the day. When demand is higher, or during what is called "peak usage" periods, the cost of power is higher. When demand is lower, or during "non-peak usage" periods, the cost is lower. Currently, the City of Wadsworth purchases a portion of its power at the wholesale level on an hourly basis, with the most expensive being at peak hours. The meter upgrade system will potentially enable billing on a time of use basis. Sixteen states have at least one utility that has adopted some form of time of use pricing for its customers.

Will this upgrade allow for other advantages?

Yes, it will allow individuals and businesses to independently monitor their own energy use remotely and may lead to the potential for remote control of devices in your home. The world of power supply and consumption is changing and advanced metering systems will play an important role in our energy future.

If I choose not to change my behaviors regarding usage, will my rates go up?

It is important to understand that, if the price of energy goes up nationwide, the City of Wadsworth will also experience future rate increases. These future rates and costs are not related to your meter, but rather are based on the market price of electricity. That said, this upgrade is designed to ensure long-term cost savings in operating the Public Service Department as well as positioning us for future growth.

If people don't use electricity during peak hours, and they use it at another time, won't the peak period just shift?

No. The vast majority of electricity consumed is by the commercial and industrial sectors during the weekday daytime hours. Shifting of residential load, and even some commercial and industrial load, will not cause the peak to change. Instead, the likely effect would be a flattening of the daily load profile.

Who can I contact at the City with questions?

For more information on the City of Wadsworth's utility services, visit www.wadsworthcity.com. For questions on the program, call the City of Wadsworth at (330) 335-2868.