



PRESS RELEASE

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DETROIT WATER AND SEWERAGE DEPARTMENT TO INSTALL NEW WATER METERS FOR ENTIRE CITY OF DETROIT

Department program will eliminate estimated bills with new meter technology

DETROIT—Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) Director Victor M. Mercado announced the department is preparing to update every water meter in the city with new technology that will eliminate estimated water bills.

Detroit Water Automated Meter Reading (AMR) is a citywide program of DWSD to update the city's water system by installing new automated meters in every Detroit residence.

Mercado said about 160,000 DWSD customers will receive new water meters. In addition, approximately 115,000 homes that have received new meters since 1996 will have those meters retrofitted as part of the Detroit Water AMR Program.


The installation program will begin in the fall of 2007 and will continue for three years until all 275,000 Detroit residences and 3,000 businesses served by DWSD are equipped with automated water meters.

As each new meter is installed or retrofitted, it will be connected to a small transmitting device located outside each residence and business. The device will transmit an updated water meter reading up to six times a day through a neighborhood antenna to DWSD's central office.

The new water meters will provide a timely, accurate meter reading that eliminates the need for estimated bills and ensures that every customer is paying their fair share for water service. The installation of the automated water meters will be required for all Detroit residences.

"Water meters become outdated and should be replaced every 15 to 20 years," Mercado

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said. “Most of the meters in Detroit homes are that old or older, so they are due for replacement anyway. By adding the automated reading component, we are making it easier for both the customer and the department to read the meter and guarantee that each bill a customer receives reflects the actual amount of water they have used.”

Mercado said the program uses proven technology that has been implemented successfully in other cities such as Philadelphia and Washington DC. He said there is no charge to the homeowner, renter or business for the new unit or the installation.

The new meters will be installed over the next three years. Customers will be sent an Installation Alert in the mail identifying when the installation team will be in their area. Customers will be able to make an appointment by either mailing in a tear-off card attached to the Installation Alert or by calling a toll free number. Customers should not call the number until they have been notified that the installation teams are in their area.

The first phase of the installation will be conducted in the area north of East Warren Avenue, east of Woodward Avenue, south of the City of Highland Park, and west of the City of Hamtramck and Joseph Campau. In addition, a second area includes the area bound on the north by McNichols, on the east by Joseph Campau, on the south by the City of Hamtramck, and on the west by the City of Highland Park.

Appointments to install the new water meter will be conducted during business hours, evenings and Saturday mornings. Mercado said the uniformed technicians will arrive within two hours of the scheduled appointment time, driving a Detroit Water AMR marked utility vehicle with a photo identification card. While the installation occurs, someone 18 or older is required to be home.

“We have established the two-hour time window to make this as convenient as possible for our customers,” he said. “We’ve all spent hours waiting for utility installation or repair people to come to our house and we did not want to force our customers to undergo such a long wait.”

AMR technicians are local workers hired by Detroit Meter Partners, the company contracted by DWSD for the AMR installation program.

The public will have an opportunity to learn more and share their opinions on the AMR program during a series of four open houses to be held this September in Detroit.

For more information, visit www.detroitwateramr.com, which is currently online, or contact the Detroit Water AMR Call Center beginning September 4, 2007, at 1(866) 217-2359 or (313) 372-2100.

DWSD is a city department that provides water and sewerage service to the Detroit area. The third largest department in the country, DWSD provides water service to approximately one million people in Detroit and three million people in neighboring southeastern Michigan communities throughout Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, St. Clair, Lapeer, Genesee, Washtenaw and Monroe counties. The 1,215-square-mile water service area includes Detroit and 125 suburban communities while wastewater service covers a 946-square-mile area encompassing Detroit and 76 neighboring communities.

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