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*Installations to begin Sept. 4*

**New Water Meters to Improve Accuracy, Reduce Reading Time**

A two-year project to replace the Village's more than 13,000 water meters with new, more accurate ones that can be read by a hand-held portable device from the street is set to begin Tuesday, Sept. 4.

The new meters will be connected to a Meter Interface Unit (MIU) mounted on the outside of the residence or business. The MIU emits a low frequency radio signal similar to a garage door opener that allows information to be received and stored in a portable computer from the street. The new meters also have an indicator that will allow a homeowner to quickly determine if a leak has occurred inside the home.

Currently, Village meter readers must walk up to each individual structure and gather usage information through a touch pad system connected to the meter, an approach that takes 60 days to cover the entire Village. With the new system, an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 meters can be read in one day, allowing accurate readings for the entire Village within a three- to five-day period.

"Reading water meters now is a very labor-intensive, time-consuming job," said Village Finance Director Greg Peters whose department manages the water billing process. "Just to read the meters takes about 60 days. With the new system, we estimate that every meter in the Village will be read within a week."

Letters began going out Friday alerting water customers to expect installation crews seeking access to the meters, most of which are in basements. Notices also will be included with water bills. The first new meters will be installed in the commercial districts, with residential installations expected to begin the following week. Each installation is expected to take less than an hour.

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The current plan beyond installation in the commercial districts is to begin residential installations in the southeast side, with work then progressing west and north across the Village. As work moves into the residential neighborhoods, installation crews will knock on doors seeking access. If no one is home, crews will leave a notice urging the resident to call a toll free number to schedule an appointment. Appointments will be available Monday through Saturday at two-hour intervals beginning at 9 a.m.

Installation crews will be in uniform and carry badges identifying them as employees of Water Resources, Inc. the contractor hired by the Village following a competitive bid in April.

Once installed Villagewide, the new meters will reduce billing periods from quarterly to monthly, allowing consumers to more easily budget for water costs, as well as receive timely notice of possible costly water leaks.

"This new system will greatly improve the administration of the Village's municipal water program," Peters said. "As consumers, residents eventually will benefit by being able to budget payment for their water usage each month, as they do with their other utilities. And as taxpayers, residents will be benefit by allowing the Village to collect revenues in a more timely fashion."

The last time meters were replaced Villagewide was in 1988.

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New water meter (right) and Meter Interface Unit (MIU). The MIU, mounted on the outside of residences and businesses, emits a low frequency radio signal similar to a garage door opener that allows information to be received and stored in a portable computer from the street.