

# ADVANCED METER FORT COLLINS

Through the Advanced Meter Fort Collins (AMFC) project in 2011-2013, Fort Collins Utilities upgraded most of the mechanical electric and water meters in homes, schools and businesses throughout the community with smart, electronic devices that enable two-way digital communication between the meter and the utility.

Utilities is among 100 utilities nationwide that received grants to develop a "smart" utility grid for advanced (smart) metering. The Fort Collins grant award included participation from the City of Fountain. These projects were independent of each other, with each city covering its own share of project expenses.

In our region, Fort Collins–Loveland Water District, Poudre Valley REA and Colorado Springs Utilities have implemented similar advanced metering programs even though they are not grant recipients.

## Why did Utilities pursue this project?

There were many reasons why Utilities pursued this project, including:

- **Customer Service:** Utilities has long been at the forefront of the industry in striving to provide high levels of customer service. Examples:
  - high electric reliability from the electric line undergrounding program
  - high water quality resulting from best practices followed in water treatment
- **System Operations:** Enhanced communications and control of the utility system enable improved system operations and environmental benefits.
  - fewer customer service calls
  - system efficiency
  - potential avoidance of need for new generation
  - consistent with the Utilities for the 21st Century initiative

## What steps were taken to ensure data privacy and security?

Utilities complies with all local, state and federal regulations to protect customers' personal data and information. All customer information—including personal information, bill payment type or status, utility use and more—are protected.

Utilities is subject to the Colorado Open Records Act and Fort Collins Municipal Code §26-26, which govern the accessibility of public records.

Utilities is also subject to the FACT Act (Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003), which requires federal agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission, to establish guidelines for use by creditors to prevent identity theft. In 2007, the FTC published the "Red Flags Rules" requiring that creditors create and implement a program to address the detection, prevention and mitigation of identity theft. As a creditor, Utilities implemented an identity theft prevention program under the Red Flag Rules, which went into effect December 31, 2010.

# ADVANCED METER FORT COLLINS, *continued*

## **How much did AMFC cost?**

The cost of the electric portion of the project was \$31.4 million. A \$15.7 million matching grant through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) helped finance half of this portion of the project. The balance of the electric project expense was paid by bonds to enable the costs to be spread-out over a longer time period so that Utilities can take advantage of project savings to recover the cost.

The water meter project was budgeted for \$4 million. Grant funds are not available for the water portion of the project.

## **How did this project compare with the Smart Grid City project in Boulder?**

The Smart Grid City project in Boulder was a pilot program of Xcel Energy. Xcel had a difficult time placing fiber optic cables underground because of the rocky ground, which caused cost and schedule overruns. Utilities' electric distribution system is 99.9% underground, and we have an extensive fiber optic network in place. Also AMFC is not a pilot program. It is being built with proven technology, equipment and applications.