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ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT



JAMES BRAY
General Manager

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(501) 992-4060
JBray@NLR.AR.gov

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 5, 2017
TO: North Little Rock City Council Members
FROM: James Bray, NLRED General Manager
RE: Metering Options

I am pleased to inform you that the North Little Rock Electric Department has completed the deployment of advanced meters within our service territory. During this lengthy process, some customers (approximately one-tenth of 1%) expressed a desire to forego metering upgrades. The administration of these accounts in a separate non-automated system would be costly. However, we have devised an accommodation that appears reasonable.

As described in the attached letter, customers can choose to have their new meter installed on a separate pole located on their property. NLRED would install the pole at no expense to the customer, but all electrical work necessary to interconnect the new meter to the customer's service must be borne by the customer. I believe this accommodation is reasonable.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

FILED _____ A.M. 2:30 P.M.
BY *Attny Jason Carter via email*
DATE *9-5-17*
Diane Wilby, City Clerk and Collector
North Little Rock, Arkansas
RECEIVED BY *[Signature]*



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September __, 2017

Name
Address
City

Dear Customer:

North Little Rock Electric Department (NLRED) began upgrading all residential and commercial customers' meters with a digital meter in October 2011. As the project proceeded, some customers were allowed to temporarily decline the installation of the upgraded meter pending the completion of the rollout. We have now completed the initial deployment of meter upgrades and are ready to address the preference of those customers who initially declined.

Across our service territory, NLRED has deployed nearly 40,000 Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) Approved Stratus meters. This was accomplished by investments in additional infrastructure, software, and employee training in order to streamline the meter data collection and billing process. There are fewer than 40 customers who have refused installation, but this refusal has required NLRED to keep the entire previous meter data collection and processing systems in place. Maintaining two separate systems for these processes is costly and inefficient.

Of those customers who chose to decline the meter upgrade, the majority of their concerns were: (1) privacy; (2) the effects of cellular communication; and (3) safety concerns with previous smart meter models.

1. Privacy. Smart meters accumulate detailed information about a customer's use of electricity. In 2015, NLRED recognized that our customers might prefer to keep that information private and sought assistance from the state legislature. The legislature responded by adopting Act 186 of 2015 which exempted customer usage data from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.
2. Effects of Cellular Communication. Our smart meters communicate like a cellular phone, just less frequently. They normally send a two-second burst of information to our data center about once every four hours with the intensity of a cell phone. To date, no study has found any scientific evidence demonstrating any negative health effects of wireless devices.
3. Safety. Early smart meters were designed prior to the establishment of industry safety standards; consequently, we worked with our supplier to replace all of our earlier smart meters with the upgraded Stratus meter, which is inspected and approved for safety by Underwriter's Laboratories (UL).

(501) 372-0100
An Equal Opportunity Employer

Due to the high cost of maintaining a separate data collection system, NLRED is requiring that all customers now receive an upgraded meter.

For those who do not wish to have the upgraded meter connected directly to their home, NLRED is offering to install a 25' Class 5 service pole at NLRED's expense on the customer's property. The customer can then have a licensed electrician install an approved meter can, disconnect switch, and weather-head and install the overhead or underground service to the house from the meter pole at the customer's expense. NLRED will attach the utility service to the service pole and connect at the weather-head. It will also require passing an electrical inspection before power can be restored to the home.

Once you have received this letter, please contact Terrence Williams at (501)372-0100 to schedule your meter upgrade. If you want your meter mounted to a service pole on your property instead of in your existing meter socket, the work must be scheduled by October 16, 2017. Please contact Greg Woodward at (501)372-0100 as soon as possible to schedule the setting of the pole and coordinate with your electrician for service. If we do not hear from you by October 16, 2017, NLRED will schedule the meter upgrade installation as our work schedule allows.

Thank you for your assistance with this transition.

James Bray, General Manager
North Little Rock Electric Department