



News from EMWD

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For Immediate Release

Automated Meter Reading technology is cost-effective option for Eastern Municipal Water District

Perris, CA (February 11, 2005)— Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) has implemented automated meter reading technology in newly developed residential and commercial areas as an alternative to hiring additional meter reading teams.

EMWD's meter department currently works a rigorous schedule with 16 meter reader employees working in teams to read 200 – 260 meters an hour, eight hours a day, five days a week. With development anticipated to increase over the next several years, EMWD is faced with the challenge of accommodating rapid growth while keeping operational costs down.

With automatic meter reading, a meter is read without physically taking the lid off the meter box. Using radio technology, the read is automatically transmitted into a computer inside the meter truck as the vehicle moves along its route, which could be as far away as one mile from the meter and still pick up the signal. Information from the computer is then downloaded into EMWD's billing system. Customers are still able to read their meter to monitor their usage.

To date, EMWD has installed 10,766 residential and 144 commercial automated meters.

Automated meter reading increases meter reading accuracy, efficiency and reduces operating costs (labor, equipment, workers compensation) associated with adding additional meter reading teams.

The cost to implement the automated meter-reading system is \$190 per meter. EMWD installs the meters and automated devices and developers pay the associated costs.

Through EMWD's meter replacement program, areas that are time consuming or hazardous to read will be selected for automated meter retrofitting. For example, several meters along Highway 74 are candidates. Costs to retrofit old meters will be paid by EMWD.

Automated meters typically take half the time to read as traditional meters. For example, with automated meters it takes five hours to read a particular route using one person, versus eight hours using two people to read the same route with traditional meters. As more automated meters are added, efficiency will improve.

The first automated meter route was read February 3 with a total of 1,456 meters read and billed. Customers will not see a change in their billing cycle unless their read date has been changed by more than five days from their regularly scheduled read date. EMWD will send affected customers a letter regarding the change to their current billing cycle.

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EMWD serves a 555-square mile area from Moreno Valley to Temecula, and from Hemet and San Jacinto to Good Hope and Mead Valley. Approximately 550,000 people live and work in this area. In addition to its own water customers, EMWD supplements water to eight local water agencies and municipalities that have their own water departments. EMWD operates four water reclamation facilities and treats some 39 million gallons of wastewater daily. More information can be found at EMWD's web site www.emwd.org.