

WHY CENTRAL LINCOLN IS GOING DIGITAL



**CENTRAL
LINCOLN** 
YOUR PUBLICLY-OWNED ELECTRIC UTILITY



Why is Central Lincoln going digital?

Our #1 reason is improved customer service.

Currently, if there is an outage, we need customers to help us out by calling our outage line at 1-866-484-3783 so we have a better idea of where and when outages happen. Our new digital meter system will tell us when customers' power goes out and where, so we can respond more quickly, and we hope, restore power even faster than we do now.

Due to increased population and power use in the Pacific Northwest, the Federal Columbia River Power System, which provides most of the power sold by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), is getting close to full utilization, meaning that the electricity the system produces is finite. Thus, electricity conservation is more important than ever. Our digital metering system will offer opportunities for our customers to conserve if they choose.

The old electromechanical meters with the rotating silver discs are no longer being manufactured. We intend to replace all of these meters by the end of October.



What should you know?

Which digital meters is Central Lincoln installing and when?

Landis + Gyr residential meters will be installed beginning in January over a ten month period, starting in Newport.

How did Central Lincoln decide on which digital meter system to use?

Our engineers did extensive research on what systems work best, how they work, other utilities' experiences with various systems, health research, and more. We've been planning for this project for several years. The size of the Central Lincoln District, our topography, and the climate here are among the unique challenges that required extensive review.

I hear a lot of things about these meters. What is Central Lincoln planning to use them for?

Three key uses: again—for improved response to outages, second—to record the kilowatt hours (kWh) customers use each month and billing customers monthly for those kilowatt hours, just like we do now with our old electromechanical meters, and third—to improve our system controlling electricity flow and distribution.

I'd like to control my electricity use to reduce my monthly bill. Will this project help me do that?

In the future, we may offer a limited number of in-home devices, but only to customers who want them—and want to conserve. Because we are owned by our customers, and we do not exist to make a profit, we strongly support our customers saving kilowatts. We are currently evaluating systems for energy control devices for use in customers' homes. Watch this website for more info as we continue to plan this part of our digital meter project. But, we want to emphasize that having an in-home device will be strictly voluntary. If you do not want an in home device, you will not be required to have one.



What about electromagnetic exposure?

What about rumors of electromagnetic exposure?

Electromagnetic and radio frequency (RF) exposure from our digital meters is minimal—less than that from most cell phones and many other electronic devices.

The radio waves emitted by a GSM cell phone handset can have peak power of up to 2 watts. Other digital mobile technologies, such as CDMA2000, use less—typically up to 600 milliwatts. (The maximum power output from a mobile phone is regulated by the mobile phone standard and by the regulatory agencies in each country such as the Federal Communications Commission here in the U.S.) Our digital meters have a power output of 450 milliwatts.

Proximity to the device is also important. RF levels drop as distance increases. RF levels also decrease when RF passes through physical matter such as walls, so exposure will be even less than that from cell phones. Many other household electronic devices, such as cordless telephones and wireless (WiFi) routers also emit low-level radio frequencies.

In a study entitled “An Investigation of Radiofrequency Fields Associated with the Itron Smart Meter” the Electric Power Research Institute reports: “*The results indicate that RF fields from the investigated smart meters are well below the maximum permitted exposure (MPE) established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for the general public.*”

Our Landis +Gyr meters are similar. Read the entire study here: <http://tinyurl.com/itronmeters>

Another useful study was performed by the City of Naperville, Illinois.

Summary: www.naperville.il.us/emplibrary/Smart_Grid/Pilot2-RFEmissionsTesting-SummaryReport.pdf

Complete study: www.naperville.il.us/emplibrary/Smart_Grid/Pilot2RFEmissionsTesting-Final.pdf

A recent study addressed cell phone risks: <http://tinyurl.com/cellrisks>



Meters, Savings, Accuracy

Does Central Lincoln have any previous experience with electronic meters?

Yes. We have been using nearly 2,000 “remote read” meters in the Yachats area for more than 8 years.

What will Central Lincoln do with the information it gathers with its digital meters?

The only information we will be collecting is the number of kilowatt hours used so we can bill our customers for those kilowatt hours, and plan for our customers’ future needs.

What about sharing customers’ usage information?

If a Realtor or prospective buyer or renter asks, we share the highest monthly usage, the lowest monthly usage, and the average use for a given property over the past year. We don’t share customers’ names, or anything more specific than these three items. Other than this, we do not share customer information with any entity, government or otherwise—unless the customer authorizes it or we are served with a court order. This very rarely happens.

What about data security?

Central Lincoln’s information technology department is constantly vigilant in keeping our data secure. The signal received from our digital meters will be secure and will not be able to be read by outside parties.

What about accuracy?

Our Landis + Gyr meters are calibrated for extremely high accuracy. Our meter shop personnel do an excellent job testing and monitoring meters to ensure accuracy, and will continue to do so when the new digital meters are installed.

What about jobs?

Our meters are currently read by a contracted meter reading firm. This firm has known for several years that when this project is complete, its services will no longer be needed. That company has nine employees currently reading Central Lincoln’s meters every month, except for the meters (mentioned above) in the Yachats area.

Meter bases belong to the customers, but Central Lincoln owns the meters?

Yes. Our long-standing policy:

6. Central Lincoln's Property

All meters, instrument transformers, service connections, and other equipment furnished by Central Lincoln are, and will remain, the property of Central Lincoln. The customer will provide space for, and exercise proper care to protect the property of Central Lincoln on their premises. In the event of loss or damage to our property arising from neglect on the part of the customer, the cost of necessary repairs or replacement will be paid by the customer.

7. Right of Access and Right of Way

The customer must grant us right of way and easements over, under and across property of the customer for erection, maintenance, repair, and replacement of any or all wires, poles, apparatus, and appurtenances necessary for the supplying and delivery of electric service to the customer.

--Central Lincoln PUD "Rules and Regulations" see clpud.org

Will our bills increase due to the costs of the new meters?

No increases are planned through the end of 2012. We do expect some significant rate increases in future years from needed maintenance and transmission improvements being made by the Bonneville Power Administration, from which we purchase all of our power. When these occur, we will have to increase our rates. Again, Central Lincoln is publicly-owned and not for profit, and exists solely to serve our customers.


What about time-of-use (TOU) rates? Will you be changing to that type of rate?

We do not have plans at this time to switch to time-of-use rates, in which utilities charge more for electricity during the times when customers are using the most power, and less for electric use during night-time.

Are there other savings?

Fewer miles driven, less gasoline being used, fewer vehicles on roads. Also, the ability to turn meters on very quickly for new customers, and turn power off more easily when customers move will result in cost and fuel savings.

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I have more questions - where do I ask?

No problem! Please email us at: info@clpud.org
or call Communication Manager Chris Chandler
at 541-574-2004