

Chillicothe Municipal Utilities Improves Customer Service, Operational Efficiencies with The Mi.Net™ System



Your Community Owned Utility

Chillicothe Municipal Utilities (CMU) is a combination utility that supplies water and electric services to the city of Chillicothe, MO—the business and energy hub of the northwest region of the state. CMU provides electricity to approximately 4,700 customers through eight substations and 115 miles of line. And, it provides water to approximately 4,000 customers through a system that consists of four alluvial wells, a water treatment plant that has the capability of providing six million gallons of water per day, and 90 miles of transmission and distribution mains.

situation

CMU was in the process of replacing more than 4,000 outdated water and electric meters when it determined that the project also presented an ideal opportunity to implement a system-wide advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) network. CMU had been considering adding a two-way AMI system for its water and electric services to help improve customer service and operational efficiency in ways that would bolster its water and electric infrastructure to help meet future service demands.

action

CMU selected the Mi.Net Mueller Infrastructure Network for Utilities™, a two-way AMI system developed by Mueller Systems that fully automates the meter reading-to-billing process and links meters, distribution sites and control devices in a single data network. The system's major components work together to completely automate the process of accurately determining how much electricity or water a customer uses—for any period of time—and allows the provider to accurately bill the customer for that usage.

The Mi.Net System uses transceivers on metering devices—known as Mi.Nodes—to gather and pass usage data via radio frequency to an area data collection module, known as Mi.Hub. This gateway collects and uploads the usage data to Mi.Host—The Mi.Net System's master data management (MDM) software—where it is then relayed via general packet radio service (GPRS) or other backhaul options to CMU's server and its third party billing software.

results

Prior to The Mi.Net System, CMU was considerably limited in its ability to address certain customer service issues. When customers had usage or billing concerns, CMU's service representatives were unable to show electric or water usage based on specific dates or times—all they could provide was monthly usage information.

With The Mi.Net System, CMU and its customers alike are now able to view electricity and water usage on a monthly, weekly, daily—even hourly basis. Access to such detailed information has enabled CMU to not only help customers improve electric and water conservation, but also to detect potential water leaks in customers' households that are responsible for losing water that customers unknowingly pay for.

And, as a result of The Mi.Net System's real-time outage alerts, CMU is immediately notified of even the smallest power outage that may be indicative of a bad electrical connection in a customer's home. By receiving these alerts, the municipality can proactively dispatch field crews to fix such problems during normal business hours, before they result in after-hours power outages.

"The Mi.Net System has enabled CMU to simultaneously improve customer service and operational efficiency while reducing costs," said Jim Gillilan, general manager for Chillicothe Municipal Utilities. "We are able to help customers improve conservation and save money by providing them detailed, on-demand views of their water and electricity usage. This real-time data access allows us to make sure we are applying our service factors in appropriate ways, and alerts provided by the system have helped reduce operating costs by giving us the means to address potential outages ahead of time before they result in service interruptions."

Mi.Net Mueller Infrastructure Network for Utilities™. Intelligence that Drives the Network.

The Mi.Net System is a communications network that fully automates the meter reading-to-billing process and links meters, distribution sites and control devices in a single, highly efficient data network. Its scalability enables utilities to deploy new technologies in stages that are best suited to their needs and budgets.



CMU also experienced an immediate increase in revenue as a result of the implementation. Before The Mi.Net System, the utility's billing gap was approximately 15 days—beginning when a meter reader collected usage data and lasting until bills were issued. The Mi.Net System's integration with CMU's third-party billing software helped the municipality reduce its read to billing to less than three days. By reducing the gap, CMU was able to experience revenues for approximately 1.3 million kWh of electricity and 10 million gallons of treated water and reduced the amount of unbilled receivables.

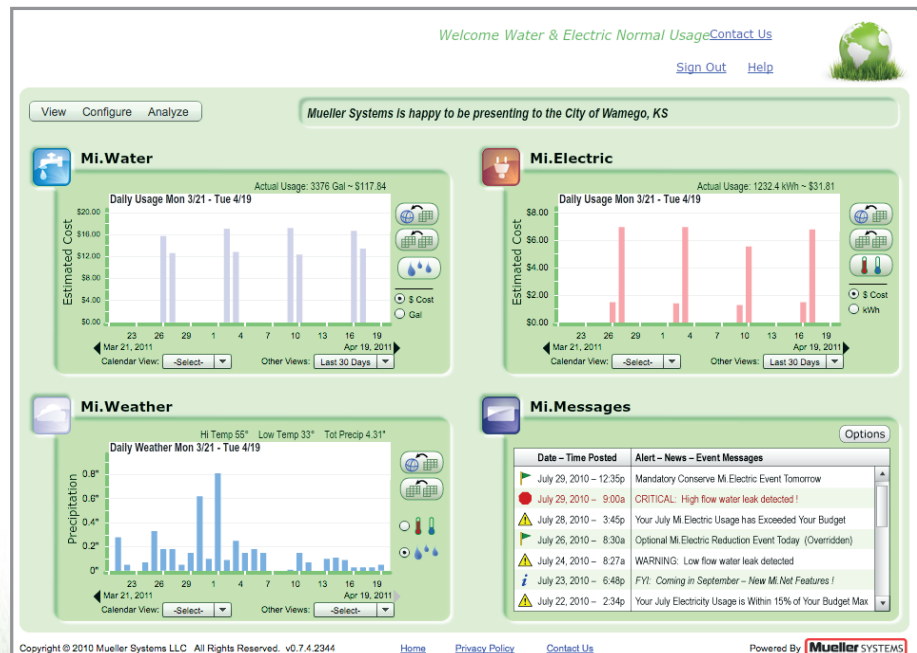
“ We are able to help customers improve conservation and save money by providing them detailed, on-demand views of their water and electricity usage. ”

Jim Gillilan
General Manager for Chillicothe Municipal Utilities

As a result of the improved customer service and operational efficiencies provided by The Mi.Net System, CMU plans to implement Mi.Data™—Mueller Systems' interactive and easy-to-use web portal that is also part of The Mi.Net System. Mi.Data graphically presents usage data to consumers in a format that allows them to easily monitor their water consumption, compare current usage to previous periods, configure individual alerts, and set budget and water conservation goals. Mi.Data is expected to be available in Q4 2011.

How Mi.Data Works.

The look and feel of Mi.Data can be customized by municipalities to include their logos, colors and important messages and educational information for consumers on conservation. Consumers can set their preferences to receive informational alerts on water bans, leaks and usage goals or budgets.



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