

## *Frequently Asked Questions about New Digital Electricity Meters*

### **What is the new digital meter?**

The new digital meter is a device that gathers data about the electricity you use in your home. It then transmits this data to the North Little Rock Electric Department through wireless, two-way radio communication. Electric energy use will be recorded every 15 minutes at your home.

### **Why is the North Little Rock Electric Department installing these meters?**

The City of North Little Rock and the North Little Rock Electric Department, leaders in sustainable, environmentally-conscious municipal power use, are pursuing ways to help customers save money, energy and the environment. When fully operational, these new digital meters will enable the instant detection of power outages so we can respond as quickly as possible.

### **How can I prepare for my new digital meter installation?**

The day your new digital meter will be put in, the installer will knock on your door to let you know about the meter change and the brief 5-to-15 minute power outage. Prior to installation:

- Make sure to provide safe access to your electric meters. Trim bushes, unlock gates, and move toys, outdoor furniture and other items away from the meter.
- Let everyone in your household know about the installation so they can prepare for the short power outage while the new digital meter is installed.
- You do not have to be home during the installation so there should be little to no interruption to your daily routine.
- Just to be safe, unplug computers, televisions, DVD players, DVRs, landline and wireless telephones, microwaves, stereos and any other electronic device.
- Keep dogs either inside or safely away from your meters.

### **Can I make an appointment for my new digital meter installation?**

New digital meter installations will be performed without an appointment. The installer will knock on your door before beginning work. Appointments for special needs will be handled on a case-by-case basis - more information on that option will be supplied when you receive your installation notification letter.

### **Will I be able to read my new digital meter?**

Yes, these new digital smart meters have an easy-to-read digital display instead of analog dials.

### **How long will a meter reader continue to read my new digital meter?**

We will continue to read your meter for two-to-three months on the first 350 installations to make certain all is working properly.

### **How do you know that the billing usage data being sent wirelessly is actually my data and does not belong to my neighbor?**

When data is collected from a meter and transmitted wirelessly to North Little Rock Electric, the data contains specific identifiers associated with the customers meter number and service address. These fields are validated numerous times to ensure accuracy before the data is used for

billing. This process is similar to the cell phone technology where each cell phone has a unique number that goes with every communication which is used to identify a cell tower and connect your call to the correct location.

**Will I pay a monthly amount for my new meter?**

You will not be charged for the new meter.

**Will I need to replace or upgrade my electric breaker panel for the new meters?**

Unless we discover a safety issue in which we are obligated to address immediately, you will not have to replace or upgrade your panel. The new digital meters are the same size as the existing electric meters.

**At what frequency does the new digital meter operate and will it interfere with other wireless devices in my home?**

The frequency communicating to the electric meter is 900 MHz (megahertz). The electric meter frequency is similar to a cell phone and will not interfere with any wireless devices in your home.

**Is the new meter network secure?**

The Information Technology (IT) security controls in place for the new digital meters reflect energy industry best practices. They are designed to provide a very high level of assurance that our systems cannot be compromised. The North Little Rock Electric Department takes all reasonable and necessary steps to ensure the services we provide our customers are not only high quality and easily available, but also extremely secure. In addition, we constantly monitor for evolving threats and attempts to breach security and progressively update our system protection as needed. We also regularly review, test and practice incident response processes.