

## **Advanced Metering Infrastructure: Frequently Asked Questions**

*Jones-Onslow is investing in new advanced meters to improve the efficiency and reliability of our electric system. Many consumer-members have asked questions about these new meters and how they work.*

### **What is Advanced Metering Infrastructure?**

Advanced Metering Infrastructure measures electric consumption just as traditional metering does but allows two-way communication between a utility and the consumer. The technology has many benefits including faster and more accurate reporting of outages and allowing members to have more tools at their disposal to control their electric consumption.

### **How does my new automated meter work?**

With the new advanced meters, JOEMC can read the meter remotely from the office. Information from the meter is transmitted back to the co-op in daily increments. Electronically transmitting this information means that a meter reader will no longer have to drive by your home to gather the information monthly like we currently do.

### **Why is JOEMC changing to AMI?**

AMI provides many functions that were previously not possible or had to be performed manually. With AMI, you can:

- Save money by eliminating the labor and transportation costs of in-person meter reading and other services like connects and disconnects — a savings we pass on to our consumer-members;
- Improve billing accuracy, eliminating misreads or inaccurate readings;
- Pinpoint the exact location of outages more quickly, meaning a faster response time;
- Help our consumer-members troubleshoot high-bill or service-related problems by providing information about power consumption patterns, outages and blink count history and voltage information; and
- Help secure the overall safety of the cooperative employee team.

Commonly used by utilities worldwide, AMI has proven to provide utilities with improved operational and service benefits which, for JOEMC, will allow us to serve you better and keep your rates down.

### **Will this increase my electric bill?**

No. The advanced meters are being installed at no additional cost to consumer-members. The AMI metering technology will allow JOEMC to operate more efficiently and provide more reliable service and more accurate reporting of outages—*things that can help keep your rates down.*

### **Are there any additional installation parts I will need?**

No additional parts are anticipated or required. However, if something is identified as faulty or hazardous with consumer-members' equipment (an example would be a hazardous or damaged meter base), the co-op will make contact and make them aware of the problem.

**What do I need to do to get ready for my meter replacement?**

Unless your meter is obstructed, consumer-members do not need to do anything to prepare for their meter replacement.

**Who will be changing the meters out?**

Because we must continue with our day-to-day business operations (including reading meters that have yet to be converted) and with this project being so labor-intensive, JOEMC has contracted out the installation of the advanced meters with Allegiant Utility Services headquartered in Texas. Allegiant is a well-respected and trusted partner in the business, having worked with electric cooperatives for over 18 years.

**What should I expect when my AMI meter is installed?**

Installation takes only minutes. An installer will knock at your door to let you know that the new advanced meter is about to be installed. From there you will have only a brief power interruption. If no one is home, the installer will proceed to change the meter and leave you notification (door hanger) that the changeout has occurred.

**Do consumer-members have a choice in getting a new advanced meter?**

The cooperative is embarking on a system-wide program that will change 100 percent of existing residential and commercial meters so new meters will be installed on all accounts. Consumer-members will, however, have the choice to opt-out and the communication module of the meter will not be enabled – additional charges and fees will be applied per the cooperative's AMI Relocation and Opt-Out Policy.

**Will I keep the same rate after the conversion?**

Yes, consumer-member will continue to stay on the same rate class as they have in the past. There will be no increased cost to the consumer-member.

**What if my bill reports more kWh usage than normal or I think my meter is not working correctly?**

Contact your nearest co-op office right away to discuss your billing concerns. The new meters being installed, in some cases, may be more accurate than some of the meters currently on our system and have been tested and meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) regulations.

**Will meter readers ever need to come to read the meter manually again once the new meter is in place?**

Probably not. Meter readers will no longer regularly need to spend valuable time traveling the roads to gather the metering information. All meter readings will be digitally transmitted back to the co-op headquarters.

With that said, JOEMC will continue to do routine inspections of all meters and services on a rotational basis to look for safety hazards or other problems. Reasonable access to equipment still must be maintained.

**What information does the new meter record?**

The new meter records an electronic kWh reading, the date and time of the reading, the overall peak demand of the electric account, if the meter has rotated backward, and the number of times the meter has experienced a loss of power for any reason. The meter will also record the date and time of light blinks and the length of the power outage.

**What day of the month will the meters be read?**

All of the co-op's new meters can be read at a variety of times to obtain a history of account information. However, for billing purposes, member bills will be read on monthly schedules.

**How will the co-op read the meters?**

The cooperative's computer systems will communicate with the equipment installed in our substations and our electrical distribution system, which sends a request for one or more meter readings. The meter reading is sent back to the co-op via a secure network.

**Will someone other than the co-op be able to read the new meter?**

It's unlikely but not impossible that some very sophisticated "bad actor" could access information from the cooperative's automated metering system. Meter manufacturers are incorporating security features and encryption technology into their meters, as recommended by national security experts. Our goal is to upgrade our electric distribution system to make it safer, more secure, and more reliable. Your new advanced meter is part of this effort. Once your new meter is installed, JOEMC will be able to tell if someone "tampers" with your meter because the meter will report any tampering attempts to the cooperative.

**Is JOEMC's meter network secure?**

Cyber-security is nothing new to the utility industry. We have extensive experience maintaining cyber-security for information systems and operating the electricity grid. While advanced meters have added a new component to our system, the meters, communications, and information management are subject to the same Department of Energy security standards that keep the grid secure.

**How secure will the new meters be?**

The meter display is visible for consumer-members to be able to check their consumption. All other information and data stored in the meter are secure, and the meter is sealed.

**How is my personal data protected?**

Advanced meters are only known by their "ID" on the AMI Network, and no consumer-member account information such as name or address is broadcast by the meter. Data from the meter is also encrypted further securing the network and information.

**Can the cooperative connect and disconnect electric service using the new meters?**

Yes, the new advanced meters can be connected and disconnected right from our office, saving the expense of sending an employee to the location as well as protecting the safety of the employee and consumer-members.

**Is a new advanced meter safe for homes with old wiring?**

The new meters being installed do not add load to the consumer-members' home. Electric meters are powered by electricity provided by JOEMC and only monitor the energy that is used in the consumer-members' home.

**Are there health risks associated with radio frequency transmission?**

Wireless devices are common in our everyday lives. Wi-Fi routers, cell phones, garage door openers and baby monitors all use radio frequencies to operate. The Federal Communications Commission sets standards for all radio frequency levels as well as AMI Meters. Those used by JOEMC are in compliance, and its frequency is below FCC thresholds for the general public.