

## **June 2, 2011**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What is a Smart Meter?**

A smart meter records energy consumption in intervals and communicates that information over a communications network back to the electric utility for monitoring and billing purposes. Smart meters enable two-way communication between the meter and your cooperative, Rappahannock Electric.

#### **Why is REC making this metering change?**

As your member-owned Cooperative, we are always looking for ways to improve your service now and for the future. The meter change will allow us to expand REC's Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) into our new service area, providing numerous member benefits in a variety of areas and will prepare us for the electric industry's fast-paced technological advancement.

#### **What does AMI mean?**

AMI or Advanced Metering Infrastructure allows two-way communication between the meter and your cooperative, Rappahannock Electric. REC will be able to decrease operating costs by automatically reading your meter monthly. We will no longer need to access your property on a regular basis. In addition, it provides more accurate bills because the meter reading is more accurate as opposed to estimated.

#### **Will this new meter installation affect my bill?**

No. As a member of REC, you are not charged for this upgrade to your service. This is a benefit of being a member-owner of REC, we are always looking for ways to improve service now and for the future.

#### **What type of technology does the REC Smart Meter use?**

**Aclara** Two-Way Automatic Communications System (TWACS) communication technology uses the existing power lines for data transmission. This technology allows REC to use existing power line infrastructure to collect and manage detailed data from electric meters to provide enhanced outage information and the ability to effectively manage energy operations. This equipment does not use radio frequency (RF) to retrieve data.

#### **My meter works fine. Can I opt out of receiving the new meter?**

No. All REC meters will be replaced with smart meters so all members can receive additional benefits.

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

REC has partnered with Scope Services Inc. to perform all meter changes. Scope Services Inc. employees will be driving small white trucks affixed with a REC logo. All Scope Services Inc. employees will carry REC contractor identification badges. REC chose to utilize contract employees because of significant cost savings.

### **When will my meter be replaced?**

You can expect to see the transition to smart meters beginning on Nov. 1, 2010. This will be an 18-month deployment process.

### **Will my electric service be interrupted during the meter change-out?**

Yes, you will experience a brief, possibly five minute, interruption of power during the meter upgrade. Scope Services Inc. employees will try to provide advance warning by knocking on your door before performing the upgrade.

### **How do I know my smart meter is working properly?**

REC has tested and verified the accuracy of every meter before installation at your property.

### **What are the benefits of the smart meter?**

- Automated readings – No longer will we have to access your property to read your meter on a regular basis.
- Usage information – We can provide hourly and daily meter readings so that you can understand how you use electricity.
- Service restoration – If you call to report an outage we can pinpoint areas affected to respond more quickly and automatically confirm when your power is restored.
- Carbon footprint reduction – Through smart meter automation we reduce the number of trucks on the road and in the field.

### **Does member and account information remain confidential?**

Yes. REC is required to comply with all federal laws regarding privacy, protection and disclosure of personal information. The meter and associated communication system are equipped with security features to prevent unauthorized access.

### **What specific information will the new meter provide?**

New meters will record:

- Kilowatt-hour usage
- Whether or not the meter has been tampered with
- When the demand for electricity is highest
- If the lights blink
- Voltage levels to determine if the power supply to your home meets code requirements for local and state government

### **Can anyone other than REC electronically read the new meters?**

No. All of the information and data is stored within the meter and requires special technology to access the information. This helps ensure that no one except the Cooperative will be able to access

information contained in your meter. However, the new meters will have a digital display so members can read their own meter on-site if they wish.

**With a smart meter, do I still need to report an outage?**

Yes. When you have an outage or emergency situation you are encouraged to call us at 800-552-3904. The smart meter helps us verify whether the problem is with our service. It can also help us identify the extent of the outage and assist in verifying restoration.

**What do I do if I think my new meter is not working properly or is recording higher kilowatt-hour usage?**

Always feel free to contact REC at 800-552-3904 to discuss concerns about your meter

**Where will REC place the smart meter at my house?**

The meter will be placed in the existing meter base at the member's location.

**How big is the smart meter?**

The size and shape of a smart meter is comparable with a standard meter. A smart meter fits into the existing size and shape of the meter base currently at your residence.

**Can I make an appointment for the installation?**

We are not scheduling appointments for smart meter installations, except in rare instances of medical emergencies. On the day of the installation the installer will knock on your door before beginning work. If your meter is inside or otherwise inaccessible, REC will contact you directly to make arrangements for the installation.