

Smart meter workshop scheduled

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Pacific Power will host a smart meter workshop Saturday, Sept. 22, in Grants Pass. The event is to be held in the Arts and Crafts Building of the Josephine County Fairgrounds, located at 1451 Fairgrounds Road, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The free informational workshop comes in the wake of Pacific Power's rollout of smart meters for all customers in the state of Oregon, which is in full swing in Jackson County and beginning in Josephine County this fall (See "Smart Meters are coming" in last week's edition).

"The workshops will offer an opportunity for customers to meet with Pacific Power staff and smart meter experts, gather information and facts and see demonstrations, including a chance to measure the radio frequency levels of a smart meter compared to other wireless technologies," according to a recent press release. "During the workshops, Pacific Power will provide updates on opt-out fees, offer information to help customers feel confident that they have the facts on smart meters, and share tips to help navigate misinformation being circulated."

The press release goes on to explain a significant development in the process of opting out of smart reader installation: "In response to customer and community feedback, Pacific Power filed a proposal with the Oregon Public Utility Commission to remove the upfront smart meter opt-out fee of \$137, to reduce the immediate financial impact for customers who opt-out."

Although the initial fee has been eliminated, it is important to note that opting out will still extract a toll. "(C)ustomers who opt-out before having a smart meter installed will only be charged a \$36 per month fee for manually reading an existing meter. Customers who opted out prior to August 14, will receive a refund of the \$137 fee."

The final topic covered by the press release is that of syndicated anti-smart meter groups. "Pacific Power has identified several out-of-state groups that are providing, and in some cases actively charging for, whitepapers, videos, and speaking engagements that perpetuate incorrect or misleading information. Pacific Power is a source for correct facts on smart meters that can help customers navigate misinformation being promoted on websites, social media and through word-of-mouth. This information can be found at www.pacificpower.net/smartmeter, or by calling 866-869-8520."

Despite the power company's best efforts to reassure their customers that smart readers are safe and reliable, many individuals continue to assert that the new meters are dangerous, as well as a violation of our safety and privacy.

Illinois Valley community activist John Gardiner voices the concerns of anti-smart meter advocates in our region: "It seems that there are two categories of people at risk of developing unpleasant symptoms: 1) the elderly, children and pregnant mothers, and 2) individuals who have compromised neurological systems or are simply vulnerable to high radiation frequencies (RF). That is not to say that the rest of us are immune, just that others may not express symptoms in the short term."

"More ominous is the apparently misleading information we're getting...S.M.s (smart meters) are not like cell phones or Wi-Fi in their bizarre pattern of sharp spikes of RF. Growing public awareness of RF exposure has led people to choose a wired internet connection or use a wired phone at home. But Pacific Power is not offering us a wired SM option. Once installed, it can't be turned off."

Keep in mind that the aforementioned statements contradict findings from not only Pacific Power, but other respected sources such as the World Health Organization and American Cancer Society. They concede that while RF radiation emitted by smart readers is potentially carcinogenic to humans, the meters give off this energy in safe levels well within limits set by the Federal Communications Commission.

Opponents of smart meters cite not only the potential threat of cancer in their disdain of the technology, but also various other harmful, albeit unproven, features of the new meters, including privacy violations, fire hazards, data insecurity, etc.

If you would like a more in-depth analysis of the allegations against smart meters, this article by Mercola offers just that: <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2017/08/05/smart-meter-dangers.aspx>

Please note, however, that the *Illinois Valley News* cannot guarantee the validity of this information. It is suggested only to give readers a sense of the noxious claims posed against smart meters. Similarly, this article serves as a rebuttal to those claims: <http://www.whatissmartgrid.org/smart-grid-101/fact-sheets/myths-vs-facts-the-truth-about-smart-meters>.

If you have any concerns about smart readers, it is recommended that you attend Pacific Power's workshop. "Nationwide, more than 70 million smart meters are already installed at homes and businesses, which include half of all households in the U.S. Pacific Power smart meters are a key component to updating the energy grid initially built for technology from 100 years ago. They also help Pacific Power hold down operating costs, improve customer service and reliability while maintaining the highest standards of security and customer privacy," the press release stressed.

Christina Kruger, Pacific Power's regional business manager for Southern Oregon, made this statement: "We are confident that smart meters are safe and will provide customers with greater insights into their energy usage while helping us deliver faster more responsive service. Through these workshops, we're making sure our customers know that we are here to help them understand the benefits of these new smart meters, while also addressing their questions and concerns."

Everyone loves a parade!



(Photos courtesy of Wendy Williams Photography for the *Illinois Valley News*)

The Valley of Sound Music & Production Co. won first place in music (top left); "The Beauty" fire truck helped I.V. Fire District win first place in public service; and Taylor's Sausage won first place in the commercial category during the 2018 I.V. Lions Club Labor Day Parade, Monday, Sept. 3. More Labor Day Festival photos on A-10.

Cans and bottles help children's programs

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Big things often start small and a community recycling project named IVCandDonate is one of those things. The program is intended to provide funds for local youth art, sports and music programs.

It started with IVHS student Owen Dwyer collecting bottles around the neighborhood a couple of years ago. It was so successful that he and his mother, Kate Dwyer, wondered if they could do it on a bigger scale as a community service project. They met with Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative (OBRC) and Shop Smart, site of three of the Valley's beverage container return vending machines, to see what it would take. They were disappointed to realize that it would take not only collecting the containers but also driving them into Grants Pass to OBRC's "Bottle Drop" facility for redemption. The fact that Owen Dwyer had not yet gotten his driver's license scuttled the project.

But Kate Dwyer wasn't willing to give up on the idea. She figured, rightly as it turns out that most people would jump at the chance to donate their refundable containers to a good cause. "It's such a win-win," said Dwyer.

Refusing to be defeated by the delivery to Grants Pass requirement she contacted the Portland mayor's office and connected with the head of the OBRC recycling programs. The fact that the Valley is 30 miles from any "Bottle Drop" facility combined with the potential volume of containers played in Cave Junction's favor. Dwyer's persistence paid off when OBRC agreed to take a chance on the Valley and allowed Kate and Owen to add their collected containers to the pickup at

Shop Smart under a separate invoice. Once again this proved so successful that OBRC agreed to pick up the collected containers from them directly. When the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO) joined the team the project really picked up steam.

Oregon Caves Chevron stepped up and offered their back lot as a home for the rented cargo container to store the collected containers. Shop Smart volunteered to assist with pass-through returns and to help with the OBRC checking account as well as publicizing the project. Southern Oregon Sanitation made a sponsorship donation.

In the first month of operation, IVCandDonate brought in about \$1,200 worth of containers. Program overhead still needs to be figured in but organizers anticipate they will be able to give \$500 to \$600 in grants to student groups from the first month's take and hope to build that to higher levels as the costs of running the program become more clear. Malcolm Hirsch, current project lead,

said "... this is a project that has no end in sight. IVCandDonate is an endeavor that the IVCDO projects will bring at least \$5,000 annually for our local Illinois Valley kids' groups."

Want to your support your local youth? Bring redeemable containers to the shipping container behind Chevron in Downtown Cave Junction Saturdays from 10 a.m.—2 p.m. All containers must be clean, unbroken and have labels. They MUST be deposit containers. The deposit amount will be indicated on the label. Additionally, the container must be redeemable in Oregon. If Oregon is not on the label list of states accepting the deposit container it can't be returned for fundraising.

Containers need to be sorted as follows: Glass bottles in boxes of 12 ounces or 24 ounces of like size; bagged cans 12 ounces and under need to be bagged separately from cans over 13 ounces; and plastic containers 20 ounces and under need to be bagged separately from ones 21 ounces and over.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*)

IVCandDonate members collecting donations Saturday, July 27.

Cougs are on a roll! Read about it on A-3.