

Are you ready?

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Smart meters on the way to Cottage Grove

Pacific Power is bringing smart meters to residents and businesses of the Cottage Grove and Junction City areas, replacing thousands of aging electric meters.

About 11,000 new meters will be installed in the area which includes Cottage Grove, Creswell, Junction City, Harrisburg, Coburg, Monroe and other unincorporated areas. In all, Pacific Power will replace 590,000 meters in communities across the state from now through fall 2019.

The new smart meters will:

* Instantly track outages, meaning faster service response and shorter outages overall.

* Let customers view their power usage hour-by-hour, so they can adjust their activity to reduce both their carbon footprint and bill.

* Provide businesses with detailed usage reporting which will help them cut costs and make investments in items that help their business grow.

* Update the grid to work more efficiently and better integrate renewable power sources.

"Installing smart meters is a key step toward the power grid of the future here in Oregon and our cus-

tomers throughout the state all benefit," said Sam Carter, Pacific Power's regional business manager for the area. "By vastly improving our meter technology, we can deliver power more reliably and shorten outages, save costs, and allow for better management of renewable sources."

More than 70 million smart meters have been installed nationwide, which means half of all households in the U.S. have them. Smart meters are a key component to updating the energy grid originally 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.

Access to daily energy usage information will be available to customers via a secure website. This near real-time energy usage information will let customers better understand what is driving their electric bills and help them make decisions that can save energy and money. This capability will come about six weeks after a new meter is installed.

"We are connecting our small communities

throughout Oregon in a way that improves the reliability and efficiency of the grid, both at home and at work," said Carter. "With smart meter technology now mature, proven and available at competitive prices, we can deliver the benefits without any additional cost to customers."

Here's what customers can expect during the installation process:

* Customers will be notified before installation through the mail and will receive detailed information about the new smart meters. Reminder calls will be made to customers as their scheduled installation date approaches.

* Pacific Power's authorized installer, Aclara, will arrive between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. to make installations. Installers will drive vehicles and carry badges that identify them as an authorized contractor of Pacific Power. Unless an electric meter is inside, they will not need to enter customer homes.

* During the installation, Pacific Power technicians will remove the old meter, install the new meter, restore service and verify the new meter is working properly. This process will require a brief

power outage (less than five minutes). The technicians will leave a door hanger to let customers know they were there, and successfully installed the new smart meter.

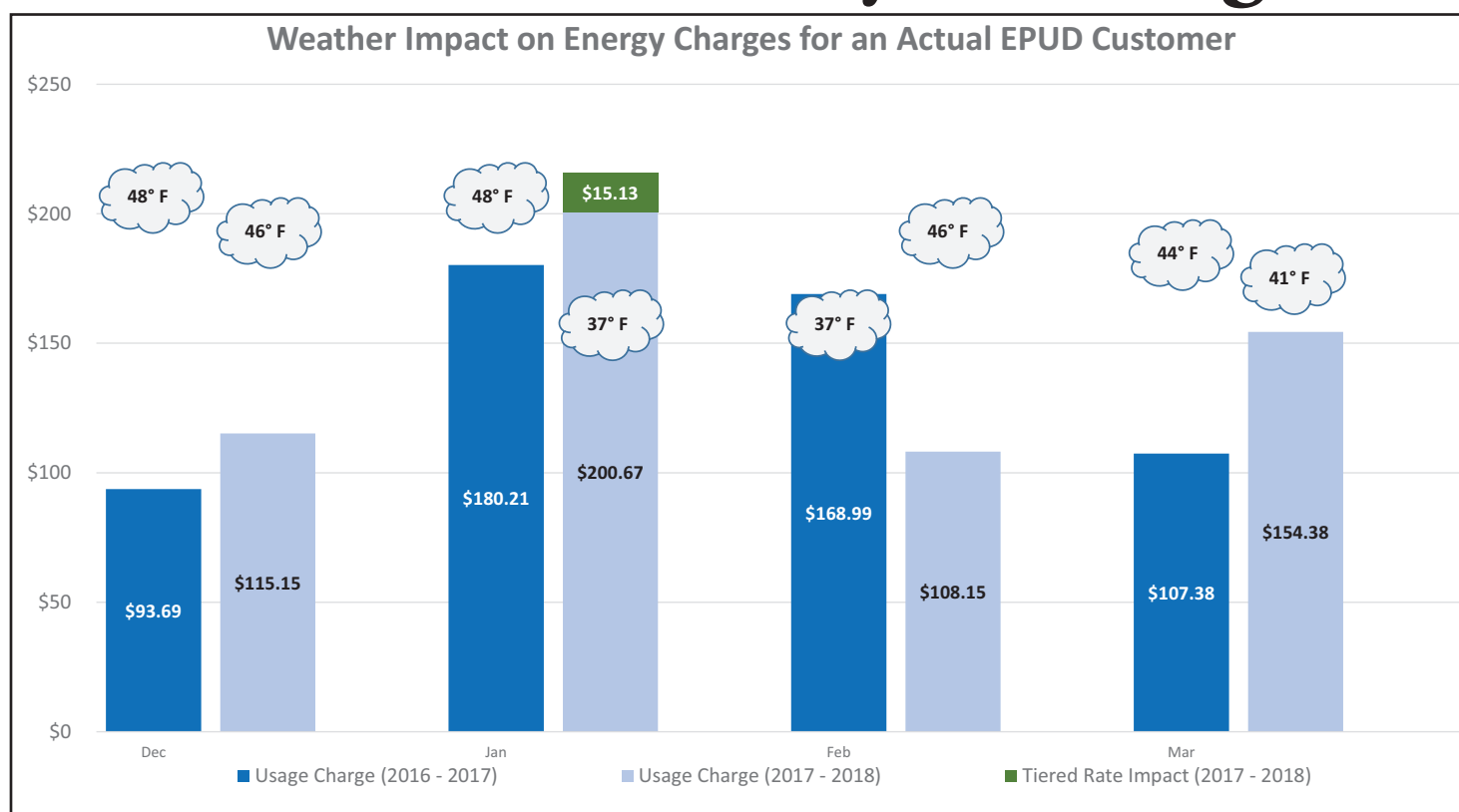
* Pacific Power will manually read the newly installed smart meters for as long as it takes to confirm everything is working correctly. After meter installations are complete in the area, meter reading will happen remotely.

* Approximately six weeks following the installation when all area installs are complete, customers can sign in to their Pacific Power account to access the newly available usage data. Customers can sign up for their web account here.

If customers have any concerns, have not received the proper series of notices or have any reason to think a notification is not legitimate, customers should hang up and call Pacific Power's customer service at 1-800-221-7070 immediately to verify whether they are scheduled for an installation.

Additional information, including installation updates are available at www.pacificpower.net/smart-meter. Customers can also call 866-869-8520.

EPUD warns bills may climb again



The above graph shows the average temperature and compares the monthly bill each month from the year before to the current bill. The graphic is available online at cgsentinel.com.

By Caitlyn May
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Emerald People's Utilities District (EPUD) customers may be seeing another large bill.

Customers' March bill (which covers the month of February) should be arriving if it hasn't already but EPUD officials are warning that the possible increase is not attributed solely to the new tiered rates set in place last April.

In early February, the company issued a statement apologizing for December's high bills.

"Over the past month, many of you have voiced concerns about high electric bills and the tiered rate structure that was implemented in April 2017," General Manager Scott Coe wrote. "Your phone calls, emails and public statements helped us realize we did not adequately prepare you for the impact this structure could have on bills during winter months. We also did not clearly

communicate why we felt this was the right thing to do."

The company, however, has since been clear that the tiered system is not solely responsible for the higher rates.

"It's the temperature," said EPUD's public relations coordinator Patty Jo Angelini. "Customers saying their bills have doubled, it's just not possible," she said.

The average temperature in December was 45.3 degrees. In January, the average temperature was 36.8 meaning that February's bills were set to be higher despite the tiered rate which assigns a higher price per kilowatt hour for households that use more power.

Customers who use between one and 600 kWh will pay .0696 per kWh, a one-cent reduction in comparison to the previous rate. Those who use between 601 and 1,800 kWh will remain at the current rate of .0796 per kWh and those who exceed 1,801 kWh will

pay .1089.

"Some of the increase is due to the tiered rate change but the majority of it is the temperature. We had a cold February," Angelini said. "The bills in March will be higher."

In a sample bill, December saw a \$141.90 charge. January's bill for the same anonymous customer paid \$242.55.

"The average temperature went down but the bill did not double," Angelini said.

EPUD is providing several options for customers unable to pay their higher bills including a free energy audit which Angelini says can often cut a power bill in half.

The utility has also waived late fees and offered an extended enrollment period for its Equal Payment program that allows customers to pay the same dollar amount every month by averaging the prior year's bill.

For more information, or for specific questions about a bill, contact Angelini at (541) 744-7440.

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- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.
South Lane Fire & Rescue • 233 Harrison Ave, Cottage Grove 541-942-4493 • 55 South 1st Street, Creswell 541-895-2506

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