



SUCCESS STORY

CITY OF WEST JORDAN, UTAH BUILDS A BRIDGE TO AMI TO BOOST WATER CONSERVATION AND IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

BACKGROUND

The City of West Jordan, Utah, is nestled in the valley near the Oquirrh Mountains, just southwest of Salt Lake City. The city was founded in the mid- 1800's and operates under a Council-Manager form of government, with the city manager as the administrative head of the city.

One of Utah's fastest growing cities, West Jordan blossomed from a population of 4,221 in 1970 to over 111,000—and is still growing.

West Jordan's water system is operated by the Public Works Department. Public Works maintains over 23,000 water meters, of which 3,000 are commercial accounts. West Jordan purchases wholesale water as a primary source, with some of their own wells for backup.

CHALLENGE

Like most cities in the western United States, West Jordan has been especially concerned about the critical issue of water conservation. "We're really aware of how we use our water, and conservation is at the forefront of everybody's mind in Utah," stated Craig Frisbee, West Jordan's Utility Director. "We're basically a high desert. The last few years we've had a reduction in our snowpack, so that makes us more anxious about our conservation efforts."

West Jordan's wholesale provider set a goal of 25% reduction for water consumption by the year 2025. West Jordan adopted that same goal.

The city implemented Master Meter's Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system, and the staff has been very pleased with this drive-by system. The meter reading accuracy and drive-by technology increased billing revenues and reduced

operating costs. This detailed data also allows the city to better answer customers' questions when they call with billing or consumption questions.

Yet, to meet West Jordan's strong conservation goals, the utility department staff wished to further engage customers. West Jordan had a vision of giving customers information to help them budget their water use. And Craig had a personal goal to not only give citizens a tool to manage consumption—but to also help them reduce their water bills.

Providing customers with current data on their usage, comparison programs, notification of leaks, and other high value services, would help to make this vision a reality.

These features, associated with Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI), were desirable, but the city did not have sufficient funds to completely upgrade the system.

SOLUTION

Craig and his staff met with Master Meter to discuss their desire to move towards AMI. "We've worked with Master Meter for quite a few years. We like their product and their approach to customer service. They have a good customer service philosophy," noted Craig.

The main concerns for West Jordan's City Council were funding issues and ensuring a smooth transition for the upgrade.

With Master Meter's help, West Jordan developed a 5-year program to upgrade the metering system while staying within the city's budget. "When we expressed our concerns about budget—and about changing over to a new system—Master Meter worked with us to develop a program to meet both political and budgetary goals," noted Craig.



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Because of those important preliminary efforts, the City Council has been very supportive of the project.

West Jordan is now in the process of upgrading their 3G AMR system to Master Meter's Allegro Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Network. Master Meter is also helping West Jordan with changes to the billing software. Fortunately, the software works with both the old and new system, resulting in a smooth transition.

In the meantime, West Jordan conducted extensive research to find a best-in-class customer engagement system. They were introduced to WaterSmart Software. Craig explained, "We were looking for software to work with our water conservation program. WaterSmart had a great track record for conservation, good data analysis, and a portal that was easy to use and customer friendly." WaterSmart helps customers enjoy some of the benefits of AMI—like detailed consumption information by use category and leak notification—ahead of AMI installation.

Craig met with WaterSmart and Master Meter to see if there were benefits to having the two companies work together. This meeting led to a strategic collaboration the team refers to as the "Bridge to AMI."

While Master Meter installs the hardware, and transitions the utility billing software, WaterSmart fosters relationships with customers. As the new meters are deployed, WaterSmart relays real-time information to customers, such as leak resolution workflows and water-use tracking on their mobile phones or through the web.

"We weren't aware that both companies' systems would work together so well to help customers manage their water spend, to increase water conservation and improve customer service," noted Craig. "That was an ah-ha moment for us."

RESULTS

BUILDING A BRIDGE TO AMI

By working together with Master Meter and WaterSmart, West Jordan's customers are enjoying a seamless transition to an improved system.

Master Meter's ability to easily integrate the new and old meters with billing software means no hiccups on customer

utility bills. And WaterSmart's modern data analytics give customers and the West Jordan utility team useful insights into water use patterns, even before the new meters are installed.

From the customers' point of view, they only see better service. They have an informative, easy-to-use way to monitor their water use and lower their bills.

As the upgrade to AMI progresses, utility employees will enjoy the advantages of this new technology: Remote reads, immediate data access, 15-minute consumption reports, and other important information will be at their fingertips.

With the help of Master Meter and WaterSmart, West Jordan implemented a strategy to provide customers with two types of technology. Master Meter provides the infrastructure to obtain the data. And WaterSmart provides an interface that allows customers and staff to understand and use the data to their advantage.

IMPROVED CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Because the program is still in the beginning phase, West Jordan does not have exact figures on conservation results.

However, Craig noted that the utility is seeing positive responses from customers and early data on water-use efficiency is encouraging. "Our customers seem to be engaging around conservation, and these programs are helping. . . Within a year, we're confident we'll be pleased with the results."

IMPLEMENTING A MAJOR PROJECT WITHIN BUDGET

Tight budgets are a reality for today's utility systems. Without Master Meter's assistance to develop a 5-year program for the project, it may have been a no-go. WaterSmart also helped with the process by engaging customers to provide the utility with additional stakeholder support for the project. "Working with us on the budget was the biggest thing that the companies did," said Craig. Master Meter came up with the 5-year program. WaterSmart suggested we work on a section of the city at a time to help with budget. Both suggestions worked very well and allowed us to move forward with the project."

Knowing that customers are engaged in saving efforts along with the 5-year investment plan allowed West Jordan's City Council to fully support the upgrade to AMI.



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CUSTOMER SERVICE

Improving customer service is an ongoing goal for West Jordan.

With the new Master Meter AMI system, customers will have even more money saving and property protecting information available at their fingertips through the WaterSmart user-friendly customer portal. West Jordan utility staff will also be able to easily answer billing and water-use questions from customers by accessing detailed consumption, behavioral, and demographic information from the WaterSmart Analytics Dashboard.

The goal for the project was “no disruption to the customer. No changes perceived other than better service,” according to Craig. “So far, everything is very satisfactory. . . both companies work with us just great. We’re really pleased with the way the program is working so far.”

CONTACT INFORMATION

To learn more about how these companies can help you build a Bridge (to AMI):

Visit Master Meter at www.MasterMeter.com
or call us at 1-800-765-6518.

Visit WaterSmart at www.watersmart.com
or call us at 415-366-8622.

CUSTOMER DETAILS

City of West Jordan, Utah
<http://www.wjordan.com/>

CHALLENGE

Improvement to Conservation Program, goal to reduce consumption 25% by 2025

SOLUTION

- Master Meter Allegro Advanced Metering Infrastructure Network
- WaterSmart Software Customer Engagement & Data Analytics for Water Utilities

RESULTS

- Created a Bridge to AMI by partnering with Master Meter and WaterSmart on a 5-year implementation project
- Improved Conservation Efforts by
 - Upgrading metering system to AMI for improved, immediate data
 - Engaging customers with useful water use information and easy-to-use portal
- Met Budget Restrictions by creating 5-year implementation plan
- Improved Customer Service with immediate data availability and customer engagement program