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# NEWS RELEASE

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## Water Meter Replacement Project Update

DUBUQUE, Iowa – As of July 2, almost 12 percent (2,712) of the 22,821 water meters in Dubuque have been replaced with new meters featuring automated meter reading (AMR) and advanced leak indication technology.

The initial installations of the City of Dubuque's community-wide, mandatory water meter replacement project began in March and have gradually been ramped up to the current rate of approximately 300 meter installations per week. The project is on schedule for its completion by the end of summer 2011.

The City has contracted with Northern Water Works Supply (NWWWS) to install the new meters by geographic "zones." Dubuque water customers receive a notification letter when it is time for them to schedule an installation appointment and are encouraged to respond to this notification in a timely manner. This is a mandatory program and customer cooperation will greatly assist in the timely completion of this major project to improve Dubuque's water infrastructure.

Currently, NWWWS has eight full-time installers, two lead installers, and a supervisor working on the project. Installers work six days per week and they are averaging 50 meter installations per day. All NWWWS installers have completed training and background checks and have identification, wear identifiable uniforms, and drive marked vehicles. NWWWS is also partnering with Jaeger Plumbing and Modern Piping of Dubuque on certain installations.

The new meters are outfitted with a radio frequency meter interface unit (MIU), which collects meter usage data and remotely transmits the information to data collectors. The MIU and water meter work as a unit to detect intermittent leaks, continuous leaks, reverse-flow situations, and zero-usage situations. The system will automatically transmit meter usage data over radio frequency waves each hour to data collectors placed throughout the community which then transmit the data to City Hall. The new meters also allow customers to see their current meter reading, current flow rate, and any leak indication by simply shining a flashlight on the new meter.

The meters, manufactured in the U.S. by Neptune Technology Group, are also augmented with an Unmeasured Flow Reducer (UFR), manufactured locally by A.Y.

McDonald Manufacturing Company. The UFR assists the new meters in detecting and measuring low-flows, such as leaks and drips that have previously been immeasurable. By utilizing the UFR along with the new meter's digital leak indicator, customers can easily monitor their homes for even the smallest leaks. One customer fixing a 1/20 gallon-per-minute continuous leak can save over 20,000 gallons per year of previously wasted water.

In conjunction with the meter replacement project, the City has converted its utility billing system to invoice customers based on gallons of water used instead of cubic feet of water so customers can be more aware of just how much water they are using. The City has also created a grant program for financial assistance on costs of repairs of leaks identified through the project. The City will pay 50 percent of the replacement cost, not to exceed \$100, for repairs made to devices inside the home.

The new water meters are an example of the City's ongoing sustainability initiative and allow water customers to identify waste and consider behavior changes which will translate into "smarter" water use and increased energy savings. More efficient water use will also reduce the use of both energy and chemicals in treating and delivering water.

Funding for this \$8.7 million project is from a \$7.7 million State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan and a \$1 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) forgivable loan. Additional information, images, and frequently asked questions, is available on the City of Dubuque website at [www.cityofdubuque.org/watermeters](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/watermeters).

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