

Automated Meter Reading (AMR)

The good news is: DS&O is just beginning the process of installing meters which will automatically send the meter reading to the DS&O office! The bad news is: It will take DS&O three years to replace the 7,213 meters that are currently on the system.

DS&O currently uses a combination of customer and company meter readings to generate monthly energy billings. Customers who read their meters each month send the reading to the Cooperative along with their payment for the last billing each month. DS&O personnel read a large portion of the commercial meters along with all meters in the City of Solomon.

So why change something that seems to be working? In short, once this program is fully installed the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. Automated Meter Reading (AMR) is a method of reading meters using mechanical or electronic equipment. Your usage data will be periodically sent to the office through a signal being transmitted over the existing power lines in a matter of minutes. The system is reliable, accurate and completely eliminates the need for physically reading the meters. In addition, the system will save many hours of billing time as employees will not have to manually input meter readings.

Advantages to the AMR system are:

- * All meters will be read electronically by the cooperative on a regular basis.
- * Will allow expansion of our current load control efforts.
- * Capture KW information to properly determine the size of the transformer.
- * Enable DS&O to take blink counts to help us find equipment or tree problems
- * Eliminate the annual meter readings by DS&O.
- * Reduce the number of estimated bills.
- * Provide accurate in/out readings when changing customers.
- * DS&O will be alerted to meter tampering/theft as soon as it happens
- * Accommodate new rate designs such as interruptible, time of use and real time usage.

DS&O will begin installing the automated meters in the City of Solomon in April. Once the City of Solomon is up and running on the new system, AMR's will be installed in the Lindsborg and Marquette areas. The Solomon area was chosen because of its close proximity to the DS&O office and the Lindsborg and Marquette areas because of the irrigation wells that participate in the load control program.

The AMR program is another way in which DS&O is working to better serve you our consumers/ members. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the DS&O office.