



Current

News from Floresville Electric Light & Power System

Volume 20, Number 5

September/October 2018

Additional Technology Will Reduce Costs and Enhance Service

FELPS Begins Installing Smart Meters in Residential Areas

The Floresville Electric Light & Power System has begun installing smart meters in residential areas in the cities of Floresville, La Vernia, Stockdale, Poth and Falls City. The work there is expected to continue through the end of the year.

The meters of customers in rural areas are expected to be changed out next year. Customers who have one-way communication meters will have their meters changed at the end of the project also.

Smart meters allow for two-way communication between the meter and the FELPS system. The new technology will provide FELPS customers with better information about their electricity usage, will allow for more billing options in the near future and will provide for better load information that will assist FELPS staff in determining the needs of the electrical distribution system

before issues arise. The smart meter program also will allow FELPS to use existing staff to fill needs in other areas.

The following answers to frequently asked questions will provide additional information about the program. If you have questions, please call FELPS Customer Service at 830-216-7000, sub-option 1.

Do smart meters represent a health threat because of RF radiation? The RF emitted is less than the levels produced by other common household devices, such as cell phones, baby monitors, satellite TVs and microwave ovens. The American Cancer Society published an article addressing the issue. It can be read online at <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/radiation-exposure/smart-meters.html>.

Will my bill increase as a result of getting a smart meter? Rates are set by the Board of Trustees and the City of Floresville. At this time, no rate change is forecast. However, customers who opt out of getting a smart meter will pay an additional charge for meter reading each month and may pay one-time charges for meter changes. This information is detailed on the FELPS Web page: www.felps.us.

Are you going to turn my power off to save electricity when I have a smart meter? No, FELPS does not have a demand response program at this time. If the utility were to offer one, you would be able to opt into the program. Staff may use remote disconnect features to disconnect meters for non-pay and for locations with high turnover. But not all meters will have the remote disconnect feature.

Can I keep my current meter? No, all meters will be changed to either a smart meter, which will be the standard, or to a meter without communications for customers who opt out of getting a smart meter.

Will my meter catch my house on fire? FELPS has been using the same brand of meter for the last 15-18 years and has not had any fire problems. The only difference between the meters currently in use and the smart meters is the communication module in the smart meters. The meters most recently installed have one-way communication capabilities, while the smart meters have two-way communication capabilities.

FELPS Briefs

- The FELPS office will close at noon on Oct. 12 to allow access to the Peanut Festival booths and parking for emergency service personnel. The office also will be closed for the Columbus Day holiday on Oct. 8. Regular hours will resume on Oct. 9 at 8 a.m.
- Please note that the FELPS office will be closed on Nov. 22-23 for the Thanksgiving holiday.
- Theft of electricity is a crime. To save customers money, FELPS prosecutes persons who steal electricity.
- You can receive your FELPS bill by e-mail in addition to receiving it by regular mail or you can get it only by e-mail, if you wish. Sign up for the e-mail option on the FELPS Web site, www.felps.us, under the "E-Notifications" link located on the "My Account" tab.
- The 74th annual Floresville Peanut Festival kicks off on Oct.9 with the Goober Games. Look for the complete schedule of activities on the Internet at www.floresvillepeanutfestival.org.

Continued on page 2

The early version of another brand of meters did have fire issues, but FELPS is not buying meters from that manufacturer. All meters in use at FELPS go through various certifications in accordance with industry standards and they meet ANSI and FCC guidelines.

Will I be able to get insurance on my property?

Although we cannot guarantee that all companies will offer insurance, smart meters have been installed for many years and all utilities in neighboring areas have smart meters in use, including CPS Energy, GVEC, Karnes Electric and many others.

Can I schedule my meter change time and date?

Currently FELPS is changing meters of residential customers in the cities of Floresville, La Vernia, Stockdale, Poth and Falls City. Customers in the rural service territory will be changed out next year and customers with one-way communication meters will be changed at the end of the project. The schedule follows the path of meter readers so they can read the meters as they are changed out; consequently scheduling is not possible.

How long does it take to change out my meter and will that affect my appliances? The entire process takes about 10-15 minutes; the interruption of service shouldn't be more than 10-20 seconds and should not cause any voltage issues. A technician identified with a FELPS shirt, badge and truck will give a courtesy knock at your door to let you know they are there.

How was the \$25 monthly meter reading fee calculated for customers who opt out of getting a smart meter? The amount was determined based on the average cost to send an employee in a FELPS vehicle to a location within the service territory.

Is there any way I can avoid paying the meter exchange fee if I opt out? Yes, if you submit a completed Smart Meter Opt Out/In Program application before installation of a smart meter at your location and meet eligibility requirements, you will not pay the fee. See information on the FELPS Web site for details about the program and associated fees to exchange a smart meter for a meter requiring a field visit.

How can I get more information about opting out of receiving a smart meter? Please call Customer Service at 830-216-7000, sub-option 1 with any questions about smart meters or your service or check the FELPS Website at www.felps.us.

Communities Benefit from Public Power

Public Power Week during October recognizes the benefits of municipal utility systems, such as the Floresville Electric Light & Power System. Established in February 1943, FELPS is one of the nearly 2,000 public power utilities throughout the country that are owned by the communities they serve.

Because they serve the interests of the community rather than stockholders, municipal utilities offer low rates. FELPS has rates that are among the lowest compared with other comparable utilities.

Besides offering low rates, FELPS also transfers 3 percent of the system's gross electric sales revenue to the governments of the owner cities: Floresville, Stockdale and Poth. In addition, the utility pays 2.5 percent of gross electric sales within the city limits of La Vernia and 2 percent to Falls City as franchise fees. These transfers add to the cities' budgets and help keep property taxes lower than they would be otherwise.

The availability of safe, reliable and low-cost electricity is a major factor in this area's ability to attract businesses and to help them prosper, thus providing jobs.

Plan Now for Winter

Despite the summer temperatures, it's time to begin preparations for the heating season. Start now so you'll be ready when the first cold air arrives.

- Service the furnace so it operates well and is clean. Properly functioning, clean equipment saves you money on your utility bill, because the furnace is more efficient.
- Purchase a supply of air filters, so you can change them at least once a month during the heating season.
- Check for air leaks around windows, doors and pipes; then seal any leaks with caulk and weather-stripping.
- Check the attic insulation and maintain approximately 10 inches for a rating of R-30. Insulation can be installed from rolls or loose insulation can be blown into the attic.
- Resist the temptation to cover the rotating vents on your roof. These vents circulate air to reduce attic moisture and are necessary in both winter and summer.
- Consider getting a programmable thermostat so you can reduce the temperature at night and while you are gone for an extended time.



Contacting FELPS

Floresville Electric Light and Power System

1400 Fourth Street, P.O. Box 218, Floresville, TX 78114

www.felps.us Twitter: @FELPS_Electric Facebook: www.facebook.com/FELPS.OnLine

Phone: (830) 216-7000 • Fax (830) 393-0362

Business hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

After 5 p.m.: (830) 216-7000 (for outages, press sub-option 2, or report outages online)

The Floresville Electric Light and Power System Board of Trustees meets the last Wednesday of each month at 8 a.m. in the utility offices, 1400 Fourth Street, Floresville.