

# Frequently Asked Questions about Advanced Member Power



## **Q. What does Advanced Member Power include?**

A. Advanced Member Power includes the installation and implementation of an Advanced Metering Infrastructure system — called AMI for short in the industry. Commonly referred to as part of the smart grid, AMI is an integrated system of smart meters that enables more accurate measurement and allows us to serve our members better.

## **Q. What are the benefits of Advanced Member Power and switching to AMI?**

A. This new system will allow Tri-County Electric Cooperative to respond more quickly to outages, and better pinpoint issues causing outages. It will also allow Tri-County EC to see potential issues and address them before they cause major problems.

## **Q. What is a smart meter?**

A. A smart meter is a digital measurement device that monitors energy usage in homes or businesses. It also transmits meter readings, time-stamped usage data and status information to us automatically.

## **Q. When is the deployment occurring?**

A. The deployment is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2019 and will continue for up to two years. We will publish updates [here](#).

## **Q. Why is Tri-County Electric Cooperative making the change?**

A. Our goal is to provide the best service possible and Advanced Member Power is the best way for us to improve. The previous model of meter has reached its end of life and is no longer being supported by the manufacturer. Now is the ideal time to be proactive and upgrade. After careful consideration, the board and staff of Tri-County Electric Cooperative have elected to move to AMI meters.

## **Q. How does Advanced Metering Infrastructure work?**

A. AMI works by creating a radio-frequency (RF) mesh. The meters relay encrypted information to one another and eventually to a device called a router. These routers will relay information sent over the meter to another device called a collector. From here the information is sent to Tri-County EC's office over a fiber-optic backbone. We will be able to communicate back to the meters through the process in reverse.

## **Q. Will my bills go up?**

A. Provided that your usage remains the same, you will not see an increase on your bill.

## **Q. Will I be charged for the new meter?**

A. No.

**Q. What frequency differences will there be between the old and new meters?**

A. Both systems operate on the same frequency (900–928MHz), but the new AMI meter will broadcast on a set schedule while the previous meters broadcast continuously.

**Q. What is the margin of error on readings?**

A. The system will have a .2% margin of error as set by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

**Q. How often does the system read?**

A. The meter will store data in fifteen-minute intervals that are relayed to our office every four hours. It will conduct a comprehensive read once a day.

**Q. What data will be collected by the new meter?**

A. We will collect kilowatt hour (kWh) usage, volt/VAR metrics, amperage and more. Everything collected has to do with usage and power quality.

**Q. Is my data secure?**

A. Yes. The data is encrypted at the meter and stored securely at Tri-County EC's office. Your smart meter records and transmits your meter number and your electricity usage only. No personal data is accessed or stored by your meter. We respect your privacy and take our responsibility to protect it seriously.

**Q. Will Tri-County Electric Cooperative provide or sell my data to a third party?**

A. No. Your information is private. Sharing member data is against [Tri-County EC policy](#) and is also prohibited by the Public Utility Commission. An exception will be made in the case of a court-ordered warrant, as we are compelled by law to provide.

**Q. Can Tri-County Electric Cooperative manipulate the reading?**

A. No. The meter reports what it sees for usage. We cannot remotely alter readings.

**Q. What is the changeout process?**

A. Tri-County EC has partnered with Allegiant to conduct changeouts. A technician from Allegiant will stop by the member's home to take a picture of the old meter reading, the socket and the new meter upon installation. They will also remain on-site if problems are identified during the changeout until a Tri-County EC retained electrician comes to fix whatever issue is found. For details on Allegiant, visit [AllegiantUtilityServices.com](http://AllegiantUtilityServices.com).

**Q. Will my meter number change?**

A. Yes. The meter will have a new number, but all account numbers will remain the same.

**Q. Can I get sick from these meters?**

A. No. Twenty plus years of research by the World Health Organization, American Cancer Society, Electric Power Research Institute and others indicate that nothing about these meters is harmful to the health of humans or animals when used in the appropriate manner.

The frequency and power of the radio-frequency (RF) waves given off by a smart meter are similar to that of a typical cell phone, cordless phone or residential Wi-Fi router. Smart meters typically send and receive short messages only about 1% of the time. Because the smart meter antenna is located outside the home, people are much farther away from the source of RF waves. In addition, walls between the person and the smart meter's antenna further reduce the amount of RF energy exposure. This means that the amount of RF energy that someone would be exposed to from a smart meter is much lower than the amount that they would be exposed to from other devices.

**Q. Are the radio-frequency (RF) signals used by the smart metering system safe?**

A. Yes. These meters communicate using low-power, wireless signals that are similar or weaker in strength than those created by common electronic devices like cell phones, cordless phones or the Wi-Fi for your computer's internet at home. Smart meters emit only a fraction of the power identified in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) guidelines for safe RF energy exposure. Additionally, the Landis+Gyr Gridstream meters selected by Tri-County EC have also been subjected to testing for safety by UL, formerly Underwriter's Laboratories, and have received their certification for safety.

**Q. Can I decline getting a smart meter?**

A. No. However, you can choose to have the alternate option of installing the meter away from your home at your cost. Tri-County EC will not be installing multiple types of meters. To learn more about the alternate option click [here](#).

If you have further questions, please contact us [here](#).