

The background of the entire page is a scenic landscape photograph. In the foreground, there are large, jagged, reddish-brown rock formations. Beyond the rocks, a green valley with a golf course and some buildings is visible. In the distance, there are rolling hills and a prominent snow-capped mountain peak under a clear blue sky.

CASE STUDY

Oregon City finds improved customer service with the Aclara RF Network

City of Redmond Water Department, USA

Business Challenge

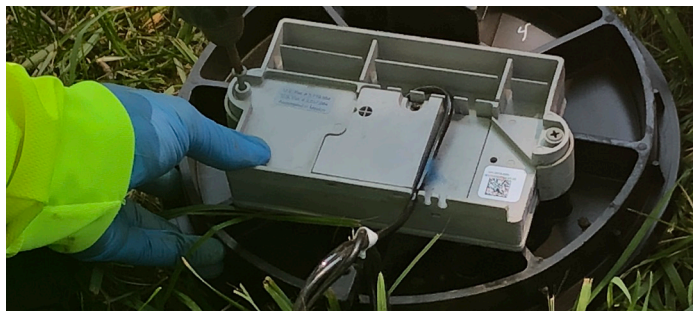
Redmond's water utility previously relied on contracted meter readers to manually report water meter data once a month. Using this outdated monthly system, the city was obtaining inconsistent information that did not allow the utility to effectively answer customer questions.

Additionally, the expense of hiring the contracted company and dispatching a pickup truck and field service person to a site to perform a meter read was becoming a financial burden. This, combined with the cost resulting from water loss due to undetected leaks, prompted the utility to search for a more cost-effective solution that would also help serve its customers more efficiently.

“ We chose the Aclara RF network for the added benefits to the customer. We're able to answer customer questions a lot more efficiently and effectively, as opposed to just getting one manual read a month. We're able to track leaks in the system on the customer's side. ”

Josh Wedding
Automatic Meter Reading Systems Manager for the City of Redmond

The customer now benefits by having somebody on every end, from technical support, to product management, to a program manager that's there and actually willing to help you, and if they can't help you, they'll get you to somebody that can.



Aclara MTU mounted under an RF transparent lid



Solution Overview

In 2006, the city eliminated the contracted company and implemented Aclara's RF network system. With approximately 10,000 end points, the utility uses the system to receive accurate meter data over a secure, long-range wireless network, eliminating the need for site visits.

Aclara's network meter transmission units (MTUs) are small, permanently sealed modules that are connected to the utility's water meters. The MTUs read the meter and forward the meter data on an FCC-licensed wireless channel at customer specified intervals. These messages are received by one of several data collector units (DCUs) that cover the service area.

The DCUs receive, process and store meter reading information transmitted from the MTUs and forward the information to the Aclara RF network headend located at the utility.

The headend collects, validates, processes, and stores data transmitted by the DCUs, providing billing, customer service, operations and other departments timely access to comprehensive account information. The Aclara RF network system also provides a complete range of customizable management and diagnostic reports.

Business Justification

The fast data turnaround helps the city of Redmond better serve its customers. For example, if a customer calls to ask about an unusually high bill, the utility is able to tap into the database and determine if and when a leak may have occurred. Instead of obtaining data from one read a month, the utility can now examine hourly activity on a customer's account to pinpoint any abnormalities.

Josh Wedding confirmed that they are really pleased with every aspect of the product as well as the service. They were moved to the top of the line in order to resolve their issue, and got some much needed hardware to do some DCU upgrades. They actually switched over from the way they previously transferred data with code division multiple access to a different method of transmitting.

The ability to immediately identify and track leaks has added benefits for the utility itself as well. Redmond is able to stay in line with its water conservation management objectives and the city

can provide accurate data during its annual state water audits.

The utility has also experienced a cost savings by curbing water loss through early leak detection.

Customer service is important to Wedding, especially when working with a technology provider. He noted a lack of technical support when dealing with other software providers, but not with Aclara.

In one instance, the city's cellular service was disrupted, requiring the system to go offline for more than two weeks. While the cellular provider struggled to get its circuit switches back up and running, Aclara sprang into action.

The city is currently in the process of upgrading to two-way, 3000-series MTUs to take advantage of the system's time stamp data and two-way communications.

Explore our AMI network and advanced sensors to boost your operations and enhance utility management with our comprehensive water solutions.



Preparing MTUs for installation.



Aclara MTU being installed in Redmond.



Accelerate change with smart utility solutions to transform your electric, water, and gas networks. Deliver the actionable insights your distribution network needs to create a more efficient, responsive, resilient, and reliable infrastructure.

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