



Energy InSightSM Frequently Asked Questions

CenterPoint Energy will deploy more than 2 million smart electric meters across its 5,000-square-mile service territory between 2009 and mid 2012.

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If you have a question you don't see answered here or elsewhere at www.CenterPointEnergy.com/energyinsight, e-mail energyinsight@centerpointenergy.com.



What is Energy InSightSM?

Energy InSight is what we call our new system of “smart” electricity technologies, which include smart electric meters and grid monitoring devices, remote switches and other electric distribution equipment, which we call the intelligent grid.

Why is it called Energy InSightSM?

We call our smart technologies “Energy InSight” because they are designed to give consumers greater insight into their consumption habits to promote more informed energy choices as well as give CenterPoint Energy insight into the health of the electric grid so we can improve power reliability and restoration.

What smart technologies are you deploying?

We are in the process of installing smart meters and developing an intelligent grid. Smart meters automate meter reading and service connection and disconnection as well as give consumers more frequent, detailed information on their electricity use. The intelligent grid is designed to improve electric reliability and monitor grid health which will reduce the number and shorten the length of power outages, among other benefits.

Why are you installing smart meters?

To help consumers take control of their energy use and to modernize the electric grid. It’s time for electricity to enter the Internet age. Imagine filling up your gas tank without knowing how much gas you bought or how much you spent until getting a bill weeks later. Smart meters can help show consumers how much electricity they are using and how much they are spending on it as they use it, which can encourage them to save energy, which is also good for the environment. Smart meters will also notify CenterPoint Energy automatically when your power goes out, which along with an “intelligent grid” could help us restore power sooner.

What makes “smart” meters smart?

Smart meters transmit electric usage data via a wireless two-way communication system that enables consumers to track energy consumption down to 15-minute intervals. The meters can also be read, connected, and disconnected remotely and will notify us when a customer’s power goes out, which means we can begin restoring power that much sooner.

How do smart meters work?

Smart meters securely transmit electric usage data by radio to cell relays, which are wireless devices installed on power distribution poles. Cell relays transmit the data to a radio tower “Take out Point” (TOP). TOPs collect data from cell relays within a several-mile radius and deliver it via microwave or fiber optic cable to CenterPoint Energy’s data center, where computing systems gather and process 96 daily reads per meter plus connect and disconnect electric service as needed electronically without sending a truck.



What are the benefits of smart meters?

Smart meters encourage consumers to conserve electricity by giving them the ability to better monitor and manage their electric use more frequently and in greater detail. Smart meters make possible a new energy future:

- **Remote meter reading** - CenterPoint Energy can read smart meters remotely, which means more privacy for residents, fewer estimated meter reads, and easy on-demand reads.
- **Remote service connection/disconnection** - Faster service, lower cost to consumers to move or switch Retail Electric Providers.
- **Automated outage notification** - Smart meters will automatically notify CenterPoint Energy about power outages to help us restore power more quickly.
- **Energy efficiency and savings** – Consumers can see their electric usage history at www.smartmetertexas.com to better manage energy costs by making small changes such as adjusting the thermostat.
- **New products and services** - Retail Electric Providers, who sell electricity, can now offer new services such as pre-paid service, “time-of-use” rates, or energy analysis tools.
- **Home Area Networks (HAN)** – Smart meters can interact with ZigBee -compatible HAN devices such as thermostats or other electric appliances so consumers can better manage their electricity use.

Do smart meters benefit the environment?

CenterPoint Energy’s smart meters and intelligent grid can significantly benefit the environment by reducing consumption of fossil fuel resources, thereby reducing emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) and other air pollutants. Environmental benefits can be achieved in three ways:

1. **Reducing electricity consumption and increasing transmission and distribution efficiency**
Studies suggest that given the ability to monitor their energy use more frequently in greater detail, many consumers may begin turning off unneeded appliances, change to more efficient lighting, adjust thermostats and make other energy-saving changes. If consumers conserve energy, less power may need to be produced. Reduced emissions from potentially decreased power generation could translate into better air quality in Houston.
2. **Reducing CenterPoint Energy’s vehicular needs**
CenterPoint Energy’s smart meters will also reduce the consumption of resources and associated emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants associated with performing basic utility services such as connections, disconnections, and meter readings, which can be conducted remotely for consumers with smart meters without sending a truck.
3. **Promoting distributed and renewable energy production and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles**
Finally, the company’s smart grid will create a platform that will promote the development and deployment of technologies for increasing distributed generation (DG)



and energy storage capacity, such as wind and solar generation, and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). Our smart meters measure surplus electricity generated as well as electricity delivered, eliminating the need for installation of expensive specialized DG metering. Distributed generation can help reduce the need for new fossil-fuel-generated capacity and therefore benefit the environment. The smart grid will also include technologies that facilitate the use of PHEVs, thereby reducing the consumer's reliance on gasoline and diesel-fueled vehicles.

I am interested in installing solar equipment at my home. Do I need to talk to someone at CenterPoint? Do smart meters give us net metering?

One advantage of smart meters is their ability to integrate so-called “distributed generation” sources such as solar panels and wind turbines. Our smart meters use multi-channel metering to measure surplus electricity generated as well as electricity received, eliminating the need for installation of expensive specialized distributed generation metering. Distributed generation can help reduce the need for new fossil-fuel generated capacity, now and in the future, and can therefore benefit the environment.

For consumers with distributed generation, CenterPoint Energy sends the amount of electricity consumed and generated to Retail Electric Providers (REPs), who may compensate customers for surplus generation. Ask your REP about their policy on solar or wind power and compensation for surplus distributed generation.

If you are interested in connecting a distributed generation source to your residence, visit www.centerpointenergy.com/solarwind and click on “Required Steps.” You may also call 713-945-4155.

Can smart meters help me save money?

Smart meters can provide consumers more frequent, detailed information regarding their energy usage. If you choose to use that information to lower your energy consumption, you could save money. One consumer in our In-Home Display pilot says he is saving 25 percent on his bill as a result of changes he's made since getting the device. Another woman says she is saving \$30 per month. Of course, individual results will vary: smart meters and In-Home Displays give you information that you must translate into changes in energy consumption if you are to save money.

Watch a video of consumers sharing their experiences with In-Home Displays at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cS7QYACmug>.

In addition, smart meters will allow Retail Electric Providers to offer new services such as time-of-use rates that encourage energy use during off-peak periods, such as during the night, by offering lower prices during those periods.



Exactly how much money will I save with the new smart meters?

That depends on several factors including wholesale electricity prices, retail electric service offerings, and your energy consumption. Smart meters make more information about your energy use available to you. If you choose to use that information to lower your energy consumption, you could save money. One consumer in our In-Home Display pilot says he is saving 25 percent on his bill as a result of changes he's made since getting the device. Another woman says she is saving \$30 per month. Of course, individual results will vary: smart meters and In-Home Displays give you information that you must translate into changes in energy consumption if you are to save money.

Watch a video of consumers sharing their experiences with In-Home Displays at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cS7QYACmug>

Studies suggest that raising consumer awareness of energy use does lead to lower consumption, which should not only save money for consumers who reduce their usage, but also could lower the cost of electricity for all consumers. In addition, smart meters will allow Retail Electric Providers to offer time-of-use rates that encourage energy use during off-peak periods. For example, customers might pay less to run appliances at night.

You can find some case studies at www.centerpointenergy.com/energyinsight under Resources.

How much will this cost?

The Texas Legislature and the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) authorized utilities to assess Retail Electric Providers (REPs) a surcharge to recover the cost of advanced metering system deployment (which includes smart meters, communications infrastructure and back office systems). The surcharge, which was to have been spread over a 12-year period, was \$3.24 per month for each residential consumer for the first 24 months, beginning in February 2009. In 2011, the surcharge was reduced to \$3.05 per month. The receipt of a U.S. Department of Energy smart grid grant will reduce the duration of this surcharge from 12 years to six years, saving consumers millions of dollars.

The total cost of a limited [Intelligent Grid](#) deployment, to be completed in 2013, which will serve half a million people, is \$100 million: \$50 million will come from the federal grant.

What is the Smart Meter Texas portal? Why can't I find my meter in the portal?

The Smart Meter Texas website was designed by IBM on behalf of a consortium of electric transmission and distribution utilities, including CenterPoint Energy, Oncor, and American Electric Power, to give customers with smart meters in the service territories of these utilities more control over their electricity use.



After a testing and acceptance period of up to two months following the installation of their smart meter, consumers can register at www.SmartMeterTexas.com to access detailed views of their electric usage history in 13-month, 30-day, or 24-hour snapshots down to 15-minute intervals including usage data up to 24-48 hours before the current day.

The Smart Meter Texas portal also allows Retail Electric Providers (REPs) to access their smart meter customers' usage information to support retail offerings such as energy analysis tools, time-of-use rates, and pre-paid service. Through the portal, consumers and REPs can also connect Home Area Network devices to smart meters to help consumers better manage their electricity use by remotely controlling smart electric appliances and thermostats, which are under development by a number of manufacturers.

For more information, or to register your meter, visit www.SmartMeterTexas.com or call the Smart Meter Texas Help Desk at 1-888-616-5859. *If you do not find your meter on the portal, it may not yet have completed the 60-day acceptance period.* Check with CenterPoint Energy at 713-207-2222 or 1-800-332-7143 or call your retail electric provider to find out when your smart meter is ready for the Smart Meter Texas portal.

Why does the meter approval process take 60 days?

After installation, smart meters need time to “mesh” with the communications network to determine the best path from meter to meter to cell relay to radio take out point. This stabilization period can take up to 60 days.

Will I be able to buy variable rate (time of use) electricity as soon as my smart meter is installed?

CenterPoint Energy does not sell electricity but delivers it on behalf of scores of Retail Electric Providers. Retail programs designed to take advantage of smart meters should become increasingly available as more smart meters are installed. Check with your Retail Electric Provider about their smart-meter enabled service offerings or visit www.powertochoose.org to compare Retail Electric Providers.

What other new products and services do smart meters make possible?

Remember, CenterPoint Energy does not sell electricity but delivers it on behalf of scores of Retail Electric Providers. With smart meters, Retail Electric Providers can now offer pre-paid service, time-of-use rates, energy analysis tools, and other products and services. Check with your Retail Electric Provider about their smart-meter enabled service offerings or visit www.powertochoose.org to compare Retail Electric Providers.

As part of the Biggest Energy Saver Contest, sponsored by GRID 21, software application developers are creating new apps for smart phones, tablets, and the web that will make use of



smart meter data to help consumers manage their electricity use. Visit the Biggest Energy Saver website at www.BiggestEnergySaver.com/consumer to try out the new smart meter apps.

When will my meter be installed?

Smart meter deployment began in March 2009 and will continue through mid 2012. To find out when your meter will be installed, visit www.CenterPointEnergy.com/smarmeterschedule. You should receive door hangers before and after your meter has been installed.

Will there be a specific day when you will install the meter? What if my gate is locked? Do I just have to leave the gate unlocked?

A contract company, North Houston Pole Line, is installing the new smart meters for CenterPoint Energy. While the deployment schedule is known, the specific date a meter will be installed will not be known until just before the installation and can change depending on weather, accessibility of the meter or other factors. If the meter cannot be installed because of an access issue (i.e. locked gate, dog, etc.), you will receive a door hanger with a phone number to call North Houston Pole Line to schedule an appointment for the meter installation.

How long will it take to install my new meter?

The installation will take about 10 minutes, during which you will experience a very brief power outage. The technician installing your meter should knock on your door, and you may want to save any files you are working on and turn off your computer during the outage.

What if I am not home when they come by to change out meters? Can I make an appointment for the meter change out?

In most cases, you need not be present for the meter exchange, which takes only ten minutes or less. If the technician is unable to access your meter, he will leave a door hanger with a phone number you can call to schedule an appointment. For business customers, installers will make an effort to coordinate a time for the installation to avoid disrupting business.

How do you decide who gets a meter first? Can I get mine now?

We are obligated by the PUC to install meters pursuant to a carefully developed plan, with smart meters being installed along meter reading routes from central Houston outward. Installation of smart meters across CenterPoint Energy's territory will be complete in mid 2012.

Are you installing smart meters in new homes?

Our PUC-approved meter deployment plan requires smart meters to be installed in newly constructed homes even when the rest of the area has not been upgraded. However, they will become "smart" only when the communication systems are in place. To find out when the communication systems will be in place in your area, visit www.CenterPointEnergy.com/smarmeterschedule. Just perform a lookup of your scheduled meter installation period: the communication should be in place by the first month in the range.



What happens to the old meters?

Meters that are replaced by the new smart meters are being dismantled, and all their components – such as aluminum, copper, glass et cetera – are being recycled.

My smart meter has been installed - what happens now?

After an acceptance period of up to two months, you can get detailed information on your historic electric usage up to 24-48 hours before the current time by visiting www.SmartMeterTexas.com.^{*} To learn when your smart meter is ready, check with your Retail Electric Provider or CenterPoint Energy (at 713-207-2222 or 1-800-332-7143). To register, you will need your meter number and ESI ID (electric service identifier), which are on your bill. You may contact the Smart Meter Texas help desk at 1-888-616-5859.

^{*} The Smart Meter Texas Web site complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

What can I do with my smart meter?

After an acceptance period of up to two months, you can get detailed information on your electric usage up to 24-48 hours ago down to 15-minute intervals by visiting www.smartmetertexas.com. You can see in graphs what time of year, month, or day you use the most electricity and identify usage spikes or trends that may encourage you to make energy saving changes. This data will also be helpful if your Retail Electric Provider (REP) offers “time-of-use” pricing.

You can check with your REP or CenterPoint Energy at 713-207-2222 or 1-800-332-7143 to learn when your smart meter is ready for the Smart Meter Texas portal. To register for the portal, you will need your meter number and ESI ID (electric service identifier), which are on your bill.

CenterPoint Energy has piloted In-Home Display (IHDs) which are devices about the size of a digital camera that “talk” to the smart meter to show your electric usage up to the minute. IHDs may provide other useful information such as the total estimated electric bill based on usage for the month to date.

While IHDs are not yet widely available, consumers should have access to a variety of devices in a range of prices as demand grows. Since regulatory restrictions currently prevent CenterPoint Energy from offering displays for sale, you can ask your REP if they are planning programs involving these in-home devices.

As part of the Biggest Energy Saver Contest, sponsored by GRID 21, software application developers are creating new apps for smart phones, tablets, and the web that will make use of smart meter data to help consumers manage their electricity use. Visit the Biggest Energy Saver website at www.BiggestEnergySaver.com to try out the new smart meter apps.



In the future, you will be able to create a **Home Area Network** (HAN) using the smart meter to let you remotely monitor and control up to five smart devices, such as a smart thermostat and smart appliances, which are under development by a number of manufacturers. For example, you could program appliances to run when prices drop below a certain level. Ask your REP if they have plans to offer time-of-use rates or other smart meter-enabled products and services.

How do I read the meter?

Smart meters display six different sets of information at three-second intervals, 24 hours a day (1) usage in kilowatt hours (2) electric demand in kilovolt amperes for commercial customers (3) surplus electricity generated by solar panels, wind mills etc (4) a check to ensure the characters are displaying correctly (5) whether the meter is registered with the communications network (6) and whether the meter is synchronized with the network. Instructions for reading the meter can be found at www.centerpointenergy.com/energyinsight under Resources.

However, in-home displays and other applications will be available that will provide more detailed and helpful information about your electric usage than does simply reading the meter, and within 60 days after the installation of your meter, you can view your detailed electric usage up to 24-48 hours before the current time at www.smartmetertexas.com.

Do I have to get a smart meter? My meter is working fine.

Yes. The Public Utility Commission of Texas has authorized deployment of smart meters across CenterPoint Energy's electric service territory. While the old meters may operate correctly, they do not provide consumers with the potentially energy- and money-saving insights into their electric consumption and other benefits that smart meters can provide.

Can I refuse to have a meter put in my yard?

No. The Public Utility Commission of Texas, the chair and commissioners of which are appointed by the governor, ordered that smart meters should be deployed throughout CenterPoint Energy's service territory. PUCT rules also guarantee CenterPoint Energy access to meters for purposes of maintenance and obtaining consumption information. If the installer is unable to access the meter to make the exchange, he will leave a door hanger with a phone number you can call to schedule the installation. Following installation, smart meters give residents more privacy since a meter reader will no longer have to visit the property to read the meter.

Are the proceedings at the PUC authorizing smart meters available to the public for inspection?

Yes. The Public Utility Commission of Texas's final order authorizing installation of smart meters, as well as monthly reports to the PUCT by CenterPoint Energy on the status of the project, can be found at www.centerpointenergy.com/services/electricity/residential/smartmeters/pucreports/.



Are smart meters accurate?

CenterPoint Energy understands that your trust in us depends on accurate meter readings. That's why we, the Public Utility Commission (PUC) of Texas, and other Texas utilities engaged an independent technology firm, Navigant Consulting, Inc., to test smart meters being installed throughout the state. Here are some of the key results:

- Of *thousands* of CenterPoint smart meters tested, **NONE** were found to be inaccurate according to American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards.
- In side-by-side testing, smart meters were **MORE** accurate than traditional electromechanical meters.
- Navigant found no statistically significant difference in electricity usage on average between customers with smart meters and those with electromechanical meters that can be attributed to the installation and use of smart meters.
- Navigant concluded that “the vast majority of the higher electricity bills observed appear to be due primarily to significant changes in the weather and electricity usage”

You can see Navigant's entire report at www.CenterPointEnergy.com/EnergyInSight under Resources. You can also view a video demonstration of the testing procedure for installed meters at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BatrKmKxyIU>. To request a test of the accuracy of your specific smart meter, you may contact CenterPoint Energy at 713-207-2222 or 1-800-332-7143.

Will I get fewer estimated bills with a smart meter?

Yes. Since CenterPoint Energy can read smart meters remotely, fewer estimated readings will be necessary because of accessibility issues. In a recent month for example, 1.5% of CenterPoint Energy's traditional electromechanical meters required estimated readings, while only 0.3% of smart meters required estimated readings, an 80% reduction.

My bill went up after I got a smart meter. Is there a connection?

No. Remember, CenterPoint Energy does not sell electricity. You can direct questions about your bill to your Retail Electric Provider, who sells you the electricity we deliver. However, here are some factors that can contribute to increased consumption and high bills:

- **Temperature extremes** – in summer, air conditioning can account for two-thirds or more of your electricity usage. Electric heaters may contribute to high winter bills.
- **Holiday lighting and other seasonal usage** (e.g. pool pumps) can create spikes in usage.
- **Vacation periods**, with more people at home during the day, can be times of high usage.
- **Electronics**, such as computers, LCD and plasma TVs, and gaming systems comprise an increasing percentage of home electricity consumption.
- **A higher electric rate** can also result in a higher bill even if you reduce consumption. Rates can be either fixed at a given price every month or variable, in which case they can fluctuate significantly. Check with your Retail Electric Provider about their rate plans or



visit www.powertochoose.org to compare the rate plans of different providers.

Our smart meters can help you better monitor your consumption of electricity. With an in-home display, new smart applications, or at www.smartmetertexas.com, you'll no longer have to wait for your monthly electric bill to find out how much electricity you are using, which can take the surprise out of your bill and prompt you to conserve energy.

For energy-saving tips and programs, visit www.CenterPointEnergy.com/EnergyInSight and www.centerpointefficiency.com.

Are smart meters secure from hackers?

Security is of paramount concern to CenterPoint Energy. We maintain a comprehensive cyber security and risk mitigation program based on national standards followed by other leading companies in the energy, defense, and financial industries.

Will smart meters let you see when I watch TV or run my appliances? Who else can see my electricity usage?

CenterPoint Energy understands your concern about privacy. We believe energy usage data belongs to the consumer and can be shared only when authorized in writing by the consumer or authorized by regulatory authorities as necessary to conduct business, such as for billing.

As with any service, we must measure energy consumption for accurate billing. CenterPoint Energy measures your electric consumption just like your cell phone provider measures your cell phone use to bill you. Smart meters merely allow utilities to automatically perform an otherwise manual process while giving you more frequent and detailed information on your energy usage patterns, which can help you save energy and money.

Fifteen-minute interval usage data is delivered electronically to the Smart Meter Texas Web portal, where your Retail Electric Provider can access it for billing. Unless you make an inquiry, billing department personnel generally do not view your usage data and it is not categorized by individual appliance. In the future, you may be able to connect up to five electric appliances in an optional Home Area Network that allows you to see your energy use by appliance.

How do you know that the usage you send to my retail electric provider for billing is mine and not my neighbors'?

Data collected from a meter and transmitted wirelessly contains specific, unique identifiers associated with the customer's meter number and service address. These fields are validated numerous times to ensure accuracy before the data is used for billing. This process has been independently validated by Navigant Consulting, Inc.

Will smart meters help you stop people from stealing electricity?

Yes. In addition to their other features, smart meters automatically alert CenterPoint Energy when tampering occurs. CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric investigates numerous electric



diversion (theft) cases every year throughout the Houston area. Electricity diversion is not only illegal; it is also dangerous. Meter tampering can result in death or injury by electrocution and may also present a fire hazard. If you suspect someone of diverting electricity, you can call our hotline at 1-877-570-5770 or complete an online form at www.centerpointenergy.com/metertheft/.

Do smart meters interfere with my security systems, pacemaker, cell phone or other electronics?

No. According to Itron, the manufacturer of CenterPoint Energy's smart meter, "The transmitting devices operate in compliance with 47 CFR Part 15 regulations, which require coexistence with other Part 15 certified devices. Within the 902-298 MHz frequency band, operation is limited to frequency hopping, direct sequence spread spectrum and digital modulation intentional radiators. This rule facilitates multiple devices operating in the same location. This includes devices such as security systems, cordless phones and pacemakers. The meter's transmit signal is of very short duration, which further decreases the potential to interfere with other devices."

Is it true smart meters can cause fires or damage appliances?

CenterPoint Energy has installed more than 1.5 million smart meters, and we are not aware of any fires in Houston-area homes or businesses related to the installation of smart meters. In rare instances, the removal and/or replacement of a meter (including old electromechanical "dial" meters as well as smart meters) can cause electrical discharge and/or "arcing" (i.e. sparks) which may damage the meter and associated components. CenterPoint Energy is committed to the safe deployment of smart meters and will continue to work closely with our installation contractor to investigate any customer concerns.

A month or two before your smart meter is installed, our crews will visit your property to look for potential safety hazards or other obstacles to installing a smart meter. If they identify any potential hazard, you will be informed of the hazard and no smart meter will be installed until the situation is corrected.

You can also perform a visual inspection of your meter. If your service is fed from underground power lines, you should look at the conduit (the tube that surrounds and protects the wires) where it enters the meter can, and if the conduit is pulled away from the meter and you can see the wires, you may want to contact a qualified electrician to perform an inspection. If the conduit is pulled away from the can, it does not necessarily mean there is a problem with the service, but it is something that you might want to get checked out to make sure everything is in proper working condition.



Is it true that smart meters pose a health risk by emitting radio signals?

Safety is a paramount concern at CenterPoint Energy. CenterPoint Energy's smart meters transmit electric usage information through radio frequency (RF) signals three times per day. Exposure to RF signals from smart meters is similar to or less than exposure from common household devices such as cell phones, microwave ovens, cordless phones, and Wi-Fi routers.

Will the meter reader stop coming to my house?

Yes. After a meter acceptance period of up to two months, CenterPoint Energy will read your smart electric meter remotely. Electric service can also be connected and disconnected remotely for most homes, but CenterPoint Energy will continue to dispatch crews as needed to make on-site repairs.

Won't the savings on meter readers pay for the new meters?

No. There are some operational savings for CenterPoint Energy, but the surcharge approved by the Public Utility Commission of Texas, which covers not only smart meters but also the costs associated with the communications infrastructure and back-office computer systems, takes predicted operational savings into account.

Will meter readers lose their jobs?

As of June 30, 2011, CenterPoint Energy's smart meter and intelligent grid projects have created or retained 551 jobs, from the manufacture, installation, and maintenance of meters and other equipment; to the construction and maintenance of communications infrastructure; to computer hardware and software. Smart meters create new opportunities for CenterPoint Energy employees, from metering, to telecommunications, to information technology, to business analysis.

As smart meters are installed, we will need fewer meter readers. We may not hire new meter readers to replace those who choose to leave the company. Meter readers and other employees, to whom CenterPoint Energy offers educational assistance, can apply for new positions. So far, the company has not laid off any meter readers as a result of this project.

Won't the savings from not sending someone in a truck to connect or disconnect service offset the cost of installing smart meters?

No. Anticipated operational savings to CenterPoint Energy were subtracted from the surcharge. In fact, execution of service orders is a discretionary service charge to Retail Electric Providers passed on to customers when service is connected or disconnected and is not part of CenterPoint Energy's base rates. Each year, the discretionary service charge for smart meters with connect/disconnect functionality is reduced based on the number of smart meters installed, thereby reducing the cost of service connection and disconnection for all customers regardless of whether they have already received their smart meter.



I got a smart meter years ago; why do I need a new one?

Actually, you probably have an OMR (off-site meter read) meter, which uses an earlier form of digital technology, in which meter readers walk or drive by the house to pick up a remote signal from the meter. OMR meters do not offer all the consumer benefits of smart meters and will therefore be replaced.

If I move, can I take the smart meter with me?

No, but smart meters will be installed in newly constructed homes and businesses in CenterPoint Energy's service territory, even outside the areas currently scheduled for deployment. However, those meters installed outside the scheduled areas will not be fully functioning until the scheduled installation period for that area when the necessary telecommunications will be in place. To find out when you the communication systems will be in place in your area, visit www.CenterPointEnergy.com/smartmeterschedule. Just perform a lookup of your scheduled meter installation period: the communication should be in place by the first month in the range.

What is a Home Area Network?

In the future, smart meters will be able to interact with up to five ZigBee-compatible devices, such as future smart appliances and thermostats. We call this a Home Area Network, and it will allow consumers to monitor and control the networked devices remotely. Several appliance manufacturers have announced that they are adding HAN capabilities to smart appliances, and CenterPoint Energy is in the process of testing many of these. We expect HAN technology and related products to grow as smart meters are deployed in large numbers across the country.

What is ZigBee?

ZigBee is an alliance of companies working to enable wirelessly networked monitoring and control products for appliances and other devices based on an open global standard to make sure they are compatible.

What is an In-Home Display?

In-Home Displays are devices that "talk" to smart meter to show consumers their electric usage up to the minute. In-home displays may provide other useful information such as the total estimated electric bill based on consumption to that date. Watch a video of consumers sharing their experiences with In-Home Displays at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cS7QYACmug>.

Where do I get an In-Home Display? How much do they cost?

While In-Home Displays are not yet widely available, consumers should have access to a variety of devices in a range of prices (from about \$50 to several hundred dollars) as demand grows. Since regulatory restrictions currently prevent CenterPoint Energy from offering displays for sale, you can ask your Retail Electric Provider if they are planning programs involving these in-home devices.



CenterPoint Energy has made a limited number of In-Home Displays available free of charge to consumers with smart meters and is developing a plan to provide In-Home Displays to qualified low-income consumers.

Do I need special appliances to use the remote functionality that the smart meters will provide?

CenterPoint Energy can read, connect, and disconnect smart electric meters remotely without your having to purchase any additional equipment. In the future, you will be able to create a **Home Area Network** which “talks” to the smart meter so you can remotely monitor and control up to five ZigBee-compatible devices, such as smart thermostats and appliances. There will also be devices that can be connected to existing appliances allowing you to control these appliances, such as devices plugged into wall outlets for connecting and monitoring usage of window air conditioning units.

When are smart appliances going to be available?

Several appliance manufacturers, including GE, are developing smart appliances. As part of the Biggest Energy Saver campaign and contest, CenterPoint Energy customers could win a full kitchen suite of GE Profile smart appliances enabled with Brillion™ technology, or a second-place prize of a GE Profile Front Load washer/electric dryer. CenterPoint Energy expects Home Area Network (HAN) technology and related products to grow as smart meters are deployed in large numbers across the country.

What is demand response? Will CenterPoint Energy or my retail provider be able to turn my appliances off?

"Demand response" programs encourage consumers to reduce or shift their electricity use (e.g. from afternoon to evening) in response to price signals or to reduce the possibility of overloading the electric grid in times of high demand. Such programs, now available to commercial and industrial customers, could be extended to residential and small business customers with smart meters. Through such **optional** programs, utilities could offer price incentives, payments or rebates to consumers for shifting or reducing their electricity consumption. Under such demand response programs, **with customer authorization**, utilities can cycle air conditioners off or adjust programmable communicating thermostats when demand for electric service exceeds available supply.

Will this be used for rolling outages if demand gets too high? With this new smart meter, will you be able to specifically turn off my power at my house if you have rolling outages?

When the demand for electricity exceeds supply, it is necessary to curtail usage, or the entire electrical grid is subject to collapsing. When there is a shortfall of available power generation supply to meet demand or when a supply shortfall is anticipated, ERCOT (the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which operates the electric grid across most of Texas) issues an emergency requirement to begin cutting back electric load through “rolling outages.”



Rolling outages are systematic, temporary interruptions of electrical service. They are the last step in a progressive series of emergency procedures that ERCOT follows when it detects that there is a shortage of power generation within the Texas electric grid. ERCOT will direct electric transmission and distribution utilities, such as CenterPoint Energy, to begin controlled, rolling outages to bring the supply and demand for electricity back into balance. They generally last 15-45 minutes before being rotated to a different neighborhood to spread the effect of the outage among consumers, which would be the case whether outages are coordinated at the circuit level or individual meter level. Without this safety valve, power generating units could overload and begin shutting down and risk causing a domino effect of a statewide, lengthy outage.

With smart meters, CenterPoint Energy is proposing to add a process prior to shutting down whole circuits to conduct a mass turn off of individual meters with 200 amps or less (i.e. residential and small commercial consumers) for 15 or 30 minutes, rotating consumers impacted during that outage as well as possible future outages.

There are several benefits to consumers of this proposed process. By isolating non-critical service accounts (“critical” accounts include hospitals, police stations, water treatment facilities etc.) and spreading “load shed” to a wider distribution, critical accounts that happen to share the same circuit with non-critical accounts will be less affected in the event of an emergency. Curtailment of other important public safety devices and services such as traffic signals, police and fire stations, and water pumps and sewer lifts may also be avoided.

Will CenterPoint Energy provide assistance to low-income consumers?

Yes. CenterPoint Energy has committed to spend \$7.5 million to provide qualified low-income consumers with an in-home device that will give them the ability to directly monitor their electrical usage. The Public Utility Commission of Texas is coordinating an effort on behalf of several Texas utilities to procure, test, and deliver the devices.

I don't use electronics in my home. Do I still need a smart meter? How can I get the full benefit of smart meters if I am not computer literate?

The Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) has authorized CenterPoint Energy to install smart meters for all consumers in our electric service area. CenterPoint Energy is testing several battery-operated in-home displays with a variety of options in a range of prices that show your electricity usage up to the minute so that you don't have to wait for your monthly bill to see how much electricity you are using. The company has committed to the PUC to spend \$7.5 million to provide qualified low-income consumers such in-home displays in a program to be coordinated by the PUC. Studies suggest that giving consumers more frequent, detailed information on their electricity use encourages them to conserve energy, which can save you money.

Check with your Retail Electric Provider to see if they will make your electric consumption information available to you in a non-electronic format.



The automated capabilities of smart meters, such as remote reading, connection and disconnection, and automatic outage notification, do not require the consumer to have any electronic device or expertise other than the smart meter.