



## BEACON® Advanced Metering Analytics (AMA) and high resolution, E-Series® Ultrasonic meters create a winning combination for Beauregard Parish, LA

When Waterworks District 3 of Beauregard Parish, La., began to research new water meters to replace its aging system, it didn't take long to decide that the BEACON AMA managed solution was the right fit. As the first BEACON AMA starter kit sold by distributor Rural Pipe & Supply, District 3 started its deployment before the four-month trial was over. "As soon as I learned about BEACON AMA, I let District 3 know, and they were on board right from our first conversation," says Todd Stott, sales rep from Rural Pipe & Supply. "Even though they are only partially deployed, they've seen the benefits and have convinced other utilities to sign up for the starter kits as well."

Beauregard Parish, which covers 1,200 square miles, is mainly rural with most of its 7,000 customers spread apart, creating hard-to-reach meters. Although the aging system was working, there were many inefficiencies, including hiring a third party to manually read meters. "We knew immediately that the BEACON AMA software suite, the ORION® Cellular endpoints and the E-Series Ultrasonic meters, would help save time and money," says Jeremy Joffrion, distribution manager for District 3.

### Overdue efficiencies

Long driveways, wooded areas, pesky dogs, hidden meters, and often times, multiple meters per property, were all barriers to an easy meter read. On average, it took three people more than 12 days to collect information in the Parish. Realizing that it needed to enter the electronic age, the district knew that the time and money it spent to obtain meter readings could instead be used to increase efficiency. Enter BEACON AMA: an immediate solution that combines cellular endpoints, use of existing cellular networks and an easy-to-use software product to give the utility the fast, near real-time data it needed to start saving time and money. Now, instead of paying for manual meter readings, which averaged \$2 per meter, the utility is able to focus on its core competency.

In addition to the time it took to read the meters, the utility also knew it was obtaining readings from aging meters with decreasing accuracy. This was another area desperately needing improvement. After considering various meter products, District 3 selected the high resolution E-Series Ultrasonic engineered polymer meter line for its durability and long-term accuracy.

E-Series Ultrasonic meters use solid-state technology in a compact, totally encapsulated, weatherproof, and UV-resistant housing. Equipped with an easy-to-read, 9-digit LCD display,



District 3 of Beauregard Parish, LA – Front row left to right: Kenny Rogers, Ray Hauser (general manager), Karen Ramsey, Sasha Reeves, Shera Fowler, and Jeremy Joffrion. Second row left to right: Rusty Gross, Michael Guimbellot, Bruce Butts, and Dale Dartez.



Michael Guimbellot, distribution, installs an ORION Cellular endpoint as part of the BEACON AMA managed solution.

the Ultrasonic meter presents consumption, rate of flow, reverse-flow indication, and alarms. With no moving parts, the E-Series meter also improves reliability and has greater extended low flow accuracy compared to other positive displacement meters.

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## Accuracy pays

With new, more accurate meters beginning to be installed, District 3 is already capturing more revenue. "The E-Series Ultrasonic meters are catching the lowest flow amounts we've ever been able to record," says Joffrion.

Along with capturing more revenue, District 3 appreciates the ability to gather and analyze more granular measurement data. "It helps me generate better reports," says Joffrion. "The numbers are much more accurate than they have been in the past and will continue to get better as we install more."

With its long term, sustained accuracy, the E-Series meter will also help the District record flows at new meter accuracies throughout the life of the meter. Overall, Joffrion estimates that with the labor efficiencies and added revenue from more accurate metering, the system will pay for itself very quickly.

## Improved customer service

BEACON AMA offers an interface that is easy to use for both District 3 and its current customers. By utilizing the BEACON AMA software suite, the utility can easily access and manage exact, near real-time data. This gives the utility a troubleshooting tool for any customer complaints or maintenance issues that may arise. Because the utility has access to accurate data that is collected continuously, it can easily point to specific occurrences on the customer's utility bill to help decipher where and how a discrepancy might have occurred. Customers can then work with the utility to fix any leaks or determine when their water use may have exceeded their expectations.

District 3 has also come to rely on the notes section in the software for each account. After a conversation with a customer, the utility rep will go into the account and record the conversation so he or she knows moving forward what was said, how a problem was addressed and what next steps should be taken to resolve the issue. This has proved to be very helpful, especially with billing discrepancies and when multiple staff are involved.

In addition, the EyeOnWater smartphone/tablet app, included as part of the BEACON AMA software suite, is being downloaded by the district's customers. "This app is growing in popularity because it allows our customers to see the amount of water they are using and when they are using it – especially when they are away from home," says Joffrion.

## Future deployment for more customers

Moving forward into a wider implementation, the utility will deploy 100 Badger Meter ORION Cellular endpoints per month, with a goal of 1,000 in 2015 and every year after. It will also continue to replace aging meters with E-Series Ultrasonic meters.

## Beauregard Parish Solution

- BEACON® Advanced Metering Analytics (AMA)
- 100 ORION® Cellular endpoints initially installed, ordering 100 per month with a total goal of 1,000 per year
- High Resolution E-Series® Ultrasonic Meters

## Results

- Meter reading efficiency
  - Automated systems enable staff to perform other tasks and reduce third-party expenses
- Added revenue generated by more accurate meters and time-saving solutions
- Improved customer service
  - Faster leak detection
  - More detailed usage information reduces billing disputes
  - EyeOnWater smartphone/tablet app

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