



MIDWEST NATURAL GAS

CLIENT

WASHINGTON, IN
LOCATION

(L-R) Jeremy Burns, Utility Serviceman; Larry Hubbs, Utility Supply Company; Terry Shafer, Assistant Operations Manager; Ted Williams, Operations Manager; Kenny Hinkle, Construction Foreman; and Phil Hepburn, AMR Systems Salesperson, Utility Supply Company

Neptune R900® Technology for Gas Metering Applications

2007 marked the year that Neptune started “cooking with gas.” Since 1892 Neptune has been a most valued partner of water utilities. In 1965, Neptune pioneered automatic meter reading with the introduction of ARB® Utility Management Systems™. In 2001 Neptune became the only manufacturer in the world to provide NSF-certified water meters (no-lead) as a standard offering to protect safe drinking water.

After Neptune’s entry into the gas market, a number of utilities in the Southeast, Midwest, and in Texas adopted Neptune’s ARB Utility Management Systems. These utilities achieved increased range, improved meter reading success rates, and reduced meter reading times with the implementation of Neptune’s R900G gas AMR endpoints – a critical component of Neptune ARB Utility Management Systems.

MidWest Natural Gas serves about 15,000 gas customers spread across eight counties in southern Indiana. Headquartered in Washington, Indiana, MidWest has been using Neptune’s ARB Utility Management Systems since 2000.

MidWest personnel developed their own laptop-based work orders system to help serve their customers more efficiently. The system uses GPS-based mapping and location of service vehicles to help dispatch field operations personnel. As a technology-savvy company, MidWest has been convinced of the benefits of mobile AMR for years.

MidWest watched as local distributor Utility Supply Company worked with surrounding water utilities to implement Neptune’s R900®-based mobile reading systems. When Neptune launched the R900G, offering the same performance and benefits for natural gas metering applications, MidWest Gas was ready. In the words of Operations Manager Larry Trett, “Neptune has been doing AMR with water utilities for a long time. This was a big selling point.”

Although much of the project remains to be implemented, MidWest Natural Gas has already seen the benefits of its new mobile system. By targeting more rural meter reading routes where hazardous driving conditions are more of an issue, MidWest is already saving 68 man hours a month on meter reading. **The first route implemented included 290 meters that took two-and-a-half days to read manually. Today, that same route is completed in two-and-a-half hours.**

MidWest currently has seven servicemen that read meters. Going forward, it expects to reduce the meter reading manpower requirements. Instead, the utility will be able to focus these resources on other activities that will allow it to further save costs, such as performing more distribution system inspections and changing out old meters. In addition, Midwest expects to respond more quickly to service calls, improving customer service.

The project plan calls for complete system deployment of 15,000 services in three years. Working out of their Scottsburg and Bloomfield service offices, MidWest personnel will have deployed nearly 5,000 units by the end of this year. Larry Hubbs and Phil Hepburn from Utility Supply have been working with Midwest Gas personnel to ensure the project goes smoothly. According to Operations Manager Ted Williams, “You can put it on record – we’re very happy with Utility Supply and Neptune.”

MidWest Natural Gas. Utility Supply Company.
Neptune. “Cooking with Gas.”

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