



News Release

Seattle gas meters go high tech

Puget Sound Energy's high-tech meters debut in Seattle Networked system to give Seattle consumers 'real-time' information about energy use

(Bellevue, Wash., Jan. 27, 2000) – High tech "talking meters" are making their way into Seattle today as part of Puget Sound Energy's ongoing expansion of a network meter reading system that gives consumers faster and more accurate information about their energy use.

Puget Sound Energy employees today (Thurs., Jan. 27) began to retrofit the first of 150,000 natural gas meters on Seattle homes and businesses with a device that "talks" to the utility every 15 minutes by relaying meter data over a high-tech wireless network system developed by CellNet Data Systems, Inc. of San Carlos, Calif.

Once the Seattle natural gas meters are automated, Puget Sound Energy customers will have access to nearly up-to-the-minute information about their energy consumption and energy costs. Eventually, the automated system will allow consumers to access their daily billing and consumption information over the Internet.

Already, more than 620,000 natural gas and electric meters in the region are operating on Puget Sound Energy's extensive high-tech network meter reading system. In Kent, where homes and businesses have both their electric and natural gas meters operating automatically, 200 homeowners are about to test for the first time anywhere a new technology that lets them monitor and adjust their heating system while they're away. The new technology uses the network meter reading system to relay two-way information between the thermostat and the utility.

"These networked technologies expand Puget's ability to deliver information access and convenience," said Brian Pollom, Puget Sound Energy's manager of meter reading services. "There's also considerable potential for the capabilities of the network system to be extended to additional services."

Pollom expects the conversion of all natural gas meters in the metropolitan Seattle area to be completed by February 2001.

Puget Sound Energy first deployed network meter reading in a 1997 pilot in Thurston County. Since April 1998, it has extended the vast network of talking meters in Thurston, Pierce and King counties. By the end of 2001, network meter reading services will operate on more than 1.3 million natural gas and electric meters — 95 percent of all Puget Sound Energy customers — in a nine-county area.

Contact: 1-888-831-7250