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FEBRUARY 2009

energynotes

SMART METERS set the stage for energy savings, improved services



SDG&E plans to install smart meters from spring 2009 to the end of 2011. In addition, by about the end of the year, SDG&E will begin offering smart-meter customers the option of viewing their energy use daily online.

You'll soon have a new tool that can help you gain better control of your energy use and costs. SDG&E® will replace 1.4 million electric meters with smart meters and upgrade 900,000 natural gas meters from spring 2009 to the end of 2011. SDG&E's smart-meter initiative is part of California's Energy Action Plan, a statewide roadmap for achieving a reliable, affordable and sustainable energy future.

Smart meters are digital devices that collect and communicate your energy-use data regularly throughout the day to SDG&E. Eventually, you'll be able to monitor your energy use daily via the Internet instead of waiting for a monthly recap on your energy bill.

You'll be able to track your home energy use hourly and business energy use every 15 minutes. Knowing when you use energy can help you save it, which also helps the environment by preserving natural resources.

"We're using smart-meter technology to develop improved service options for customers, including new ways to save energy, save money and add convenience to everyday life," says Debra Reed, SDG&E president and chief executive officer. "In the future, for example, smart meters may allow you to earn bill credits for conserving power at peak-use times. Smart meters will also enable us to find and fix power outages more quickly."



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— Debra Reed
SDG&E President and
Chief Executive Officer

Smart meters already serve about 7,200 large businesses in SDG&E's service area. To prepare for installations throughout the region, SDG&E tested the smart-meter technology at selected homes and businesses in San Diego's Tierrasanta community last year. In 2006 and 2007, field tests were also conducted in Clairemont, downtown San Diego and Fallbrook.

SDG&E will notify you by mail a few weeks before technicians arrive to install your smart meter. To learn more about smart meters, visit www.sdge.com/smartmeter or call 1-800-411-SDGE (7343).

▶ TIMELY TIP

With just a few taps on your computer keyboard, you can discover ways to "go green and save green." Look for SDG&E's interactive guide to saving energy and money at home, including rebate offers, at www.sdge.com/homerebates.

What to do if you suspect a GAS LEAK

For safety, it's important to know what you should do in case you notice any of the following signs of a natural gas leak:

- The distinct odor of natural gas.*
- A damaged connection to a gas appliance.
- A hissing, whistling or roaring sound near a gas appliance or pipeline. (Special markers show the location of most major pipelines.)
- Dead or dying vegetation in an otherwise moist area over or near pipeline areas.
- A fire or explosion near a pipeline.
- Dirt or water being thrown in the air.
- Exposed pipeline after an earthquake, fire, flood or other disaster.

If you smell a natural gas odor, hear the sound of gas escaping or see other signs of a leak:

- **Remain** calm.
- **Don't** light a match, candle or cigarette.
- **Don't** turn electrical appliances or lights on or off.
- From a safe location, call SDG&E at **1-800-411-7343** or call **911**.

For more safety tips, visit www.sdge.com/safety.



Call SDG&E 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for an inspection if you notice signs of a natural gas leak, such as the distinct odor of natural gas or the sound of gas escaping.

*Although SDG&E adds a distinctive odor to natural gas to aid in the detection of leaks, you should not rely on your sense of smell alone to determine if you have a gas leak. Some persons may not be able to smell the odor because they have a diminished sense of smell or because the odor is being masked by other odors in the area. In addition, certain conditions, such as odor fade, may cause the odor to diminish so that it is not detectable.

Rates change, assistance available

Every year, SDG&E adjusts rates to bring revenues in line with the amounts authorized by state and federal regulators. As a result on Jan. 1, 2009, the typical residential bill for 500 kilowatt-hours of electricity and 50 therms of natural gas increased by 4.6%, or \$5.11, from \$110.88 to \$115.99. Actual bills will vary, depending on the amount of energy used, the climate zone and other factors. For details – or to learn how SDG&E can help you save energy and money – visit www.sdge.com.

If you're having trouble paying your SDG&E bill, please call **1-800-411-SDGE (7343)** to work out payment arrangements.



Call SDG&E toll free at **1-800-411-7343** if you're having trouble paying your SDG&E bill.