



American Water Team Awarded Awwa Research Foundation Grant For Automatic Meter Reading

Project Will Provide Utilities with Greater Understanding of Advanced Meter Reading Systems

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American Water, the largest water services provider in North America, today announced that the team of American Water, Cognyst Consulting LLC and Advantica, Ltd. has been awarded a grant to research Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) for use in the water industry. Funding for the project, titled "Automated Meter Reading - Best Practices for Selection, Acquisition and Implementation," will be provided by the Awwa Research Foundation (AwwaRF) and the UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR). Total project budget, including contributions from participating utilities and the AMR industry, is more than \$900,000.

The project will enable utilities to understand the many aspects of advanced meter reading systems, as well as provide a means of assessment for meter and associated data collection methods in relation to a utility's needs. In addition to providing overall project management, American Water will add its experience in AMR and innovative technologies that utilize AMR to that of recognized leaders in the industry.

One such innovation is a first-of-its-kind AMR program implemented by American Water in June of 2005. The program equipped 500 water meters in the city of Connellsville, PA's water system with leak-detecting sensors, using state-of-the-art technology to examine an aging distribution system and explore the true nature of water main leaks. The program uses AMR to communicate acoustic information daily and serves to detect distribution system water leaks, often before they surface and cause significant damage.

"Many North American utilities are seeking an organized way to recognize the value and potential of investing in advanced metering systems," said American Water's project manager Dave Hughes. "We intend to explore and illuminate best practices for the variety of utilities that should be considering automatic meter reading."

Don Schlenger, author of AwwaRF's original AMR study, of Kinnelon, NJ-based Cognyst Consulting and founding president of the Automatic Meter Reading Association will direct the preparation of key documents. Antony Green and the staff at Advantica, Ltd., a leading research consulting firm based in Loughborough, UK, will provide direction on issues related to the expanding UK meter industry. Included in the project will be the development of guidance documents for utilities to evaluate, select, purchase and successfully implement AMR projects and, in the process, identify the appropriate costs, benefits and risks of the undertaking.

"We've only begun to tap the full potential of advanced metering systems for water utilities, including conservation, customer service and asset management," said Schlenger. "Part of our effort will be to better understand and quantify these extended benefits."

The project will rely on the experiences of many utilities across North America and the UK to define terminology, establish procedures for analysis and outline methods for success. In addition to American Water, at least 18 other water utilities, various AMR and meter firms and recognized AMR experts will be involved in case studies, pilots of innovative technology or participation in workshops covering key areas such as conservation, customer service, meter management and water loss management. The utility list includes the Boston Water & Sewer Water Commission, Aurora Water in Colorado, the City of Ottawa in Canada and Thames Water in the United Kingdom.

"The population of domestic meters in the UK is increasing and will continue. As this population increases, the economic efficiencies of AMR have to be considered alongside technical advances that will improve customer service levels," said Green. "This project will provide valuable information to help utilities evaluate both the core technology and the additional benefits to be realized in their particular circumstances," he continued.

For more information on the project, please contact David Hughes at 856-346-8320, or via email at David.Hughes@amwater.com. A website for the project is in development and will be announced when live.

With headquarters in Voorhees, NJ, American Water employs approximately 7,000 dedicated professionals who provide high-quality water, wastewater and other related services to about 17 million people in 29 states and Canada.

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