CUSTOMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 12, 2021

AGENDA

- Roll Call
- Billing Overview
- AMI
- Road Forward (Rene)
- Listening Session
- Next Steps

WHAT WE HEARD

- Prompt identification of issues before a customer even notices
  - Better flagging of unreasonable increases or readings
- Better way to handle long estimations and true-ups
  - Share in responsibility
- Better customer service processes
  - One-call to resolve
  - More data, less conjecture
  - Consistency and standardization

LEAK EXAMPLE

- US EPA estimates 10% of homes in the US have a leak that waste 90 gallons or more per day

- Toilet usage typically accounts for 30% - 45% of household water usage

- Identify toilet leaks by placing a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank- if any color shows up in the bowl after 10 minutes, you have a leak.

Toilet Leak in New Orleans

Slow leak:

up to 30 gallons/day =

$11.25 to $14.50 in excess charges

Medium Leak:

up to 250 gallons/day =

up to $126.75 in excess charges

Fast Leak:

up to 4,000 gallons/day =

up to $1,970.50 in excess charges

LEVEL BILLING

- Based on individual usage in the past
- Would be fixed for a set period of time, typically 6 months to 1 year
- At the end of that period there will be an adjustment for any changes in consumption, this could be up or down
- Allows for more predictable budgeting, but also allows us more flexibility in reading meters
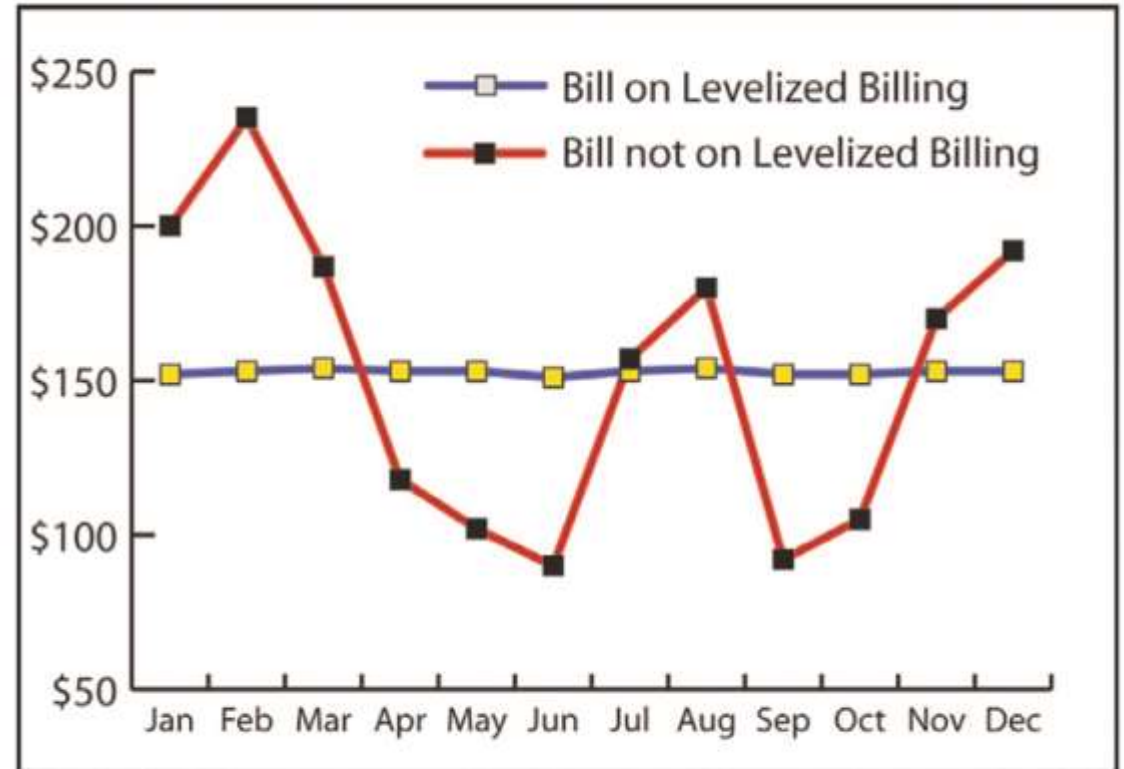
IN REVIEW

- SWBNO runs 3 lines of business:
  - Water
  - Sewer
  - Drainage
- Funding for each pays for operations and improvements of each system independently
- Funding for administrative costs and other overarching expenditures are typically split evenly in three by system

SWBNO

User Fees / Charges (billed monthly) → WATER, SEWER

Property Taxes (billed annually) → DRAINAGE
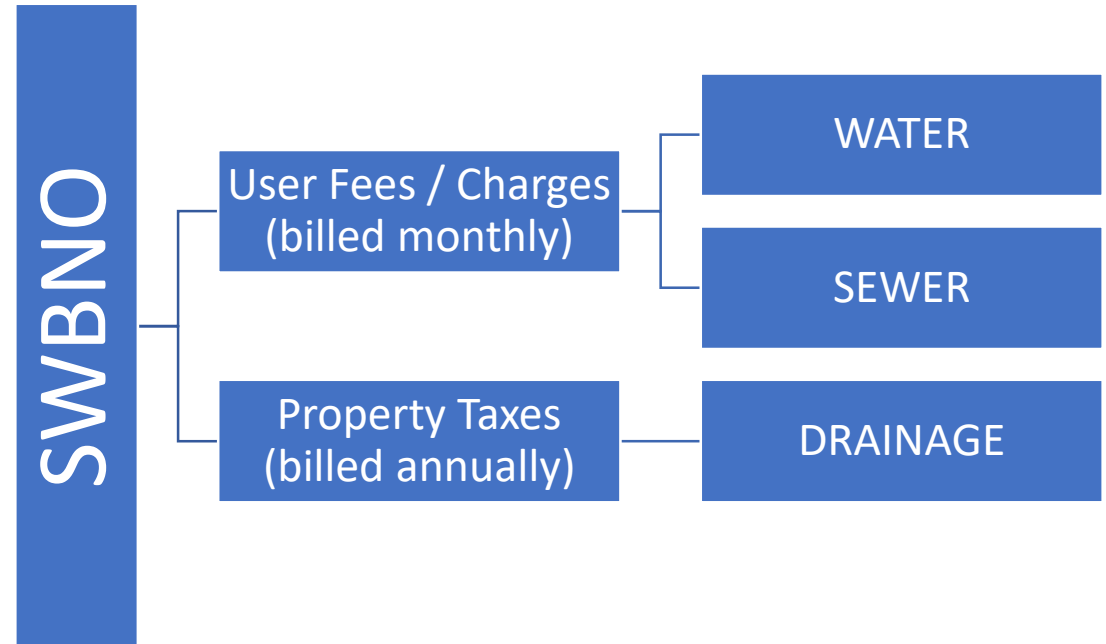
BILLING

- Minimum bill for residential customer before usage: $58.56

- Drainage is not included on this bill

SEWERAGE & WATER BOARD OF NEW ORLEANS
625 SAINT JOSEPH ST
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70165-6501
52-WATER or (504) 529-2837
Hearing Impaired TRS 711
Visit us on the web at www.swbno.org

Account Number	
Service Address	
Total Due	$88.83
Date Due	12/10/2020
Total Due After 12/10/2020	$88.83

Meter	Service Class	Bill	Read Date	Reading	Read Type	Usage*	Days Of Use	Avg Usage/Day*
A416246	RESIDENTIAL	This Bill	11/11/2020	46.8	Actual	2.3	30	0.08
		Last Bill	10/12/2020	44.5	Actual	2.4	26	0.09

*Usage in thousands of gallons

Water Usage Graph* (in thousands of gallons)
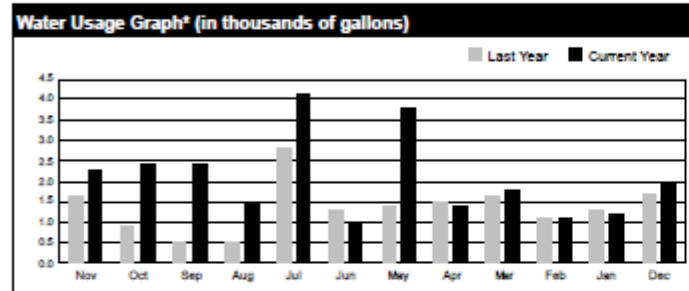
Previous Activity

Last Bill	$90.15
Payment Received - Thank You	-$90.15
Late Fees	$0.00
Adjustments	$0.00
Balance Forward	$0.00

Current Activity

Meter A416246

Ready To Serve - Water for 5/8" Meter	$8.69
Water Usage	$13.34
Safe Drinking Water Fee	$1.00
Ready To Serve - Sewer	$24.87
Sewer Volume Charge	$16.93
Residential Sanitation Charges (1 unit)	$24.00
Current Charges	**$88.83**

Important Information

If you are 62 years or older or disabled, and you are having trouble paying your bill, contact TCA at 504-324-8609 to see if you qualify for Water Help.

Total Due (Balance Forward + Current Charges)	$88.83

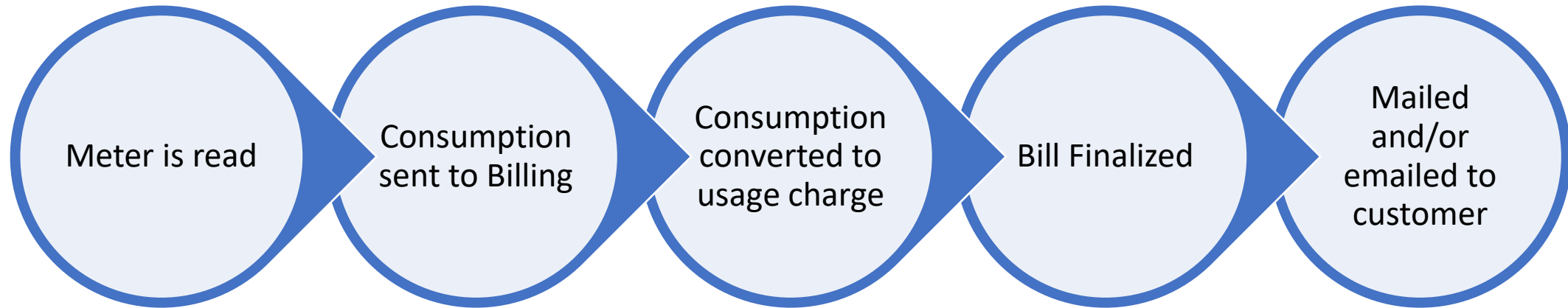Please add $1.00 to Your Payment for Water Help

STRUCTURE

Many Departments must coordinate to create accurate and timely bills including:

- Customer Service
- Billing Administration
- Revenue Assurance
- Meter Reading
- Computer Center
- Meter Shop

BILL GENERATION

Meter is read → Consumption sent to Billing → Consumption converted to usage charge → Bill Finalized → Mailed and/or emailed to customer

ESTIMATES

- Must be charged when a meter read cannot be completed.
- Could be because:
  - Lack of staff
  - Inclement weather
  - Holidays
  - Obstructions or other conditions

- Option 1:
  - Average daily use based on four previous reads, at least two must be actual reads
- Option 2:
  - 170 gallons per day default usage charged

METER READING

- Must read over 136,000 meters manually every month

- Labor intensive and slow process

- Requires significant number of readers, devices, tools, and vehicles
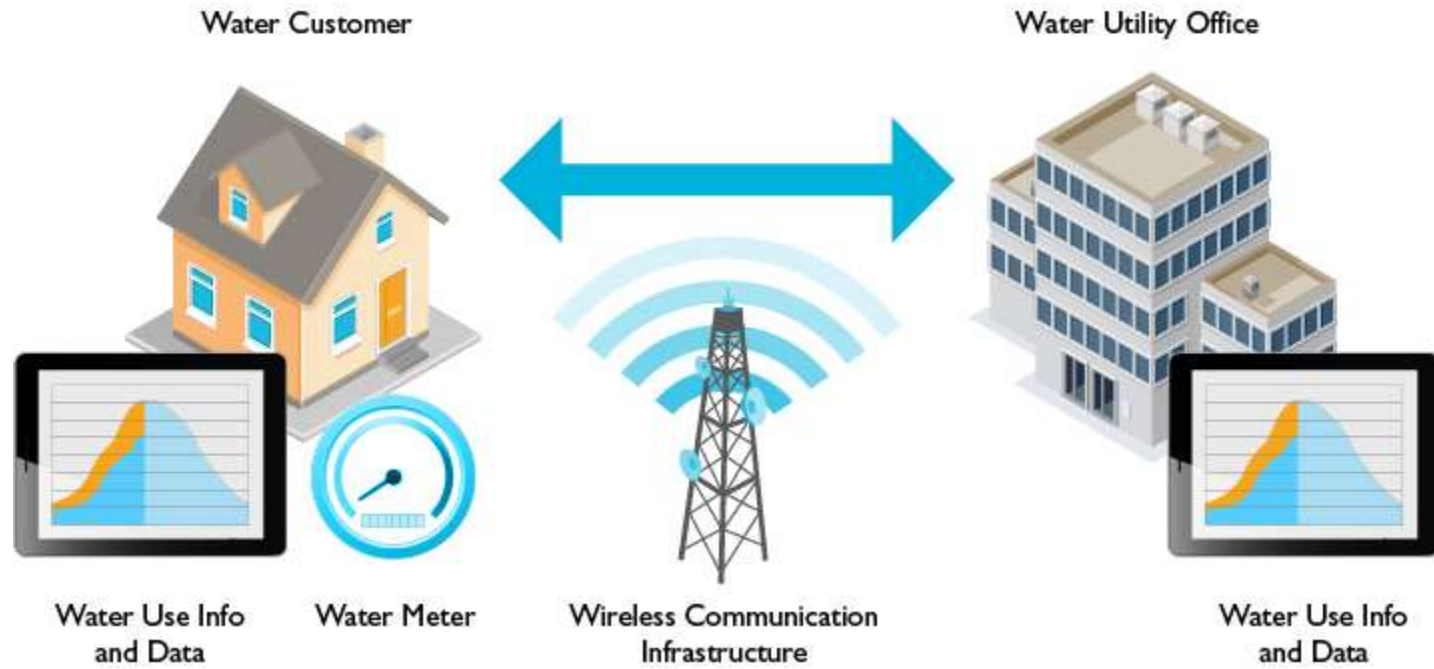
METER READING

METER READING

BILL DISPUTES

- Disputes can be made by calling 52-WATER, or emailing customerservice@swbno.org

- A dispute exempts the account from collection activities and penalties

- Issue is investigated by a member of staff to determine if the issue is the result of a leak or other issue

- If the issue is not resolved, the customer can request a hearing

- Hearing officers may have the issue investigated further

- Decisions are subject to a rehearing within 10 days and may then be appealed in Civil Court within 30 days

AMI

Automated Meter Infrastructure and Smart Water Metering

Water Customer

Water Utility Office

Water Use Info and Data

Water Meter

Wireless Communication Infrastructure

Water Use Info and Data

WHY AMI?

- Eliminate vast majority of on-site meter reads
  - Reduces cost
  - Increases accuracy
- Better Customer Service
  - Easier resolution of disputes, reliable data
  - Faster leak detection and notifications
  - Improved outage information and response
- Allows for customer conservation programs
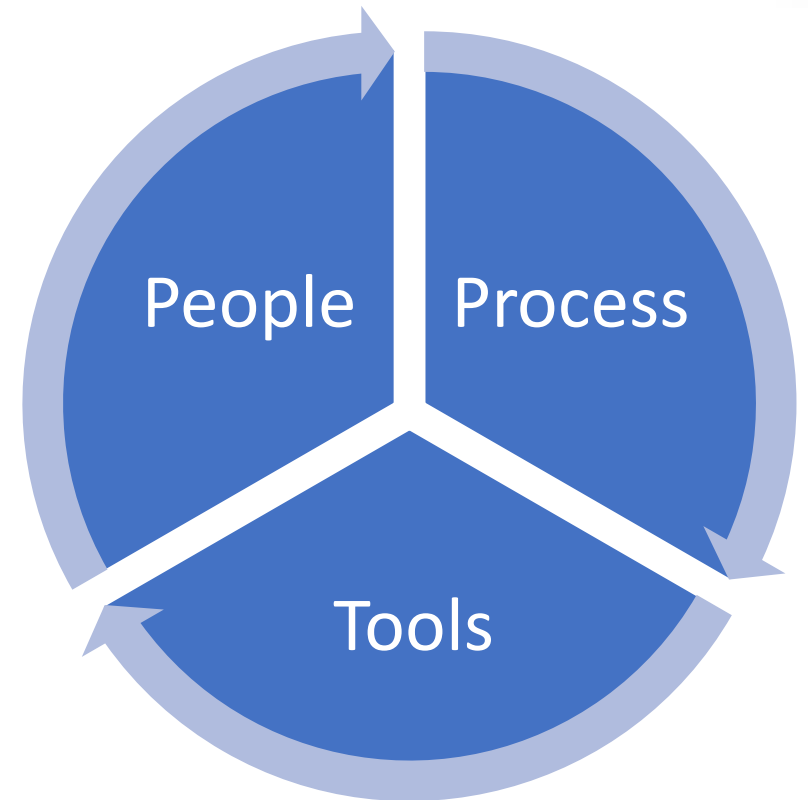- Supports creative rate designs

DISCUSSION

CEI – How we'll get there

Customer Experience Improvement Project

A comprehensive and overarching, sustainable, cross-functional strategy

1) Enhance customer confidence and trust

2) Improve organizational performance

3) Enhance organizational culture

People

Process

Tools

Customer Service – How we'll get there

Leadership Trust and Confidence

Diagnostics

Change Management

Continuous Improvement

Training and Development

NEXT STEPS

- Next Meeting will be April 9th
- Deeper dive on AMI

THANK YOU