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NEWS RELEASE

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City to begin replacing water meters

Customers could see increase in water bills

Starting in June, the city of Branson Utilities Department will begin replacing more than 300 customer water meters that could result in higher bills for those customers.

The existing meters scheduled for replacement have been in operation for 10 to 15 years and even longer. Utilities officials have determined that about 30% of water being produced and sent through the system is either being lost through leaks or inaccurate water meter measurements. The national average for water loss by water utilities is about 10-15%, according to Branson Utilities Director Mike Ray.

“Through steps taken by the Utilities Department, about five percent of the water being lost has been accounted for through leak repairs,” Ray said. “The next step is to further reduce water loss through the replacement of aging meters.”

It’s also estimated the city is losing more than \$1 million annually in revenue due to the old, inaccurate water meters.

The replacement process will begin with commercial customers along West Highway 76 and then continue with other customers identified on the current replacement list located throughout the city. The current 300 meter replacement program will take about nine months to complete.

In some instances the meters due for replacement may still be accurate. In these cases, customers who receive a new meter may see only a moderate increase in the amount of water actually being registered.

However, it’s anticipated many of the meters being changed have given inaccurate readings in the past, and these customers will experience an increase in the amount of water being registered.

“It’s not that more water is being used, but rather the amount being used will now be accurately measured with the new meter,” said Ray. “We also see this as an incentive for customers to conserve more water.”

Ray said the average time to change a meter is about six hours with up to two of those hours requiring shutting off the water. Each customer on the current meter replacement list will receive a letter from the Utilities Department explaining the process and contact information for questions.

“We want to minimize as much as possible any inconvenience to the customer while keeping the project on schedule,” said Ray.

A map plotting the location of meters to be replaced and an address list can be found on the city web site at www.bransonmo.gov. Click on Department, Utilities, and About to view the information.

For further information, contact the Branson Utilities Department at 417-243-2737 or 417-243-2740 or visit the Utilities Department offices on the fourth floor of the water tower at 616 West Pacific Street.