

Public Utility in Largest County of Washington State Selects TWACS Power-Line Communications Technology

ST LOUIS – July 7, 2009 –The Okanogan County Public Utility District (PUD), which has served the largest county in Washington State for over 60 years, recently began a two-year advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) project to deploy the Aclara™ Two-Way Automatic Communications System (TWACS®), a leading Intelligent Infrastructure™ technology that works over power lines. The PUD, the 300th customer for TWACS technology, will use the system to collect interval data from 22,000 electric meters, perform outage management, and do engineering analysis.

The utility chose TWACS technology because of its reliability. “We focused on finding a solution that was mature and that had the bugs worked out of it,” said Doug Adams, Manager of Operations for Okanogan County PUD.

“We were also constrained by our terrain, which consists of a series of peaks and valleys, to power-line technology,” added Adams. “The TWACS technology worked flawlessly for us in a pilot project done with the help of Okanogan Electric Cooperative, a neighboring utility.”

Okanogan County PUD shares a substation with Okanogan Electric Cooperative, a TWACS technology customer that serves about 3000 customers. The cooperative’s positive experience with TWACS technology was also a factor in the PUD’s decision.

The primary reason the PUD moved to AMI was to move from bi-monthly to monthly billing, which will improve the utilities cash flow and prevent the large two-month winter bills for customers as well as eliminate estimated reads.

TWACS technology will read meters remotely by communicating over power lines and the fiber-optic network that was developed by the PUD to provide high-speed telecommunications to its customers. In addition to providing regular meter reading, the system will offer immediate access to information about loads, voltages, meter tampering, and outages.

Okanogan is using TWACS PROASYS™ software to pinpoint the extent of outages. The software works by signaling meters to determine which ones are working. The utility also will use iVUE software

from the National Information Solutions Cooperative to help map the location of outages as well as to dispatch repair crews.

Utilizing TWACS' interval-data collection capability, each customer meter will be checked periodically for outages, which allows the utility to immediately identify meters that have stopped working, rather than waiting to find them when the meter is physically read. In addition, the system will provide customer service representatives with information that will allow them to better handle customer inquiries. TWACS technology also will make it easier for the utility to switch accounts from one person to another.

TWACS technology is the most prominent fixed-network solution serving electric rural cooperatives and public utility districts in North America. It employs patented technology that handles two-way communication to electric meters and provides for timely billing, load control, demand response, and outage detection and assessment. With the system, utilities effectively manage customer data and reduce costs while enabling innovation and providing superior customer service.

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About Aclara

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