

City of Rochester Hills
Department of Public Services

RECOMMENDATION ON SELECTION FOR AMR VENDOR

The Department of Public Services recommends ETNA (Sensus) as the vendor for the purchase of Automatic Meter Reading equipment for the following reasons:

1. The ETNA supplied equipment is the most customer friendly of the products reviewed including
 - Ease of installation for homeowners. More than 9,500 of the total 31,350 accounts have a dual meter installation. For those accounts, the ETNA supplied Sensus recorder will supply both meters, meaning that only one device needs to be mounted on the homes. The other vendors required one device for each meter, meaning that two devices will be installed on the home. The additional mountings add installation costs and require more mounting holes to be drilled into the siding of homes.
 - Ease of installation for businesses. The ETNA supplied Sensus recorders will supply up to 16 meters. For a business with multiple meters (some Mall meter rooms have up to 20 meters off a single manifold) that means less mounting of meter reading devices on the exterior of business buildings. The other vendors required one recorder for each meter.
 - The ETNA supplied Sensus recorders will read the old style TTR meters. There are approximately 4,200 old style TTR meters still in use in Rochester Hills. Sensus recorders will read those meters until they are replaced. This option allows the installation of the new recorders with out the mandatory replacement of the TTR meters at the same time. Because it is difficult to gain entry into homes due to scheduling conflicts with residents, this option allows for the rapid installation of the new recorders and shortens the time until a positive cash flow from the project will be realized. This flexibility provides ample opportunity to schedule according to customer needs rather than being tied to a schedule based on program implementation.
2. History of superior service. ETNA Supply has been the vendor for the City of Rochester Hills meter equipment since 1982. During that time they have demonstrated a record for outstanding customer service including same day responses to questions and rapid repair and turn around for meter products.
3. Proposal continues product redundancy. The proposed system incorporates the existing touch pad reading system. By maintaining the touch pad reading system a back up meter reading system would be in place at no extra cost to our operations. Additionally, to remove and replace the existing system increases the installation cost of a different vendor.

4. System includes low battery warning system. The low battery warning alert allows for rapid recovery of readings and accuracy in budgeting for replacement.
5. Lower installation cost. Other vendors require a one-for-one system with a removal of the existing touch pads at an estimated installation time of 30 minutes. Due to the single unit installation, the Sensus Automatic Reading System can be installed at an estimated time of 20 minutes.
6. 20-year warranty on units and battery. The 10/10 warranty matches or surpasses other vendor warranties. However, because the Sensus meter uses a wake up mode rather than a bubble up mode (which continuously sends a signal), the battery is more likely to meet the 20-year warranty. Sensus also uses cycle codes. Cycle codes are used to limit the number of times a unit transmits during a reading cycle. This results in longer battery life.
7. One stop shopping for service. Utilizing the same vendor for meters and equipment assures that product warranties, service repairs and equipment troubleshooting are responded to by a single person/company.
8. Product utilizes a licensed FCC frequency. With the emergence of a multitude of wireless communication products on the market, the risk of frequency encroachment is a possibility. A FCC license provides protection from frequency encroachment.
9. No shipping cost. ETNA has agreed to supply the new equipment at no shipping cost to the City of Rochester Hills.
10. Loaner equipment availability. Loaner equipment is available whether the repair equipment is under warranty or not.
11. Transmission type and power level. Sensus uses direct sequence spread with a high power level. Power levels are regulated by the FCC due to transmission type. The type and power levels are a critical factor to system performance. Sensus uses fully compliant Spread Spectrum transmission that can transmit up to 1 watt. Other vendors max out at 90 mw.
12. Sensus provides reading segmentation meter reading flexibility. Programmed codes allow meters to be grouped and read when desired. This function allows certain types of meters to be read such as maintenance or business type meters, or to read by section. Functionality that will provide diagnostic capability. Like when tracking down a water main leak or sewer infiltration by district or class.
13. Migrate able system architecture. Sensus provides the ability to start with one reading technology and progress to another –handheld, vehicle, fixed. The high power of the transmitter will compliment the transfer to a fixed based system in the future.