The Town of Greensboro is located on the North banks of the Choptank River in Caroline County, Maryland. In this small community of 1931 people, living is at its best. Residents, business owners, city officials, all know each other. With its quaint downtown retail area and broad spectrum of recreational activities, Greensboro is the perfect place to spend a relaxing weekend or a lifetime. Greensboro’s potable water is provided by three wells that pump water from the Pine Point underground aquifer. Water is then treated and sent to the distribution system.

As other small communities, Greensboro was facing a challenge to financially support maintenance projects and invest in new ones. One of the major projects being considered was the replacement of an aging 15 year-old touch-read metering system. On average, it took 4 days to manually read and collect the information in the town. However, due to the heavy workload on the town resources, meter reading could only be done on a quarterly basis. In addition to the time it took to read the meters, the city also knew it was collecting readings from old meters with decreasing accuracy.

Realizing that it needed to increase the efficiency of its metering infrastructure, Greensboro’s water system contacted its long-time service partner, SUEZ Water Advanced Solutions (Utility Service Co., Inc.). For the past 14 years, SUEZ has successfully maintained the town’s tank assets under an asset management program, providing excellent customer service and building a high level of trust. After carefully reviewing the town’s requirements, SUEZ recommended the installation of a new Advanced Metering System (AMI) and new water meters. The company installed the new metering infrastructure without putting any burden on the Utility staff and handles all future maintenance so the Utility can focus on its core competency.

The new AMI system combines radio frequency transmitters with over 820 Neptune E-Coder® water meters and an easy to use software to provide the utility with near real-time data. The new water meters use state-of-the-art technology to accurately display readings on consumption, rate of flow, and indicate direction of flow and possible leaks.

**Project Summary**

**Customer:**
Town of Greensboro, MD

**Type of Project:**
Metering Maintenance Program - including installation of a new AMI system and new Meters - Aclara® AMI System with Neptune E-Coder® water meters

**Date:** 2016

**Results:**
- Increased meter reading efficiency (100% reading)
- Increased revenue generated by more accurate readings and more efficient process
- Improved cash flow
- Improved Customer Service
- Increased availability of Utility Staff resources for other activities

**Solutions**

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"Greensboro was facing a challenge to financially support maintenance projects and invest in new ones."
Capturing more revenue

Instead of replacing a few meters every year, the Metering maintenance program from SUEZ Water Advanced Solutions enabled the Utility to replace all the meters at once by spreading the cost over several years. Since their installation, the new and more accurate meters have allowed the Utility to capture more revenue. In addition, the new automated system has reduced significantly the time dedicated to reading, processing and billing which allows Utility staff to perform other important tasks. Moving from a quarterly billing to a monthly billing has also greatly improved the Utility cash flow.

With this innovative Metering program - which spreads the initial AMI infrastructure costs over time and guarantees a timely preventative maintenance of all equipment for the duration of the contract, SUEZ is bringing AMI networks to small utilities, that couldn’t afford them until now.

Improved Customer Service

The new AMI system, provides hourly data on any customer which helps the Utility be more proactive. In case of an abnormal reading signaling a potential leak, the Utility operators are alerted immediately so they can take appropriate action. Thanks to the accurate data collected continuously and available online, the Utility can also respond more diligently and efficiently to any customer inquiry or complaint. For example, the analysis of a customer utility bill over time helps identify recurrent patterns and allows the Utility to understand if and when a true discrepancy occurred, thus reducing billing disputes.

“The new AMI system and new meters and the fact that SUEZ Water Advanced Solutions is in charge of all future maintenance has freed up my team to perform other critical tasks. The labor efficiencies and added revenue generated by more accurate meter readings will provide a quick payback on our investment”  - David Kibler, Utility Director