CITY OF
CONVERSE
CONNECTING COMMUNITY + COMMERCE™

Opportunity:

In 2019 the City of Converse put out an RFP for a new meter reading system (AMI). Converse is located 15 miles NE of San Antonio within the fast growing I-35 corridor. Over the last 10 years our community's population has increased by nearly 30%. We were reading meters manually, via handheld. Meter reading was labor intensive and always subject to human error (re-reads). At the end of each month the bills would be mailed out and before you knew it, it was time to start all over again. This was a never-ending process. The water consumption provided to our customers was based on one read per month, twelve reads annually. Additionally, some of our meters were older and we were not receiving 100% of the revenue due to us. We could not continue to do "meter reading" the same way it had always been done before. We have a great team staff and council that recognized our situation.

Process and Goals of the RFP-Purchase of a New AMI System:

The City Manager and Council asked me and my staff to form a search committee. Our search committee visited surrounding cities to find out what systems they were using, their satisfaction level with their system, and the overall customer service experience provided. We wanted a turn-key solution that included materials, installation, training, and ongoing support. A modern reading system and partner that could help us move from 20th to 21st century technology. Very important in this search was the amount of data and how that data could be accessed by staff and even our customers for their individual accounts. After months of interviews and discussion internally, we decided to interview 3-meter manufacturer/distributors. Each meter company was scored based on quality of product, price, service, warranty, and a few other criteria.

Solution:

The company selected to partner with the City of Converse was HydroPro Solutions based in Georgetown, Texas. As we talked with neighboring cities, we realized that many of them were currently using the Master Meter Allegro system (AMI Network) or were in the process of migrating from Drive-By to AMI. The Allegro network customized for us consists of 1 base station, four repeater units, 7,700 wireless residential meters, and approximately 200 intermediate/large meters.

Once the contracts were signed, HydroPro Solutions introduced us to their Project Manager. Infrastructure and meters were ordered. Training was scheduled. Hydropro Solutions served as a general contractor to get the infrastructure and meters installed and our system operational. They rented a large Conex box that housed 20+ pallets of meters that the installers worked out of for approximately 3 months. The pre-construction meeting was held the first week of October 2019 and installations began the following week. At times they had 20+ installers on the ground and the entire installation process took just 8 weeks. I do have to give my team credit during this project. They did a great job swapping lids (metal to plastic) and working with the installers on customer-side leaks, etc. This was a turn-key project, but we wanted to save some money where we could. The HPS Project Manager was on-site every week, sometimes multiple days per week working with our staff and his installers. He and his company have proved to be a get partner.

Conclusion-The Allegro/Harmony AMI System

So, was it all worth it? Yes. It certainly was. We have moved meter reading from a field operation that took hundreds of man hours each month to an indoor operation that takes 20-30 minutes to import reads into billing. Instead of 1 read per month to bill, or 12 reads per year; now we have (hourly reads) 720 reads per month-8,640 reads per year. This is a "data management" system, not just a meter reading system. In addition to the granular data, we have alerts (leak, counterclockwise, inactive, & tamper) and any report we need, transparency of our entire system. Customers can sign up via app or computer to monitor their account. Our community has come a long way. Thank you, HydroPro Solutions.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Smith

Jonathan Smith
Director of Utilities