

Providing Superior Service to
Your Community with Oracle
Utilities Customer Care and Billing
for Municipal and Public Utilities



Providing Superior Service to Your Community with Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities

“We looked at quite a few systems during the selection process. We found Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities software to be the most robust and well-designed of all the products. We really liked the system’s flexible technical architecture and database structure.”

— Jack Swanson

**Manager – Information Systems
Benton Public Utility District**

RESPOND POSITIVELY TO CITIZENS’ CHANGING DEMAND

For more than a century, municipal and public utilities have safeguarded economic welfare and growth in communities around the globe. Driven by a clear mission to serve, they provide citizens with reliable, safe and not-for-profit energy and water at reasonable prices. They build infrastructure vital for the wellbeing of local communities while generating revenue that contributes to providing and expanding community services.

Today, however, municipal and public utilities find themselves hampered by aging infrastructure insufficient to keep up with the citizens’ changing demands, including:

- New payment procedures such as direct debit, online, and prepayment
- Bills with more information to help customers conserve energy and reduce their costs
- Better use of the distribution grid through programs like demand-side management and demand response
- Support for growing populations without major staff increases
- Optional services like broadband, cable, or “green energy”

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities helps you respond positively and productively to the demands of your constituents, no matter what changes you face. With the comprehensive support for all customer and billing operations provided by Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities, you can not only continue to fulfill your mission of serving the local community, but expand the services you offer to them—all without increasing your operating expenses.

GROW WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

As the most visible authority and business in the local government, public and municipal utilities are critical to the economic development and expansion of their local communities. As the city or town expands due to population growth and

“The new system replaced our 30-year-old mainframe system, which was becoming costly to maintain. It is helping us operate more efficiently, keep rates low, and give customers more information and better service.”

**— Linda Tenpenny
Director – Customer Service
Knoxville Utilities Board**

“With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Public and Municipal Utilities, rate changes could all be made on just one screen,” she says.”

**— Linda McGowan
Project Lead
Philadelphia Gas Works**

surge in commercial businesses, public and municipal utilities must keep up with the escalating demand for energy. The key is to provide a high level of service to residential, commercial, and industrial customers alike while keeping the rate competitive to attract new business. Additionally, introducing complementary products and services provides public and municipal utilities with extra revenue sources, which will allow you to fund future expansion.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities enables you to maximize the return on previous investments made in your infrastructure and reserve funds for future development.

With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities, you can:

- Expand your services or modify rates overnight without cumbersome coding changes to your system
- Offer demand response or complex energy data management services to large businesses and, when needed, expand programs to smaller firms and residential customers to conserve energy and fight grid congestion
- Facilitate industrials’ access to the wholesale grid
- Introduce innovative services and products such as equipment purchase, hardware repairs, credit cards, energy audits, energy conservation loans, and differentiated rates for groups with special needs
- Help corporate and private citizens lower their electricity costs through energy data management, smart metering, and complex billing
- Attract new businesses through flexible contract management options

MAXIMIZE OPERATING EFFICIENCY

As the most capital-intensive government functions in most jurisdictions, public and municipal utilities often face extreme pressure to control cost. Although escalating demand from local communities makes it possible for you to generate additional revenue through offering new commodities and services, it is also causing the costs to skyrocket and putting a strain on your existing infrastructure. This intersection of increasing customer expectations and rising internal costs is driving the constant need for innovative solutions that will help you achieve cost savings in the areas of meter reading, credit and collections, and billing and payments while providing better service and more products to your local community—all without hiring additional staff.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities helps you do exactly that. Whether automating meter data management, energy auditing, equipment repair, or credit card processing activities, Oracle Utilities Customer

Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities streamlines business processes and enables rapid execution of strategic business initiatives without incurring huge costs.

Optimize Billing Presentment and Payment

As the bill is the primary link between utilities and their customers, it is essential that public and municipal utilities award their customers more bill presentment and payment options to maximize customer satisfaction. Customers want utilities to customize bill formats to meet their needs: a large retailer may prefer a single bill consolidated across multiple premises; a major corporation may favor having a consolidated bill sent to the central corporate office and individual bills sent to service outlets; a company offering multiple products may desire a converged bill that combines varied products and services.

Additionally, Steering customers to alternative methods of receiving and paying their monthly energy bills can lower your operating costs and improve customer service. Customers pay more quickly when they receive accurate bills timed to their financial needs and payable via the financial tools they select, be they postal service, direct debit, budget plans, or online accounts. In the event that customers fail to pay their bills on time, however, you need to collect debt as quickly as possible to lower your collection cost.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities allows you to accomplish all this, thereby optimizing your cash flow and maximizing customer satisfaction.

With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities, you can:

- Minimize the time from meter to bill and from bill to cash
- Ensure bill accuracy by identifying and resolving issues before sending the bill
- Tailor bill formats according to customer needs
- Help customers better understand their bills with graphs that show consumption variances over customer-specified periods
- Let customers choose the end date for their billing cycle
- Offer a choice of bill and payment methods, including email, Internet, CD, direct debit, postal service
- Speed collections and reduce uncollected debt by monitoring debt levels, tailor collection methods to specific situations, and manage deposits

Automate Field Service Orders

All too often, the only contact customers have with a utility is when they need to establish a new connection, perform a special read when there is an outage, or

“Our customers have benefited from easier to read bills and improved billing accuracy.”

**—Suzy Anderson
Project Manager
Grant County**

“Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities makes it simple to add new services and rates. We really value the flexibility of the system and have been able to handle rating complexities with relative ease.”

**—Andrew Duhon
Manager – Customer Support Services
Lafayette Utilities System**

schedule a final read as they move out. The speed at which the field service is dispatched and the service call is handled can profoundly affect the customer's continuing loyalty and the operating efficiency of the business.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities enables you to perform these routine field services tasks accurately and cost-effectively by:

- Booking field service appointments easily and quickly
- Automating service order initiation through a background processor, which makes key decisions about assignments and timing
- Expediting service order dispatching by uploading and downloading data to hand-held devices
- Delivering data on completed field service tasks and orders to customer service representatives so that they can answer customer calls with the latest information

Increase Call-Center Efficiency

Call center is the lifeblood of a public and municipal utility's customer service strategy. Customers want to know why service was interrupted and when it will be up and running or get information on new billing cycles. Your customers are counting on you to deliver uninterrupted service and to answer their call when there are problems. This means not only being reactive with accurate information it means being proactive with real-time information.

Yet, your call center personnel may still be dependent on outdated legacy systems or even arcane, manual process for accessing customer data. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to respond quickly to customer inquiries, especially as the overall call volume increases. The complex procedure for retrieving customer information also makes it time-consuming to train call center personnel, leading to massive training costs. Additionally, despite the increase of broadband access and the prevalence of the Internet, many public and municipal utilities have yet to implement an online self-service strategy, further increasing the workload of the call center.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities enables you to streamline call center processes and reduce operating costs while significantly improving customer satisfaction.

Among other benefits, the system allows you to:

- Shorten call times and reduce callbacks by providing call center staff with immediate and complete access to a customer's entire history
- Minimize employee training time through an intuitive user interface, online help, and prewritten scripts to handle the most-common customer service inquiries

- Ensure level call loads throughout the month and year
- Create alternative contact routes like self-help websites

Reduce Total Cost of Ownership

Upgrading systems requires extensive personnel time, which results in high costs but often fails to produce tangible benefits. Energy industry average expenses for upgrading customer care applications can exceed US\$20 per customer. With Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Public and Municipal Utilities, a full upgrade costs less than US\$2 per customer. Upgrading individual components costs less than 4 cents per customer.

Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities has several key features that help minimize the total cost of ownership, including

- Low-cost archiving that stores and protects data over its entire lifecycle
- Tracking and automated workflow processing
- A configuration lab that moves data safely from testing to production
- A robust architecture that supports internal business-process-engineering initiatives

CONTINUE YOUR MISSION OF SERVING THE COMMUNITY

As the cornerstone of your community’s economic growth engine, you play a pivotal role in ensuring your constituents have access to reliable energy at competitive rate while receiving convenient and seamless customer services. Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities enables you to continue to fulfill your mission of better serving your community by allowing you to grow your business and boost customer satisfaction while continuously improving operational efficiency.

CONTACT US

For more information on Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities, call +1.800.ORACLE1 to speak to an Oracle representative, or visit oracle.com/industries/utilities.

“Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities permits significant customer-by-customer variations without requiring custom code that would be expensive to maintain and upgrade.”

**—Mary Durkin
Chief – Customer Information Services
Division
Hampton Roads**

ORACLE®

UTILITIES

Providing Superior Service to Your Community with Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing for Municipal and Public Utilities
August 2007

Oracle Corporation
World Headquarters
500 Oracle Parkway
Redwood Shores, CA 94065
U.S.A.

Worldwide Inquiries:
Phone: +1.650.506.7000
Fax: +1.650.506.7200
oracle.com

Copyright © 2007, Oracle. All rights reserved.

This document is provided for information purposes only and the contents hereof are subject to change without notice.

This document is not warranted to be error-free, nor subject to any other warranties or conditions, whether expressed orally or implied in law, including implied warranties and conditions of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. We specifically disclaim any liability with respect to this document and no contractual obligations are formed either directly or indirectly by this document. This document may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose, without our prior written permission. Oracle is a registered trademark of Oracle Corporation and/or its affiliates. Other names may be trademarks of their respective owners.