

MAYOR JOHNSON'S TEMPLE NEWS & VIEWS COLUMN: NEW WATER METER PROJECT HAS STARTED

In last month's column, I reported that residents, businesses, and industries in the City of Temple soon would be served by new water meters. This month, I am happy to be able to announce that this long-awaited project is underway. The first shipment of meters has been received, and actual in-the-field construction of this Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Fixed Based radio communication system is scheduled to begin in mid-January.

The consulting engineering firm of Keck & Wood prepared the work schedule and sequence for placing the approximate 2,200 water meters in the ground throughout the City of Temple. If the weather and the "meter delivery" schedule cooperate, we expect all of these new meters to be installed before the end of April.

When it's time for the installation work to be done on your street and in your particular section of the City of Temple, we expect the process to be steady and relatively short. Even though I imagine all of us will be willing to accept some inconvenience while this long-awaited construction is occurring, our aim is to have the installation at each location to be completed in a relatively short period of time and for you very promptly to have your new water meter operating properly.

A FEW KEY POINTS. The City of Temple obtained funding for this project from the State of Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). The \$1,404,000 GEFA loan is to be repaid by the City of Temple, with the annual interest rate being only 0.13 percent.

Following a competitive bid process, the City of Temple selected contractor RTS Water Solutions who had submitted the low bid of \$1,157,055.35 and who will install the Neptune water meter. Keck & Wood will oversee this project for the City.

NO CHANGE IN WATER RATES. The Temple City Council recently voted to make no change in the fee schedule for water usage and for sewer usage until the new water meters have been installed, and until a subsequent analysis can be made of the cost of operating this new system with the billing process being a "radio read" each month as contrasted with the current system where a City of Temple employee physically must go to the meter box, clean-off the face of the meter so it can be seen and manually read, and then replace the lid. (Obviously, this new meter-reading process will be much quicker...being automated with remote reading capability.)

As you may recall, usually the City Council makes a decision late in the fall regarding any rate increase for water and sewer usage. But as I noted in this column, no rate usage change will even be considered until late spring or early summer of 2023.

CHECK THE CITY'S WEB SITE FOR INSTALLATION DATES. In the first paragraph of this column, I pointed out that on-the-ground installations will start in mid-January. On the City's web site, we will have a week-to-week schedule as in which subdivisions and on which streets we expect actual water meter installation to occur during that week (and probably the following week). -- So, as time passes early in 2023 check out the City's web site and find out if the new water meters are going to be installed on your street and in your neighborhood within just a few days. -- I'm excited to know the City of Temple is starting our Water Meter Replacement Project. It's a very good way to begin the new year!