

**Another Utility Lie Exposed – “Smart” meters are little used for outage alerts.  
Information & Perspective by Warren Woodward  
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As part of their “smart” meter propaganda, utilities nationwide – including ones in Arizona – have promoted a myth that “smart” meters reduce their response time to outages. For example, here's a typical sampling of website hype from four Arizona utilities:

Navopache Electric Coop: “... AMI helps locate and respond to outages faster ....”

Mohave Electric Coop: “... improve system reliability through improved outage management ....”

APS: “In addition, the meters have the potential to assist APS in providing faster outage response to customers.”

SRP: “More benefits will include quicker outage restoration ....”

Gee whiz, ain't “smart” meter technology grand?! Indeed, SRP headlined its webpage “TOMORROW'S GRID TODAY” in enormous font.

The reality however is what I have been telling the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) for years: Utilities still rely on customers to tell them when the power's out.

My assertion has just been confirmed by the BRIDGE Energy Group, self-described as “the leading consulting and systems integration solutions company focused on improving utility operational performance.”

BRIDGE recently released their *2015 Outage & Restoration Management Survey Results Summary*. Over 20,000 utility employees – executives, managers and engineers – from 90 utilities across North America were surveyed.

81% of the surveyed utilities had installed “smart” meters, but only 16% use “smart” meters as their primary source of power failure alerts. Customer calls come first.

Secondarily – after customer calls but well before “smart” meters – utilities rely on SCADA systems for outage alerts. SCADA stands for Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition. It is technology employed by utilities for decades and does not involve metering but operates at the transformer and substation level.

I brought SCADA to the ACC's attention over a year ago when I sent them the declaration of one of New England's largest utilities, Northeast Utilities. Northeast trashed “smart” meters in detail, saying there was “no rational basis” for their implementation, and that “smart” meters did *not* reduce outages or “modernize” the electricity grid.

On page 4 of Northeast's comments to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, Northeast explains:

“For example, utilizing SCADA-enabled smart switches will both reduce outages and

mitigate the effects that outages have on customers. Substation monitoring, remote controls and microprocessor relays can mitigate the impact of widespread outages; manage load constraints; and help to optimize the use of assets in real time.”

[my 2/12/14 letter to the ACC including Northeast's complete statement is here:

<http://images.edocket.azcc.gov/docketpdf/0000151238.pdf> ]

BRIDGE's full report is here: <https://www.bridgeenergygroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015-BRIDGE-Survey-ORM-Results-Summary-final1.pdf> . Slow-learners at the ACC need not fret over its 19 page length. It's mostly very large print, pictures and pie charts – so simple even a child could understand.