

APS -- Still Lying After All These Years
Information & Perspective by Warren Woodward
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Over the last several years I have received many calls and emails from APS customers stymied by APS when trying to refuse an APS "smart" meter. My advice to them is always the same: Don't take no for an answer and keep calling until you get what you want. It's an exercise in persistence. APS will say all kinds of lies and nonsense like "We don't have any more analog meters." Sometimes they will even tell you a digital meter is an analog one.

To be fair, I *have* gotten feedback from APS customers that their "smart" meter refusal went smoothly and quickly. So, calling APS to refuse a "smart" meter is a form of gambling. You never know how it will turn out.

Last week it was my turn to gamble. I needed to get utilities turned on at a house here in Sedona so I called APS to start service and refuse a "smart" meter. I gave clear instructions that I was to have an analog meter at the address. In return I got no abuse, lies or lame stories about how safe "smart" meters are. The APS person said the switch would be made in a day.

I was like, Wow, APS has finally learned proper customer service.

But a day came and went so I called APS again to remind them about my analog meter request. I got a polite and apologetic APS person on the phone who assured me that APS would be out in a day to replace the "smart" meter. That was on a Friday.

By Monday the "smart" meter was still there so I called APS again. This time I got someone who said it normally takes 5 business days to make such a change. Who was telling the truth? Two people said one day; one person said five days.

The next day APS came out when I was not there and replaced the "smart" meter with a non-transmitting digital meter, not an analog meter. So I called APS for the fourth time. Incredible lying ensued.

The APS person told me the digital meter was in fact an analog meter. Magical! I think I'll try telling APS an unpaid bill is really a paid one.

Anyway, I informed the APS person what a real analog was and that APS does not get to redefine words. She put me on hold to consult with a supervisor, then came back to tell me it was really analog on the inside but with a "digital face."

I was starting to get a cross face.

Again, I explained to the APS person that was not true. I have seen a tear-down of a non-transmitting digital, the same kind APS uses. They are not "analog on the inside."

The conversation went round and round like that for several minutes. Her making ridiculously

untrue statements (including the APS favorite, "we don't have any more analog meters"); me refuting the statements, and her putting me on hold while she got the next lie from a supervisor.

Normally I get extremely angry at being lied to so blatantly but I could not hold this APS person responsible because it was obvious she had zero subject matter knowledge and was only repeating what the higher-ups told her to tell me. An unwitting, guileless cog in the APS machine, she was not the real liar, the APS machine was.

So that she could fully grasp the extent to which her employer was willing to lie to her and everyone, I encouraged her to search YouTube for my name plus any of the following videos, APS Caught Lying, APS Caught Lying Again, and APS Caught Lying Revisited when she got home.

Finally she told me I would have to talk directly with a supervisor. So I said now I have to repeat everything all over again? I had been on the phone long enough. She said she would tell the supervisor everything so I would not have to repeat myself; I just had to wait on hold while she did so.

After waiting on hold for about 15 minutes I had to hang up because I had an appointment. Sometime later my wife got a call from someone at APS saying they would install an analog meter the next day. Sure enough, the next day a brand new analog meter (*the kind APS can't get anymore*) was on the house.

Yes, a happy ending, but why should anyone have to make four calls, be blatantly lied to repeatedly, and argue to get an analog meter? How many customers give up after the first or second call? Why has APS been allowed to get away with this illegal, abusive, bullying behavior *for years* by their supposed regulators, the Arizona Corporation Commission? The ACC has been apprised many times of APS's abuse of -- and lying to -- customers who refuse "smart" meters but the complaints go nowhere. Commissioner Bob Burns, up for re-election and talking about how much he cares about ratepayers, clearly *does not* care because neither he nor anyone at the ACC has put a stop to APS's deceptive, unfair and abusive business practices.

Here is a link to a letter docketed at the ACC that I wrote *over three years ago* about the abuse of customers who refuse "smart" meters: <http://images.edocket.azcc.gov/docketpdf/0000145819.pdf> . Others have written similar to the ACC. Nothing changes, and APS is still lying after all these years.

A.R.S. § 40-202

C. In supervising and regulating public service corporations, the commission's authority is confirmed to adopt rules to:

1. Protect the public against deceptive, unfair and abusive business practices, practices related to deposit requirements and reconnection fees, intrusive and abusive marketing, deceptive or untrue advertising practices and practices prohibited under subsection H of this section.