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## Navigating AMI – Central Point’s Path to Selection

PNWS AWWA

May 3, 2019

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## City of Central Point

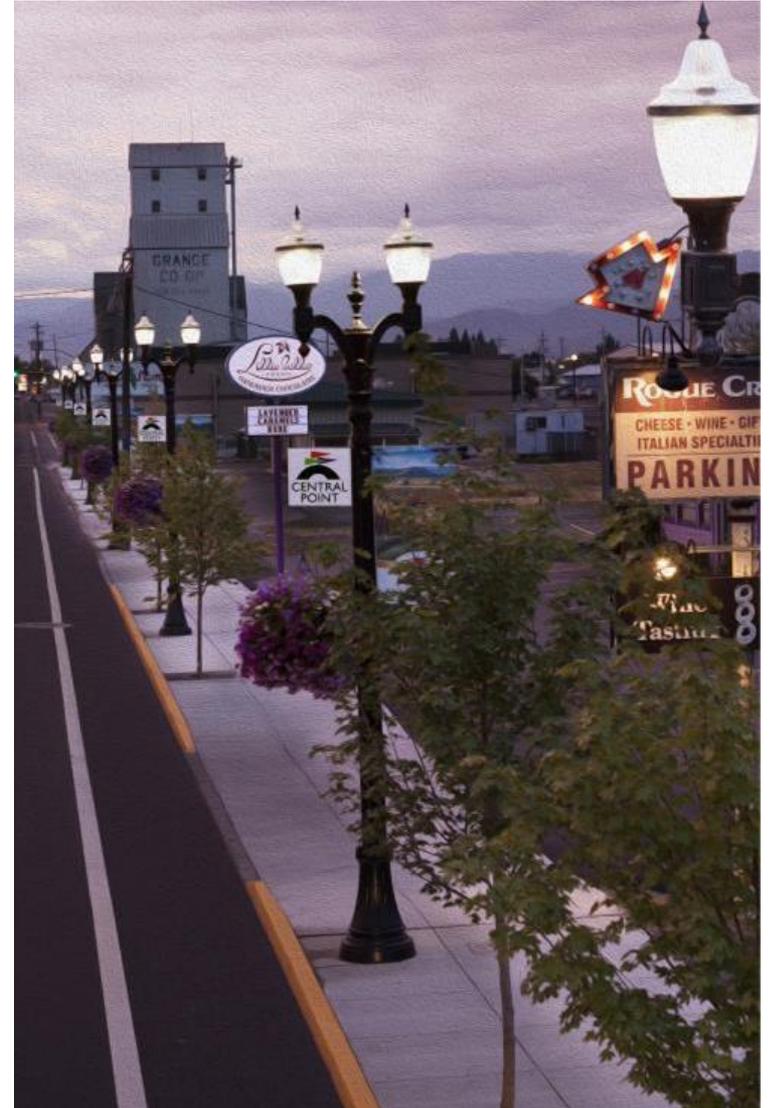
- Water service provider in Southwestern Oregon
- ~ 18,000 people served
- Service area is 3.9 square miles
- Existing metering system: 6,700 Sensus TouchRead meters
- Goal: Transition existing metering system to advanced metering infrastructure (AMI)
- Why: Smart City features that can be utilized by multiple departments, maximize staff / do more with less, improve billing accuracy, water loss reduction, leak detection/cross-connection management, and proactive customer service



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## Challenge

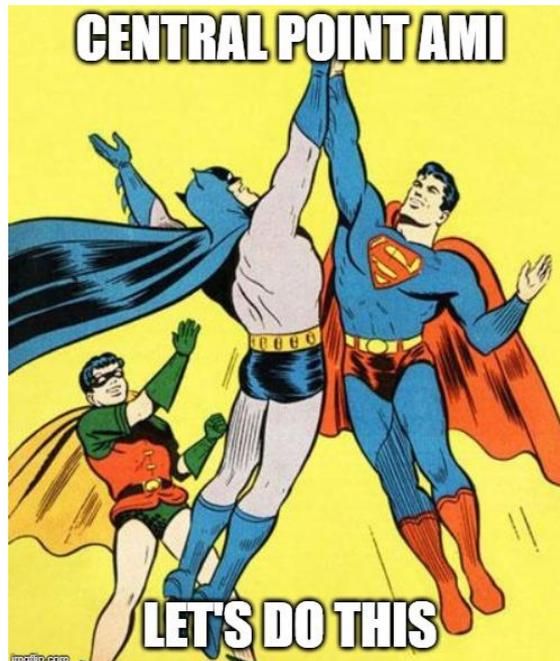
- AMI delayed for 10 years
- Staffing resources
- AMI was new to us
- Other higher priority projects
- Field of AMI solutions is crowded and complex
- Input from numerous stakeholders needed
- Necessity of weighing all options and considerations



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## Logic for Hiring a Consultant

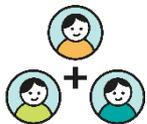
- Overcome staff time limitations and maximize investment of City resources
- Provide AMI expertise and understanding of the global state of the industry
- Meet procurement requirements without lengthy bid process driven by lowest cost
- Project and all communication with vendors is managed externally
- Systematic and unbiased selection process driven by City priorities
- Extensive vetting of customer references
- Support for contract development



# Isle Introduction



16 Global  
Technology Forums



> 6,000 Technologies  
Evaluated



200+ Organizations  
Supported by Isle



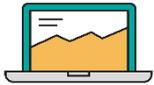
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# Isle's Methodology



## Technology Scan

Identify and qualify AMI solutions with experience in the US.



## Comparative Evaluation & Scoring

AMI solutions qualified during the tech scan responded to an RFI. Solutions were evaluated based on performance metrics and ranked by a weighted scoring system.



## Workshop

The highest ranked vendors were invited to an onsite workshop.



## Informed Decision Making

The systematic and objective approach narrowed vendor options based on highest priorities, met procurement requirements and provided selection confidence.

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## Qualification and Evaluation

### Tech Scan Criteria (4 Criteria)

- Compatibility with existing meters
- Compatibility with billing software
- Data management capabilities
- Domestic commercialization

### Comparative Evaluation (7 Metrics Weighted for Scoring)

- Life cycle cost
- Equipment costs
- Battery life
- Installation experience
- Quality of customer service references
- Remote upgrade of firmware and programming
- Ability to read on demand

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## Onsite Workshop

- Based on scoring, 4 highest ranking solutions were invited to workshop
- All solutions met the City's high priority performance criteria
- 7 members of Central Point staff represented 5 divisions
- Guidelines for presentation content
- Q&A to drill down into performance features and capabilities of interest
- Vendor was selected at the end of the workshop
- Final Selection Factors:
  - ★ Proven track record of quality customer service
  - ★ Height of Collectors
  - ★ Cost
  - ★ Smart City Capabilities
  - ★ Local distributor



# Timeline



Central Point invested ~ 130 hours of staff time and < 5% of the total value of their AMI contract in the vendor evaluation, selection and contracting process.

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## Selection and Next Steps

- Mueller was selected by City staff and selection was approved by City Council
- Isle supported the procurement contract
- Contract executed in 2019
- Planning for 18 month implementation
- Staff looked at all of the benefits and chose to expedite implementation

### AMI System Details:

- Radio system; unlicensed 902-928 MHz band with cellular backhaul
- Mesh configuration (a.k.a “peer-to-peer,” “multi-hop,” and “point-to point”)
- ~8,000 endpoints to be installed on existing meters
- 6 LoRa collectors (Smart City Capable) and 5 Repeaters
- Mueller hosted server & customer portal
- Meter data management



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## Lessons Learned

- Tie in stakeholders early, including procurement, IT, billing, operations, etc.
- Understand total infrastructure costs, i.e. data storage/transfer if applicable
- Check references
- Details matter
- Understand your billing system
- Identify the needs of your field staff
- Contracting
  - ★ Time consuming
  - ★ Clearly identify roles of the manufacturer and the distributor
  - ★ Think long-term: Implementation is a huge undertaking; AMI system will be in use for 20+ years; and you will have a relationship with the vendor throughout

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## Acknowledgements

- Matt Samitore, Central Point Parks and Public Works Director
- Max Woody, Former Central Point Public Works Field Operations Manager
- Steven Farabaugh, Senior Consultant, Isle Inc. / [steven.farabaugh@isleutilities.com](mailto:steven.farabaugh@isleutilities.com)
- Utilities with AMI that provided vendor references
- Vendors who submitted RFI responses and attended the workshop



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Thank you!

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