MYTHS VS. FACTS ABOUT LUS SMART METERS

Myth: LUS will use smart meters to turn off appliances in your home without your permission.
Fact: LUS simply does not have the capability to operate appliances inside a home or business. Smart meters are not able to turn off appliances. In the future, LUS may offer a voluntary program in which customers allow LUS to install load control devices on their air conditioner compressors. Once installed, LUS would have the ability to turn off those compressors in situations where overall energy consumption in the system must be reduced. Again, customers would have to allow LUS to install these devices, and in exchange, those customers would receive a rate rebate. It’s also important to note that these devices do not require smart meters and can be installed at homes where standard meters exist.

Myth: Smart meters will emit high levels of radio frequency (RF) radiation into my home.
Fact: Smart meters emit extremely low, infrequent signals. The RF exposure from smart meters is 13,000 times less than the exposure from cell phones. Also, exposure levels decrease significantly as distance from the transmitter increases. RF also weakens as it passes through barriers such as building materials and meter enclosures.

Myth: LUS has not researched health effects of radio frequency.
Fact: LUS has researched multiple industry and third-party scientific RF studies. All show that smart meters result in “negligible RF exposure.” In fact, some studies have shown that these meters emit less RF than what is naturally occurring in the human body, and certainly far less than what is emitted from common household devices like cell phones and microwave ovens. Although research is ongoing, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says that available scientific evidence, including the World Health Organization (WHO) findings released May 17, 2010, shows no increased health risk due to radio frequency energy (RF), a form of electromagnetic radiation that is emitted by cell phones. The FDA shares regulatory responsibility with the Federal Communications Commission, which has determined smart meters meet safety guidelines.

Myth: Like cell phones, smart meters transmit a signal all the time.
Fact: Unlike cell phones, which are “on” all the time unless powered down, smart meters communicate and then “go to sleep.” LUS’s smart electric meters will typically communicate using RF signals 6 times per day. Each transmission takes only a few seconds, which means the meters will transmit less than one minute per day on average.

Myth: LUS is installing smart meters so it can put time-of-use rates in place.
Fact: LUS has no immediate plans to implement time-of-use rates or dynamic pricing. These types of rates, which are being used or considered by other utilities across the country, are based on the cost to
generate electricity at certain times of the day. Currently, LUS pays more to produce electricity in the mid-afternoon and early evening than it does in the middle of the night; however, LUS customers pay the same rate no matter what time of day electricity is used. LUS is in talks with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and the Lafayette Consolidated Government to implement a pilot program using time-of-use rates for facilities operated by those organizations. The results of that program will help LUS determine whether time-of-use rates may be beneficial to the system and to our customers. Any rate changes would have to be approved by the Lafayette City-Parish Consolidated Council and the Lafayette Public Utilities Authority (LPUA).

**Myth: Smart meters track or monitor individual appliances.**
**Fact:** Smart meters do not identify electrical devices in the home or record when they are operated. Smart meters only record total energy usage, as does older, analog meters.

**Myth: Smart meters are surveillance devices.**
**Fact:** Smart meters do not monitor household activity. They only record total energy usage for the home or business, just like all current LUS meters. The advantage of smart meters is that LUS will no longer have to send an employee to the house or business to read the meter, which actually equates to more privacy for the customer. In addition, LUS will be able to pinpoint outages sooner and fix them faster.

**Myth: Installation of a smart meter will automatically cause an increase in customer bills.**
**Fact:** Smart meters do not cause higher bills. They have been tested and proven to record energy usage accurately. In reality, many older meters are not as accurate and customers may see a slight difference when the newer, more accurate meters are installed. Smart meters also eliminate possible human error when reading meters for billing.

**Myth: Smart meters will give criminals access to personal data.**
**Fact:** Smart meters send only energy usage data over secure, encrypted networks. They never send personal data. In addition, LUS never shares personal data with third parties unless required to do so by law.

**Myth: Smart meters are being installed so utility companies can get more money from customers.**
**Fact:** Combined with other tools such as online energy usage information, smart meters can be very useful in helping customers take control of their energy use. LUS encourages customers to use this information to reduce energy consumption, thus saving money on monthly bills.

**Myth: LUS will keep my energy usage information for an unlimited period of time.**
**Fact:** LUS will not keep consumption data for an unlimited time. However, one of the benefits of smart meters is that customers will have access to usage data for a period of time (up to 24 months), which they can use to adjust their consumption to best fit their needs and budget. Although not currently available, this information will soon be accessible at LUS’s website, [www.LUS.org](http://www.LUS.org). Please note that when this online portal is set up, data will only be available as far back as the date the smart meter was installed.