
Case Study

South Swink Water Company

Customer Decision to Submeter Trailer Park

2013

\$3,000

Water Company Information

Approx. Population Served

Approx. 750

Approx. Number of Connections

Approx. 250

Project Summary

South Swink Water Company provides potable water to residential customers located south of Highway 50 between Swink and La Junta, Colorado. The Water Company also provides potable supply to one trailer park which contains between 20 and 25 separate homes. This is South Swink's largest single customer.

Water use at the trailer park was paid by the residents with a flat fee to the owner of the facility. Over time, the resident behavior included numerous wasteful water use practices including allowing water to run freely during cold snaps to prevent water lines from freezing. As the cost of water increased, the owner of the trailer park worked with South Swink to submeter each trailer, such that each resident became responsible for their individual water use.

Project Components

Beginning in April 2013, individual trailer based water meters were installed and the trailer park began charging for water use combining a service fee with a per gallon use over a certain allowable use related to the service fee. The water meters cost about \$120 per meter.

Project Benefits

The metering of individual trailer usage at trailer park had immediate impact on water use, reducing water demand at this location by 50%¹, reducing the overall water demand in the South Swink system by about 7%. This reduction related to a monthly reduction in the customer water bill of over \$6,000 per year. It also impacted the total revenue of South Swink by this same amount, which represented about 7% of annual revenue.

Figure 1 presents the change for water demand for this single customer from 2011 through 2013.

¹ Average monthly water use prior to the Submetering was about 300,000 gallons per month (or 450-500 gallons per day per trailer); and after the submeters were installed monthly water use dropped to about 150,000 per month (to about 225 to 250 gallons per day per trailer).

In addition to the improved water efficiency, South Swink has realized substantial savings with respect to avoided energy costs for both pumping and treating water; however the change in utility revenue is being evaluated regarding the need for future water rate changes.

Figure 1 – Trailer Park Water Use in South Swink (blue is prior to submetering; red is after submetering)

