

Automating Meter Reading: SmartSynch Leverages the SkyTel Network

SmartSynch, an energy technology company based in Jackson, MS, is the leading provider of smart metering solutions to the energy and utility industry. Its core product, the SmartMeter SystemSM, enables energy and utility companies to communicate with commercial and industrial electricity meters using wireless communications and the Internet.



Improving efficiency in energy use measurement

On an average day, one of the largest electric utilities in California provides power to 11 million people. To measure how much electricity each customer uses, 4.3 million meters must be read every month. Traditionally, electric utilities have deployed meter-readers on foot to check how much electricity is consumed each month.

An expensive and inefficient process, utility companies are searching for better, more secure ways to measure energy use. In this heavily regulated and competitive industry, utilities are hungry for new technology to improve efficiency and lower costs. By automating the process, utility companies can focus on providing better service to their customers. Enter the Smart Meter System. By combining real-time data access and back-end system integration, SmartSynch provides a faster, cheaper, and more precise method for measuring energy use. The system also puts the data to use by identifying and pinpointing potential problems and then solving them before they become catastrophes. Such a system relies heavily on existing wireless technology to make it all possible.

Connecting utilities without wires

Currently in use by more than 20 leading public utility companies, the SmartSynch solution connects utility companies to their meters through a combination of proprietary web-based software, the SkyTel 2Way ReFLEX network, and interfacing hardware. With the SmartMeter SystemSM, utilities don't just cut labor costs; they can implement innovative new ways of serving their customers. It also



provides the means to address demand management problems by remotely tracking energy consumption, an increasingly important feature during peak usage times.

“The most critical element of our solution is the timely and accurate delivery of wireless data,” said Stephen Johnston, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for SmartSynch. “The SkyTel Advanced Messaging Network is nationwide, highly stable, fully redundant and public, and they provide air time at reasonable rates. That’s a great combination. By partnering with SkyTel, SmartSynch is able to create real business value for our customers through data delivery and aggregation.”

The SkyTel, SmartSynch advantage

- Provides utilities companies and their customers access to a constant stream of valuable information, facilitating immediate reaction and real-time solutions.
- Streamlines operations and reduces expenses by automating manual processes, e.g., billing, load curtailment, and outage notification and restoration.
- Increasing service efficiency gives customer service personnel more time to do what they do best – serve customers.
- Allows utilities to eliminate on-site meter reading, providing customers with an increased sense of security.
- By constantly monitoring energy load, the system lets service providers reduce demand during peak periods and increase demand when prices warrant.
- Creates new revenue streams through value-added services such as power quality monitoring, automated outage notification and restoration, and viewing interval usage data online.

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