

## Billing for Larger Water Meters

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

I have been asked by several systems lately about how to address billing for larger meters, especially systems that are just installing meters for the first time. There are two basic schools of thought when addressing what to charge for larger meters. Some systems charge according to the flow capabilities of a larger meter vs. the flow of a normal residential meter. This is justifiable due to the availability of water to the customer. The reasoning being if the customer has the capability of 10X the flow rate of the average size meter in the system, they should pay 10X the normal minimum.

Another alternative is to charge according to the price of meter replacement. For example if a 2" meter costs 8X more than a ¾" meter then the monthly charge for a 2" meter should be 8X the normal rate.

Then there is always the arbitrary method many systems use and no one can explain how it was derived. "It is just the way it has always been done". Attached is a chart that explains the ratios of different meter sizes according to meter replacement costs, flow and the average of what systems are currently charging across the state for larger meters. This is a good guide, but I strongly suggest visiting with your meter supplier to get the flow or cost of the meters you are using. The chart assumes that ¾" meters are the norm. The majority of water systems in Nebraska do not currently charge extra for larger meters, but it appears that more systems are considering it according to the requests for information that we are receiving. If NeRWA can help you with this or any other issue please give us a call.

| Meter size | Meter charge according to price | Meter charge according to pipe flow | Average of What Systems are Currently Charging |
|------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| ¾ inch     | 1                               | 1                                   | 1  |
| 1 inch     | 1.35X                           | 1.75X                               | 1.5X   |
| 1.5 inch   | 1.75X                           | 4X                                  | 2.5X   |
| 2 inch     | 5X                              | 7.1X                                | 4X   |
| 3 inch     | 8.5X                            | 16X                                 | 7X   |
| 4 inch     | 12.15X                          | 28X                                 | 12X  |