

Tightening the taps

Charlottetown goes looking for firm to install water meters on all homes

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- BY DAVE STEWART

The City of Charlottetown is in the process of hiring a firm to install water meters on homes.

A request for proposals has been issued for the universal water meter program, with the deadline for submissions June 15. All flat-rate customers have to switch over to metered service by Dec. 31, 2019 with the goal of easing the burden on the city's water supply.

To make the switch easier on customers, residential meters will be provided and installed for existing flat-rate customers who are connected to water and sewer in the capital city.

Coun. Eddie Rice, chairman of the city's water and sewer utility committee, says approximately 1,400 customers volunteered to have a meter installed in 2014.

"I'm getting stopped on the streets of Charlottetown with people asking to sign up so we still have a volunteer base and we're encouraging them," Rice said Tuesday.

The city is still accepting applications for those who wish to volunteer for a meter.

Everyone is going to get one by the deadline but applying for the Take Control program could fast-track the process.

Rice expects the successful firm will begin meter installations in July.

Information sessions will be held during the course of the installation program to keep the public informed of the progress and schedule.

Approximately 5,800 residential meters will be installed through the RFP process.

There were 7,400 originally but the city got a good number done through the volunteer portion. The numbers don't exactly add up but some meters may have been installed as part of a new residential construction, for example, as in people who weren't technically signed up for the voluntary portion of the effort.

On average, installation takes about an hour and the city will cover the cost of the meter and the meter installation.

Mayor Clifford Lee said the city is quite happy with interest in the meter program.

“This program is instrumental for our collective water conservation efforts and is necessary for future projects, continued growth and the protection of this limited and precious resource,” Lee said.

Rice said they continue to look for new ways to offer incentives for people to conserve water.

Rice wanted to clear up one misconception, that cruise ships visiting port are putting a strain on the city’s water system.

The city is by law required to service the Charlottetown Harbour Authority with water, just as it does every resident. Rice says the authority reduced in 2014 its consumption by two per cent from the year before.

“They are using up less water.”