

## For Immediate Release

### **Horizon Utilities Preparing For Widespread Installation of Smart Meters** *Sophisticated devices will enable consumers to better manage energy costs and household budgets*

**Hamilton/St. Catharines (August 18, 2006)** --- Horizon Utilities today announced the launch of a major powerWISE<sup>®</sup> Smart Meter Pilot Project in support of the Ontario government's energy plan that calls for the installation of 800,000 smart meters across the Province by 2007. By 2010, all homes and small businesses in Ontario will be equipped with a smart meter.

"Smart meters are one part of an overall provincial effort to build a culture of energy conservation in Ontario and reduce the strain on the system during periods of peak electricity demand such as those we experienced over the last few weeks," said Max Cananzi, President and CEO for Horizon Utilities. "The primary goal with smart meters is to help raise consumer awareness about energy consumption and the cost of electricity. However, smart meter technology will also make estimated electricity bills a thing of the past, which will be welcome news for some customers."

A "smart meter" is the name commonly used for a new type of electricity meter that records how much electricity is used during each hour of the day. The electronics in the meter are what make it "smart."

Currently, most homes are equipped with a hydro meter that measures how much electricity is used in a billing period, typically two months. With a smart meter, a computer chip inside the device measures and records how much electricity is consumed in the household during each hour of the day. This information is automatically transmitted across a secure network where it is compiled and used for billing purposes.

"Many of our customers are going to love the fact that, with a smart meter, their electricity bill will always be based on their actual consumption," pointed out Eileen Campbell, Vice-President, Customer Services for Horizon Utilities. "Hydro meters are sometimes located in basements or other hard-to-get-at locations, so it is not always possible to send someone in to physically read the meter. When a meter read is estimated, this can result in a large variance on the customer's next bill, which can create an affordability issue for some people. The up-to-the-hour reads available from the smart meters will eliminate this customer concern and make household budgeting much easier for those who have received estimated bills in the past."

Being able to use the data collected from the smart meter to better manage their household energy costs will also be of great interest many consumers.

When Ontario introduces time-of-use rates for electricity, at some point of time in the future, there will be different electricity rates for off-peak, mid-peak and on-peak periods. In the summer months, the highest price will be from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday, when the demand for electricity in Ontario is the greatest.

"Once time-of-use rates come into effect," said Cananzi, "customers who have a smart meter installed and who do not have a contract with an energy retailer\* may be able to save themselves some money. If consumers take steps to conserve energy during peak demand periods when rates are high, and shift some of their electricity usage to times when electricity is cheaper, they will be able to directly impact their energy bills. For example, consumers may decide to set their air conditioner a few degrees warmer during the afternoon, turn their dishwasher on before going to bed, or use their electric lawn mower on the weekend instead of during the week."

\* Consumers who purchase power from an electricity retailer will continue to pay the rate(s) stipulated in their contract, no matter what time of the day they use their power.

“Although we are starting to install 7,500 smart meters this month,” continued Cananzi, “it is important for customers to note that time-of-use rates are not yet in effect. Customers who receive a smart meter as part of our pilot project will not notice any changes on their bill. They will continue to be charged according to the current Regulated Price Plan or as per their contract with an energy retailer.”

The Horizon Utilities *powerWISE*<sup>®</sup> Smart Meter Pilot Project will involve the installation of 7,500 smart meters in the neighbourhoods listed below, commencing immediately. A smaller pilot to test smart meter technology and communications protocols took place last year. Widespread deployment of more than 60,000 smart meters in Hamilton and St. Catharines will begin later this year.

Smart meters are the same size and general shape as a traditional meter. They fit into a standard meter base and take only a few minutes to install. Residents don't have to be home if their meter is located outside. A short two-minute power interruption will occur during the meter exchange.

*powerWISE*<sup>®</sup> Smart Meter Pilot Project  
Smart Meter Installations Commencing August 2006

- Dundas - Huntingwood Avenue / Davidson Boulevard
- Hamilton - Westmount area
- Hamilton - Westdale area
- Hamilton - The area bounded by Upper Gage Avenue to Upper Ottawa Street between Stone Church Road East and the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway
- St. Catharines – The area approximately south of Erion Road, north of Grapeview Drive, east of Highway 406 and west of Vansickle Road North.

Maps of these preliminary installation areas will be posted on the Horizon Utilities website at: [www.horizonutilities.com](http://www.horizonutilities.com).

The *powerWISE*<sup>®</sup> Smart Meter Pilot is one of Horizon Utilities' multi-year, energy conservation and demand management initiatives. Under the *powerWISE*<sup>®</sup> name, Horizon is also working cooperatively with five of Ontario's other largest electricity distribution companies and the Ministry of Energy to deliver new and innovative energy conservation programs.

Horizon Utilities will have a smart meter exhibit at the **Dundas Cactus festival running from Friday, August 18 to Sunday, August 20.** Members of the Horizon Utilities Smart Meter Team will be on hand to answer questions from consumers.

More information about smart meters and Horizon Utilities' energy conservation initiatives is available at [www.horizonutilities.com](http://www.horizonutilities.com). Consumers may also submit questions to [SmartMeters@horizonutilities.com](mailto:SmartMeters@horizonutilities.com).

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**Horizon Utilities Corporation** is the third largest municipally owned electricity distribution company in Ontario and provides electricity and related utility services to over 230,000 residential and commercial customers in Hamilton and St. Catharines. The company is owned by Hamilton Utilities Corporation and St. Catharines Hydro Inc. and operates out of facilities in Hamilton, St. Catharines, and Stoney Creek.

Horizon's 340 employees are committed to delivering a safe and reliable supply of electricity, providing unparalleled customer value and helping to create a culture of energy conservation in Ontario.

Horizon Utilities Corporation is proud to be a founding member of *powerWISE*<sup>®</sup>, a brand created to promote energy conservation and reduce the demand for electricity in Ontario. *powerWISE*<sup>®</sup> is a joint initiative of the Ontario government and six of Ontario's largest electricity distribution companies. For more information, visit: [www.horizonutilities.com](http://www.horizonutilities.com) and [www.powerwise.ca](http://www.powerwise.ca).

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**A Frequently Asked Questions information sheet about smart meters is available upon request.**