Xcel Energy®

PARTNERS IN ENERGY
An Xcel Energy Community Collaboration

ADVANCED GRID COMMUNITY PLAYBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

XCEL ENERGY PARTNERS IN ENERGY

Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy is available to communities in Colorado, Minnesota and Wisconsin that are looking for a collaborative solution to identify and reach their energy goals. Through a shared commitment, we can help you identify your community's energy objectives, develop a plan, and implement strategies that incorporate your unique, local resources. To facilitate and empower communities, we've assembled a team of experts in energy consulting, process, and implementation coaching to help your team throughout the process.

The program offerings include support to develop an energy action plan or electric vehicle plan, tools to help implement your plan and deliver results, and resources designed to help the communities we serve stay informed and achieve their energy goals. Our program can deliver support to you whether this is your first foray into energy planning or if you've identified specific goals and you just need some tools and resources to make them happen.

In addition to these free professional services, Partners in Energy provides shared learning opportunities and resources of topical interest to all participating communities. Partners in Energy has developed resources, like this playbook, to help communities deliver awareness and action on a range of community energy topics.

Whether you are currently a Partners in Energy community, interested in becoming one, or simply a community that is part of Xcel Energy's service area, this playbook is intended to help you understand the advanced grid and communicate to your leadership, businesses, and residents what it means for your community.

Communities that participate in the Partners in Energy program can access additional planning and implementation resources to work with businesses and residents to maximize their benefits from the advanced grid.

For more information about available resources or to customize any of the resources with your community's unique brand identity, contact your Partners in Energy facilitator or email PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com.

WHAT'S NEW WITH THIS UPDATE?

Originally released in April 2021, this update to the playbook (September 2022) includes new information about progress to date, commercial smart meter installation, resources and information for Minnesota communities, and the Colorado Time of Use rate.

Smart meters have been installed for approximately 10% of electric customers in Colorado. This playbook and other Xcel Energy resources have facilitated productive communication between Xcel Energy, community leaders, and end use customers. Smart meter installation is being expanded to Commercial C class customers in Colorado and residential and small commercial customers in Minnesota. Explore the sections below to learn more about these next steps.

When you see text outlined in a shadow (like this section), that denotes new content for this version.

(i) Commercial Customers

In Colorado, rate schedule C customers are small commercial accounts with electric demand below 50 kW. In 2020, about 74% of Xcel Energy business electric premises in Colorado had this classification.

Commercial customers in Minnesota are referred to as small commercial customers.

USING THIS PLAYBOOK

The Partners in Energy Advanced Grid Community Playbook identifies steps to educate and engage your community on the Advanced Grid Initiative. The Advanced Grid Initiative is Xcel Energy's effort to build a smarter and more resilient energy grid that will better serve customers for decades to come.

As the Advanced Grid Initiative progresses, and smart electric meters and new pricing plans are implemented, constituents will likely look to community leaders for help understanding these changes. This playbook is designed to help you know how and when to educate your local leaders, raise community awareness around what is happening and the new resources available through Xcel Energy, and respond to questions and concerns.

Partners in Energy community participants can access a webinar recording related to this playbook – Answering your Questions about the Advanced Grid Initiative.

Engaging Other Community Leaders and Constituents

Xcel Energy is committed to partnering with community leaders in our service territory. **The primary audience for this playbook is local government staff and community organizations.**

The playbook is organized into six sections that will help you understand and communicate about the Advanced Grid Initiative:

Overview (page 8)
What is the Advanced Grid Initiative?

Align (page 18)
Identify where advanced grid capabilities and benefits align with your community's goals.

Inform (page 23)
Raise awareness before smart electric meter installation about roll-out schedules and what community members can expect during installation.

Support (page 29)
Answer questions during installation and inform local media and community members with updated communications.

Apply (page 32)
Use advanced capabilities after installation in pursuing community goals and in educating customers on costs and behavioral tips to optimize their energy use.

Appendices (page 35)
Adapt sample materials to communicate about the Advanced Grid Initiative with your community.

Providing Resources and Information

A major objective of this playbook is to equip you as a community representative with resources to effectively communicate with community leaders and your constituents the benefits, technology, and process of rolling out the advanced grid. Therefore, this playbook provides customizable templates for informing your community about the capabilities, benefits, and implementation status of the advanced grid before, during, and after advanced grid rollout. The resources are intended to help you:

- Identify how the advanced grid can support your **community's planning and implementation of energy, resilience, and/or smart city goals**.

- **Raise awareness** with community leaders and constituents about what the advanced grid is and how the advanced grid will impact and benefit the community.

- **Respond to questions** as new meters are being installed and as new energy products, rate plans *(Colorado only)*, services, and cost-saving programs are made possible through the Advanced Grid Initiative.

- **Foster consistent messaging and a common understanding** to avoid misinformation.

Resources typically fall under one of two types: ready-to-use informational materials or customizable templates for community-specific engagement materials. These materials are intended to be used before, during, and after meter installation.

A few specific notes before using these resources:

- Resources available for customization in implementing your advanced grid community engagement strategy are meant to be used in collaboration with Xcel Energy. Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to request use of a template.

- In communities served by more than one electricity utility, be sure to convey that only those who are served by Xcel Energy will experience advanced grid upgrades.

- We're here to help! In addition to the resources provided through the playbook, we are available to do presentations or support community events. Contact your account manager, area service manager/community relations manager, or email PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com for additional support and resources.

XCEL ENERGY INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

As of February 2022, the following resources developed by Xcel Energy are available for you to share in implementing your Advanced Grid Initiative community engagement strategy. Visit xcelenergycommunities.com/AdvancedGrid for a complete list.

Colorado

General

- CO Installation Map 2022 | 2021
- Advanced Grid Overview Video
- Advanced Grid and Customer Experience Flyer
- Advanced Grid Safety and Security Flyer
- Time of Use Booklet
- Time of Use Overview Video English | Spanish

- Smart Meter Installation Video
- Meter Overview Flyer
- Smart Meter Leave Behind if Unsuccessful Meter Installation Vendor | Xcel Energy
- Smart Meter Business Card

Residential

- Advanced Grid and Smart Meter Frequently Asked Questions
- Reading your Bill Info Sheet
- 90 Day Notice
- 60 Day Mailer English | Spanish
- 30 Day Letter English | Spanish
- Successful Smart Meter Leave Behind
- Smart Meter Opt Out Card
- Opt Out Meter Fees
- Transition to Time of Use Rate FAQs

Commercial

- 60 day Postcard
- 30 Day Letter English | Spanish
- Smart Meter Business Card English | Spanish

Minnesota

General

- MN Installation Map
- Advanced Grid Overview Video
- Advanced Grid and Customer Experience Flyer
- Smart Meter Business Card

- Advanced Grid Safety and Security Flyer
- Smart Meter Installation Video
- Meter Overview Flyer

Residential

- Advanced Grid and Smart Meter FAQs
- Reading your Bill Info Sheet
- 90 Day Notice
- 60 Day Mailer English | Spanish
- Opt Out of Smart Meter Info Sheet
- Unsuccessful Doorhanger
  Meter Installation Vendor | Xcel Energy
- Successful Doorhanger

Commercial

- 60 day Postcard
- 30 Day Letter
  English | Spanish
  Somali | Hmong
- Smart Meter Business Card

CUSTOMIZABLE PLAYBOOK RESOURCES

- Community Officials Briefing Script
- Community Leader Briefing Booklet
- Community Website Content
- Newsletter Articles
- Community Fact Sheet
- Community PowerPoint

OVERVIEW:
WHAT IS THE ADVANCED GRID INITIATIVE?

Overview: What is the Advanced Grid Initiative?

Technology is advancing in every area of our lives, and Xcel Energy is bringing digital technology to your electric service too. Xcel Energy is building a smarter, more resilient electric distribution grid that can better serve customers in the decades to come.

WHAT CUSTOMERS WILL EXPERIENCE

The Advanced Grid Initiative refers to an integrated package of meter upgrades, electric distribution grid and technology enhancements, updated rate structures, and new programs and services. While customers may be familiar with various types of technology grids and networks, throughout this Playbook the use of the term grid is applied to the electric distribution grid. Key customer-facing components of the Advanced Grid Initiative are described below. The Resources section provides a customer-friendly communications piece for sharing with your community members on the Advanced Grid and Customer Experience.

Smart electric meters
The first change visible to customers will be new smart electric meters at their homes and businesses. Most customers already have meters that transmit readings remotely by radio frequencies, but existing meters require someone to come to the neighborhood to collect data.

An electric meter is an electrical device that measures the electricity consumption of a building. A smart meter allows for two-way communication between the electric meter and Xcel Energy. Smart meters provide information to software that allows customers to better understand how energy is being used, manage their bill to save money, and identify specific, measurable actions to make energy-saving improvements to their home or business. Customers will also receive quicker notifications when service is out and more accurate information on when power will be restored. Find an overview of meters here.

> "The installation process was smooth and now I have access to my personalized dashboard where I can easily see how much energy I'm using and develop my own energy action plan to save about $100 per year."
>
> *Xcel Energy residential customer in Colorado*

Colorado Commercial Customers

Smart meters already began rolling out in Colorado for commercial schedule C customers and will continue through 2024.

Customers on commercial C will receive the same meter as residential customers.

Minnesota Small Commercial Customers

Smart meters will be installed in small businesses in the second half of 2022.

Customers frequently ask about the safety of smart meters, which use radio frequency technology, but smart meters have significantly lower radio frequency exposure than cell phones, most home appliances, and Wi-Fi routers. Xcel Energy's smart electric meters emit radio frequency lower than the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) guidelines established to protect the public. All Xcel Energy meter systems are fully authorized, licensed, and in compliance with the FCC's guidelines. The Resources section provides a customer-friendly communications piece for sharing with your community members on the advanced grid safety and security. Similar information on smart meters, privacy, and radio frequency is available from Xcel Energy's web page.

Time of Use Pricing Plan

By providing near real-time energy use data, the advanced grid will allow customers greater insight into and more control over their energy bill. Time of Use will empower customers to monitor and manage their energy use. The pricing plan has different rates for energy used during different times of the day (see pricing on next page). Customers who shift electricity use to non-peak hours will reduce their energy bills without decreasing their usage.

Starting in April 2022, customers in Colorado will automatically be enrolled in Time of Use pricing either in April or October depending on when their smart meter is installed or they completed the opt out process. Customers will be notified 60 days before their rate changes. For example, if they receive their new meter in February or March, they'll be enrolled in the new Time of Use pricing in October rather than April. More information and resources to help communicate changes can be found in the Time of Use Booklet and webinar.

Minnesota customers are currently not receiving additional Time of Use pricing options. A Flex Pricing Pilot, similar to Time of Use, is underway. The learnings from this Pilot will be used to identify a path forward for Minnesota customers.

Visit Xcel Energy's website for tips and resources customers can use to manage their bill. Time of Use rates support Xcel Energy's goals because they're able to use more lower-cost, carbon-free energy like wind and solar.

A Flex Pricing Pilot is underway in Minnesota. The learnings from this Pilot will be used to identify a path forward.

ⓘ Interval Data

Interval data shows how much energy is used by time intervals, such as by the hour or in 15-minute intervals.

Interval data can be used to learn how much energy is being used during peak demand hours and help identify opportunities to shift energy use away from peak demand hours.

ⓘ Peak Demand

Peak Demand is the highest electrical power demand that occurs over a specific time period.

Xcel Energy ensures enough electricity generation capacity to meet peak demand, while maintaining flexibility to scale down generation during off-peak demand times. Managing peak demand on the grid allows us to deliver energy use more cost-effectively.

Although individual sites vary, peak demand hours for the electric grid as a whole are typically midday on weekdays.

In Colorado, there are three time periods related to Time of Use Pricing:

- On-Peak Hours: Weekdays between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., excluding holidays.

- Mid-Peak Hours: Weekdays between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., excluding holidays.

- Off-Peak Hours: Daily between 7 p.m. and 1 p.m., and weekends. Off-peak hours provide the most cost savings opportunity.

Colorado Commercial Customers

Commercial Customers will have a different Time of Use rate and rollout plan than residential customers. For questions, commercial customers can email Xcel Energy at bsc@xcelenergy.com or call 800-481-4700.

12 a.m.	**1 p.m.**	**3 p.m.**	**7 p.m.** **12 a.m.**
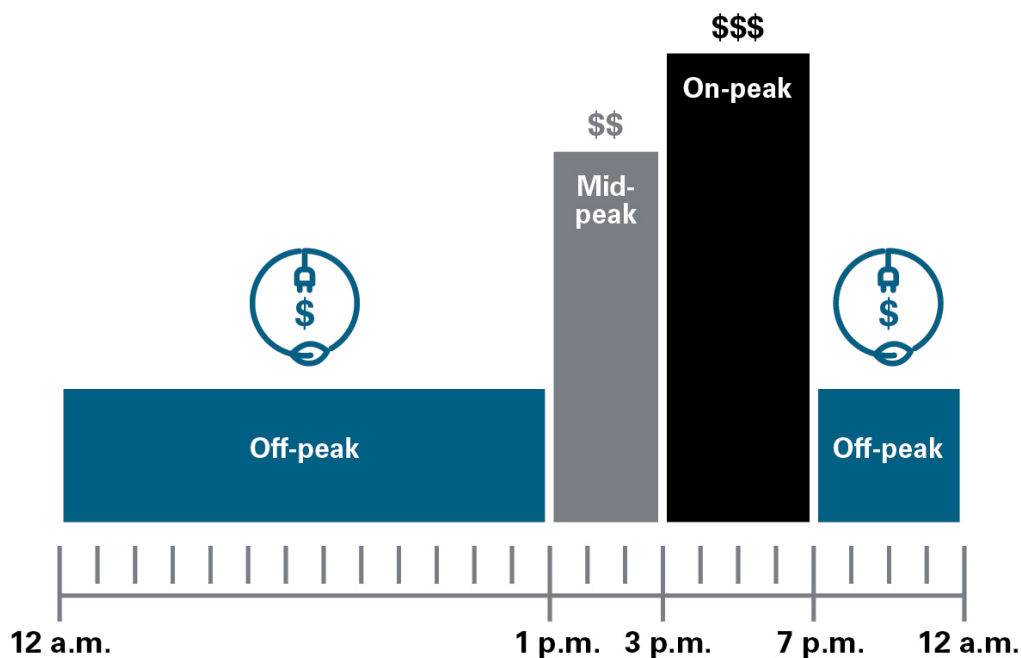
Summer: June 1 – September 30 **Winter:** October 1 – May 30

Weekends and holidays billed at the off-peak rate.

Prices accurate as of February 2022 with prices to fluctuate quarterly.

If the customer wishes to opt out of the Time of Use rate, they will be placed on a flat, Opt Out price instead.

Opt Out pricing: 14¢ / kWh (Summer), 12¢ / kWh (Winter)

Please note that customers can opt out of Time of Use even if they receive a Smart Meter.

Customers will receive more information 60 days before the transition to the new rate. See the Time of Use Booklet for more information.

Personalized Account Information

As smart electric meters are installed and software goes live, customers will be able to see their near real-time energy use in 15-minute intervals through new web and mobile dashboards. Initially this will be limited to the energy use display, but with planned near-term enhancements to the Home Area Network, the online platforms and billing statements will include more detailed information about the individual customer's energy use by time of day, as well as disaggregation breakdown by appliance category. New data capabilities will be complemented with personalized tips about how to save on energy costs.

Smart Meter Deferral and Opt-Out

Residential customers will be given the option to decline receiving a smart meter before, during and even after installation. Customers would still receive a non-communicating meter, even if they opt out of a smart meter. A non-communicating meter is essentially a smart meter without wireless network connectivity. It will measure electric use at set intervals, in order to measure both how much electricity is used and when it is used. Both types of meters also support the proposed Time of Use rate, which offer discounts for off-peak electricity use to motivate customers to conserve energy and shift their use to times of day when both costs and carbon emissions are lower.

> **Colorado Commercial Customers**
>
> Similar to residential customers, commercial customers on a rate schedule C have the option to opt out of a smart meter and instead receive non-communicating meter, which comes with additional fees.
>
> For questions, commercial customers can email Xcel Energy at bsc@xcelenergy.com or call 800-481-4700.

Note that customers can receive a Smart Meter and still opt out of Time of Use.

Customers who opt out of a Smart Meter will be billed per month, plus a one-time fee of if they opt out after a Smart Meter has been installed.

See the Minnesota Opt Out Information Sheet or the Colorado Opt Out Information Sheet for details on costs.

For questions, residential customers can email inquire@xcelenergy.com or call 800-895-4999.

Information on opting out will be included in the personalized communications to customers or you can visit xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter.

Time of Use Opt-Out

Customers can opt out of Time of Use with a 30-day notice to Xcel Energy. Customers who opt out of Time of Use will be placed on the Residential Opt-out Rate. This rate changes seasonally, regardless of what time the customer uses energy or how much energy they use. In order to formally opt out, customers should call 800-895-4999.

Please note that customers can receive a smart meter, and still choose to be on the Opt-Out rate. For more information and resources about smart meters please see the full Advanced Grid Playbook available at xcelenergycommunities.com/AdvancedGrid.

New Products and Services

Over time, new products and services will be available to help customers track and manage their energy use and costs. For example, smart meters are equipped with localized computing power and a distributed intelligence platform that supports third-party application installation to provide new electrical grid or customer-facing services in the future. Future product offerings that use an in-home wireless network that allows customers to connect their meter to a smart hub that links smart devices, individual appliances, and systems. New products and services may include interactive software applications, which can make saving energy more rewarding and fun. Xcel Energy will continue to investigate and develop new programs and services to help our customers manage their energy.

OTHER IMPORTANT ADVANCED GRID COMPONENTS

Behind the scenes other grid and technology enhancements are working together to bring the advanced grid experience to the customer:

The **Advanced Distribution Management System** (ADMS) integrates the electric distribution grid components and acts as the operating system for Xcel Energy's operations, outage events, and field devices. The Advanced Distribution Management System provides better control of the electric distribution grid (for Xcel Energy) and timelier, more accurate outage detection and restoration (for customers) – meaning faster restoration times for your community.

The **Field Area Network** (FAN) is a two-way communications network that allows the secure flow of data between Xcel Energy, smart meters, and devices on the electric distribution grid.

Integrated Volt-VAr Optimization (IVVO) uses sensors and voltage devices to optimize voltage across the distribution grid. This technology reduces end-customer energy consumption without behavior changes and allows for higher penetration of renewable energy. Information from these field devices will be sent through the Field Area Network to the Advanced Distribution Management System, which will dynamically control those devices to maintain an optimized voltage profile.

New products and services based on detailed information about customer energy usage and the distribution system will be developed by Xcel Energy teams to help customers keep their bills low and improve parts of the daily experience with better outage restoration, more accurate notifications about energy usage, and more detailed billing information. Without the Advanced Grid Initiative, Xcel Energy would not be able to offer these new products and services to customers.

ADVANCED GRID COMPONENTS

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)	Integrated Volt-VAr Optimization (IVVO)	Fault Location, Isolation, and Service Restoration (FLISR)	Field Area Network (FAN)	Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS)	Advanced Metering Management Headend (AMM)
Smart meter that supports two-way communication between Xcel Energy and smart meters	Voltage control for energy efficiency and collective customer savings	Identification and isolation of faults, reduces outage duration, minimizes impacts of outages to as many customers as possible	Two-way communication network that connects integrated electric distribution grid device and smart meter data with Xcel Energy	Intelligent model of electric distribution grid, enables enhanced visibility and control of field devices	Advanced Metering Infrastructure headend software that receives the data from customer smart meters
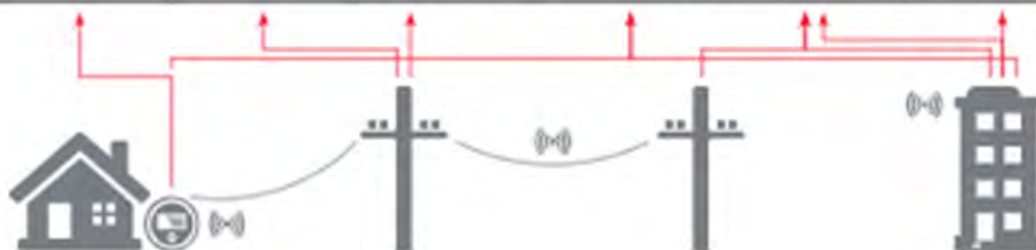
TIMELINE FOR METER INSTALLATION

Beginning in Colorado in 2021, and over a timeframe of approximately four years, Xcel Energy will install over 3.9 million smart electric meters for its electric customers. As of July 2022, 537,500 residential meters (approximately 15% of Colorado customers) have been installed. Minnesota customers began receiving smart meters in 2022, and will continue to install through 2024. As of June 2022, 18,560 residential meters have been installed.

Xcel Energy has completed implementation of the Advanced Distribution Management System and Field Area Network components described above in areas that have received new smart electric meters.

Smart electric meters are installed based on a logical and efficient sequencing of sections of the electric distribution grid that will allow Xcel Energy to bring whole sections of the advanced grid online each quarter. Distribution electric service facilities do not necessarily follow community boundaries, so installation may be completed in one part of your community several months before it's completed in other parts of the community. The system upgrades necessary to support smart meter installation are completed ahead of each phase of smart meter upgrades. The figures below show the estimated installation areas for Colorado and Minnesota in 2022.
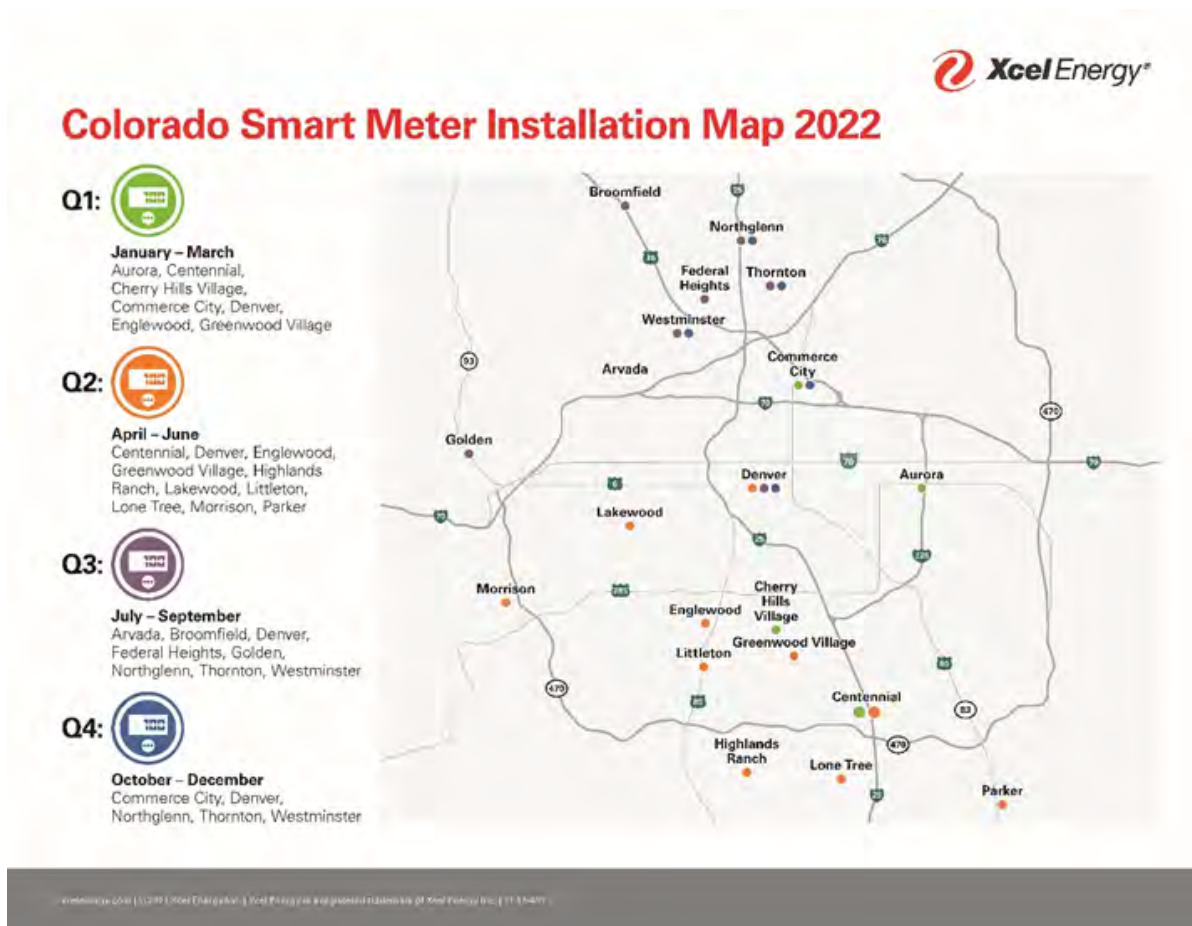

Figure 2

Minnesota Smart Meter Installation Map 2022

Q2:

April – June
Minneapolis (except the areas in the MN Flex Pricing Pilot), St. Louis Park, Golden Valley, Hopkins and Edina

Q3:

July – September
Minneapolis, St Louis Park, Hopkins, Edina, Richfield, Bloomington

Q4:

October – December
Edina, Minnetonka, Plymouth, Medina, Eden Prairie, Mound, Victoria, Waconia, Winsted, Plato, Norwood, Maple Grove

■ Flex Pricing Pilot areas
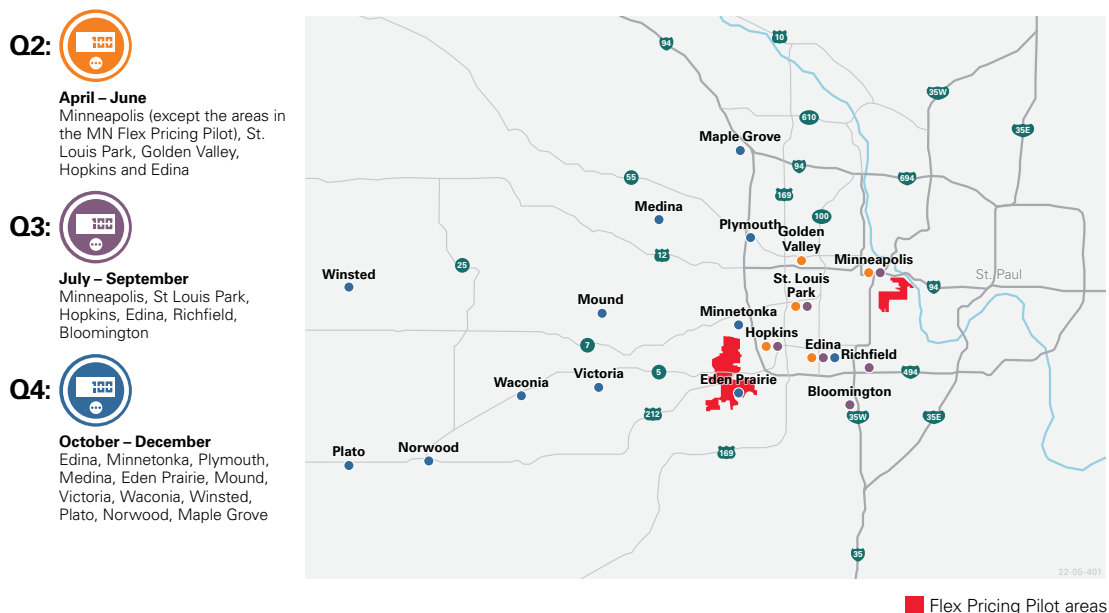
Figure 3

CUSTOMER BENEFITS

The Advanced Grid enables new, secure technologies that will help save energy and money, improve outage restorations, provide more options to protect the environment, and offer a better experience for customers.

Customer benefits are discussed in detail during the Answering your Questions about the Advanced Grid Initiative webinar.

New Technologies
Xcel Energy will use smart electric meters to enhance the service we deliver and provide customers access to detailed energy usage information and pricing plans that can maximize their savings. New tools will help customers better understand how energy is being used, manage their bill to save money, and identify specific, measurable actions to make energy-saving improvements to their home or business.

> "The communications [about smart meter installation] were great! They let me know in advance via email and a mailed postcard what would be happening. The meter install was seamless and caused no interruptions or issues!"
>
> *Xcel Energy residential customer in Colorado*

Reliability and outage restoration

The advanced grid will provide improved notification capabilities and faster outage restoration. New digital energy grid technologies enable power to be automatically re-routed to shorten or minimize any service outages. Our more resilient energy grid, along with a smart meter installed at a customer's home, can detect if an outage is localized to that home or is part of a larger system outage, helping reduce the time customers are without service. Customers receive quicker notifications when service is out and more accurate information about when power will be restored.

Environment

Our commitment to providing 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050 includes giving customers more options to protect the environment and use new, clean energy technologies. The advanced grid will help us provide customers with even more clean energy because it will allow us to maximize the use of carbon free energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydro. A new smart meter installed at a customer's home will provide the customer with detailed energy usage data and will give the customer the ability to choose how and when they use technology such as batteries and electric cars.

Security

We provide security customers can trust. Energy use data will be securely transferred electronically from the smart meter, eliminating the need for manual meter reading or estimates, which also helps reduce cost. Protecting customers' data is extremely important to us. We use multiple layers of defense to ensure all data is secure and protected.

ALIGN:
IDENTIFY BENEFITS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

Align: Identify Benefits for Your Community

Before smart meter installation is scheduled for your community, the first step you could take is to identify opportunities and benefits of the advanced grid (listed in the Advanced Grid and Community Goals section below) for your community's specific goals and values.

IDENTIFY POINTS OF COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT

In communicating about advanced grid, it can be helpful to identify how it will support values and goals the community values. The following steps outline a process to identify how the benefits of the advanced grid align to your specific community's policies and goals.

1. **Current Topics**
   Consider goals identified in the below list. Identify those that are priorities of community-based organizations. Collaborate with community leaders and partners to identify priorities. Sustainability or energy efficiency groups' values often align closely.

2. **Identify Plans and Policies**
   Search for plans and policies developed by local government and other active, broad-based community organizations - with titles or major sections that address goals that advanced grid can support. Local government department heads can help identify plans.

3. **Scan Plans**
   Look through adopted local government and community-based plans for related policies, goals, objectives, and actions.

4. **Summarize**
   Highlight and summarize key areas of alignment as talking points.

The results of the Align phase will be used to tailor engagement materials in the Inform, Support, and Apply phases – before, during, and after meter installation.

ADVANCED GRID AND COMMUNITY GOALS

The advanced grid will benefit all communities that are Xcel Energy customers through improved service delivery, more program choices, and more control over energy use and costs. In addition, the advanced grid can support communities in becoming more **resilient** to changing conditions and in **economic development** activities to attract businesses. Near real-time data available through the advanced grid can help communities develop and tailor programs to **reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions** and to be more **equitable**.

The following sections describe in more detail how the Advanced Grid Initiative supports each of these community values and goals.

Resiliency Goals

Communities face a range of risks, vulnerabilities, and uncertainties, some of which disrupt electricity supply and demand patterns. Communities work hard to enhance their level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from these disruptive events. The advanced grid directly increases community resiliency and electricity reliability through faster notifications, quicker restoration times, and outage location capabilities. This improves the length of time customers are affected, the number of customers affected, and the response time for repairs.

Communities can further improve their own resiliency by proactively implementing strategies supported by the advanced grid. For example, enabling distributed energy generation and storage is one strategy to increase community resilience. Distributed energy generation includes solar panels and wind turbines on community facilities, businesses, and homes; small hydropower; community solar gardens; and back-up generators. Distributed generation with storage may provide electricity in community facilities even in the event of a large-scale service disruption. This strategy is particularly important in rural communities where constituents are isolated from other options.

The high-resolution data from the Advanced Grid Initiative can help customers evaluate and select distributed generation technologies that make economic sense under everyday conditions but also benefit community resiliency during disruptive events. The advanced grid also supports integration and day-to-day management of all distributed energy generation systems.

Emissions Reduction Goals

Many communities have recognized the importance of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) by setting sustainability, climate, or environmental goals. In most communities, electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation. The advanced grid is an important step to reducing GHG emissions for every community in the Xcel Energy service area, whether or not that community has adopted specific GHG emissions reductions goals or plans. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions, as described in the following sections.

Increased Renewable Energy
The Advanced Grid Initiative is foundational to Xcel Energy achieving our commitments to Renewable Energy generation and 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050. Two components of the advanced grid — the Advanced Distribution Management System and Integrated Volt-VAr Optimization — allow for more energy to be supplied by renewable sources. By managing a higher contribution from renewable energy supplies, the advanced grid will help reduce emissions from electricity in all communities.

Municipal Emissions Reductions
In communities with GHG reduction goals, it is common for local governments to lead by example to reduce emissions in municipal facilities and operations, which typically represent about 2-5% of communitywide emissions. With the interval data available from the advanced grid, Xcel Energy's local government customers will benefit from better data on energy use, patterns, and trends to inform local climate actions that are impactful to achieving emissions reduction goals.

Communitywide Emissions Reductions
Communitywide energy data is used by communities to benchmark and track energy use and GHG emissions over time. In the same way that high-resolution data can inform actions to reduce emissions from municipal facilities and operations, so too can communities identify and analyze climate actions that are impactful in achieving their community-wide emissions reduction goals.

Smoothing Peak Demand
During times of peak demand, customer behavior change and demand response participation can help to smooth peaks and reduce energy consumption, thereby reducing GHG emissions. A smoother peak demand curve allows Xcel Energy to optimize the system for non-dispatchable resources such as renewable energy generation, further reducing overall GHG emissions and helping avoid the need to build future power plants.

Smoothing Peak Demand is the main goal for switching customers to Time of Use. If customers shift their energy use, they may experience lower energy bills. In this way, both customers and the electric grid benefit from this rate.

In these ways, the advanced grid allows Xcel Energy to optimize a broader diversified generation portfolio with sophisticated controls to achieve the benefits of peak demand management. The interval data from the advanced grid can help communities and customers take actions to reduce and shift peak energy demands and smooth the demand curve out. Reducing and shifting energy demands (also known as demand management practices) will also help customers avoid peak pricing under the new Time of Use rate structure (See Colorado Time of Use FAQs for more information).

Targeted Education

With the interval data and Colorado time of use pricing plans associated with advanced grid, communities will be able to identify community-wide behaviors that contribute to electricity demand peaks and customize education materials and campaigns to help community members save energy and money. For example, when energy demand is high during colder months, communities can emphasize information about programmable thermostats and insulation. Alternatively, if energy demands are high year-round, communities might emphasize programs for retiring older refrigerators or other year-round equipment.

$ⅰⅼⅼ Economic Development Goals

The advanced grid can help support the economic development goals of communities served by Xcel Energy, by providing reliable energy service and offering new information. The Advanced Grid Initiative will enable new products and services to become available to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image as described in the sections below.

Business Attraction and Retention

For businesses such as manufacturing plants, cyber security, and other technology firms, energy service reliability is mission critical. Communities served by the advanced grid can highlight reliability and security features to new business recruits (for economic development) and the existing business community (for business retention). The smart metering that comes with Advanced Grid Initiatives a standard feature allows communities and developers to promote commercial properties with a "smart technology" image that attracts tenants.

Business Energy Choices

Smart meters and near real time data from the advanced grid benefit businesses through increased occupant comfort, building security, and the ability to support building automation systems and other operating technologies that help keep costs down. Whether through manual or automated building management, near real-time information and the ability to control energy use can help businesses save energy and money, improving their bottom line.

𝖆𝖆𝖆 Equity Goals

Increasingly, communities are attentive to equity and fairness for all community members. One element of equity is ensuring that all community members enjoy reliable, affordable access to all of life's necessities, including access to electricity. Xcel Energy provides customers a range of energy assistance options.

The Advanced Grid Initiative enables more information, choice, and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

INFORM:
RAISE AWARENESS BEFORE SMART METER INSTALLATION

Inform: Raise Awareness before Smart Meter Installation

Xcel Energy is committed to providing customers with timely information about smart meter installation through direct customer communication, online resources, and other information channels. Xcel Energy has developed this Playbook as a resource for **local government staff and community organizations** to use while fielding questions about the Advanced Grid Initiative.

While emphasizing and pursuing community-specific goals enabled by the Advanced Grid Initiative, providing information about the advanced grid through this playbook before smart meter installation occurs can help community members understand the process and get answers to their potential concerns.

The sections below help you identify who in your community to engage and when to engage these groups, in addition to providing helpful information for identifying your engagement focus and then rolling it out.

No matter your role in the community, be sure to coordinate with Xcel Energy and local government staff for community-specific information and resources.

WHO TO ENGAGE

As an active member of your community, it may feel overwhelming to decide which groups may be the best to engage. Below we've provided some helpful tips on choosing who to engage.

Local Government Leaders and Officials

Local government plays an important role in community information sharing. Many community members expect and rely on local government to answer questions. Local government leaders who should be made aware of upcoming smart meter installation include elected officials, members of related boards or commissions, and department heads. Being informed in advance of smart meter installation gives local government leaders time to understand the topic and prepare for questions from community members. **If your local government leaders and officials have not yet been engaged with the advanced grid, this is an important first step.**

Options to help:

- Informational updates in newsletters or council packets. Council members may want access to literature to share with their constituents.

- Post a flier or Q&A in local government buildings. This could inform both local leaders and the public. Contact Partners in Energy if you'd like help pulling content together.

- Email the information. Even with the large number of emails we receive daily they are still a good way to disseminate information and allow links to other resources. Partners in Energy can provide you with a template to help share information with your community leaders.

See the Resources section for template that can support these activities.

Other Community Leaders and Partners

Local government channels won't reach all community members; it is important to engage with additional stakeholders in the community such as leaders in not-for-profit and faith-based community organizations who can reach out to a wide and diverse audience of community members.

Local government staff can host meetings to brief these leaders, or at a minimum, distribute informational materials that partners can learn from and share. Ideally, engage informed community partners to become involved in sharing information as trusted resources in the community.

Example Community Partners to Raise Awareness:

- Homeowners organizations
- Chambers of commerce
- Housing authorities
- Food pantries
- Cultural organizations
- Business groups
- Seniors centers
- Environmental advocates
- Other local utilities

Community Member Outreach

Outreach to community members early in the process allows for learning and reduces unnecessary confusion about the advanced grid before and during installation of smart meters. Your community member outreach can include anyone who lives, works, or is active in the community, and will complementary to Xcel Energy's communications with your community.

Newsletters, websites, social media accounts, tabling at community events, and utility mailers are all common channels used to share information with community members. If you do not have direct access to these channels, work with local government leaders and officials to distribute information using these channels. See the Resources section for draft materials that can be customized for your community's unique needs.

In communities served by more than one electricity utility, be sure to convey that only those served by Xcel Energy will experience the Smart Meter upgrades.

Inclusive Outreach

Some community members are more likely to turn to their faith community, resource providers, or other respected leaders rather than to government officials. This is why it is so valuable to work with other community leaders and partners. Share print-ready resources with community partners for distribution to hard to reach audiences and community members. With any group, focusing outreach messages on issues of greatest interest – such as cost savings or service reliability – improves the impact of engagement efforts.

Non-English speaking populations may need materials translated.

WHEN TO ENGAGE

Ideally, community engagement should begin a few months before the first smart meter installations are scheduled to begin in your community. Engage community leaders first (ideally ahead of other community members), so they can be prepared for and involved in broader community engagement.

Summary of Outreach Messaging, Audiences, and Timing
The table below provides a summary by audience of key messages, timing, and suggested activities to educate and engage your community on the Advanced Grid Initiative.

General Awareness and Community Benefits

Message	Audience	Timing	Activities
• Smart meters coming soon • What is the Advanced Grid Initiative? • Community Benefits • Community alignment	Community Leaders and Partners	Ideally 3 months before community smart meter installation or as soon as possible after that	• Briefing sessions • Overview summary materials • Communication resources
	Community Members	Ideally 2 months before community smart meter installation or as soon as possible after that	• Newsletter articles • Online and social media posts • Event tabling

Community-Specific Rollout Information

Message	Audience	Timing	Activities
• Smart meter technology • Community installation details • Community and customer benefits • Frequently Asked Questions	Community Leaders and Partners	Ideally 6 weeks before community smart meter installation or as soon as possible after that	• Briefing sessions • Installation information • Communication resources
	Community Members	Ideally 2 - 4 weeks before community smart meter installation or as soon as possible after that	• Newsletter articles • Social media posts • Webinar and/or community event

Messaging Focus

The Advanced Grid Initiative can feel overwhelming if you don't focus your communication on key messages. Below we have provided key messages during the Inform phase that you should typically consider including:

- Explain that they may be part of advanced grid enhancements if Xcel Energy is their utility provider.

- Identify the general timing of Xcel Energy's smart meter installation in the community.

- Familiarize the audience with what the Advanced Grid Initiative is and its general benefits.

- Based on results from the Align exercise, provide information about the community-specific goals the advanced grid can support.

- Share links to additional Xcel Energy Advanced Grid Initiative resources to answer questions. Visit xcelenergycommunities.com/AdvancedGrid for available resources.

Methods for Engagement

Engagement materials in this Inform phase are designed to increase awareness of upcoming smart meter installations and provide context of the community benefits of the advanced grid.

Local Government Leader Engagement

Engage local government leaders using high level summaries that can be digested quickly, with links to supporting detail.

Specific actions to take:

- Hold a briefing for elected and appointed officials to alert them to the upcoming smart meter installation planned in the community. Typically, these occur during regularly scheduled meetings. Use the community leader briefing script and show the Advanced Grid Initiative overview video.

- Provide a copy of or link to the community leader briefing booklet.

    - Include links to proof-point resources, such as the stories of shared success, and third-party articles and research.

- Hold an informational session or distribute informational resources to community partners. Help them identify aligned values, if applicable.

Resources for engaging local government officials during this Aware phase can be found in the Resources section of this Playbook. These materials include a call to action, asking officials to get involved in sharing information with their constituencies.

Community Member Outreach

Your engagement with community members should focus on raising overall community awareness of Xcel Energy's plan to install smart meters, sharing information about the Advanced Grid Initiative as context for the need for smart meter upgrades, and communicating the benefits of the advanced grid.

Specific actions to take:

- Customize a newsletter article for your community, using sample text and the community specific goal alignment results from the Align step.

- Working through local government channels, distribute the customized newsletter article.

- Post on social media using customized sample text and linking to community newsletter articles or other online materials linked in the Resources.

- Provide community partners with ready-to-use Aware phase materials and links to Xcel Energy resources.

- Provide tabling materials at community events.

Resources for engaging community members during the Inform phase can be found in the Resources section of this Playbook.

Reaching Diverse Audiences

Information and resources should be distributed not only by local government community leaders but also other partner community organizations and networks in order to reach diverse community members.

Translated community outreach resource materials are available to reach non-English speaking audiences.

SUPPORT:
ANSWER QUESTIONS DURING INSTALLATION

Support: Answer Questions During Installation

The component of the Advanced Grid Initiative that will be most noticeable to community members is smart meter installation. Community leaders are most likely to field questions during the time that Xcel Energy crews are actively installing smart meters at customers' residences. This step in the Playbook builds on the Inform step - to answer questions during smart electric meter installation and support community members and local media with updates while the installation is occurring.

WHO TO ENGAGE

Engage the same groups as in the Inform phase. Engage community leaders and partners first, to empower them with knowledge and resources so they can be involved in outreach to the broader community. Be sure to explain the benefits of the advanced grid and alleviate common community member concerns.

WHEN TO ENGAGE

In some larger communities, installation may be phased over many months, so it's important to keep information and links current throughout the entire period of installations in the community. As with the Inform step, consult the Xcel Energy website for the latest communications and roll-out status in the community. This will include maps of meter roll-out updated quarterly.

MESSAGING FOCUS

Communication materials for this phase are designed to increase awareness of ongoing smart meter installations and provide context for your community on shared benefits of the Advanced Grid Initiative. Key messages during this phase should typically include:

- Identify the start date and progress for Xcel Energy smart meter installation in the community.

- Recap/reference information from the Aware phase about smart meters, advanced grid, Time of Use, and community benefits.

- Be prepared to answer common questions about the advanced grid, smart meters, and Time of Use helping refer community members to Xcel Energy resources.

- Share links to additional Xcel Energy Advanced Grid Initiative resources.

METHODS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Engagement materials in this phase are designed to anticipate and respond to detailed questions about smart meters and their installation while also recapping shared community benefits of the advanced grid. Some informational resources from the Inform stage may be useful in refreshing and reinforcing audiences' knowledge during this stage.

Local Government Leader Engagement

Your local government leader engagement should provide informational resources and encourage leaders to actively inform community members about smart meter installation.

Specific actions to take:

- Remind elected officials and other community leaders of the smart meter installation timing and progress with specific dates for the community.

  - Include links to informational materials from the Inform phase and the Frequently Asked Questions community resource.

- Provide community leaders with links to Xcel Energy communications about advanced grid, smart meters, and what customers should to expect during smart meter installation.

Resources for engaging community leaders during this phase can be found in the Resources section.

Community Member Outreach

Engaging the broader community should focus on anticipating questions and recapping shared community benefits. Specific actions to take:

- Customize a second newsletter article for your community, using sample text, with the community-specific schedule of installation. See the Resources section for a template.

- Post on social media and user forums such as Nextdoor using customized sample text and linking to community newsletter articles, and the Partners in Energy Communities' Advanced Grid Initiative informational Office Hours webinar recording.

- Distribute advanced grid community tabling materials at community events occurring during this time. See the Resources section for templates.

- Advertise and host one or more live community informational workshop events using the customizable community workshop flyer, script, and slide deck. Live workshops may be in-person or via remote participation. Contact your community facilitator or email PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com for support.

- Working with and through community partners, distribute ready-to-use materials, workshop invitations, and links to Xcel Energy resources.

See the Resources section of this Playbook for available links and materials.

APPLY:
PUTTING ADVANCED GRID CAPABILITIES TO USE

Apply: Putting Advanced Grid Capabilities to Use

In this final step, Apply, we provide tips for using the new capabilities of the Advanced Grid Initiative, after smart electric meters are installed in your community, in order to pursue the community goals that best align with the benefits of the advanced grid. This step is also a good opportunity to reinforce the new meter capabilities, to help customers mitigate costs, and to provide behavioral tips to optimize the new electric rate associated with the meter installation.

PURSUING COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Xcel Energy Partners in Energy provides communities in Colorado, Minnesota, and Wisconsin services to develop an energy plan and assistance with implementing that plan. Each community has its own unique energy needs and priorities, and Partners in Energy tailors its services to complement each community's vision. Many communities that participate in Partners in Energy have developed vision statements and goals that align with the community benefits of the advanced grid, such as reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, increasing community resilience, and contributing to economic development efforts.

Past Participants

If your community has previously participated in Partners in Energy but has lost touch with its resources, now is an excellent time to re-engage! Partners in Energy has robust resources for reinvigorating or maintaining your momentum and helping you achieve your community's long-term goals. Smart electric meter installations will only further enhance the capabilities and opportunities in pursuing your community energy goals. Below are just a few of the resources available to past participants:

- Data reports

- Access to the Partners in Energy Portal

- Webinar trainings with Xcel Energy and other subject matter experts

- Targeted communications support

- Dedicated staffing to support a project

- Additional planning support as needed

Email PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to restart the conversation.

New Participants

If you haven't previously participated in Partners in Energy, with new advanced grid capabilities in your community, now is an excellent time to consider applying to this no-cost program. Partners in Energy includes a facilitated community energy planning process followed by implementation and a partnership commitment from Xcel Energy to help you achieve your community goals.

More and more communities are realizing that energy planning plays a critical role in helping them reach their goals. The benefits of wise energy choices are diverse. By working with citizens, businesses, and even their own government facilities, a community can shave dollars off utility bills, promote renewables, drive resource conservation, increase electric vehicle adoption, or contribute toward greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Partners in Energy helps address the challenge of identifying local priorities, then structures a path that leverages all available resources. To learn more about the opportunities presented by Partners in Energy visit XcelEnergyCommunities.com.

APPENDIX: CUSTOMIZABLE PLAYBOOK RESOURCES

Appendix: Colorado Customizable Playbook Resources

COMMUNITY OFFICIALS BRIEFING SCRIPT

Xcel Energy's effort to build a smarter and more resilient energy grid that will better serve customers for decades to come has arrived! Help your constituents understand the changes brought about by the Advanced Grid Initiative.

As the Advanced Grid Initiative progresses, and smart electric meters and new pricing plans are implemented, constituents will likely look to community leaders for help understanding these changes.

The Partners in Energy Advanced Grid Community Playbook identifies steps to educate and engage on this topic. It's designed to provide you with the essential information, help raise community awareness, and help you respond to questions and concerns.

Visit
xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter
to learn more.

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Xcel *Energy*®
PARTNERS IN ENERGY
An Xcel Energy Community Collaboration

ADVANCED GRID
BRIEFING

XCEL ENERGY'S ADVANCED GRID

Xcel Energy's effort to build a smarter and more resilient energy grid that will better serve customers for decades to come has arrived!

What will happen?

1. **Xcel Energy customers will receive an upgrade to a smart meter.**
Smart meters include two-way communication capabilities to wirelessly transmit data between customer meters and Xcel Energy system network by sending near real-time data to the billing systems and the Advanced Distribution Management System. Smart meters come with multi-layered encryption that improves transmission security.

2. **Pricing plans will switch to Time of Use.**
This pricing plan allows you more control over your energy bill by using different rates for energy used during different times of the day.

3. **Xcel Energy is working to develop new programs and services to help you track and manage your energy use and costs.**
As smart meters are installed and software goes live, customers will be able to see their near real-time energy use and costs through new web and mobile dashboards. Cost impacts will be projected on bills before new Time of Use pricing for off-peak, on-peak, and mid-peak energy use are implemented. The online platforms and billing statements will include more detailed information about the individual customer's energy use by time of day, as well as personalized tips about how to save on energy costs.

A Collaboration with the Partners in Energy Program

The Partners in Energy program provides communities tools and resources to develop and achieve their energy goals. Each community has its own unique energy needs and priorities, and Partners in Energy tailors its services to complement each community's vision.

For more information about Partners in Energy visit XcelEnergyCommunities.com.

How does this support [community name]'s energy goals?

[Community name] is committed to [goals]. The Advanced Grid Initiative will help us achieve these goals through:

Select and tailor sections based on relevance

- **Enhanced Resiliency**: The past year has demonstrated the importance of a resilient community. [Community Name] is working hard to increase our level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

  - The ability to provide customers greater insight into their energy use will support new programs and we will be able to use the communication network that includes the new meters being installed to deliver more service to all customers. These will include offerings that will help customers better manage their energy use while leaving more money in customers pockets for other expenses.

  - The interval data from the advanced grid can be used to identify opportunities to adapt behaviors and shift energy use to smooth out energy demands.

- **Emissions Reductions**: Electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation in [community name]. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions through reduced energy use from targeted education campaigns and smoothing out peak demand.

- **Economic Development**: The advanced grid will provide more reliable energy service and enable new products and services to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image.

- **Equity Support**: The advanced grid will enable more information, choice and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access, while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

To learn more about [Community name]'s goals, visit: URL PLACEHOLDER.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to request use of a template.

COMMUNITY WEBSITE CONTENT

Technology is advancing in every area of our lives. Xcel Energy is modernizing their electric distribution grid and grid management operations through our Advanced Grid Initiative. The next generation of the energy grid—the advanced grid — will help Xcel Energy serve their customers better. Over the next few months, Xcel Energy will be installing smart meters across the [community name] community. Smart meters will provide near real-time energy use information to both the customer and Xcel Energy. Shortly after smart meter installation, Xcel Energy will be rolling out Time of Use rate structures, grid and technology enhancements, and new programs and services.

What will happen?

1. **Xcel Energy customers will receive an upgrade to a smart meter.**

   Smart meters include two-way communication capabilities to wirelessly transmit data between customer meters and Xcel Energy system network by sending near real-time data to the billing systems and the Advanced Distribution Management System. Smart meters come with multi-layered encryption that improves transmission security.

   All Xcel Energy meter systems are fully authorized, licensed, and in compliance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) safety guidelines. More information on smart meters, privacy, and radio frequency is available here.

2. **Pricing plans will switch to Time of Use.**

   This pricing plan allows you more control over your energy bill by using different rates for energy used during different times of the day.

   If you shift your electricity use to non-peak hours, you may see a reduction in your energy costs. More information on Time of Use pricing and ways to reduce your energy costs can be found here. More information is available here.

3. **Xcel Energy is working to develop new programs and services to help you track and manage your energy use and costs.**

   As smart meters are installed and software goes live, customers will be able to see their near real-time energy use and costs through new web and mobile dashboards. The online platforms and billing statements will include more detailed information about the individual customer's energy use by time of day, as well as personalized tips about how to save on energy costs.

   Additional developments may include interactive software applications to make saving energy more rewarding and fun. Xcel Energy will continue to investigate and develop new programs and services to help customers manage their energy.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to request use of a template.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to request use of a template.

How does this support [community name]'s energy goals?

For existing Partners in Energy Communities

[Community name] has been working with Xcel Energy over the past [timeframe] to develop an Energy action plan through the Partners in Energy program. The plan was developed through a series of facilitated planning workshops held in the community that establish an energy vision and goals to achieve [goals described here].

The Advanced Grid Initiative supports these goals though:

For non Partners in Energy Communities

[Community name] is committed to [goals]. The Advanced Grid Initiative will help us achieve these goals through:

Select and tailor sections based on relevance

- **Enhanced Resiliency**: The past year has demonstrated the importance of a resilient community. [Community Name] is working hard to increase our level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

  - The ability to provide customers greater insight into their energy use will support new programs and we will be able to use the communication network that includes the new meters being installed to deliver more service to all customers. These will include offerings that will help customers better manage their energy use while leaving more money in customers pockets for other expenses.

  - The interval data from the advanced grid can be used to identify opportunities to adapt behaviors and shift energy use to smooth out energy demands.

- **Emissions Reductions**: Electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation in [community name]. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions through reduced energy use from targeted education campaigns and smoothing out peak demand.

- **Economic Development**: The advanced grid will provide more reliable energy service and enable new products and services to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image.

- **Equity Support**: The advanced grid will enable more information, choice and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access, while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

Resources

We have compiled the resources below for the [community name] community.

- Advanced Grid Initiative Overview Video
- Time of Use Rates Flyer
- Community Fact Sheet
- FAQs
- Community Press Release

To learn more about Xcel Energy's Advanced Grid Initiative visit xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE (ADVANCED GRID)

[Community Name] and Xcel Energy are working together to bring cleaner, safer, and more reliable energy.

Through the Advanced Grid Initiative Xcel Energy is using digital technology to save energy and money, improve reliability and outage restorations, provide more options to protect the environment, and offer a better experience for customers.

What does this mean for [community name]?
As part of the Advanced Grid Initiative, Xcel Energy will install smart meters to all customers, update rate structures, provide grid and technology enhancements, and roll out new programs and services.

[Community name] is committed to [goals]. The Advanced Grid Initiative will help us achieve these goals through:

Select and tailor sections based on relevance

- **Enhanced Resiliency**: The past year has demonstrated the importance of a resilient community. [Community Name] is working hard to increase our level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

  - The ability to provide customers greater insight into their energy use will support new programs and we will be able to use the communication network that includes the new meters being installed to deliver more service to all customers. These will include offerings that will help customers better manage their energy use while leaving more money in customers pockets for other expenses.

  - The interval data from the advanced grid can be used to identify opportunities to adapt behaviors and shift energy use to smooth out energy demands.

- **Emissions Reductions**: Electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation in [community name]. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions through reduced energy use from targeted education campaigns and smoothing out peak demand.

- **Economic Development**: The advanced grid will provide more reliable energy service and enable new products and services to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image.

- **Equity Support**: The advanced grid will enable more information, choice and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access, while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to request use of a template.

"Work with each community leader to develop a testimonial unique to the community."

What does this mean for [community name] residents?

Smart meters will provide near real-time energy use to both you and Xcel Energy. Shortly after your smart meter is installed, your pricing plan will switch to Time of Use. This pricing plan allows you more control over your energy bill by using different rates for energy used during different times of the day. If you shift your electricity use to non-peak hours, you may see a reduction in your energy costs.

The grid system enhancements necessary to support smart meter installation are already underway and will be completed ahead of each phase of smart meter upgrades. Energy grid sections do not necessarily follow [community name]'s boundaries, so installation may be completed in one part of the community several months before it's completed in other parts of the community. Xcel Energy will notify you when the meter exchange will occur in the next month. Exchanges occur between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. You will not need to schedule an appointment or be home during the exchange if your meter is accessible.

New programs and services will also become available to help customers track and manage their energy use and costs. These programs and services may include interactive software applications to make saving energy more rewarding and fun.

For more information visit [Community URL here].

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE (SMART METERS)

Smart meters are coming to [Community Name]

Technology is advancing in every area of our lives. Xcel Energy is modernizing their electric distribution grid and grid management operations through our Advanced Grid Initiative. The next generation of the energy grid—the advanced grid — will help Xcel Energy serve their customers better.

Over the next few months, Xcel Energy will be installing smart electric meters across the [community name] community. Along with these smart electric meters comes updated rate structures, grid and technology enhancements, and new programs and services – all part of the Advanced Grid Initiative.

The smart electric meters will include two-way communication capabilities to wirelessly transmit near real-time data between customer meters and Xcel Energy's network. These smart meters will come with multi-layered encryption that improves transmission security while also emitting radio frequencies of less than that of a cell phone.

The smart electric meter exchange requires minimal to no action on your part. Xcel Energy will notify you when the meter exchange will occur in the next month. Exchanges occur between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. You will not need to schedule an appointment or be home during the exchange if your meter is accessible. You will receive additional guidance in advance of your smart meter exchange.

Energy grid sections do not necessarily follow [community name]'s boundaries, so installation may be completed in one part of the community several months before it's completed in other parts of the community.

More information on smart meters, privacy, and radio frequency is available at xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to request use of a template.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE (TIME OF USE)

Weather isn't the only thing that changes with the seasons - your energy use does, too! When and how you keep cool this summer can ha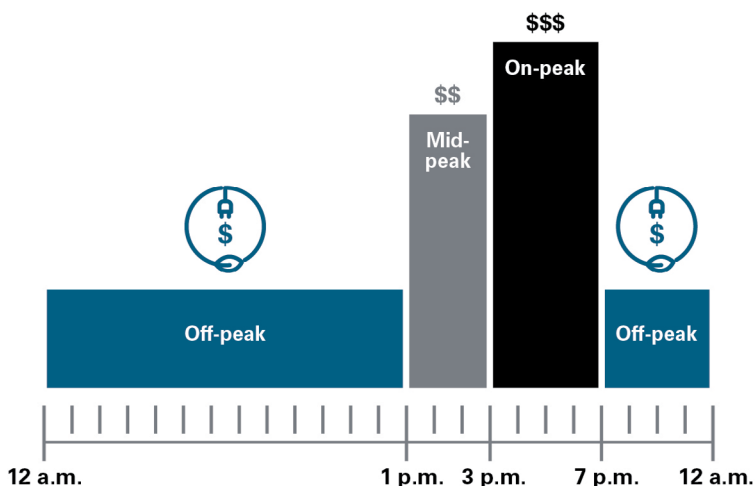ve an impact on the environment. During times when more people are using energy, like late afternoon and early evening, it costs more to produce energy and Xcel Energy may need to use more fossil fuels to meet demand. If we shift our energy use to different times of the day, like later in the evening and earlier in the day, Xcel Energy can use more lower-cost, carbon-free energy like wind and solar. Plus, if you've had a smart meter installed and are now on Xcel Energy's new Time of Use rate, you'll also save money on your Xcel Energy bill when you shift your energy use.

So how can you stay cool and green this summer? Check out these strategies and see if any will work for you!

Do laundry on the weekends.

Run a full dishwasher before bed.

Cook your meals on the weekend and reheat throughout the week.

Run your air conditioning overnight to cool your home for the next day.

Cook dinner with smaller appliances, like your slow cooker or toaster oven.

During the afternoon and evening, use ceiling fans. Run them counter-clockwise in summer and clockwise in winter.

Grill out for dinner.

Run your dehumidifier or humidifier overnight.

Set up programmable or smart accessories or appliances to run automatically overnight.

If you use a space heater, warm up the room earlier in the day.

$$$
On-peak

$$
Mid-peak

Off-peak

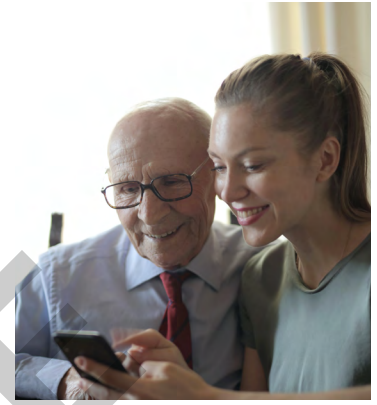**Off-peak**

12 a.m.   1 p.m. 3 p.m.   7 p.m.   12 a.m.

Summer: June 1 – September 30 **Winter:** October 1 – May 30

Weekends and holidays billed at the off-peak rate.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com *to request use of a template.*

COMMUNITY NAME] AND XCEL ENERGY ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO BRING YOU CLEANER, SAFER, AND MORE RELIABLE ENERGY.

Through the Advanced Grid Initiative, Xcel Energy is using digital technology to help customers save energy and money, improve grid reliability and outage restoration speed, provide more options to protect the environment, and offer customers a better experience.

The Advanced Grid Initiative refers to an integrated package of meter upgrades, grid and technology enhancements, updated rate structures, and new programs and services. The first visible change for customers will be the installation of new smart electric meters at their homes and businesses. Smart meters will provide near real-time energy use information to the customer and Xcel Energy. Shortly after smart meter installation, Xcel Energy will be rolling out Time of Use rate structures, grid and technology enhancements, and new programs and services.

[Community name] is working with Xcel Energy to understand the process and distribute information to address your questions.

[Community name]'s Commitment to [commitment]

For existing Partners in Energy Communities

[Community name] has been working with Xcel Energy over the past [timeframe] to develop an Energy Action Plan through the Partners in Energy program. The plan was developed through a series of facilitated planning workshops held in the community that establish an energy vision and goals to achieve [goals described here].

The Advanced Grid Initiative supports these goals though:

For non Partners in Energy Communities

[Community name] is committed to [goals]. The Advanced Grid Initiative will help us achieve these goals through:

Select and tailor sections based on relevance

- **Enhanced Resiliency**: The past year has demonstrated the importance of a resilient community. [Community Name] is working hard to increase our level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - The ability to provide customers greater insight into their energy use will support new programs and we will be able to use the communication network that includes the new meters being installed to deliver more service to all customers. These will include offerings that will help customers better manage their energy use while leaving more money in customers pockets for other expenses.
  - The interval data from the advanced grid can be used to identify opportunities to adapt behaviors and shift energy use to smooth out energy demands.

- **Emissions Reductions**: Electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation in [community name]. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions through reduced energy use from targeted education campaigns and smoothing out peak demand.

- **Economic Development**: The advanced grid will provide more reliable energy service and enable new products and services to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image.

- **Equity Support**: The advanced grid will enable more information, choice and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access, while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to request use of a template.

Community Logo Placeholder

Xcel *Energy* ®

PARTNERS IN ENERGY
An Xcel Energy Community Collaboration

What [community name] members can expect:

Xcel Energy has provided the following guidance regarding customer-facing advanced grid components:

Xcel Energy customers will receive an upgrade to a smart electric meter.
Smart meters include two-way communication capabilities to wirelessly transmit data between customer meters and the Xcel Energy system network by sending near real-time data to the billing systems and the Advanced Distribution Management System. Smart meters come with multi-layered encryption that improves transmission security.

All Xcel Energy meter systems are fully authorized, licensed, and in compliance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) safety guidelines. More information on smart meters, privacy, and radio frequency is available at xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter.

The smart meter exchange requires minimal to no action on customer's part.
Energy grid sections do not necessarily follow [community name]'s boundaries, so installation may be completed in one part of the community several months before it's completed in other parts of the community.

Xcel Energy will notify you when the meter exchange will occur in the next month. Exchanges occur between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. You will not need to schedule an appointment or be home during the exchange if your meter is accessible.

You will receive additional guidance in advance of your smart meter exchange.

Next Steps:

Shortly after installation, pricing plans will switch to Time of Use.
This type of pricing plan allows you more control over your energy bill by using different rates for energy used during different times of the day.

If you shift your electricity use to non-peak hours, you may see a reduction in your energy costs. More information on Time of Use pricing and ways to reduce your energy costs can be found here. For more information visit xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter.

Xcel Energy is working to develop new programs and services to help you track and manage your energy use and costs.
As smart meters are installed and software goes live, customers will be able to see their near real-time energy use and costs through new web and mobile dashboards. The online platforms and billing statements will include more detailed information about the individual customer's energy use by time of day, as well as personalized tips about how to save on energy costs.

Additional developments may include interactive software applications to make saving energy more rewarding and fun. Xcel Energy will continue to investigate and develop new programs and services to help customers manage their energy.

For more information that [community name] has compiled visit [URL here].

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Appendix: Minnesota Customizable Playbook Resources

COMMUNITY OFFICIALS BRIEFING SCRIPT

Xcel Energy's effort to build a smarter and more resilient energy grid that will better serve customers for decades to come has arrived! Help your constituents understand the changes brought about by the Advanced Grid Initiative.

As the Advanced Grid Initiative progresses, and smart electric meters are implemented, constituents will likely look to community leaders for help understanding these changes.

The Partners in Energy Advanced Grid Community Playbook identifies steps to educate and engage on this topic. It's designed to provide you with the essential information, help raise community awareness, and help you respond to questions and concerns.

Visit
xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter
to learn more.

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ADVANCED GRID BRIEFING

XCEL ENERGY'S ADVANCED GRID

Xcel Energy's effort to build a smarter and more resilient energy grid that will better serve customers for decades to come has arrived!

What will happen?

1. **Xcel Energy customers will receive an upgrade to a smart meter.**
   Smart meters include two-way communication capabilities to wirelessly transmit data between customer meters and the Xcel Energy system network by sending near real-time data to the billing systems and the Advanced Distribution Management System. Smart meters come with multi-layered encryption that improves transmission security.

2. **Xcel Energy is working to develop new programs and services to help you track and manage your energy use and costs.**
   As smart meters are installed and software goes live, customers will be able to see their near real-time energy use and costs through new web and mobile dashboards. The online platforms and billing statements will include more detailed information about the individual customer's energy use by time of day, as well as personalized tips about how to save on energy costs.

A Collaboration with the Partners in Energy Program

The Partners in Energy program provides communities tools and resources to develop and achieve their energy goals. Each community has its own unique energy needs and priorities, and Partners in Energy tailors its services to complement each community's vision.

For more information about Partners in Energy visit XcelEnergyCommunities.com.

How does this support [community name]'s energy goals?

[Community name] is committed to [goals]. The Advanced Grid Initiative will help us achieve these goals through:

Select and tailor sections based on relevance

- **Enhanced Resiliency**: The past year has demonstrated the importance of a resilient community. [Community Name] is working hard to increase our level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

  - The ability to provide customers greater insight into their energy use will support new programs and we will be able to use the communication network that includes the new meters being installed to deliver more service to all customers. These will include offerings that will help customers better manage their energy use while leaving more money in customers pockets for other expenses.

  - The interval data from the advanced grid can be used to identify opportunities to adapt behaviors and shift energy use to smooth out energy demands.

- **Emissions Reductions**: Electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation in [community name]. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions through reduced energy use from targeted education campaigns and smoothing out peak demand.

- **Economic Development**: The advanced grid will provide more reliable energy service and enable new products and services to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image.

- **Equity Support**: The advanced grid will enable more information, choice and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access, while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

To learn more about [Community name]'s goals, visit: URL PLACEHOLDER.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com to request use of a template.

COMMUNITY WEBSITE CONTENT

Technology is advancing in every area of our lives. Xcel Energy is modernizing their electric distribution grid and grid management operations through our Advanced Grid Initiative. The next generation of the energy grid—the advanced grid — will help Xcel Energy serve their customers better. Over the next few months, Xcel Energy will be installing smart meters across the [community name] community. Smart meters will provide near real-time energy use information to both the customer and Xcel Energy. Xcel Energy is working to provided grid and technology enhancements and new programs and services.

What will happen?

1. **Xcel Energy customers will receive an upgrade to a smart meter.**

   Smart meters include two-way communication capabilities to wirelessly transmit data between customer meters and Xcel Energy system network by sending near real-time data to the billing systems and the Advanced Distribution Management System. Smart meters come with multi-layered encryption that improves transmission security.

   All Xcel Energy meter systems are fully authorized, licensed, and in compliance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) safety guidelines. More information on smart meters, privacy, and radio frequency is available here.

2. **Xcel Energy is working to develop new programs and services to help you track and manage your energy use and costs.**

   As smart meters are installed and software goes live, customers will be able to see their near real-time energy use and costs through new web and mobile dashboards. The online platforms and billing statements will include more detailed information about the individual customer's energy use by time of day, as well as personalized tips about how to save on energy costs.

   Additional developments may include interactive software applications to make saving energy more rewarding and fun. Xcel Energy will continue to investigate and develop new programs and services to help customers manage their energy.

Contact PartnersinEnergy@xcelenergy.com *to request use of a template.*

How does this support [community name]'s energy goals?

For existing Partners in Energy Communities

[Community name] has been working with Xcel Energy over the past [timeframe] to develop an Energy action plan through the Partners in Energy program. The plan was developed through a series of facilitated planning workshops held in the community that establish an energy vision and goals to achieve [goals described here].

The Advanced Grid Initiative supports these goals though:

For non Partners in Energy Communities

[Community name] is committed to [goals]. The Advanced Grid Initiative will help us achieve these goals through:

Select and tailor sections based on relevance

- **Enhanced Resiliency**: The past year has demonstrated the importance of a resilient community. [Community Name] is working hard to increase our level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

  - The ability to provide customers greater insight into their energy use will support new programs and we will be able to use the communication network that includes the new meters being installed to deliver more service to all customers. These will include offerings that will help customers better manage their energy use while leaving more money in customers pockets for other expenses.

  - The interval data from the advanced grid can be used to identify opportunities to adapt behaviors and shift energy use to smooth out energy demands.

- **Emissions Reductions**: Electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation in [community name]. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions through reduced energy use from targeted education campaigns and smoothing out peak demand.

- **Economic Development**: The advanced grid will provide more reliable energy service and enable new products and services to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image.

- **Equity Support**: The advanced grid will enable more information, choice and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access, while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

Resources

We have compiled the resources below for the [community name] community.

- Advanced Grid Initiative Overview Video
- Community Fact Sheet
- FAQs
- Community Press Release

To learn more about Xcel Energy's Advanced Grid initiative visit xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE (ADVANCED GRID)

[Community Name] and Xcel Energy are working together to bring cleaner, safer, and more reliable energy.

Through the Advanced Grid Initiative Xcel Energy is using digital technology to save energy and money, improve reliability and outage restorations, provide more options to protect the environment, and offer a better experience for customers.

What does this mean for [community name]?

As part of the Advanced Grid Initiative, Xcel Energy will install smart meters to all customers, provide grid and technology enhancements, and roll out new programs and services.

[Community name] is committed to [goals]. The Advanced Grid Initiative will help us achieve these goals through:

Select and tailor sections based on relevance

- **Enhanced Resiliency**: The past year has demonstrated the importance of a resilient community. [Community Name] is working hard to increase our level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

  - The ability to provide customers greater insight into their energy use will support new programs and we will be able to use the communication network that includes the new meters being installed to deliver more service to all customers. These will include offerings that will help customers better manage their energy use while leaving more money in customers pockets for other expenses.

  - The interval data from the advanced grid can be used to identify opportunities to adapt behaviors and shift energy use to smooth out energy demands.

- **Emissions Reductions**: Electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation in [community name]. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions through reduced energy use from targeted education campaigns and smoothing out peak demand.

- **Economic Development**: The advanced grid will provide more reliable energy service and enable new products and services to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image.

- **Equity Support**: The advanced grid will enable more information, choice and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access, while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

"Work with each community
leader to develop a testimonial
unique to the community."

What does this mean for [community name] residents?

Smart meters will provide near real-time energy use to both you and Xcel Energy. The grid system enhancements necessary to support smart meter installation are already underway and will be completed ahead of each phase of smart meter upgrades. Energy grid sections do not necessarily follow [community name]'s boundaries, so installation may be completed in one part of the community several months before it's completed in other parts of the community. Xcel Energy will notify you when the meter exchange will occur in the next month. Exchanges occur between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. You will not need to schedule an appointment or be home during the exchange if your meter is accessible.

New programs and services will also become available to help customers track and manage their energy use and costs. These programs and services may include interactive software applications to make saving energy more rewarding and fun.

For more information visit [Community URL here].

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE (SMART METERS)

Smart meters are coming to [Community Name]

Technology is advancing in every area of our lives. Xcel Energy is modernizing their electric distribution grid and grid management operations through our Advanced Grid Initiative. The next generation of the energy grid—the advanced grid — will help Xcel Energy serve their customers better.

Over the next few months, Xcel Energy will be installing smart electric meters across the [community name] community. Along with these smart electric meters comes grid and technology enhancements and new programs and services – all part of the Advanced Grid Initiative.

The smart electric meters will include two-way communication capabilities to wirelessly transmit near real-time data between customer meters and Xcel Energy's network. These smart meters will come with multi-layered encryption that improves transmission security while also emitting radio frequencies of less than that of a cell phone.

The smart electric meter exchange requires minimal to no action on your part. Xcel Energy will notify you when the meter exchange will occur in the next month. Exchanges occur between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. You will not need to schedule an appointment or be home during the exchange if your meter is accessible. You will receive additional guidance in advance of your smart meter exchange.
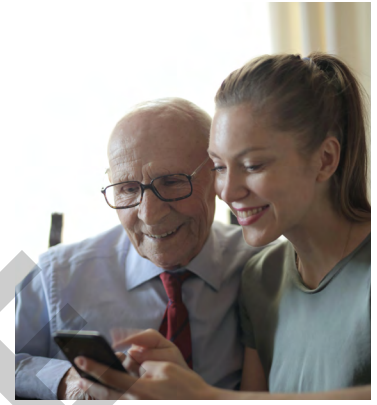
Energy grid sections do not necessarily follow [community name]'s boundaries, so installation may be completed in one part of the community several months before it's completed in other parts of the community.

More information on smart meters, privacy, and radio frequency is available at xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter.

COMMUNITY NAME] AND XCEL ENERGY ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO BRING YOU CLEANER, SAFER, AND MORE RELIABLE ENERGY.

Through the Advanced Grid Initiative, Xcel Energy is using digital technology to help customers save energy and money, improve grid reliability and outage restoration speed, provide more options to protect the environment, and offer customers a better experience.

The Advanced Grid refers to an integrated package of meter upgrades, grid and technology enhancements, and new programs and services. The first visible change for customers will be the installation of new smart electric meters at their homes and businesses. Smart meters will provide near real-time energy use information to the customer and Xcel Energy. Xcel Energy is working to provided grid and technology enhancements and new programs and services.

[Community name] is working with Xcel Energy to understand the process and distribute information to address your questions.

[Community name]'s Commitment to [commitment]

For existing Partners in Energy Communities

[Community name] has been working with Xcel Energy over the past [timeframe] to develop an Energy Action Plan through the Partners in Energy program. The plan was developed through a series of facilitated planning workshops held in the community that establish an energy vision and goals to achieve [goals described here].

The Advanced Grid Initiative supports these goals though:

For non Partners in Energy Communities

[Community name] is committed to [goals]. The Advanced Grid Initiative will help us achieve these goals through:

Select and tailor sections based on relevance

- **Enhanced Resiliency**: The past year has demonstrated the importance of a resilient community. [Community Name] is working hard to increase our level of preparedness and build resiliency to adapt to and rebound from disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - The ability to provide customers greater insight into their energy use will support new programs and we will be able to use the communication network that includes the new meters being installed to deliver more service to all customers. These will include offerings that will help customers better manage their energy use while leaving more money in customers pockets for other expenses.
  - The interval data from the advanced grid can be used to identify opportunities to adapt behaviors and shift energy use to smooth out energy demands.

- **Emissions Reductions**: Electricity generation is the second highest source of GHG emissions after transportation in [community name]. The advanced grid directly and indirectly supports emissions reductions through reduced energy use from targeted education campaigns and smoothing out peak demand.

- **Economic Development**: The advanced grid will provide more reliable energy service and enable new products and services to business customers and contribute to a "smart" community image.

- **Equity Support**: The advanced grid will enable more information, choice and options to help customers save energy and lower their energy bills. More affordable energy options will improve equity in electricity access, while leaving more money in customers' pockets for other expenses.

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What [community name] members can expect:

Xcel Energy has provided the following guidance regarding customer-facing Advanced Grid Initiative components:

Xcel Energy customers will receive an upgrade to a smart electric meter.
Smart meters include two-way communication capabilities to wirelessly transmit data between customer meters and the Xcel Energy system network by sending near real-time data to the billing systems and the Advanced Distribution Management System. Smart meters come with multi-layered encryption that improves transmission security.

All Xcel Energy meter systems are fully authorized, licensed, and in compliance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) safety guidelines. More information on smart meters, privacy, and radio frequency is available at xcelenergy.com/SmartMeter.

The smart meter exchange requires minimal to no action on customer's part.
Energy grid sections do not necessarily follow [community name]'s boundaries, so installation may be completed in one part of the community several months before it's completed in other parts of the community.

Xcel Energy will notify you when the meter exchange will occur in the next month. Exchanges occur between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. You will not need to schedule an appointment or be home during the exchange if your meter is accessible.

You will receive additional guidance in advance of your smart meter exchange.

Next Steps:

Xcel Energy is working to develop new programs and services to help you track and manage your energy use and costs.
As smart meters are installed and software goes live, customers will be able to see their near real-time energy use and costs through new web and mobile dashboards. The online platforms and billing statements will include more detailed information about the individual customer's energy use by time of day, as well as personalized tips about how to save on energy costs.

Additional developments may include interactive software applications to make saving energy more rewarding and fun. Xcel Energy will continue to investigate and develop new programs and services to help customers manage their energy.

For more information that [community name] has compiled visit [URL here].

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