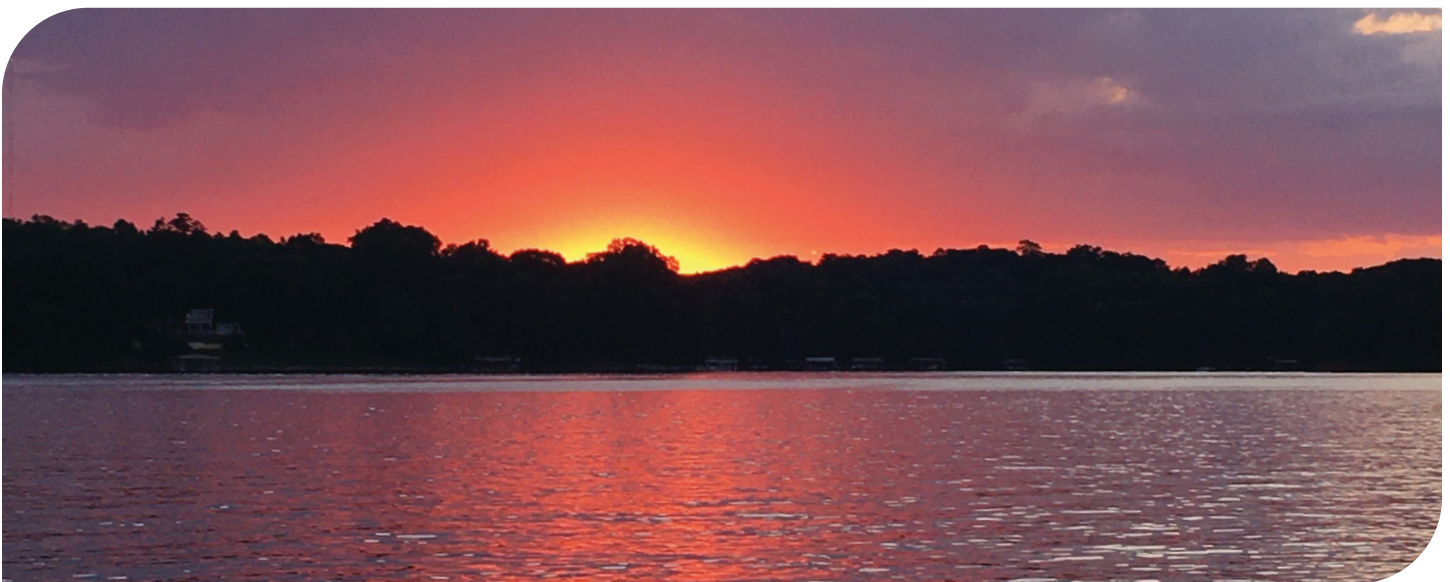


Georgia City Reaches Beyond Metering with Xylem

Sensus smart utility network allows Gainesville to improve leak detection and enhance customer service



Whether attending a wedding or simply taking a stroll, visitors to the Atlanta Botanical Garden in Gainesville, Georgia are likely to marvel at the lush, colorful plant life. Thanks to the city's water department, they can rest assured the beautiful plants will never lack water.

"Our customers look to us to provide the highest level of reliability and quality in their water service," said the City of Gainesville's Utility Senior Database/AMI Analyst Jeremy Rylee. "Innovation plays a major role in helping us anticipate and deliver on their needs."

The Gainesville Department of Water Resources is using technology to make good on their pledge to bring the best in service and quality to more than 58,500 residents and businesses in the city and surrounding area.

Evolution in ingenuity

Gainesville's dedication to innovation kept the city at the forefront of their water metering infrastructure, as they evolved from manual meter reads to automatic meter reading (AMR). The shift to drive-by reading allowed technicians to more effectively capture data.

Client

Gainesville, GA Department of Water Resources.

Xylem's role

Deploy smart utility network anchored by the Sensus FlexNet® communication network.

Project results

Meet sustainability goals and educate customers about smart water use.

“We’re always looking for ways to get better for customers and the Sensus solution gives us the tools we need to find them.”

Jeremy Rylee,
Utility Senior Database/AMI Analyst, City of Gainesville, GA

“Our team understood the power information gives you to make decisions,” said Rylee. “The more accurate and efficient you can be with collecting data, the faster you can put it to good use.”

Gainesville embarked on a major network overhaul to streamline operations and enhance customer service. As a long-time customer of Sensus, a Xylem brand, the city decided to install a smart utility network to transition to remote monitoring and lay a foundation for future services.

Valuable leak detection

Gainesville deployed the Sensus solution across more than 58,500 endpoints with Sensus SR® and iPERL® residential water meters and OMNI™ commercial water meters. The meters, combined with the two-way FlexNet® communication network, opened the doors for remote monitoring of water consumption and, in some cases, water loss.

“We used the near real-time data from the system to monitor for trends like continuous usage,” said Rylee. “When technicians saw something out of the ordinary, they could reach out to the customer to address the issue before it showed up on their water bill.”

Rylee recalled a large gas station customer that showed signs of ongoing usage. Technicians called the customer to see if there was a problem.

“Turns out they had a service line leak near the building that was spilling out underground and not visible,” said Rylee. “Resolving the issue helped the business cut their bill by more than a thousand dollars and save who knows how much money had the leak gone on undetected.”

More data, more value for customers

The Gainesville team was so impressed with the system’s continuous use alerts that they sought to extend the benefits of data to customers with a customer portal provided by Sensus. The secure, online portal allows residents and businesses to remotely monitor and make informed decisions about their water usage.



The Gainesville Department of Water Resources wants to get the most out of their data and continues to advance their smart utility network with conservation in mind.

“We have customers that use the data to help manage their budgeting,” said Rylee. “It helps them save money by being more conscientious with their usage.”

Driving sustainability through efficient operations

Conservation is also a priority for the city, as Georgia’s water loss regulations continue to tighten. Gainesville is taking steps to improve its operational sustainability by reducing non-revenue water and automating manual practices.

“Sustainability is an objective that will only increase over time,” said Rylee. “Having the flexibility to advance our network will help us meet new conservation demands.”

Gainesville specifically targeted water loss in the northern region of their service territory and created a district metered area (DMA). They installed insertion meters by simply tapping an existing pipeline without any interruption to the water supply. This zone is now set up to accurately measure totalized flow at the boundaries. Combined with approximately 1,500 customer meters also on the FlexNet system, Gainesville now has the ability to perform hourly water balances.

“This gives us great system visibility in one particular zone where we can quantify non-revenue water and use the data to optimize operations,” said Rylee.

Continuous improvement

Gainesville’s smart utility network is also helping the city’s operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote management and monitoring allows city technicians to serve customers from a safe distance. But Rylee has even bigger things in mind to positively impact the community.

“We’re exploring more ways to use our system to enhance water quality management,” said Rylee. “There are many factors that make a difference in the process of ensuring a safe, adequate water supply for the future.”

Gainesville is piloting Sensus ally® water meters and the Sensus® Smart Gateway Sensor Interface for advanced pressure monitoring across several zones to ensure asset durability and water loss detection.

The city is also testing advanced control methods with the ally meter for remote flushing to maintain high standards for water quality.

“It all goes back to innovation for us,” said Rylee. “We’re always looking for ways to get better for customers and the Sensus solution gives us the tools we need to find them.”