Summer Edition

Columbus Light & Water

"The Power of People"

NEWSLETTER 2026

The Power of People: News for customers of Columbus Light & Water

Columbus Light & Water

Planning for New Meter Replacement Installation

Columbus Light & Water (CLW) is preparing for a major meter modernization to ensure long-term reliability, better customer service, and more efficient operations across our water system. After more than a decade of service from our Mueller "drive-by" meters (installed in 2014), CLW has started a planned transition to newer smart-meter technology as part of a broader effort to address aging equipment and systems across both electric and water/wastewater divisions. "We are motivated to replace the existing Mueller water meters due to ongoing performance and reliability issues that impact accurate readings, operational efficiency, and customer service," shared General Manager, Angela Verdell, PhD.

Why now?

"We're reaching maturity on a lot of equipment — 30-plus years in many cases — and it requires ongoing assessment and planning for replacement," said Ricky Dye, Manager, Water Department. "We're committed to upgrading where needed and maintaining what works so our system functions at a high level and remains cost-effective for our customers."

What changed with the Mueller meters?

Initially, the Mueller drive-by meters performed well, allowing crews to collect readings by simply driving past a location. But over the last three years CLW began seeing an increase in issues that required field crews to stop, inspect, and sometimes take manual readings.

"As we noticed this happening more and more, which required more field time, we made the decision to explore replacement options and determine if there were more reliable meters with advanced technology to improve efficiency and provide customer access to real-time usage information," said Essex Hicks, Meter Reading Supervisor.

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Ricky Dye

How CLW evaluated new technology?

CLW conducted an 18-month pilot test of 100 meters using four leading industry brands so the utility could compare real-world performance, features, and vendor support. "We want the best product and solution for our customer," Dye explained. "We decided to do pilot testing to assess and compare based on features, functionality, and vendor support. We believe this is a holistic approach to always analyze, evaluate and support our system's health." The pilot included meters from:

- Master Meter — smart water metering and ultrasonic technology.
- Neptune — positive displacement and solid-state ultrasonic models (e.g., MACH 10).
- Badger Meter — broad technology lineup including E-Series ultrasonic meters.
- Kamstrup — digital ultrasonic smart meters with acoustic leak detection.

Pilot findings and customer benefits

All four brands in the pilot met or exceeded performance expectations. Because raw meter readings and reliability were similar across brands, CLW is weighing add-on features — such as customer portals and leak detection — alongside implementation cost and ease of integration with existing software.

Timeline and rollout

CLW is close to selecting a meter brand and installer. The goal is to begin installations this year and continue through 2027. "We're still finalizing our rollout plan — some installations can take up to a year — so a reasonable estimate for completion is about 12 months once we begin," Hicks said.

Cost and integration considerations

Dye emphasized the decision isn't just about upfront cost. "We have to take into account the integration of a new meter system with our existing operational software and the ease of transition during swap-out. Those are as important as the price," he said.

Impact on staffing and service

Essex Hicks

The shift away from drive-by readings will free crews from time-consuming route-based reads and enable more proactive customer service. "With the time saved from no longer doing drive-by readings, we can provide more services like acoustic leak detection, troubleshooting, and preventive maintenance — all to improve our performance and delivery," Hick explained. Routine day-to-day tasks such as cut-ons and notifications will continue, but the workforce will be able to focus on higher-value, preventive work and customer service.

What this means for customers?

- More frequent readings and earlier leak detection mean fewer billing surprises.
- Customer portals (if implemented) will allow daily usage visibility and better household management.
- CLW will continue to prioritize reliability and cost-effectiveness while upgrading aging infrastructure.

CLW's approach is deliberate and customer-focused: pilot first, choose the solution that balances performance, features, vendor support, and integration ease, then roll out in a predictable, planned manner. "We are committed to keeping the system functioning at a high level and within reasonable cost to our customers," Dye said — and the New Meter Installation Project is a key step toward that commitment.

Water Quality

Data Table & Test Results

Calendar Year 2025

WHERE DO WE GET OUR WATER?

Our underground water is pumped from eight wells drawing from the massive sand of the lower Tuscaloosa Aquifer.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

The source water assessment has been completed for our public water system to identify potential sources of contamination and determine the overall susceptibility of the drinking water supply. Susceptibility assessment has been completed and all wells have ranked moderate by the MDEQ for vulnerability to contamination.

CONTACT US

As a valued customer, we want you to be informed about your water utility. If you have any questions, please contact Customer Service with Columbus Light & Water at 662-328-7192, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

WATER QUALITY

All sources of drinking water are subject to potential contamination by substances that are naturally occurring or man-made. These substances can be microbes, inorganic or organic chemical and radioactive substances. All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

TESTING

The Columbus Light & Water Department routinely monitors for constituents in your drinking water according to Federal and Mississippi state laws. This table shows the results of our monitoring for the period of January 1st to December 31st, 2025. In cases where monitoring wasn't required in 2025, the table reflects the most recent results. As you can see by the table, our system had no violations. We're proud that your drinking water meets or exceeds all Federal and state requirements. We have learned through our monitoring and testing that some constituents have been detected, however the EPA has determined that your water is safe at these levels.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR LEAD

The Columbus Light & Water has completed the Lead Service Line Inventory and no lead lines were found. The system inventory does not include lead service lines. The methods used to make that determination were visual inspections.

Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Columbus Light & Water is responsible for providing high quality drinking water and removing lead pipes but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in your home. You share the responsibility for protecting yourself and your family from the lead in your home plumbing. You can take responsibility by identifying and removing lead materials within your home plumbing and taking steps to reduce your family's risk. Before drinking tap water, flush your pipes for several minutes by running your tap, taking a shower, doing laundry or a load of dishes. You can also use a filter certified by an American National Standards Institute accredited certifier to reduce lead in drinking water. If you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have your water tested, contact Columbus Light & Water at 662-328-7192. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead. The MS Public Health Laboratory (MPHL) can provide information on lead and copper testing and/or other laboratories certified to analyze lead and copper in drinking water. MPHL can be reached at 601-576-7582 (Jackson, MS).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FLUORIDATION

To comply with the "Regulation Governing Fluoridation of Community Water Supplies", COLUMBUS LIGHT & WATER is required to report certain results pertaining to fluoridation of our water system. The number of months in the previous calendar year in which average fluoride sample results were within the optimal range of 0.6 – 1.2 parts per million (ppm) was 7. The percentage of fluoride samples collected in the previous calendar year that was within the optimal range of 0.6 - 1.2 ppm was 83%. The number of months samples were collected and analyzed in the previous calendar year was 7.

Note: This system adds fluoride to your drinking water to help prevent and reduce cavities and improve overall oral health. Supply-chain issues and increased cost of fluoride have limited or prevented this water system's ability to obtain fluoride on a regular basis. The data presented above only reflects the months when this water system added fluoride to your drinking water..

EXPLANATION OF REASONS FOR MONITORING UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS

Unregulated contaminants are those for which EPA has not established drinking water standards. The purpose of unregulated contaminants monitoring is to assist EPA in determining the occurrence of unregulated contaminants in drinking water and whether future regulation is warranted.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing

chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate ways to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

As a valued customer, we want you to be informed about your water utility. If you have any questions, please contact Customer Service with Columbus Light & Water at 662-328-7192, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Water Quality Data Table

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations which limit the amount of contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The table below lists all of the drinking water contaminants that we detected during the calendar year of this report. Although many more contaminants were tested, only those substances listed below were found in your water. All sources of drinking water contain some naturally occurring contaminants. At low levels, these substances are generally not harmful in our drinking water. Removing all contaminants would be extremely expensive, and in most cases, would not provide increased protection of public health. A few naturally occurring minerals may actually improve the taste of drinking water and have nutritional value at low levels. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this table is from testing done in the calendar year of the report. The EPA or the State requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not vary significantly from year to year, or the system is not considered vulnerable to this type of contamination. As such, some of our data, though representative, may be more than one year old. In this table you will find terms and abbreviations that might not be familiar to you. To help you better understand these terms, we have provided the definitions below the table.

Contaminants	MCLG or MRDL	MCL, TT, or MRDL	Detect In Your	Range		Sample Date	Violation	Typical Source
				Low	High			
Disinfectants & Disinfection By-Products								
(There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants)								
Chlorine (as Cl2) (ppm)	4	4	2	1.2	2.5	2025	No	Water additive used to control microbes
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	NA	60	5.71	5.2	5.71	2025	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Inorganic Contaminants								
Barium (ppm)	2	2	0.0193	0.0079	0.0193	2023	No	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.676	0.589	0.676	2025	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Sodium (optional) (ppm)	NA		3.97	2.19	3.97	2025	No	Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching

Additional Monitoring

As part of an on-going evaluation program the EPA has required us to monitor some additional contaminants/chemicals. Information collected through the monitoring of these contaminants/chemicals will help to ensure that future decisions on drinking water standards are based on sound science.

Name	Reported Level	Range	
		Low	High
Lithium (mg/L)	0.01054	0.00906	0.0117

Unit Descriptions	
Term	**Definition**
ppm	ppm: parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)
ppb	ppb: parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (g/L)
mg/L	mg/L: Number of milligrams of substance in one liter of water
NA	NA: not applicable
ND	ND: Not detected
NR	NR: Monitoring not required, but recommended.

Important Drinking Water Definitions	
Term	**Definition**
MCLG	MCLG: Maximum Contaminant Level Goal: The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
MCL	MCL: Maximum Contaminant Level: The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
TT	TT: Treatment Technique: A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
AL	AL: Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
Variances and Exemptions	Variances and Exemptions: State or EPA permission not to meet an MCL or a treatment technique under certain conditions.
MRDLG	MRDLG: Maximum residual disinfection level goal. The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.
MRDL	MRDL: Maximum residual disinfectant level. The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.
MNR	MNR: Monitored Not Regulated
MPL	MPL: State Assigned Maximum Permissible Level
90th Percentile	Compliance with the lead and copper action levels is based on the 90th percentile lead and copper levels. This means that the concentration of lead and copper must be less than or equal to the action level in at least 90% of the samples collected.

Renovation of Operations

Building and Truck Facility Underway

Marc Rushing

Renovation work is now underway at Columbus Light & Water's engineering and operations building, along with the addition of a new truck bay. The contract for the main operations building renovation and the truck building addition is $3,689,485.00. The project will modernize workspaces, improve safety and data capabilities, and prepare the utility to meet the community's needs. Completion is expected by the fall of this year.

For more than six decades, the engineering and operations building has been a cornerstone for delivering dependable electric service across our service area. Built 64 years ago, the facility has supported generations of dedicated employees who maintained infrastructure, responded to outages, and planned for growth. As demands on the electric system evolved, CLW launched a renovation to bring the facility up to modern standards.

"Reliable service is our top priority," said Marc Rushing, Electric Manager. "With this renovation underway, our crews and engineers will have better tools and space to respond faster during outages and emergencies, and to coordinate more effectively every day."

Why the renovation matters?

The original building was designed for a much smaller system and a different era of operations. Today's grid relies on real-time communications and coordinated field operations—capabilities the renovated facility will continue to support so crews can restore service more quickly when storms or outages occur.

> ***"We're investing in the future of Columbus"***
> ***Angela Verdell, General Manager***

The project includes upgraded electrical systems, enhanced data capabilities, and refined meeting and training spaces to support digital mapping, advanced monitoring, and stronger cybersecurity protections.

Improving employee safety and working conditions

Renovated work areas will include updated safety features, better lighting and insulation, and modern HVAC systems—improvements that make the workplace safer and more comfortable for employees who are often called to respond in adverse conditions.

"We're investing in the future of Columbus," said Angela Verdell, General Manager. "This renovation will strengthen our ability to provide dependable, efficient service while improving the working conditions for the skilled professionals who keep the lights on. By modernizing our existing facility instead of replacing it, we are making a long-term, resource-conscious investment to help support residential and business growth."

What this means for customers?

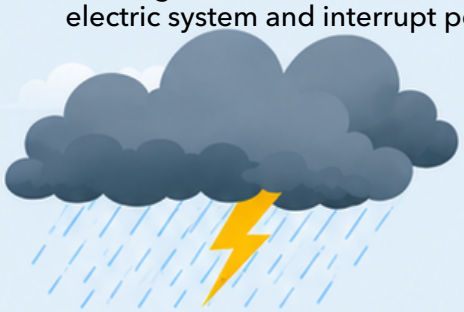
While construction is underway, CLW remains committed to maintaining reliable service. The upgraded facility is designed to improve response times during outages, strengthen system monitoring, and allow staff to train and coordinate more effectively—translating to more reliable service for homes and businesses across Columbus now and in the years ahead.

This renovation is a local investment in safety, technology and service reliability. The operations team, together with management and Board leadership, are committed to ensuring CLW remains ready to serve residents and businesses for decades to come.

WHAT CAUSES POWER OUTAGES?

Columbus Light & Water
"The Power of People"

Outages are often beyond our control and can happen without warning. Learn about the most common causes that can affect the electric system and interrupt power to your home or business.



1. SEVERE WEATHER
Lightning, high winds, ice storms, heavy snow and tornadoes can damage power lines, poles and equipment.

2. TREES & VEGETATION
Trees and overgrown branches can grow into power lines or fall on them, causing outages when they come in contact with equipment.

3. WILDLIFE INTERFERENCE
Animals like squirrels, birds and snakes can come in contact with equipment, causing outages.

4. VEHICLE ACCIDENTS
Cars or trucks hitting utility poles or other equipment can cause serious damage and power interruptions.

5. EQUIPMENT FAILURE
The electric grid is made up of equipment that can wear out or fail over time. Aging equipment can lead to unexpected outages.

6. CONSTRUCTION DAMAGE
Digging or construction activities near underground lines can accidentally damage utility equipment.

REPORT AN OUTAGE ANYTIME
CALL: 662-243-7440
ONLINE:www.columbuslw.com/report-outages-emergencies

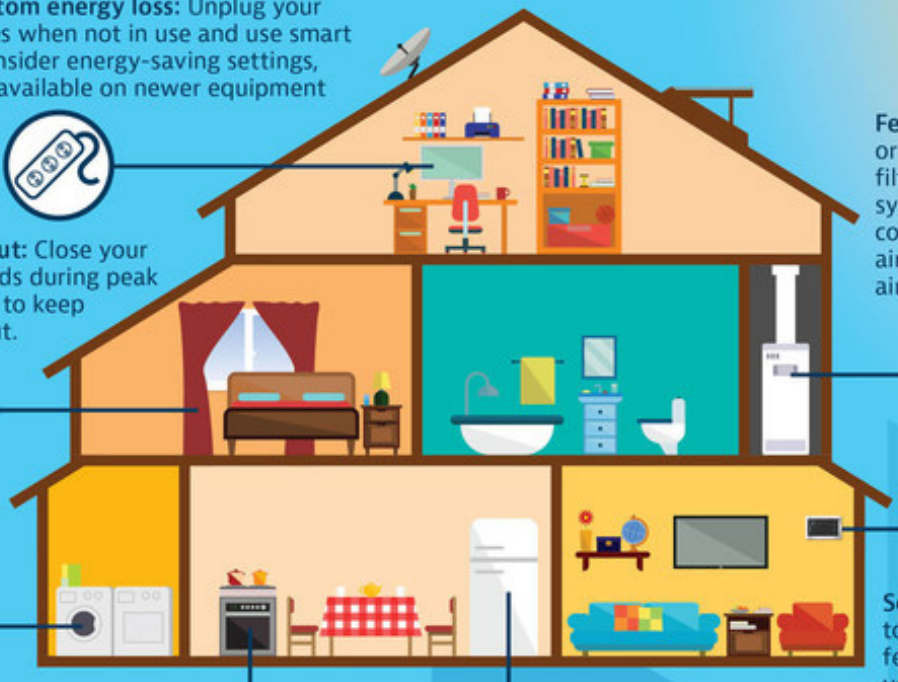
Visit www.columbuslw.com for outage updates, service information, and utility news.
Follow Columbus Light & Water

Columbus Light & Water
P.O. Box 949
Columbus, MS 39703

Summer Energy Efficiency Tips

Phase out phantom energy loss: Unplug your electronic devices when not in use and use smart power strips. Consider energy-saving settings, which are often available on newer equipment and appliances.

Keep the heat out: Close your curtains and blinds during peak hours of the day to keep the sun's heat out.



Feel the flow; free your filters: Clean or change your air filters monthly. Dirty filters can block airflow, making your system work harder to keep you comfortable. Clear spaces around your air returns and vents to prevent airflow blockage.

Set it for the season: Set thermostats to 78 degrees and use fans to keep you feeling cooler. For every degree higher you maintain your thermostat, you can see up to a 3-4% decrease in energy use.

Manage your spin cycle: When washing clothes, try to wash and dry full loads only, and in cold water.

Fill your fridge: Solids and liquids are easier to cool than air. Try to keep your refrigerator set to the temperature recommended by the manufacturer for optimal performance.

Cool down the kitchen: Use your oven sparingly. Consider cooking options such as the microwave, slow cookers and outdoor grills.