

NAPERVILLE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

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A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION PLAN, DESIGNED AROUND TRANSPARENCY AND EDUCATION, BUILDS VITAL SUPPORT FOR THE CITY'S SMART GRID PLANS.

NAPERVILLE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES.

Naperville's Department of Public Utilities—Electric (DPU-E) is responsible for serving more than 143,000 residents of Naperville, Illinois, along with the city's industrial customers and a significant "high-tech corridor" of large commercial companies.

WINNING THE SUPPORT OF DIVERSE CONSTITUENTS.

Naperville is the only utility in the state of Illinois selected to receive a Smart Grid Investment Grant (SGIG) from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). It was chosen from among more than 500 grant applicants nationwide.

Naperville began planning and investing in the modernization of its electric grid long before the 2009 stimulus program began. Winning SGIG funding enabled it to accelerate the transformation by providing matching funds for its initiative. The city, however, would have to complete its project within the required three-year time frame—an effort that would depend on winning the support of diverse internal and community constituents, including the city council and an upscale, engaged customer base. In particular, Naperville wanted to bridge the gap between smart grid reality and perception to overcome some nationally negative publicity about smart grid initiatives.

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE.

For assistance with developing a communication plan as part of its comprehensive smart grid initiative, Naperville turned to West Monroe Partners. West Monroe Partners has been assisting with Naperville's Smart Grid Initiatives (NSGI) program since Naperville prepared the initial grant request submission in July 2009. Based on its experience during the grant application process, Naperville recognized that West Monroe Partners is a valuable partner whose methodologies and strategic approach mesh well with its smart grid vision. West Monroe Partners also offered substantial expertise in developing and executing customer communication and experience strategies to facilitate the complex transformational efforts that the city would be undertaking.

AN APPROACH TAILORED TO EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP.

West Monroe Partners worked with Naperville's smart grid project team to develop a communication plan that:

- ◆ Incorporates all of the city's critical audiences, including the city council, residential and commercial customers, and the Department of Energy, as well as employees across many departments.
- ◆ Conveys the city's commitment to transparency and openness.
- ◆ Emphasizes two-way communication and feedback.
- ◆ Minimizes the initiative's inherent risks.

In particular, West Monroe Partners:

- ◆ Assessed current state communications and perceptions for each key stakeholder group and compared that with the city's goals.
- ◆ Developed a business case to demonstrate the benefits of communications and demand-side management and to prove why they are important to a successful initiative.
- ◆ Developed the communication strategy, including a road map for each stakeholder group.
- ◆ Assisted with development of the Naperville Smart Grid Initiative Customer Bill of Rights, which the city used to publicize its plans, gather feedback, and generate support.

EARLY ADVANCES IN AWARENESS AND EDUCATION.

With the support of West Monroe Partners, the Naperville Department of Public Utilities has established a comprehensive plan and road map for achieving its awareness and support goals.

Even in the early stages of its smart grid program, the city has increased consumer awareness that the NSGI program delivers an excellent return on investment for the utility by increasing network reliability, improving operational efficiencies, and reducing wasted energy—all while providing customers with options to use new tools, additional rate plans, and low-cost, off-peak power to manage their energy costs.

West Monroe Partners is an international, full-service business and technology consulting firm focused on guiding organizations through projects that fundamentally transform their business. With the experience to create the most ambitious visions as well as the skills to implement the smallest details of our clients' most critical projects, West Monroe Partners is a proven provider of growth and efficiency to large enterprises, as well as more nimble middle-market organizations. Our more than 300 consulting professionals drive better business results by harnessing our collective experience across a range of industries, serving clients out of offices across the United States and Canada.