



NEWS RELEASE

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Storm-tested Sensus FlexNet Communication Network from Xylem Helps Texas Municipalities Weather Historic Winter Blast

Texas water providers rely on remote meter management and leak detection capabilities

RALEIGH, NC (April 8, 2021) – When ice, snow and bitterly cold temperatures blasted Texas in mid-February, the National Weather Service issued a first-ever winter storm warning for the entire Lone Star state. While essential service crews responded to emergencies, the storm-tested [Sensus FlexNet® Communication Network](#) from [Sensus](#), a Xylem brand, stood up to the intense winter conditions, including a rare, three-inch snowfall in the [City of Arlington](#).

“The data from our remotely managed network played a vital role in water department storm recovery,” said Arlington Water Utilities Director Craig M. Cummings. “Customers calling in issues is no longer our only source of information. With the available meter data, we can identify locations with leaks and contact the customer.”

In moderate-climate regions such as Texas, days-long deep freezes like the one in February are not common. Power outages left homes without heat for days and water pipes with little or no insulation around them froze and burst. Then, the pipes gushed water in walls and other areas when thawing began. The City of Arlington pinpointed 1,800 private plumbing breaks based on unusually high, continuous usage data from their water meters.

“Our Sensus FlexNet system allowed us to find potential problems before they led to outrageous damage or billing issues for customers,” said Arlington Water Utilities Senior Program Analyst Matt Peters. “We actively reached out to customers by phone or in person to ensure there were no unattended water line breaks.”

The FlexNet system is part of the utility's [smart water network](#), which allows them to remotely monitor water usage and pinpoint any problems. The network communicates via dedicated, FCC-licensed spectrum, ensuring secure and reliable data transmissions. Peters credits the system with allowing Arlington Water Utility staff to notify their customers of leaks from ruptured lines, and in some cases, no service at all.

After a precautionary boil water alert was lifted, many apartment residents reported that property management would not turn the water back on until repairs were made in other areas of their complex. Arlington's utility staff turned to FlexNet data and determined more than 4,800 apartment units did not show water usage. They collaborated with Arlington Code Enforcement to investigate and ensure quick repairs at 47 complexes.

"The data helped us pinpoint customers in need of water," said Cummings. "The City set up water container filling stations for apartment renters until repairs could be made, so the right data at the right time made a real difference."

Just a half-hour northeast in the Dallas-Ft. Worth metroplex, the [City of Coppell](#) shared a similar experience with the FlexNet system.

"The FlexNet communication network is like having X-ray vision of your water system," said Coppell's Assistant Director of Public Works Michael Garza. "We identified hundreds of leaks and knew exactly where to go to shut off water and help customers avoid further water loss or property damage."

In just one day, Coppell's utility team, with help from the fire department, shut off approximately 400 homes or businesses with leaks caused by the winter weather. Their system's daily reports identified homes, businesses and an elementary school that showed continuous water usage.

"Our Sensus smart water network was a tremendous help in providing proactive customer service," said Coppell's Assistant Director of Finance Kim Tiehen. "Even without power, we were able to locate and alert customers with leaks because the data is stored online at a remote location through Sensus [Software as a Service](#)."

The City also provides customers access to their usage information through the [MyH2O Customer Portal](#). The portal updates every four hours and can alert the account holder to a spike in usage such as a burst pipe, broken sprinkler system or leaking pool. Since the severe winter weather event, more than 200 customers have created a portal account.

Learn more about the benefits of the FlexNet system in the [Sensus FlexNet Resource Center](#).

About Sensus

Sensus, a Xylem brand, provides remotely-managed products and solutions that deliver the right data at the right time for investor-owned utilities, cooperatives and municipalities. As part of Xylem's digital portfolio, our smart devices connect with a variety of communication technologies to help customers make timely decisions that optimize electric, gas and water systems. Learn more at sensus.com.

About Xylem

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