

THE OPINION OF THE RGJ EDITORIAL BOARD

Benchmark is met; it is time for TMWA to turn 'switch' on

Truckee Meadows Water Authority officials debating whether they should "flip the switch" on the meters should go ahead and do it. It's been known for years that the time would come when an all-meter system for usage and billing would be the standard. That time is now.

The Truckee Meadows Water

Authority has planned for the moment when 90 percent of households in the area have the meters installed.

SNAPSHOT

TOPIC: Water meters

OUR VIEW:

Conservation and economic equality are at stake.

The plan to gradually convert flat-rate customers to meters and that benchmark were key to negotiations that made TMWA the region's primary water supplier. That benchmark now has passed. Currently, 95 percent of the area's single-family homes have meters and 85 percent are billed through them.

The debate has continued, particularly among people who have consumed water on a flat-rate basis. The flat-rate system has been cheap. Two or three millions of gallons of water can run through supply lines of the highest-consuming customers for less than \$1,000 per year, as compared with more than \$5,000 for the same amount of metered usage. Also, some



LIZ MARGERUM/RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL FILE

Chris Wintch installs a water meter for a house on Clemson Street in Reno. Truckee Meadows Water Authority officials should convert to an all-meter system for water usage and billing.

YOUR VOICE

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people feel a sense of entitlement for their flat-rate billing, because "it's always been that way" or they have more land.

The higher objective for going the way of the meters involves conservation in this region where supply and demand is of critical concern. People with meters tend to use less. Water saved through meter usage can be diverted into drought storage.

Further, there can be no economic equality, of course, when some people pay so little and others pay more than their fair share. It is time to "flip the switch."