

Benefits of energy use reports, smart meters outweigh concerns

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Recent letters critical of the Fort Collins smart meter program warrant clarification. The letters complained it was unfair to compare their energy use to that of their neighbors' because of lifestyle differences. We are all free to adjust for our lifestyle differences while we look at ways to reduce our own consumption. The comparison information will not be used to penalize anyone, nor will it be made public. It is similar to the historical information the utility gives us for electricity and water use — for your use only. Some studies show that such comparisons help to decrease electrical usage, which is a good thing. I would think most people would view having access to such comparisons as positive.

There is an understandable concern about radio frequency, or RF, produced by smart meters. The RF emitted by smart meters is minimal. Even for those who choose not to use cell phones, microwave ovens or wireless routers, we live in a world of radio and TV broadcast stations, cell phone towers, microwave relays and a whole host of electronic devices that emit RF. It is part of modern technological society. Smart meters produce RF periodically and only for a few seconds at a time, contributing negligible amounts of RF.

Smart meters are a means to further Fort Collins' carbon footprint reduction goal, as specified in the 2008 Climate Action Plan and adopted by City Council. With smart meter information, we can educate ourselves about our electrical energy consumption, make responsible decisions to reduce, and save money at the same time.

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