

# AMI Consulting

## Empowering Electric Innovation through AMI Procurement Services



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Headquartered in Fergus Falls, MN, Otter Tail Power Company (OTP) is an investor-owned utility that provides electricity and energy services for residential, commercial, and industrial customers across 70,000 square miles in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.



## Business Challenge

In 2018, Otter Tail Power Company (OTP) embarked on a project to modernize 175,000 electric meters by assessing the viability of procuring and implementing advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). Prior to the AMI initiative, OTP's electric meters were used primarily to collect billing data, requiring manual reading by meter readers who drove to every part of the service territory to collect data via handheld devices for upload to OTP's billing systems.

"The focus for implementing AMI was to enhance and improve our overall electric business operations, with benefits gained through timely and accurate data, better preparation for dynamic changes on the grid, and to allow more direct customer engagement for energy management. Util-Assist stood out as a strategic partner with key industry experience and knowledge to help us navigate the complexity of the procurement process," said Al Koeckeritz, Manager of Advanced Concepts and Energy Management and Control for Otter Tail Power.

OTP's AMI project forms part of a larger overall initiative, Innovation 2030, which focuses on enhancing safety and reliability, delivering expanded data to provide customers with enhanced service and choice, and enabling improved productivity and efficiency in meter services. All AMI efforts contributed to the Innovation 2030 mission statement: To create and maintain a long-term vision and framework for proactive investments in technology and infrastructure, which enable a mobile, automated, analytics-based future to optimally and efficiently operate our business.

# Util-Assist's Role

Util-Assist was selected to guide OTP's journey to AMI and provide procurement consulting services to facilitate and negotiate the selection of an ideal long-term AMI solution. Util-Assist led the OTP team through the entire procurement process for three RFPs (AMI, MDM, meter installation services), from the initial kick-off meetings through to assisting in final contract negotiations following the vendor selection process.

Over a 30-month period, Util-Assist worked in consult with OTP to fully understand OTP's unique requirements while also adhering to OTP's overall program goals and initiatives. Project milestones were embedded along the path to maintain project control, with Util-Assist services rendered in four phases for the three procurements: pre-RFP support, RFP development, RFP administration, and post-selection negotiation.

## The Result

Following Util-Assist's structured administration process, OTP's AMI, MDM, and meter installation RFPs elicited high-quality responses from several major AMI vendors. Key consideration was given to RFP responses which comprehensively addressed the Innovation 2030 mission, and Util-Assist's proprietary tools helped to ensure that the evaluation process for each procurement remained fair and unbiased.

An industry-leading vendor was ultimately selected to provide AMI meters, software, and services to support OTP's energy grid across its three-state service territory. The contract includes advanced AMI electric meters and network communications along with a 20-year SaaS agreement for meter data management, advanced grid analytics, and system operating software.

The new AMI technology offers many distinct advantages which cater directly to OTP's needs, including operation with cleaner, more reliable energy, improvements to outage management and response, and a heightened ability to monitor and process data at the grid edge, enabling more direct customer engagement for energy management.

# Contact Us



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## About Util-Assist

Util-Assist's solutions merge technology with strategy to streamline processes, boost productivity, enable data-driven business decisions, and deliver enhanced customer experiences, transforming how utilities operate and deliver value to their customers. Driving digital innovation with professional services and managed services for electric, water, and gas, Util-Assist is shaping the utility of the future.

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**Solutions. *Simplified.***