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February 3, 2010

Kelly Kelsey
Kansas Department of Health and Environment
1000 SW Jackson, Suite 400
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Kelly,

At the request of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, assistance was provided to the City of Oakley concerning an issue with a user, the Kansas Country Inn, which was recently acquired by Ms. Dena Stoll. Norbert Windholz and I met with Dena this morning.

Dena provided a history of water use and billings since her purchase of the motel. The usage varied, but increased drastically in the last couple of months as the recorded usage increased to 500,000 gallons or more, monthly.

Subsequent to our meeting with Dena, Norbert and I met with Rod Huffman, Oakley City Supervisor. Rod explained that three different water meters were involved over the period of billings that we had reviewed. The first meter had stopped functioning after pheasant hunting season in late 2009. Rod had called KRWA for advice for replacement of the meter. I had suggested both compound and Mag-type meters, as both were suitable for installations at motels. Due to the lay lengths of those types of meters, Rod reinstalled a 3-inch Neptune HP turbine that was similar to the original meter. The registration on the new meter increased to 100,000 gallons per month from less than 40,000 in prior months. Dena did not agree that the old meter could have become that inaccurate.

Several weeks ago, I was requested by the city to test this second meter; it was not possible to test this meter in place. I instructed Rod to replace the second meter, and also by obtaining new flanges and fittings, it should be possible to test the meter with flow through an adjacent fire hydrant. Rod called a vendor and purchased a Pelster Amco Mag-type meter with the same lay length as the Neptune. The specifications are similar to the Neptune brand; the cost is nearly the same as a compound. The meter, as tested new in the factory about two months ago, had an accuracy of 100.5% at 0.6 gpm; 100.04% at 1 gpm; 100.03% at 40 gpm and 100.08% at 400. The fittings Rod had acquired were undersized and so it has not been possible to test the second meter. It will be retested at a future date.

Today, after the motel had emptied and laundry run and the rooms had been cleaned, Norbert shut the motel section off while I tested the lines to the laundry/pool and the other to the RV Campground. The laundry/pool had no usage and the campground had about .25 gpm. The motel on the other hand had a flow rate from 2.5 to 10 gpm and would only stop when the motel line was shut off. While in the meter vault I notice that the totalizer for the meter was in 100's and not 1,000's US gallons.

Since the installation of the third (Pelster) meter, the city has been incorrectly assuming that the readings have been in thousands. So, when the motel actually used 100,000 gallons, it was billed 1,000,000 gallons. The city has agreed to provide a refund to the motel owner.

Sincerely,

Doug Guenther
Technical Assistant

C: Rod Huffman, City of Oakley
Norbert Windholz, KDHE, Hays