



GEMI[®]

Collecting the Drops:

**A Water
Sustainability
Planner**

Case Example

Johnson Controls, Inc.: Helping Customers to Achieve New Efficiencies

Johnson Controls is committed to help its customers globally with technologies and services that use resources efficiently, consume less energy, and cause less pollution. That means reaching customers one at a time, year by year.

In 2006, the company culminated a three-year coordination effort with Florida's St. Johns County for the launch of what one county commissioner calls "a dream project" to upgrade its water metering technology.

What drove the move? A development boom had been requiring hook-up of 3,500 to 4,000 new customers a year, and "physically reading water meters is extremely difficult to do in a timely manner," according to Frank Kenton of the county utility.

How is St. Johns County doing it? Through performance-based contracting, the county is able to shift some of the risk burden to Johnson Controls, which has committed to a \$7 million (USD) loan to pay for the project, which calls for replacing 17,000 to 18,000 aging water meters with a new fixed-base, radio-read system connected to a central control room. Work involves:

- Installing new meters over a six- to eight-week period
- Retrofitting meters newer than four years
- Completing the overall upgrade in less than one year (ten months)

Upon completion of the project, county utility staff will be able to get usage information from a small radio transmitter in each new meter. A battery with a 15- to 20-year life span will power meters and the transmitter. The transmitter signal will be delivered to collector antennae that could be as little as a half-mile or as much as three to four miles away.

This will reduce or eliminate costs previously devoted to gasoline, vehicle insurance, maintenance, meter reader salaries, overtime and re-reads. Moreover, the upgrade is expected to improve billing efficiency and customer service. The county anticipates a neutral—or even positive—cash flow over the life of the project.