



# STAYING CONNECTED

Issue 88 • April 2020

## We're Always Here for our Members, **Keeping The Lights On 24/7**

### COVID-19 Response

EQUS staff are, as always, committed to providing the highest standard of service to our members. We know that rural homes and businesses rely on their power and we will continue to deliver it throughout these uncertain times. In accordance with the recommendations of government health authorities, EQUS staff have been, and will continue to be, working safely in the field, in our offices, and remotely from home whenever possible, ensuring that there is no disruption to service while minimizing exposure risk.

The health and safety of EQUS staff, members, and our communities is our top priority at this time. In upholding our commitments to service and safety we ask that EQUS members please don't visit any EQUS offices for the time being. Payments can still be deposited in the drop box at the office and the staff in that office would be happy to help you over the phone with any additional needs you may have.

There will be no impact to the services provided or to outage response as a result of these office closures. EQUS' operations and service delivery are continuing as normal.

If EQUS employees are working on your property please remember to maintain a safe physical distance as recommended by government health authorities. We are always happy to talk to members, we'll just do it from a bit of a distance for a little while.

Information about the postponed 2020 Annual General Meetings and about government utility deferral programs that are currently available can be found inside this newsletter.

For the most current updates visit us online at [equs.ca/members/covid-19-information](https://equs.ca/members/covid-19-information), or connect with us on social media.



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# EQUS

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# AMI PROJECT UPDATE:

EQUS' Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project is ready to kick into high gear. After a brief delay due to approvals that were necessary with Measurement Canada, we are preparing to begin installation of the Central Area meters.

Last summer and fall, contractors worked to complete the installation of the network infrastructure throughout EQUS' Central Service Area. They installed routers, collectors and passive antennas that will allow the meters to communicate over long distances. This equipment will also be installed in EQUS' North and South Service Areas in the coming months, followed by the meter installation.

**The deployment schedule for 2020 is planned as follows:**

**May - July 2020: EQUS Central Area Meters Installed**

**Aug. - Nov. 2020: EQUS North and South Area Meters Installed**

**Please note: This schedule may change due to the current COVID-19 outbreak.**

All members will receive a phone call prior to their meter exchange notifying them of when it will be occurring. All AMI work will be conducted by EQUS approved contractors who will have identification with them and on their vehicles. Please watch this newsletter or visit [equs.ca/AMI](http://equs.ca/AMI) for ongoing project updates or for any scheduling changes as a result of COVID-19.

An important reminder to all members who are having meters and network equipment installed over the next several months:

**IF YOU CURRENTLY READ YOUR METER MONTHLY, PLEASE CONTINUE TO READ YOUR METER MONTHLY AND SUBMIT THAT READING TO EQUS AS YOU NORMALLY WOULD, EVEN AFTER RECEIVING A SMART METER. WE WILL NOTIFY YOU WHEN YOU NO LONGER NEED TO READ YOUR METER.**

## 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS POSTPONED

**As the Board of Directors has been presented with, and has reviewed the 2019 Audited Financial Statements, any members wishing to go through the 2019 Financial Report prior to the rescheduled Annual General Meetings are invited to contact the auditor, RSM Canada, directly.**

**Please reach out to Colleen Sharpe by email to arrange to view the report: [Colleen.Sharpe@RSMCanada.com](mailto:Colleen.Sharpe@RSMCanada.com)**

The 2020 Annual General Meetings have been postponed due to the current COVID-19 outbreak. The health and safety of EQUS members, their guests, and the rural communities that EQUS serves is a priority for the EQUS Board of Directors. The decision to postpone the meetings was made in accordance with that priority and with the recommendations of provincial health authorities.

Once new dates are available, members who had reserved their seats will be contacted and all members will be notified in their monthly newsletter. EQUS members can still RSVP for the rescheduled meetings if they wish by contacting Megan Hanson at [mhanson@equs.ca](mailto:mhanson@equs.ca) or by calling 1.888.211.4011.



[communications@equs.ca](mailto:communications@equs.ca)



# Utility Bill Deferral Programs

The Government of Alberta has announced a series of financial supports for Albertans affected by COVID-19 including the option to defer utility bill payments for 90 days (March 18 - June 18, 2020) for those who qualify. This program is available to Albertans who are experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of COVID-19.

It is important to note that this program does not pay for any costs of utility bills on your behalf, it simply defers them, with the outstanding balance not owing until the end of the 90-day period.

As a co-operative, EQUS believes in the value of neighbours helping neighbours, especially in tough times such as these. Our co-operative was built in this spirit and we will continue to provide sustainable and flexible support to our members through this outbreak.

EQUS is committed to working with members who may require help during this time, and to ensuring that we minimize the impact to our co-operative as a whole. We will work with those members who require support to develop suitable payment arrangements, and to connect them with other applicable supports through existing programs like Alberta Works.

The Emergency Needs Allowance from Alberta Works can cover utility arrears for eligible individuals. To learn more about this program call 1-866-644-5135, or visit their website at [humanservices.alberta.ca/ABWcentres](http://humanservices.alberta.ca/ABWcentres).

EQUS will ensure that the lights stay on in rural Alberta and ensure that we support the collective sustainability of co-operative electricity distribution for all EQUS members.

EQUS members seeking more information about payment arrangements or the deferral program can call their Member Service Administrator at 1.888.211.4011.

## Operation Round Up (dates)

The students and staff at Poplar Ridge School (Red Deer County) applied for Operation Round Up funding to purchase some equipment that they could use for winter recess activities both indoors and outdoors. They were so happy to receive the funding that they held an assembly to thank all the EQUS members for their contributions.



**The next application deadline is March 31. Programs that benefit youth and seniors in EQUS' Service Area could be eligible to receive up to \$5,000. For more information visit: [equs.ca/community/operation-round-up](http://equs.ca/community/operation-round-up)**

# Stay Connected!

**Download the MyEQUS app today to access everything you need!**

Let's not let a little social distancing disconnect us. With the MyEQUS app and online member portal, EQUS members can register to access all their account information on their smart phone, tablet, or computer, from the safety and comfort of your own home.

## Live Outage Updates

Get real-time notifications if your power goes out, so you'll know even if you're not home! You choose if you prefer email or mobile notifications and we'll let you know when we determine your power is out, when we have an estimated time of restoration and when your power is restored.

## Report an Outage

Submit your outage information right in the app.

## Submit Meter Reads

Submit your meter read from one or multiple meters.

## Check Your Bill

View your current bill, find out when your next payment is due and see your billing and payment history.

## View Your Usage

View and compare your current, average and historic usage on multiple meters.

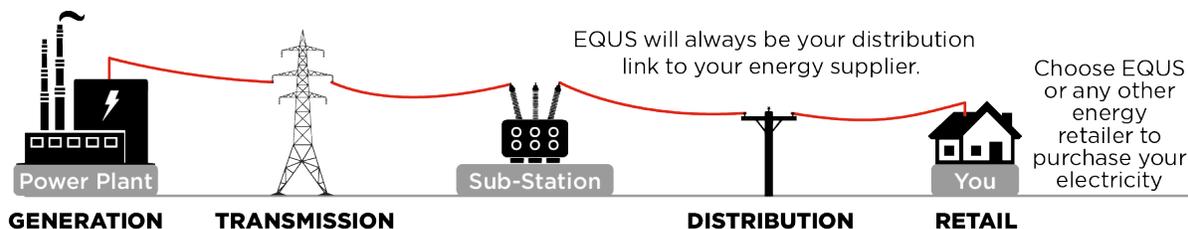
## And More...

- Compare your usage to that of others around you
- Submit service requests
- Add your smart appliances



Enjoy the convenience of having MyEQUS at your fingertips. All you need to register is your account number, meter number and postal code.

**Download MyEQUS today from the App Store or Google Play.**



*Members are free to purchase electricity services from a retailer of their choice.  
For a list of retailers, visit [www.ucahelps.alberta.ca](http://www.ucahelps.alberta.ca) or call 310.4822 (toll free in Alberta).*

**Power  Out?**

To report a power outage in your area, or for other services such as construction or vegetation management, please call your local Area Office.

**Main Office**

1.888.211.4011

**North Area Office**

1.888.627.4011

**Central Area Office**

1.877.527.4011

**South Area Office**

1.888.565.5445

Mailing Address: Box 6199, 5803 42 Street, Innisfail, AB  
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