



Property owners should consider utility submetering this heating season

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While temperatures across much of the country are dropping lower every day, utility bills are steadily on the rise. Utility submetering protects property owners from the brunt of these increases by promoting conservation and placing responsibility for these utilities in the tenants' hands.

WaterWatch Corporation, a utility submetering company headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., has been serving multifamily and commercial properties across the nation for over 13 years. WaterWatch submeters water, gas, and electric and provides clients with a wide range of energy management services, from billing and collection to submeter installation and free property audits.

Since starting the business in 1997, WaterWatch president Todd Quarterman has seen the utility submetering industry grow immensely. He explains, "New wireless equipment technologies have matured and now allow the submetering industry to cultivate and thrive." Quarterman also believes that greater access to the Internet means that developers, owners, managers and tenants can better educate themselves on the benefits of submetering.

"Submetering is a win for everyone involved," Quarterman said. "Thousands of multifamily and commercial properties currently submeter and hold their residents accountable for their utility usage. If you're not going to submeter now, then when?"

Avoiding skyrocketing heating bills is certainly a positive outcome of utility submetering for property owners, but what about the tenants residing in submetered units? WaterWatch Corporation recognizes the importance of customer service during the submetering process, and advises property owners interested in submetering to partner with companies that have a long standing record of customer satisfaction.

WaterWatch Corporation VP of Operations John Paul states, "If your residents do not receive superior customer service from the submetering company, they will demand it from the property manager or property owner. This could undermine all the benefits of submetering in the first place."

In addition to offering reliable customer service, conservation education is crucial for tenants, as it ensures that they have all the knowledge necessary to save money on their utility bills. WaterWatch Corporation offers tenants their own website, which includes access to online billing, conservation tips, and frequently asked questions.

WaterWatch Corporation's number one tip for tenants looking to reduce utility bills this winter? Monitor your thermostat. Paul explains, "There is a cost whenever the heat comes on, so keep the thermostat low when you're not at home or sleeping and keep it steady when you are home. A long sleeve shirt and sweater can save a bundle over the course of a cold winter."

If tenants conserve regularly, they can manage to save money on their electric, gas, and water bills year round through utility submetering. In fact, recent studies conducted by Parks Associates for Multifamily Executive magazine, show that nearly 30% of renters are actually willing to pay more to

live in environmentally friendly units. The study also concludes that almost 80% of multifamily firms today view energy efficiency as an important asset to their company.

WaterWatch Corporation recognizes that energy efficiency does not end with utility submetering. They have chosen to partner with Utility Bill Manager, LLC, an energy management company offering services including carbon emission reporting, vacant unit cost recovery, and energy procurement. Continuing to focus on energy efficiency can help property owners to save even more money, and will attract an increasing number of environmentally minded residents.

While heating season is a time of utility bill distress for many, utility submetering can benefit those living in any climate, year round. By choosing a reliable submetering company with strong customer service and a dedication to its residents, property owners can take the first step towards promoting energy conservation while decreasing operating costs.

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