



To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

March 5, 2024

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON USE OF WATER DEPARTMENT'S MYH2O PORTAL

The MyH2O portal offers many benefits to our Water Department customers, including the ability to view hourly water usage, set up and receive alerts, manage accounts, and select preferred methods of communicating with the utility. Since launching the portal in May 2022, the water utility has since engaged residential customers to transition their accounts to the portal through various channels, including in-person and online events, banner notifications on the City's website, social media, postcards sent through the mail, and water bill messages and inserts. As detailed in IR 23-0750 (September 19, 2023), the utility began the final push to transition all remaining residential customers from the interim payment processing platform (Paymentus) to the MyH2O portal by October 23, 2023.

With the transition, residential customers were notified of the urgent need to move to the portal to prevent payment issues and service interruptions. The utility increased its communications outreach in both English and Spanish to customers and delayed the transition deadline to December 4 to allow more time for customers to make the switch. In addition to the outreach efforts outlined above, the utility added direct text messaging and personalized phone calls to customers. To further support the remaining customers, the utility staffed a specialized resolution unit within the customer contact center to expedite moving the customers who had not transitioned to the portal prior to the final December cut-over date. The comprehensive outreach is summarized in the table below. A timeline of all MyH2O communications is provided in Attachment A, and samples of the communications used are provided in Attachment B.

Type of Communication	Number	Target Audience	Reach
Communications prior to September 2023			
Events & Open Houses	28	Specific bill cycles as meters were installed & general community events	1,500
Social Media Posts	146	Online audience	96,000
Mailers, Postcards, and Handouts	14	Specific bill cycles as meters were installed; multiple mailings	2,115,000
Total			2,212,500
Communications beginning September 2023			
Mailers, Postcards and Handouts	3	All remaining residential and all business accounts on Paymentus	86,400
Emails	15	Remaining residential autopay customers & all business accounts on Paymentus	338,000
Text Messages	7	Remaining residential autopay customers & all business accounts on Paymentus	23,300
Social Media Posts	10	Online audience and boosted posts	96,000
Outbound Calls	11,500	Remaining residential autopay customers & key large business accounts	11,500
Total			555,200
Total Direct Communications Reach			2,767,700

The supplemental measures proved highly effective and, by the December 4 cut-off date, approximately 155,000 customer profiles had been established in the MyH2O portal, up 41,000 profiles in fewer than three months.

Autopay Customer Impact

As part of this process, residential customers on autopay were required to re-establish their account in the MyH2O portal so that the interim system could be decommissioned concurrent with the deployment of the enterprise module for commercial/industrial customers. Prior to that cut-over date, residential customers

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could migrate to the MyH2O portal (including retention of scheduled autopay functions) with only a password change. After the December 4 cutover date, however, residential customers were required to re-register because the interim system was closed, resulting in cancellation of any scheduled autopay transactions going forward.

Establishing user accounts in the MyH2O portal requires an email address due to security reasons, coupled with system architecture and multi-factor authentication requirements of the portal vendor. This new requirement affected a small number of customers that previously used ACH bank drafts and that did not have an email address. Staff has worked with those customers to either establish profiles that include an email address or to establish other payment options.

Following the December 4 cutover, all customers with scheduled autopay drafts remaining in the interim payment processor received direct phone calls from staff prior to their scheduled autopay draft date, reminding them to make other arrangements as that system had been decommissioned. Despite all of the outreach efforts, not all residential autopay customers acted on the notifications. Overall, a small number of customers experienced service or billing problems because they did not transition their automatic bill payment into the MyH2O portal by the mandatory cut-over date. Approximately 2,400 residential customers had their autopay cancelled in the decommissioned payment processor. Of those, about 600 customers experienced water service interruptions for non-payment. Staff is continuing to follow up with the remainder to determine the disposition of autopay status.

Delinquency Shut-off Procedures

Delinquency management throughout this transition period has followed standard practices outlined in the IR 23-0742 (August 29, 2023), to City Council titled, "Water Utility Shut-off Practices." In accordance with those practices, customers are sent an "Urgent Notice" three days after bills become delinquent. Those notices, delivered through the U.S. Postal Service, advise customers of the outstanding balance owed and the need to contact the utility in order to avoid service interruption. Customers receive these notices approximately ten days prior to water shut-off. Additionally, customers receive an auto-generated phone call advising them of outstanding balances owed and requesting the customer to contact the utility immediately. The MyH2O special resolution unit was authorized to waive late and service restoration fees for customers impacted by the autopay transition process. Most customer concerns have been resolved and addressed at the contact center level without the need for escalation.

The MyH2O portal transition has been effective, with the vast majority of customers successfully migrating or re-registering in the MyH2O portal. The challenges have been met with proactive and customer-centric solutions, and utility staff has worked diligently to support affected customers. As of February 26, 2024, 172,253 profiles have been established in the MyH2O portal, well-above industry adoption rates.

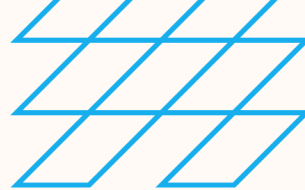
Should you have any questions about the MyH2O communications, portal deployment, or delinquency management, please contact Jerry Pressley, Assistant Water Director at (817) 392-8257, or Chris Harder, Water Director, at (817) 392-5020.

David Cooke
City Manager



MYH2O COMMUNICATION TIMELINE

Attachment A



All communication was in both English & Spanish. The only exception was the text messages due to character limits. However, we were able to immediately respond & have conversations in Spanish w/ customers who responded to the text. Text also directed customers via hyperlink to the website, which is in Spanish.

2019

Launched MyH2O Communication Campaign

- + Built interactive MyH2O display
- + Mailed first postcard invitations for Open Houses
- + Started Open Houses in February
- + Began attending neighborhood meetings to talk about MyH2O & answer questions
- + Created YouTube videos for MyH2O overview & meter installations
- + Provided general handouts about MyH2O at events

2021

Increased Mailers & Resumed In-Person Meetings

- + Sent bill insert to all residents for MyH2O program update
- + Sent mailers to all residents addressing accurate meter reads & possible increase in bill due to leaks
- + Held nine events & open houses informing customers about MyH2O

2023

Continued Community & Online Presence Before & During Final Sign-up Push

- + Continued social media, bill inserts, & other handouts about program
- + Started final push in September to have customers migrate
- + Sent postcards to all remaining residential customers to remind them of change
- + Sent postcards and emails to businesses to notify them of the enterprise portal launch
- + Sent residential customers a postcard, up to 11 emails & several text messages
- + Made phone calls to remaining autopay residential customers & businesses to again notify them to migrate

CUSTOMERS REACHED BY THE NUMBERS

- 1,500** Meetings & Open Houses attended or organized solely for MyH2O
- 2.2m** Individual postcards or handouts given to customers
- 338,000** Emails sent to customers
- 23,300** Text messages sent to customers
- 191,900** Social media post reach
- 11,500** Proactive calls made to customers

2.8 million

Proactive points of contact made with customers

2020

Continued Communication & Increased Online Presence

- + Held in-person Open Houses until COVID started
- + Created Youtube series to explain utility & MyH2O
- + Held Virtual Open Houses for some billing cycles
- + Created video walk-through of MyH2O Open House

2022

Launched Online Portal for Residential Customers

- + Encouraged portal sign-ups by increasing social media presence
- + Created several Youtube step-by-step guides for using the portal
- + Attended more events & neighborhood meetings to talk to customers about MyH2O

ONGOING COMMUNICATION

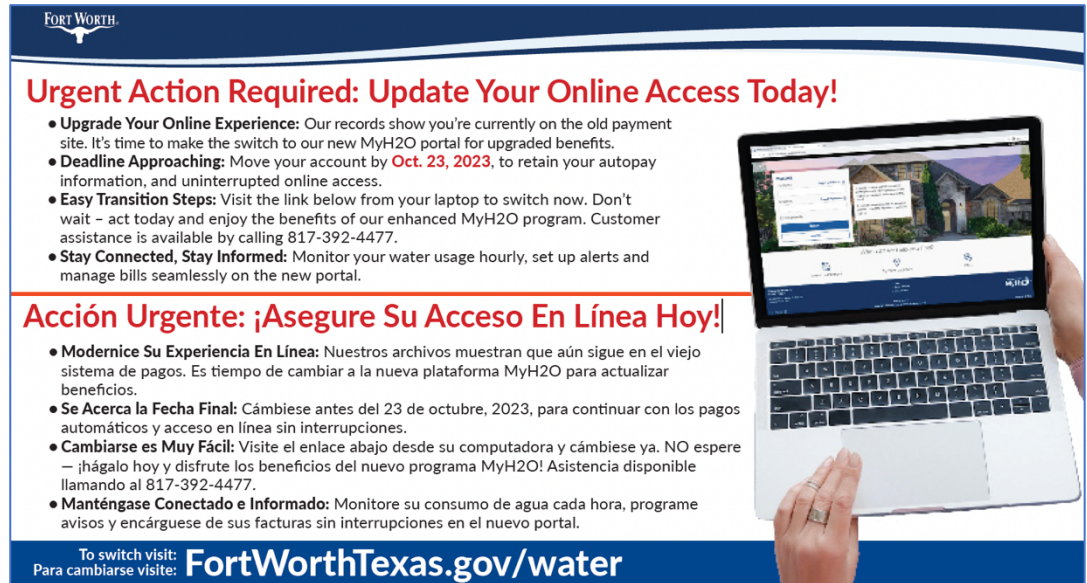
- Website was routinely updated with information about MyH2O, monthly billing cycle updates for meter installations, FAQs and banner alerts of any major changes.
- Attendance at many events/programs; customers were given information about the portal. Numbers here reflect events/programs with MyH2O being the primary focus.
- Social media (across 6 channels) were routinely updated about progress.

*These totals do not include engagement from other departments/individuals sharing our social posts to their pages

Attachment B



Postcard to Residential Customers



Two of the Many Social Media Posts



Fort Worth Water

Nov 10, 2023 · 🌐

Have you signed up for our MyH2O portal yet? 🤔

Sign up, save 💧 & 💰! What are you waiting for?

<https://fwmyh2o.smartcmobile.com/portal/>



Fort Worth Agua

Nov 14, 2023 · 🌐

Garantiza tu acceso ininterrumpido a tu cuenta de agua y, si aún no lo has hecho, inscríbete ya en el portal MyH2O. Hazlo ahora y mantén el control de tu perfil, consumo e historial de facturas. No te olvides la fecha límite. ¡Cámbiate hoy mismo!

See translation

