



# City of Margate

## A Return to Neptune® Brings Peace of Mind

Less than 10 miles from the stunning beaches of southeastern Florida lies the City of Margate, home to nearly 60,000 residents and 17,000 water customers. For years, the City relied on Neptune® T-10® meters paired with third-party endpoints, providing reliable and efficient advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) services. However, a change in leadership led the previous management to shift away from the Neptune brand, which introduced unexpected challenges for the utility and its new leadership team.

### LOSING CUSTOMER TRUST DUE TO FAULTY METERS

Accurate water measurement is crucial for any utility. When accuracy declines, widespread challenges arise—something Margate experienced firsthand. After moving away from its long-standing Neptune meters, the City began detecting significant discrepancies between manual and electronic readings, eroding both customer confidence and operational efficiency. Marta Reczko, Assistant Director for Utilities, noted that while one-third of the city continued to rely on Neptune meters—some in place for over 12 years and still delivering reliable data—the remaining two-thirds had been transitioned to a different brand. As the meter replacement project advanced, inconsistencies in readings became increasingly evident. The problem escalated to the point where the City had to suspend further meter replacements, redirecting substantial time and resources toward troubleshooting the newly installed units.

When the utility reached out to the meter provider, they were told that a “bad batch” of meters had been supplied. However, the problems extended far beyond this explanation. “We also experienced frequent communication losses,” Reczko explained, “which the provider attributed to Florida’s high humidity. We were told there was nothing wrong with the equipment—



#### CUSTOMER

City of Margate, Florida

#### SERVICE TERRITORY

Serves 17,000 water customers

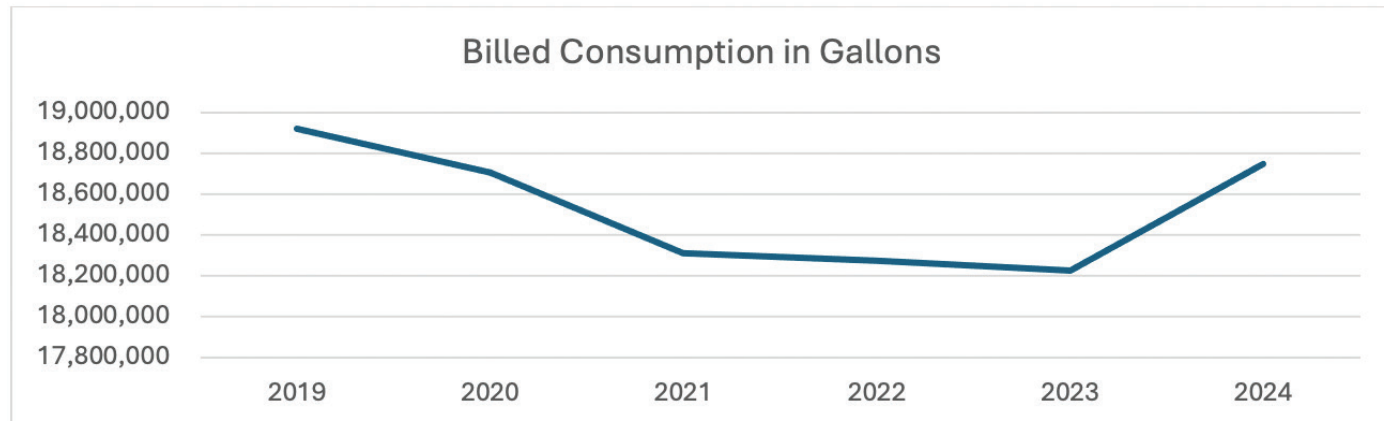
#### SOLUTION BENEFITS

Recovered lost revenue  
with new meters

Reduced staff needed for  
infrastructure maintenance

Decreased billing cycle from one  
week to four hours

Regained customer confidence



just Florida’s humid weather.” This was particularly concerning, given that the City had been assured before the purchase that the meters would operate reliably in all conditions.

Despite warranty claims, additional staffing, and repair attempts, the provider failed to resolve the humidity-related issues. As a result, the utility faced mounting operational challenges and a significant erosion of customer confidence.

Handling the back-billing was incredibly time-consuming, along with managing complaints from irate customers and setting up payment plans to provide some peace of mind,” said Jackie Earll, Utility Accounting Manager for Margate.

Despite these efforts, many customers still felt unsettled. Earll explained that as billing and consumption data grew increasingly unreliable, the utility faced significant challenges, leading to delays in revenue collection. While back-billing eventually helped recover lost revenue, the process placed a heavy burden on the billing team, frustrating both staff and customers alike.

By late 2022, with the support of new management, the City recognized the need for swift action. It became clear that the current provider was unable to resolve the ongoing issues, prompting the team to reach out to Ferguson, one of Neptune’s distribution partners. This initiative aimed to explore a transition back to a reliable metering system and restore operational efficiency.

#### **FINDING A SOLUTION TO GET BACK ON TRACK**

Reczko said that her previous experience with Neptune at Margate and other utilities made the decision to transition back to Neptune an easy choice. However, it wasn’t just about familiarity. “We faced challenges like losing communication in humid weather and dealing with registers’ mechanical issues that weren’t being addressed. These problems added complexity to an already difficult situation,” Reczko said.

To evaluate a potential solution, the utility launched a three-month pilot program using Neptune® MACH 10® meters with cellular endpoints. During the trial period, none of the issues experienced under the previous provider were observed. “The difference was night and day. Neptune provided not just a reliable product but also hands-on support to guide us through the entire process,” Reczko noted.

Initially, there was some hesitation about using cellular endpoints due to the upfront cost. However, this was quickly offset by the fact that no additional infrastructure was needed to capture data—the existing cellular towers in the area handled everything. “It’s less maintenance for us, and we don’t need to monitor that equipment,” Reczko said. “We were just happy to finally have less infrastructure to worry about now and in the future.”

The lower maintenance requirements also translated into significant operational savings, eliminating the need for a full-time position and reducing overtime by 20-30 hours per week. Additionally, it streamlined the billing process, eliminating many of the inefficiencies the City had previously faced.

“With our previous provider, billing would take an entire week. Now, we can complete a billing cycle in less than four hours,” Earll said. “The amount of back-billing has definitely decreased.”

## ENSURING CONTINUED SUCCESS

As per Reczko, during a period of financial losses and declining public confidence, Neptune helped restore standout service. So much so that neighboring utilities are reaching out to them, having heard about their challenges before and the success they’re experiencing now.

“Finance people and superintendents, they’re all contacting us, and we couldn’t speak more highly about Neptune. They’re asking us for some face-to-face meetings to learn more about what we did,” Earll said.

## A FAR CRY FROM THE ISSUES THEY WERE HAVING JUST A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO

“I’m very happy with Neptune, not only the product, but it’s the people behind Neptune,” Reczko said. “Not only is the product reliable, but reliable people are picking up the phone and taking care of us right away.”



#winyourday  
neptunetg.com

Neptune Technology Group  
1600 Alabama Highway 229  
Tallahassee, AL 36078  
800-633-8754 f 334-283-7293