

## Meet the McCann's — Two of South Bend's Smartest Customers

SOUTH BEND, IN. – Jim McCann is a landscaper and a retired mechanical engineer. You might say he's a combination of a naturalist and a tinkerer. That's why he is also an ideal Smart Meter Pilot Project customer.

"I love figuring out how things work, and I love nature. Nature is why energy efficiency is so important to me," Jim says.

Jim and his wife Carol are among the 7,900 customers in South Bend's Smart Meter Pilot Project (SMPP). A smart meter was installed outside their home late last year.

Smart Meters are digital meters connected to a two-way radio frequency communications network that make it possible for meter readings to be taken remotely, for service to be connected and disconnected remotely, and for service interruptions to be detected more quickly leading to faster restoration.

Smart Meters also empower customers by making it possible for them to monitor their energy usage on an hourly, daily, weekly and monthly basis on the Indiana Michigan Power web site.

Jim's wife Carol has sheet upon sheet of energy usage summaries she has printed from their computer. She studies and compares them, factors in the weather and adjusts accordingly.

"I love it," said Carol. "I check our usage on the computer several times every day. I can spot when the microwave has been used or the TV left on. We have changed our habits. We no longer leave lights on, or brew coffee between two p.m. and 6 p.m., for example."

Carol and Jim are enrolled in a cost-savings program offered to SMPP customers called Smart Shift, and they plan to enroll in the Smart Cooling program when it becomes available.

Smart Shift customers pay lower prices during off peak hours, which is 95 percent of the time. Electricity used during off-peak periods costs about one-third of on-peak rates.

Smart Cooling, or direct load control, will allow automatic adjustments to be made to central air conditioning units during periods of peak demand in the summer, in exchange for a five dollar monthly bill credit. Enrollees also receive a free programmable communicating thermostat, valued at approximately \$285.

Carol and Jim estimate they will save at least \$120 a year with Smart Shift and regularly monitoring electricity. When you consider that their average monthly bill, according to Jim, is approximately \$63, that means they will be saving almost two month's worth of electricity costs. Smart Cooling will keep even more money in their pockets, since enrollees will receive the monthly bill credit.

"It's a way of saving money that's like a game to us. This isn't work at all. It's fun," says Carol. "And we are helping to protect our environment by using less energy. I like doing we can to help ourselves, and help the environment."

