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## CASE STUDY / HI-LAND ACRES WATER & SANITATION DISTRICT

# AmCoBi Provides Comprehensive Utility Billing Services to Hi-Land Acres

### QUICK SUMMARY OF RESULTS

American Conservation & Billing Solutions, Inc. (AmCoBi) helped Hi-Land Acres Water & Sanitation District improve its utility billing process by:

- Enhancing communications and providing timely problem resolution to residents
- Significantly reducing the time and effort Board members spend managing utility billing
- Developing custom reports to simplify past due account management
- Reducing billing service fees--15-20%.

### HI-LAND ACRES BACKGROUND

Hi-Land Acres is a water and sanitation district located northeast of Denver in Brighton, CO. This special district provides water and wastewater services to 115 homes and is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board is charged with ensuring its residents have access to a clean and uninterrupted water supply. Each home is individually metered and the consumption data collected is used to calculate resident bills. Hi-Land Acres employs a tiered rate structure to determine monthly water and wastewater charges.

### THE CHALLENGE

Prior to working with AmCoBi, Hi-Land Acres used a different third party utility billing services provider for several years. This company would process monthly consumption readings, calculate and deliver water and wastewater bills to homeowners, and collect payments.

During the course of this company's service, however, there were several issues raised by residents and Board Members that prompted Hi-Land Acres to consider switching billing providers.

Fred Brinkerhoff, Treasurer of the Hi-Land Acres Board, said that "many residents expressed concerns that the previous billing company was difficult to get a hold of. Residents would leave voice mail and send in e-mail messages that were not returned in a timely manner."

*"AmCoBi came in and really reduced the time our volunteer board spends on billing issues. They have reduced my workload considerably."*

-- FRED BRINKERHOFF, TREASURER, HI-LAND ACRES

Brinkerhoff also noted that "it was very challenging to obtain customer information from the company. I needed an Aged Receivables (AR) report to understand where our customers were in regards to payments. With the economic downturn, this information was becoming more critical to our operations. This company simply couldn't provide the reporting I needed and it was increasingly frustrating for me."

### THE REQUIREMENTS

When Hi-Land Acres decided to investigate other billing providers, the evaluation requirements included:

- Improve the management of receivables and past due accounts
- Ensure the selected provider would communicate responsively with residents and the Board
- Find a provider who would effectively manage the entire billing process from start to finish.

The Hi-Land Acres' Board had very specific requirements because their members are volunteers and they were spending an inordinate amount of time and effort managing the utility billing process.

## THE SOLUTION

AmCoBi was chosen to perform utility billing services for Hi-Land Acres because, Brinkerhoff noted, "we believed they were sincere and capable of delivering for us. Even though it didn't play heavily into our decision, the company's fees were 15-20% less than our previous provider."

AmCoBi provides an end-to-end utility billing solution to Hi-Land Acres that includes:

- Bill calculation and delivery
- Payment collection
- Late payment management services
- Online payment options (customers can pay via the Internet)
- Custom report development and accounting support
- Data analysis to detect leaks and/or broken meters.

## THE RESULTS

Several issues have been resolved since AmCoBi assumed responsibility for Hi-Land Acres' monthly utility billing. Resident phone and e-mail inquiries are handled quickly and competently. Complaints by residents to the Board about billing issues have all but been eliminated.

Aged receivables and other useful reports are sent to the Hi-Land Acres Board to keep them informed of resident payment status. AmCoBi mails late payment notification letters and makes follow up calls to homeowners when applicable. AmCoBi makes sure the Board's policies are followed as they relate to water and wastewater billing.

By analyzing consumption data using its **UtilityHawk™** technology, AmCoBi was able to catch several inaccurate meter readings and identify broken water meters that needed to be replaced.

"AmCoBi came in and really reduced the time our volunteer Board spends on billing issues," commented Brinkerhoff. "They carry out our procedures and guidelines without ever making decisions that are contrary to Board policies--something that had happened with the previous provider. They operate in a very proactive manner and communication has been excellent."

"AmCoBi has reduced my workload considerably," Brinkerhoff pointed out.

## CONCLUSIONS

Brinkerhoff suggests that any special or metropolitan district with a volunteer board consider using a third party billing provider. "Board members can have all the confidence in the world that they can outsource this process, have it done in a timely fashion, and save a lot of hours for their volunteers. You really don't need to be doing this."

"There are certainly affordable options available; companies that specialize in managing this responsibility. We certainly appreciate the job AmCoBi has done for us and would highly recommend them," Brinkerhoff added.

## ABOUT AMERICAN CONSERVATION & BILLING SOLUTIONS, INC.

AmCoBi offers utility billing, submetering, and conservation consulting services to special districts and multifamily housing providers. UtilityHawk™ provides a means to analyze utility consumption data for the purpose of improving utility bill accuracy and extracting actionable business information.