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## SmartMeter installation set for July

By **TIFFANY REVELLE** The Daily Journal

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SmartMeter installation is going ahead as planned despite a moratorium on the devices the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors adopted earlier this year.

Pacific Gas & Electric, which plans to install 52,301 of the wireless meters in Mendocino County, will hold two "education centers" next week in Albion and Laytonville before installation begins in July, according to a Tuesday statement from the company.

"We don't recognize the county's moratorium or other jurisdictions' moratoriums; the CPUC (California Public Utility Commission) is the only entity with jurisdiction over the SmartMeter program," Pacific Gas & Electric spokesman Greg Snapper said Wednesday.

The Board of Supervisors adopted the moratorium after hours of public input at its Jan. 25 meeting, during which several speakers cited concerns about the health risks of increased exposure to radio frequency (RF) emissions from the devices, bill overages among customers who already have the meters and privacy, among other concerns.

The company touts the wireless devices as a way for customers to track their energy use online, a more accurate way to bill customers, a more efficient way to address outages and a way to integrate solar and wind power. It also cited a need to meet a CPUC mandate to automate its metering by 2012.

Snapper said PG&E aims to install nearly 10 million SmartMeters by then, and has so far installed about 8 million. Installation is slated to begin in July for Mendocino County.

Two

SmartMeter "education centers" are scheduled next week. The first is slated from 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at Albion Elementary School, located at 30400 Albion Ridge Road. The second will be held

from noon to 5 p.m. Thursday at the Community Christian Church in Laytonville, located at 42100 N. Highway 101.

Snapper said PG&E customers who don't want the meters installed can call the company's SmartMeter hotline, 1-866-743-0263, and ask for a "delay" until the CPUC finishes reviewing the company's alternate proposal.

The proposal is an "opt-out" plan, where customers concerned about RF exposure from the devices can pay an up-front fee and an ongoing monthly fee to turn off the radio inside the meters, according to Snapper.

Asked in January about the likelihood of PG&E suing the county over its moratorium, Mendocino County Counsel Jeanine Nadel assured the Board of Supervisors she would argue the board has "broad ... police powers to adopt ordinances that protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens."

PG&E filed its alternate, "opt-out" proposal with the CPUC "a couple of months ago," Snapper said, and is waiting for a decision.

The county of Mendocino filed a petition two months ago with the CPUC challenging the alternate proposal, according to Nadel.

"We're challenging the proposal for the opt-out program because we don't feel it's appropriate; it doesn't go far enough," Nadel said.

The county's moratorium was to hold until PG&E



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offers its customers an alternative to the wireless devices and provides information about the technology and risks associated with the models the company plans to install in Mendocino County, Nadel said previously.

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