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Utility submetering forecast 2011

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There's no question that the construction of new multifamily and commercial properties has slowed dramatically in recent years due to the economic recession. The Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. (ABC) have reported that while year 2011 will not be a complete turnaround for the industry, both U.S. commercial and residential construction will make modest progress.

Although the progress for new construction is predicted to be slow moving, the utility submetering industry will continue to grow in 2011. This is largely due to the fact that decreasing operating costs and increasing the energy efficiency of existing properties will remain at the top of many organization's agendas.

WaterWatch Corp. president Todd Quarterman has seen the industry expand greatly since founding his national utility submetering company in 1997. Looking towards the future, Quarterman explains, "Organizations are always looking for ways to improve energy efficiency and utility submetering is another energy-saving tool that just helps to complete the puzzle. Energy management will continue to dominate in 2011 and for years to come."

While owners of existing properties and new construction will continue to make the choice to submeter in 2011, some may find that they are mandated to do so in the coming years. Georgia's Water Stewardship Act requires that all multi-family and commercial units are submetered by July of 2012. Areas of California and Texas have also passed similar laws that will take full effect in the next few years.

Submetering mandates may currently only affect certain cities, but an increasing number of financial incentives will help to make submetering a reality for many organizations in years to come. The U.S. Department of Energy offers access to a wide range of state incentives that can be applied to utility submetering through their Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE) program. Submetering a property can now also provide credits towards the Water Efficiency and Energy and Atmosphere categories of LEED Certification.

An expansion of energy management services can be expected from utility submetering companies in 2011 as well. WaterWatch's Todd Quarterman said, "We believe that to truly understand and manage your organization's energy costs, utility invoice validation, cost comparisons, and other analytics are essential. Smarter data lets us make fact-based projections, which leads to greater energy cost reductions."

WaterWatch Corp. chose to advance their energy management services for the coming year by partnering with Utility Bill Manager, LLC. (UBM). UBM's services, including carbon emissions reporting, vacant unit cost recovery, and energy procurement, will be needed now more than ever to help businesses save money and solidify their position in today's increasingly "green" business world.

As 2011 progresses, the number of energy management services available in the industry will

undoubtedly continue to grow. The focus on expanding energy management services, in conjunction with the increasing number of financial incentives and submetering mandates, ensures that utility submetering will remain on the rise for many years to come.

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