

# CLIENT SUCCESS STORY



## Gross Builders

RESIDENTIAL / ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Celebrating over 90 years of building excellence, Gross Builders manages thousands of apartment units in Ohio, Tennessee and Alabama while also operating as one of the region's top home builders.

In 1999, Gross Builders changed from master meter utilities included with rents to utilizing the services of EBS (now YES Energy Management) and their utility billing program after watching the submetering trend successfully take hold in the west. "We saw a need to control utility costs. We were confident that we could find a way to get residents to use less water and show them how to save money by reducing their water usage," declares Dick Devaney, General Manager at Gross Builders. After researching and selecting YES, every new property has been submetered and billed by YES.

For Gross Builders, the most notable impact of YES submetering and utility billing services is conservation. "Conservation is unquestionably the biggest change we've seen when passing utility costs through to residents," says Devaney. "We saw tremendous results immediately. In the first month of submetering, water consumption didn't change at all. During the second month, we noticed a modest decrease, but by the third month, consumption dropped by approximately 30% and has plateaued at that level ever since," Devaney recalls. The results have been comparable for all Gross Builders properties where submetering was introduced.

Utility billing has been integrated with operations for so long now, that keeping stats on revenue recovery is no longer a primary focus. Ultimately, we really did this because it was the right thing to do for Gross Builders and our residents," according to Devaney. With water bills increasing exponentially, the billing program allowed Gross Builders to hold lease rates steady and keep occupancy strong as a result. The management team recognizes that residents have a choice when they select an apartment home – they can choose a newer property with submeters for rent plus utilities, or they can choose an older building where utilities are included with their rent, noting that with the latter scenario, the resident has no control over their energy costs.

### Added Benefits

According to Devaney, added benefits include improved customer service, improved resident services, and smooth equipment installations. "The YES Customer Service Department is very accommodating and helpful. They get the calls handled and we just don't hear much from our residents which indicates a successful program." Enhanced resident services include the ability to make credit card and ACH payments online via Yardi Portal. "I for one was shocked to learn how many of our residents do in fact utilize the Portal tools," remarked Devaney. With this in mind, Gross Builders also elected to be an early adopter of the E-Statements feature with Yardi Energy Solutions.

YES offers turnkey meter installation and maintenance services by knowledgeable, experienced technicians. For Gross Builders, the new equipment installations have gone very smoothly. Most of the Gross Builders installations have been with newly constructed properties.

### FAST FACTS

#### Portfolio

- 9,000 units in 27 communities
- 70% submetered

**Client Since:** 1999

#### Products Implemented

- Yardi Energy Solutions™
- Yardi Portal™

#### BEFORE Yardi Energy Solutions

- Master meter utilities included in rents
- Excessive water consumption by residents

#### AFTER Yardi Energy Solutions

- 30% reduction in water usage
- Residents can control their costs through conservation
- Rents are competitive and not subject to ever increasing water costs

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Dick Devaney,  
General Manager

