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## **Innovative SmartMeter Prepayment Water Meter to be manufactured by Stadium Electronics**

STADIUM Electronics has secured a manufacturing partnership with a global provider of metering systems.

Stadium Electronics has been appointed to manufacture the revolutionary SmartMeter Prepayment System™ on behalf of Universal Metering, providing both electronics assembly and final product build.

The contract, which has an annual value of £2.3m, will see over 30,000 water meters built and shipped to major Utilities in Africa and Brazil.

Headquartered in Hartlepool and with further manufacturing locations in Rugby and China, Stadium Electronics is part of AIM-listed Stadium Group plc and employs over 1000 people worldwide.

The innovative SmartMeter Prepayment System™ utilises a fully electronic, non-moving parts water meter ensuring accuracy, performance and reliability - the first prepayment system to prevent false billing for air, therefore ensuring total meter accuracy and accurate billing.

Dr Ian Smith, Managing Director at Universal Metering, said: "The SmartMeter Prepayment™ system concept was originally developed to satisfy the needs of Utility companies for guaranteed revenue capture from more accurate billing. Today, prepayment electricity and gas meters are relatively common place but mechanical water meters that already exist, limit true and fair means of prepayment due to common inaccuracies, poor performance and high failure levels. Electronic non-moving parts water metering on the other hand makes Water Prepayment possible."

"The unique SmartMeter Prepayment design system provides unrivalled and none deviating accuracy for the Utility Company whilst providing the customer with an accurate and lasting meter, built to protect against grit and particle damage which can also effect the reading."

"We initially looked at getting the SmartMeter Prepayment™ manufactured overseas to bring competitiveness through lower cost components and labour, but due to the nature of the product, quality is of paramount importance and we felt that the logistical and communication risks concerned with dealing with a company thousands of miles away were just too high. To ensure build quality and product longevity the decision was made to establish a manufacturing base in the UK."

"Stadium Electronics, a electronic manufacturing services provider with two UK sites and a wholly owned site in China offers a unique proposition that allows us to reap the security, quality and time-to-market benefits of UK manufacturing, whilst also accessing competitive tooling and lead wire production through the China operation."

"Stadium was also able to react quickly, providing electronic design support, prototyping and fast-track tooling, allowing the first batch of SmartMeters to be manufactured in just 12 weeks from the initial quotation."

Tony Inskip, Commercial Director at Stadium Electronics said: ““Offshore manufacturing isn’t as appealing as it was six or seven years ago. The Dollar and Euro rates have increased the cost of manufacturing overseas significantly and forced UK OEMs to review their manufacturing strategy in a race to keep costs under control in these testing times. Our choice of manufacturing sites - strategically positioned in the North at Hartlepool and Midlands in Rugby, as well as our offshore facility in the Guangdong province of China – allows production to be tailored to geographical, technology and scheduling requirements providing a best-fit solution for our customers.”

“The SmartMeter Prepayment™ System is a perfect example of this. The PCBs are manufactured in Rugby, plastics tooling and lead wires in China and final assembly box build and test at Hartlepool. Our proven business model at Stadium is based on a partnership approach, as we become an extension of the customers’ business and with the project managed out of Hartlepool, which is in close proximity to the Universal Metering offices, their Engineers have ongoing access to the production cell at Stadium.”

This year the Government announced a £7bn plan to phase in gas and electricity Smart Metering to all UK homes by 2020. Dr Smith commented on the announcement: “As the world recognises the wider opportunities for Smart Metering in energy management, Universal Metering is moving forward with plans to take the SmartMeter Prepayment™ System into additional global markets where water management is as critical as energy management.”

Tony Inskip added: “Stadium’s value proposition in electronics, plastics and ‘best-fit’ approach offers OEMs economies of scale through a single source supplier and manufacturing partner, enabling quicker time to market benefits and tighter quality control – a key benefit to products such as the SmartMeter Prepayment™ Water Metering System.”

**Further information:**

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## Notes to Editors

### **Universal Metering**

SEDGFIELD based Universal Metering is part of the Universal Group and has over 20 years experience in the water metering industry.

The company was formed in 2003 and employs over 30 staff including design engineers and in-country engineering teams. Universal Metering, in addition to SmartMeter Prepayment, provides metering solutions to Utilities utilizing their unique metering technology, AMR communication products and Remote valve systems, through excellence and professionalism.

### **SmartMeter Prepayment™ System**

The System's hardware consists of three core elements, an Internal Unit, External Unit and the fully electronic Water Meter.

The Internal Unit, which can be situated in any convenient location inside the home or business, provides wireless communication by radio with the meter and control valve housed within the External Unit. It displays the customer's tariff and credit status, the volume of water relating to this credit and indicates any potential leakage. The customer unique Smart Card enables credit to be uploaded to the system and also facilitates the transfer of metering data between the customer and the Utility.

The External Unit, is situated at the boundary to the customer premises and is enclosed in robust, moulded anti-tamper housing. It is the heart of the customer's unit managing credit level, current water usage and usage for the previous 6 months, leakage history, tamper events and crucially, the status of the valve. It does this by using the state of the art electronics and RF technologies. The External Unit communicates wirelessly with the Internal Unit, updating the customer's information and ensuring a two-way live feed of information.

The Meter itself is a fully electronic none moving parts water meter that offers tried and tested technology, ensuring the whole system is based on integrity and reliability.

The innovative system offers the customer and Utility non-intrusive wireless and remote control technology, two-way communication, accurate billing and more effective management of water usage and budgeting.

[www.universalmetering.co.uk](http://www.universalmetering.co.uk)

### **Stadium Electronics**

Part of Stadium Group plc, Stadium Electronics operates from manufacturing sites in Hartlepool, Rugby and China providing Electronic Manufacturing Services (EMS) from pcb assembly and test to full product build, global procurement and logistics.

Stadium Group plc incorporates Stadium Electronics, Stadium Power and Stadium Asia and employs over 1000 worldwide. Annual turnover in 2008 was £47m.

Stadium Group plc floatation onto the London stock market took place in 1996

There is no association to Stadium Plastics Ltd, also on Brenda Road, Hartlepool. Stadium Plastics Ltd was originally part of the Group but was sold in 2001.

[www.stadium-plc.com](http://www.stadium-plc.com)  
[www.stadium.co.uk](http://www.stadium.co.uk)