

New year new beginnings, Zesa comes up with an 'accurate' billing system

by Staff reporter

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[Zesa Holdings](#) has completed upgrading its billing system under an initiative aimed at ensuring electricity customers receive accurate bills.

The power utility immediately promised customers a better year ahead, saying inaccurate bills would be a thing of the past.

Zesa spokesperson Mr Shepherd Mandizvidza told The Sunday Mail last week that the new system would be in operation in Harare by the end of this month. The rest of the country would benefit by the end of March.

"The Zimbabwe Electricity Distribution Company, a subsidiary of Zesa Holdings, has already completed upgrading its billing system and has already started migrating to the new version of the billing system beginning December," he said.

"It is anticipated that by end of January 2012, all the necessary test runs would have been completed and Harare, being a pilot phase, will be running on a new billing system and the other five regions would be running on the new billing system by the end of the first quarter of 2012."

Mr Mandizvidza said precautionary tests have been taken for the system with positive results having been recorded.

"ZETDC has been diligently testing and fine-tuning its billing system to ensure that it performs to the expectations of the organisation and its customers.

"The results have been so pleasing that concerns of all the stakeholders have been well addressed."

He said Zesa Holdings remains concerned by the failure of consumers to pay electricity tariffs.

The utility is owed more than US\$500 million.

"Zesa is currently owed about US\$537 million by all categories of customers nationwide.

"Consumers are urged to also play their part by paying their electricity bills to, subsequently, enable Zesa Holdings to fulfil its mandate of achieving security of electricity supply through the payment of its import bill, procurement of spares for infrastructural maintenance, purchase of coal for its thermal stations and payment of the Zambezi River Authority for water for Kariba South Hydropower Station, among other critical areas of need."

The spokesperson said the power utility is ready to switch to prepaid electricity meters once the State Procurement Board finalises the procurement process for the gadgets.

He said it was also keen to introduce the prepayment system to eliminate the non-payment of

tariffs.

"By virtue of their technological mechanism, smart prepaid meters are advantageous in that they enable customers to manage their own electricity consumption while, at the same time, enabling Zesa to cut on operational costs like meter reading, disconnections and other related functions.

"Smart meters are also a convenient way of recovering the revenue that is locked with defaulting customers as it is also possible for some units to be dedicated towards a customer's debit until it is cleared while allowing them to survive as well."