

## **J.D. Power Reports:**

### **Awareness and Participation in Electric Utility Offerings Increases Overall Satisfaction**

**WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 23 July 2013**—While many electric utility companies provide programs to help their customers manage their energy costs, a large percentage of their customers are not aware of the programs available to them, according to the J.D. Power 2013 Consumer Engagement Study<sup>SM</sup> released today.

The inaugural study measures the level of residential customers' engagement with their electric utility's programs, products and services, and is based on responses from customers of electric utilities throughout the United States and Canada. The study also provides electric utilities with insights regarding customer awareness, familiarity and usage of their utility's programs, products and services; ease of enrollment and participation in these offerings; and the impact these offerings have on the overall customer experience.

Data from the J.D. Power 2013 Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup> shows that overall satisfaction is highest among customers who participate in one or more of their electric utility's offerings at 679 on a 1,000-point scale. Satisfaction declines to 642 among those who are aware of the offerings, but have chosen to not participate in them, and declines even further to 582 among those who are unaware of any offerings from their utility.

"Creating awareness and motivating customers to engage with new energy programs, products and services is a huge opportunity for utilities to improve customer satisfaction," said Jeff Conklin, senior director of the energy utility practice at J.D. Power. "Customer satisfaction is higher when consumers are merely aware of programs, and then satisfaction increases substantially with each additional program a consumer joins."

Customers were asked about their awareness of 29 various programs, products and services commonly offered by utilities. Study findings show that 19 percent of customers are not aware of any of the programs being offered by their utility provider. Electric utility company programs with the highest awareness rates are e-bill or electronic bill statements and payments (53%); in-home energy audit (28%); and awareness of rebates on Energy Star appliances (28%).

Among customers who are familiar with their utility's programs and services, the highest usage levels are for e-bill (43%); high-efficiency light bulb rebates/discounts (27%); and household electricity usage comparison tools (26%).

Based on customer awareness, familiarity, and the impact of programs, the following are the most engaging programs offered by electric utilities:

- E-bills
- Level or equal pay plan
- In-home energy audit
- Rebates on Energy Star appliances
- High-efficiency light bulb rebates/discounts

The following brands perform particularly well in overall customer engagement: APS; Clark Public Utilities; Salt River Project; Seattle City Light; and SMUD.

“Only about a dozen utilities excel at offering a wide variety of options for their customers,” said Conklin. “While many other utilities do a good job, far too many utilities lag behind in engaging with their customers.”

According to the study, 21 percent of customers indicate that their home is equipped with a smart meter, most frequently citing avoiding on-site meter readings; more accurate bills; the ability to track energy use online; and more control of home energy usage as benefits of the device.

The 2013 Consumer Engagement Study is based on more than 27,000 responses from residential customers of 131 electric utilities that represent many of the industry’s leading electric utility brands. The study was fielded in April and May 2013.

#### **About J.D. Power**

J.D. Power is a global marketing information services company providing performance improvement, social media and customer satisfaction insights and solutions. The company’s quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power has offices in North/South America, Europe and Asia Pacific. For more information on car reviews and ratings, car insurance, health insurance, cell phone ratings, and more, please visit [JDPower.com](http://JDPower.com). J.D. Power is a business unit of McGraw Hill Financial.

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