



CONNECTIONS SUMMIT

◆ ELECTRICITIES

Plugging Into Customer Needs: Improving Utility Engagement and Satisfaction

March 5, 2025

Breakout Session #4B

PUBLIC POWER'S

VISION

To be and be recognized as the leader in providing superior service and innovative energy solutions to communities and customers in our region.

Public Power Measure: In annual Retail Customer Survey, percentage of ratings as “Good” or better for the question “*How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your utility?*” within the statewide public power sample.

Goal: Achieve the top score in the region amongst the IOU and electric co-op scores.

Overview

- Public power utilities play a unique role in delivering affordable and reliable energy to municipal communities in North Carolina.
- Customer satisfaction survey data from 2017 to 2024 highlights strong customer satisfaction levels.
- Today's focus is on key trends and offering recommendations to boost customer engagement and satisfaction.

Key Findings

Customer Segmentation

Green Innovators

Strongly value sustainability and lead the way in saving energy with technology.

Tech-Savvy

Receptive to changing energy habits and using technology but need to be shown how to do it without sacrificing comfort.

Movable Middle

Not complete rejectors of saving energy and face few barriers but lack interest in technology.

Energy Indifferent

Lower levels of environmental concern and low interest in saving energy, keep their energy needs simple and want to be left alone.



MORE INTEREST

LESS INTEREST

How much interest customers have in using technology to save energy

Customer Segments and Satisfaction

	Energy Indifferent	Moveable Middle	Green Innovators	Tech Savvy
Public Power				
Percent of Customers	17%	13%	23%	48%
Overall Satisfaction	70%	73%	76%	72%
Opportunity	5.0%	3.5%	5.5%	13.0%

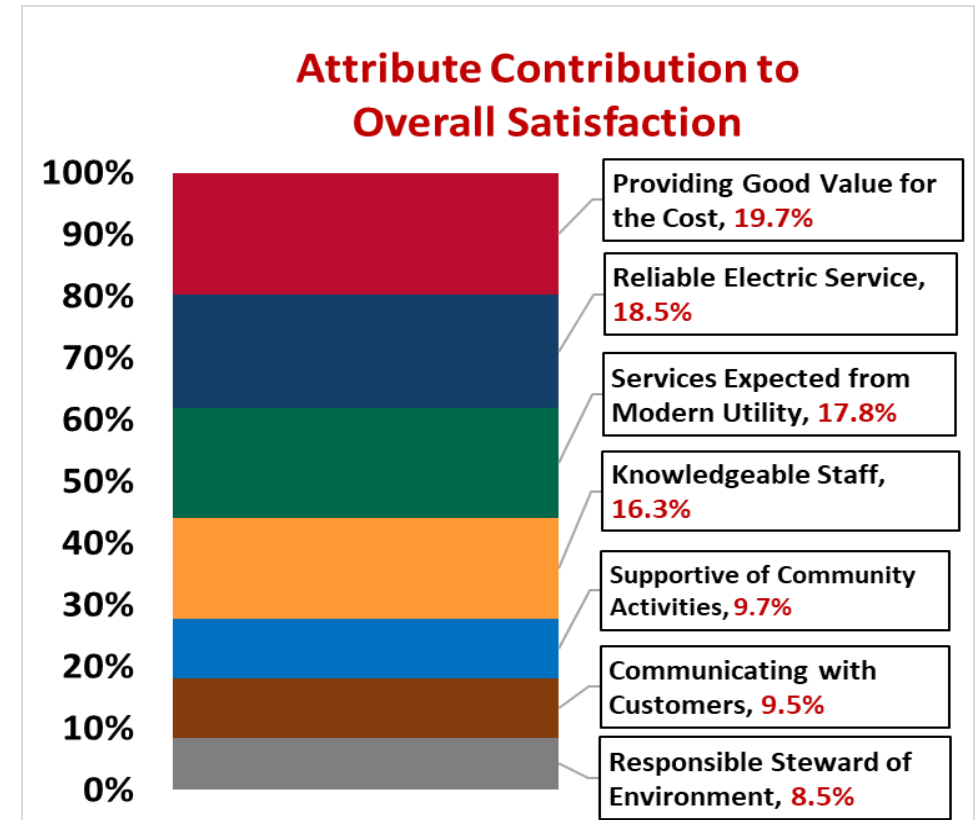
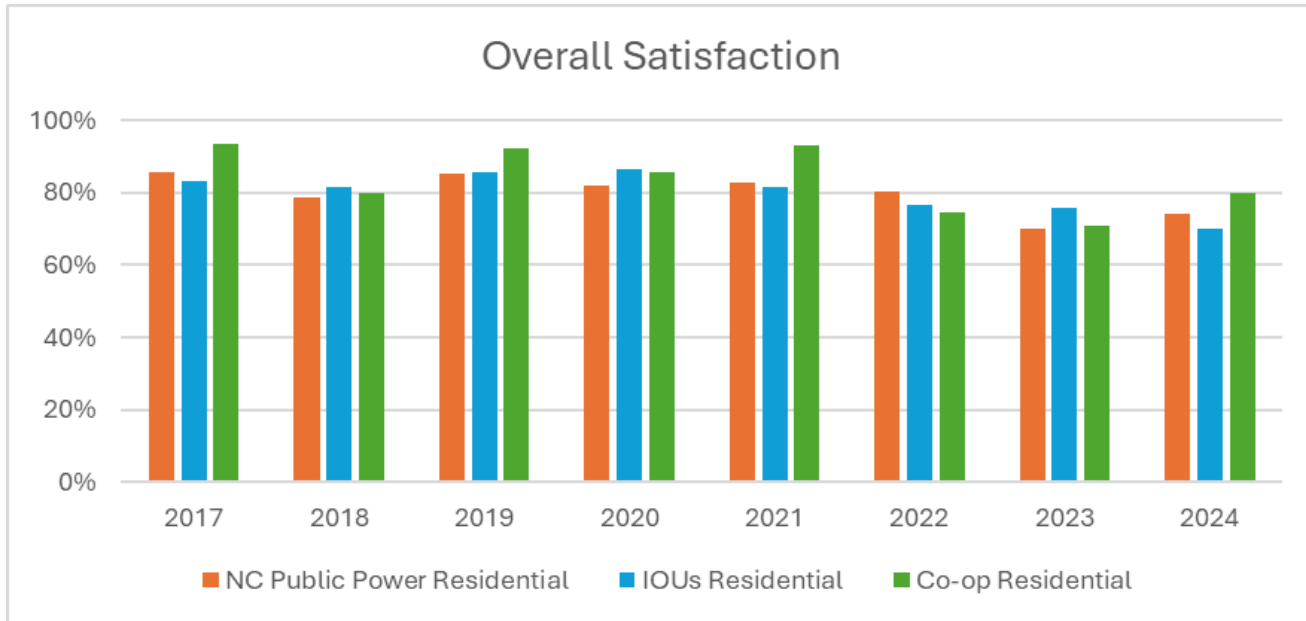
	Energy Indifferent	Moveable Middle	Green Innovators	Tech Savvy
Competitors				
Percent of Customers	19%	14%	22%	45%
Overall Satisfaction	71%	76%	72%	72%

Customer Satisfaction

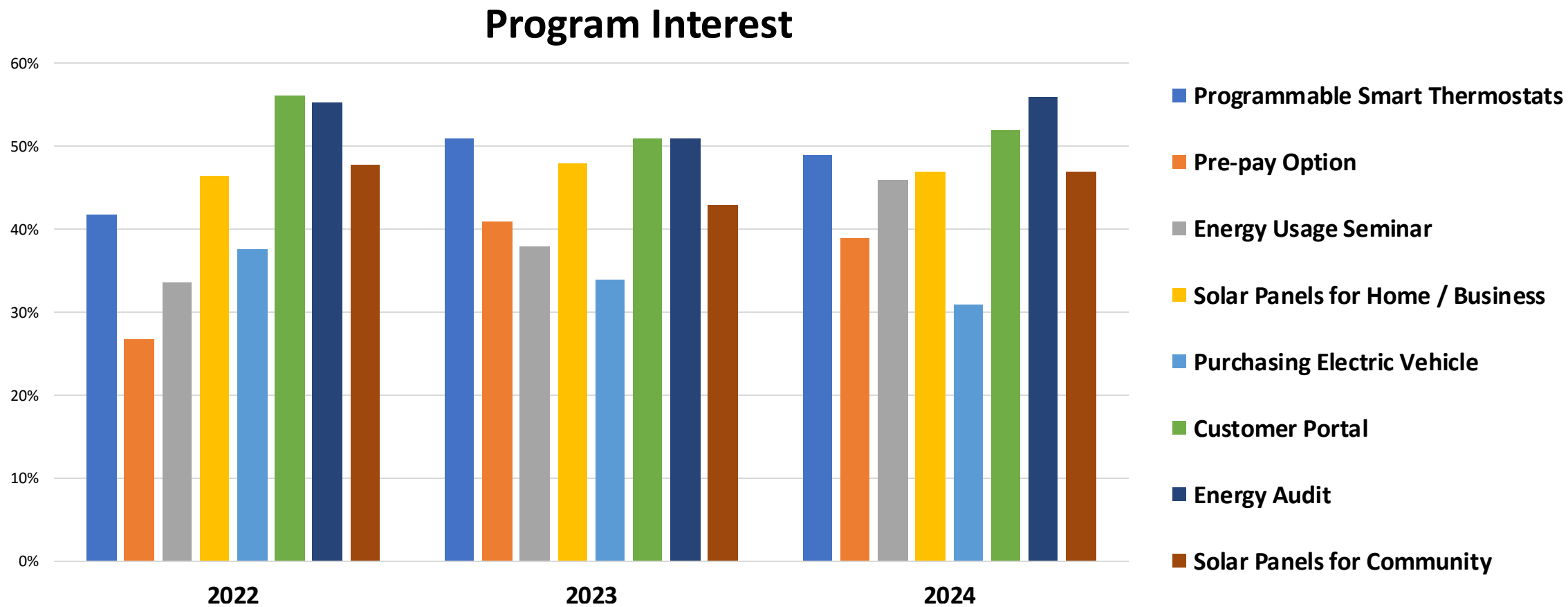
- To improve customer satisfaction, you need to first understand what drives satisfaction perspectives of your customers.
- The research shows there are two drivers that consistently influence customer satisfaction:
 - **Delivering good value**
 - **Reliable electric service**
- 2024 research also shows there is a new primary driver for public power customers: **providing services and products customers expect from a modern utility.**

Overall Customer Satisfaction

Public power customer satisfaction improved from 70% in 2023 to 74% in 2024.



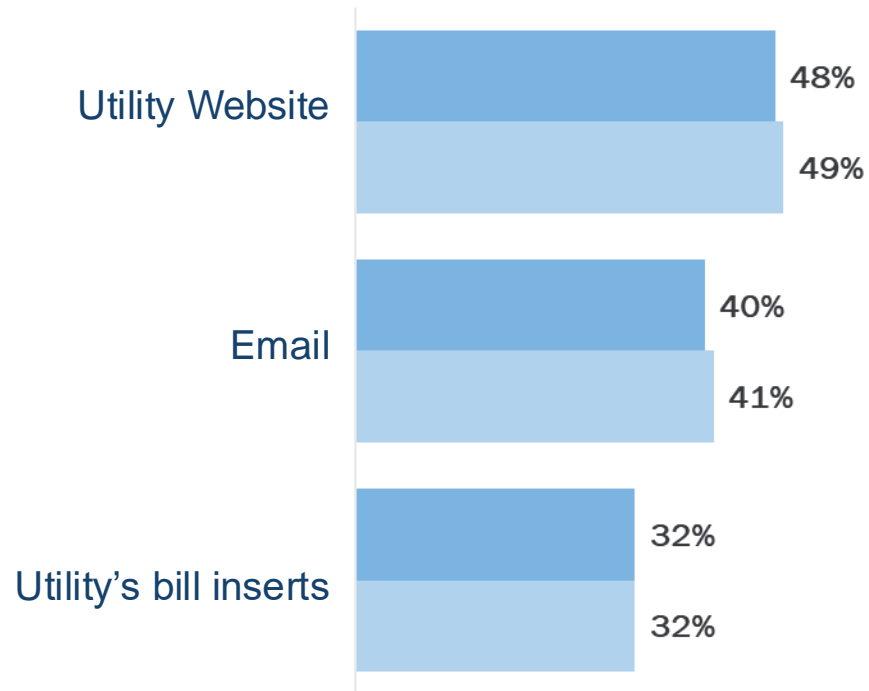
Program Interest



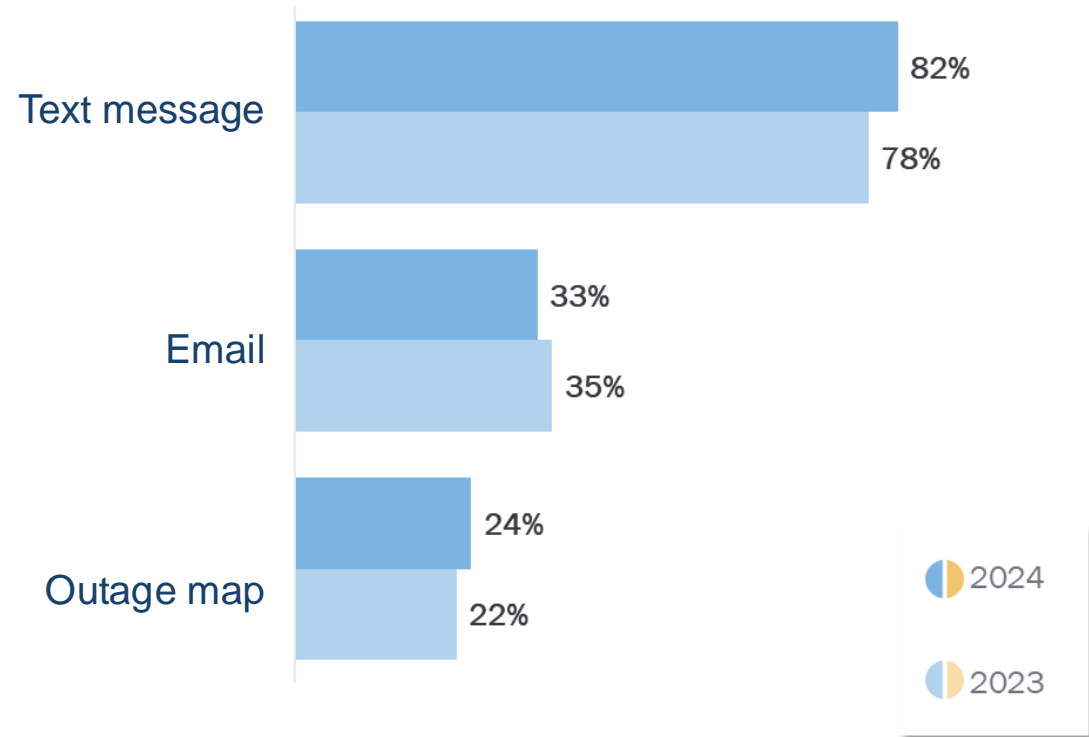
Communication Preferences

RESIDENTIAL
2024/2023

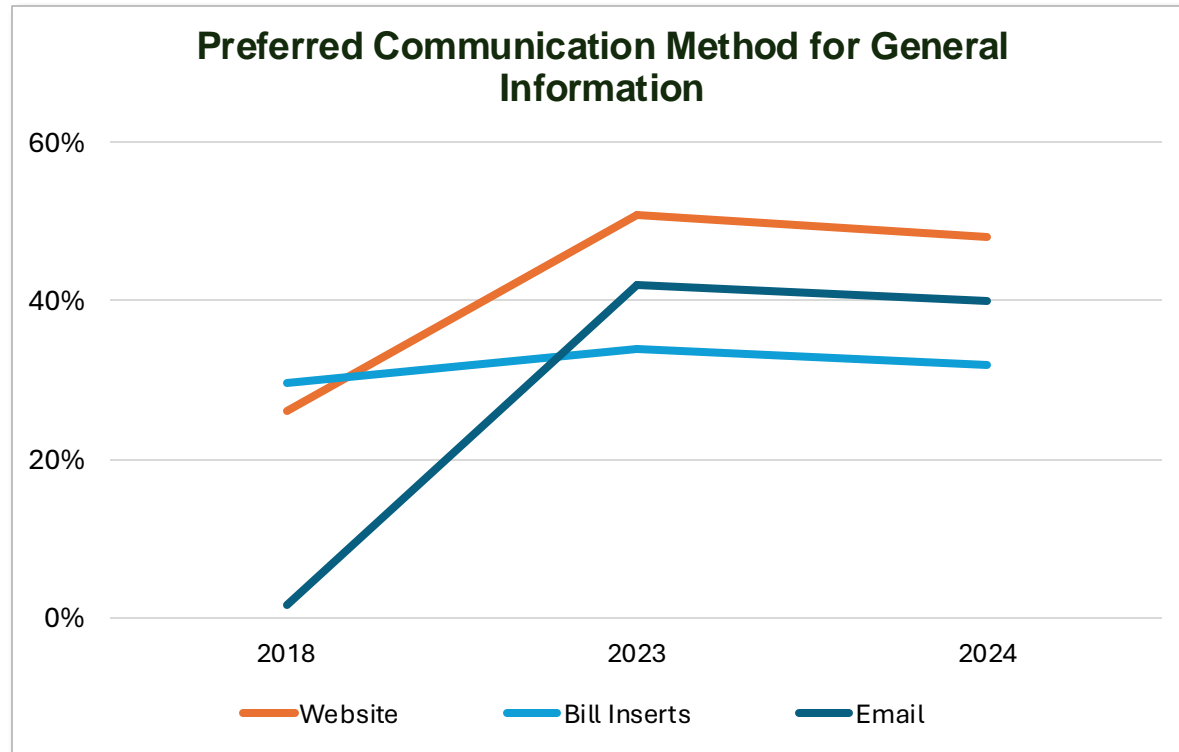
Q. Where would you prefer to look for information about your utility?



Q. And how do you prefer to receive outage information from your utility?



Communication Preferences Over Time



There has been a dramatic increase in the number of customers that ranked “email” as their preferred method of communication from their utility over the last few years. As you can see from this chart, **“email” has increased 38% since 2018.**

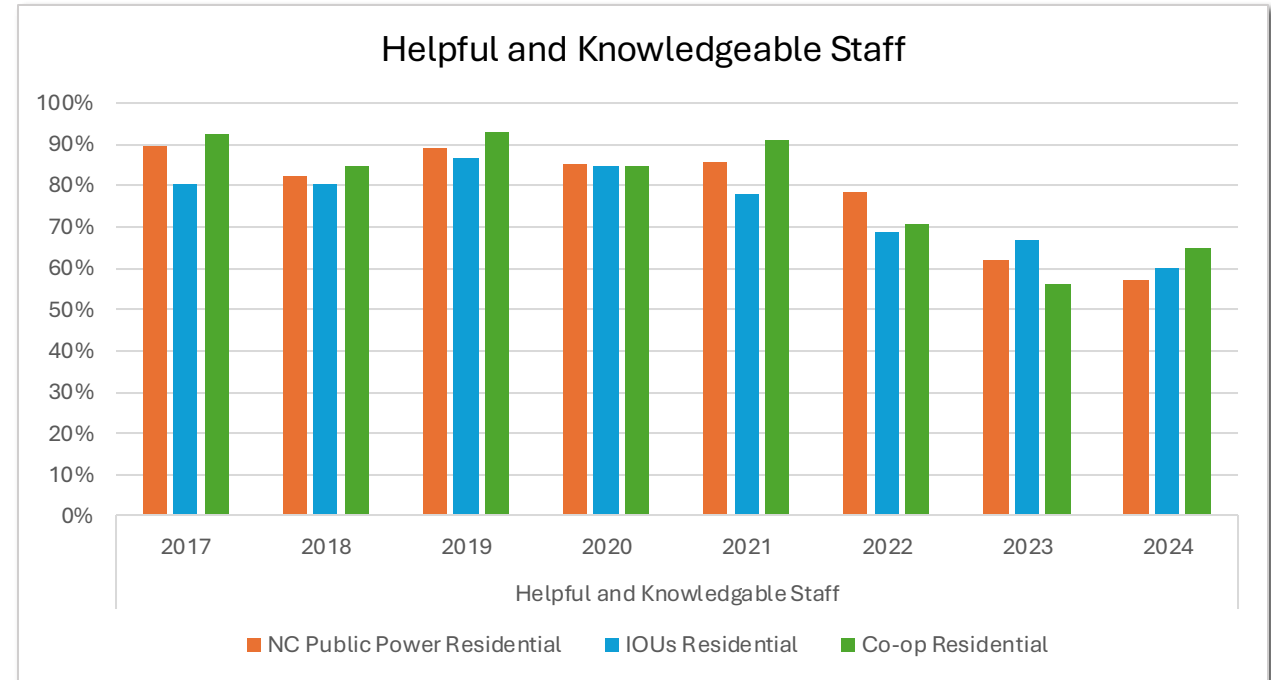
QUESTION

How many of you have considered an email strategy for your utility?

Strengthen Staff Knowledge

A decline in satisfaction with staff knowledge and responsiveness from 2023 to 2024 highlights the need for improved customer service training.

Investing in technical expertise and providing access to available training in customer service skills and basic energy efficiency and bill structures will help address these concerns and increase trust and customer satisfaction.

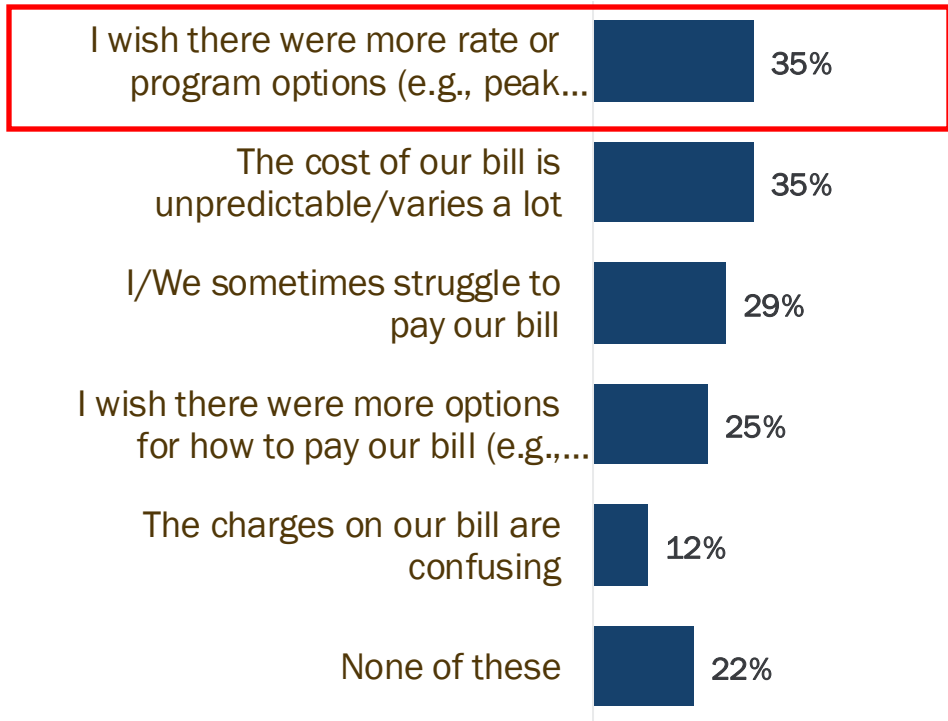


Understanding Customer Rate Knowledge

Electricity Bill Attributes

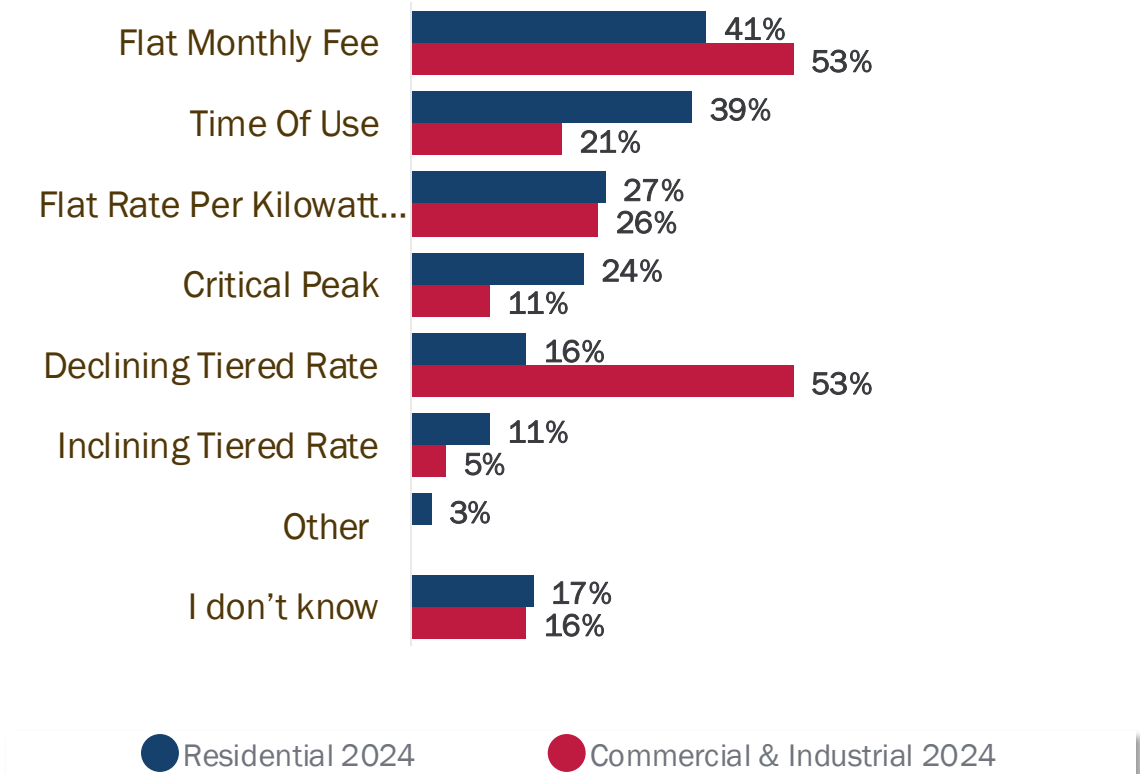
Q. Which of the following apply to you?

Public Power



Rate Options

Q. Which of the following options, if any, interest you?



Recommendations

Recommendations Overview

How do you translate all this data into improved customer satisfaction?

- Even if you haven't recently participated in a Retail Customer Survey, you can use the Public Power benchmarks as a guide.
- Do an internal audit of your programs, services, communication capabilities, current technologies, and staff skillset and bandwidth.
- Also do some informal information gathering on customer awareness of offerings
- Compare audit results to the Public Power benchmarks and **look for the gaps.**

Expand Customer Programs

- Research shows “**providing products and services I expect of a modern utility**” is a new key driver for customer satisfaction.
- Leverage customer segmentation insights to develop targeted programs that address specific customer needs.
- Increase interest in digital platforms and energy-saving initiatives.
- Expand programs like smart thermostats and energy audits.

Support offered by ElectriCities

Helping our communities serve their residents.

We provide a number of services to the residents in our member communities. From energy education to energy-saving programs, our goal is to deliver the knowledge and resources to help people lower their home energy bills.

Check out the list below, or contact us to request more information.



Energy Audits

Our energy auditors visit homes in our member communities and provide guidance on ways to cut energy costs.

Energy Savings

Load management, energy audits, and rebate programs help you improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Energy Education

Our energy experts give advice on the best ways to save money on your home energy bill.

Energy Bill Forecast

Use this tool to see how the upcoming weather in your area could impact your energy bill.

[CREATE YOUR FORECAST](#) ▶

TempTracker365™

Use this tool to see historical weather trends in your community.

[START EXPLORING](#) ▶



Energy Saving Products

Purchase energy saving products like energy-efficient light bulbs, air filters, filter whistles, and more.

Public Power Example

The screenshot shows the website for the NRLP Connect Mobile App. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the title "NRLP Connect Mobile App" and contact information: "Service, Billing and Outages: 828-264-3671" and "Email: nrlp-csr@appstate.edu". Below this is a sidebar menu with the following items: Forms & Applications, Start/Stop Service, Billing & Payment Options, Prepaid Service, Green Power Program, Customer-Owned Generation, Retail Rate Schedule, AMI Meters, Customer Correspondence, and Mobile App (highlighted in yellow). The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: "Home / Customer Services / NRLP Connect Mobile App". The primary message is "NEW! Updated in 2024 to better serve you." followed by a call to action: "Download our mobile app, **NRLP Connect**, to take control of your energy usage and easily manage your account from any device!". A list of benefits includes: "View and pay your bill", "Track your energy usage by day, week, or month", "Get energy usage details, such as average daily electricity consumption", "Set up notifications", "Go paperless", and "Contact our office". A footer note states: "Remember to update your NRLP Connect app to the most current version. For information about terms of use and protection of your data, please review our [privacy policy](#)." At the bottom, there are two buttons: "ANDROID APP ON Google play" and "Download on the App Store".

New River Light & Power has implemented an app to help their customers manage their energy usage and billing.

This makes it easy for customers to access the information they need in a way that works for them.

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Public Power Example

AYDEN

Our Town | Departments | Government | Resources | Pay My Bill

Utilities Customer Service

Information Resources

Public Power

The Town of Ayden is a Public Power provider that owns and operates its own electric distribution system. Ayden shares ownership with 31 other municipal power providers in electric generating plants, both nuclear and coal that transmit current to municipal-owned substations. The Town then distributes the power to its customers.

Reduce Your Electricity Bill

Energy Audit

The Energy Department will come to customers' homes free of charge and find ways to reduce energy consumption and increase conservation.

Online Savings Resources

Learn more tips on how to save on your energy bill, analyze your electric bill, and view energy forecasts by creating a custom profile for your home.

Access Our Energy Calculator & More!

Contact the Town of Ayden Customer Service at (252) 481-5817.

Video Resources

The following videos provide great information about Ayden's Public Power service.

Track Your Energy Usage

Tyler Smart Meters Walk Through Video

Why is my electric bill so high?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwynaHNjHgM&feature=youtu.be>

What is NCEMPA?

What is Public Power?

Know Your Meter: Analog or Digital?

CFLs: Buy One and Save Big!

Other Customer Program Snapshots

Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) LIHEAP smart thermostat initiative:

- Engaged with their income-qualified customers, targeting them with an energy-efficient smart thermostat offer.
- They were able to successfully identify and engage with pre-qualified targeted Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) customers and drive them to a limited time offer for a free smart thermostat to save energy and money.
- The ComEd pilot resulted in **over four times the industry average for overall program conversion**

DTE Energy *SmartCurrents Program*:

- Motivated residential customers to enroll in a variable peak rate by including a free ecobee smart thermostat.
- Nearly doubled the number of active customers with ecobee smart thermostats in 2019.
- Estimated 1 kW of savings on average per household during critical peak events.

Strengthen Staff Knowledge

- **Enhance customer service training programs.**
- **Provide regular customer service training opportunities to strengthen staff knowledge and increase customer satisfaction.**
 - ElectriCities offers a suite of customer service training opportunities
- **Implement customer feedback loops and promote knowledge-sharing across teams.**
 - Example: Target specific services you offer & task CSRs with gathering awareness information.

Key Areas to Focus on

- Effective internal and external communication strategies
- Programs and services your utility offers
- Conflict resolution skills
- How to manage and prevent call escalations
- Improving your utility's consistency and overall customer service
- Updating customer contact information in real-time (i.e. gathering current phone number and email address in every interaction)

Community Engagement

- Regularly participate or sponsor local events that provide face-to-face interaction with customers.
- Recognize that partnerships with area organizations also create recruitment channels which can lead to customer loyalty and a sense of pride in ownership.

Public Power Example



Fayetteville PWC is hosting a community event to provide information to customers, share tips, learn about managing energy usage, etc.

While you don't have to create your own event, having some easy to digest educational materials to share with customers at in-person events is a great way to connect with your customers.

Experience the Annual (P)ower & (W)ater (C)onservation Expo!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The 2025 Expo is set for March 28, 2025.



Admission is **FREE & Open to All**

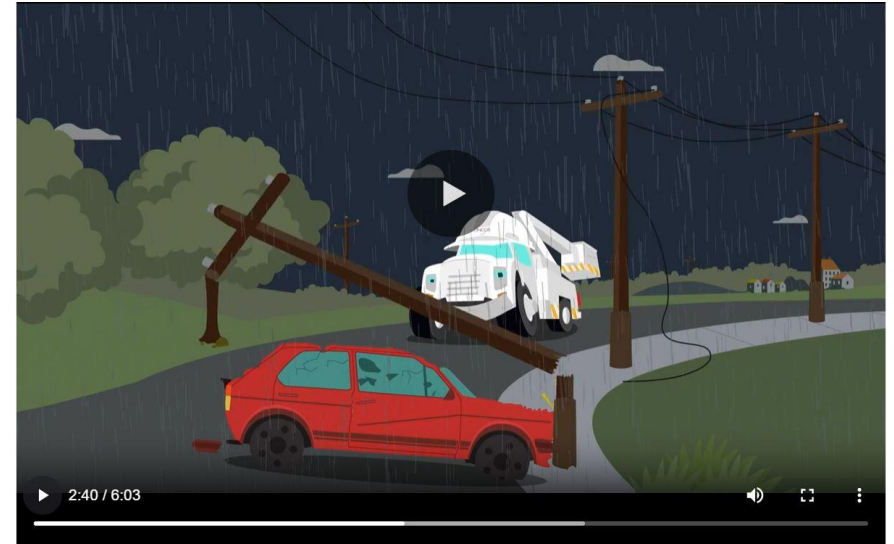
Our premier **FREE** event gives you the power to save lots on your utility bills – with experts on hand, demos, useful giveaways, and more, to help you conserve. You can speak with customer service representatives, incentive program specialists, and other PWC experts including Lineworkers!

- FREE conservation goodies, including LED bulbs.
- Pick up a Fat Trapper and help us Cease the Grease.
- Visit with our Watersheds staff to learn how we're protecting our drinking water quality.
- Chat with our Water Reclamation Facility Maintenance group about keeping wipes out of the pipes.
- Learn about job opportunities and how to do business with PWC.
- Bring the kids! We'll have conservation resources for them, too.
- Learn about our online Energy Resource Center that helps you monitor/manage your energy usage to reduce consumption for significant savings.
- Register to win a bill credit.

Other Customer Program Snapshots

ONCOR Super Safe Kids Program

- A program designed to help kids learn how to stay safe around electricity [[Promo Video](#)]
- Road show educates 250,000 kids in 50 districts annually
 - Super Safe Kids assembly
 - Career day presentations
 - Live Line Safety demos
 - Touch-a-truck appearances
- Digital experiences for students, parents, and teachers
- Partnerships with Nickelodeon, PBS, Children's Theaters



[Animated educational videos](#)
run on PBS daily

Targeted Communication Strategies

- Expand communication channels and increase use of digital communication platforms.
- Regularly update your website and monitor traffic to ensure customers are finding the information they need. Use email and bill inserts to promote service offerings and reach a wide audience.
- Implement an outage management system to provide customers with real-time updates on outages and other emergency events.
- Provide real-time outage updates through text messages and emails.

Public Power Example

Town of Clayton recently launched a new Outage Management System (OMS)

- Customer feedback from multiple platforms let the Town of Clayton know that they wanted a better and faster way to learn about outages and other emergency situations.
- Key challenge was ensuring they had accurate customer contact information. They took a strategic approach and included:
 - Incentivized data collection
 - User-friendly online form
 - Proactive communication via multiple channels (bill inserts, website, social media, and in-person events)
 - Customer service interactions
- Over 1,200 customers provided updated contact information within the first 6 weeks

Other Customer Program Snapshots

Cobb EMC *EV Program*

- Developed a Multi-Phase EV Education Program
- Identified that 37% of their customers were somewhat to very likely to consider purchasing an electric vehicle and 53% wanted the utility to offer an EV rate.
- Comprehensive educational campaign included:
 - EV seminars for live educational events,
 - EV experience events with test drives, and a
 - Check-out program allowing consumers to “check-out” a fleet EV overnight.
- Developed a time-of-use rate, NiteFlex, that offers free overnight home charging (up to 400 kWh) between midnight to 6 a.m.

Delaware Electric Cooperative (DEC)

Beat the Peak

- Program developed to provide customers a way to keep their rates down
- Communicates with customers via a Beat the Peak app, email notifications, or text messages
- In addition to notifications, the app sends tips to customers on best ways to save on energy costs.
- The program also sits on the DEC website where a live counter tracks the all-time total savings for customers that participate in the program.

Customer Education

THE CUSTOMER'S
PERCEPTION

**IS YOUR
REALITY**



Customer Education

- **Customers don't know what they don't know**
- **They look to their utility to tell them what they need to know**
- **Education is an ongoing process via multiple channels**
- **Different customer segments need different messages**
- **Remember the “Who, What, Why, When, and How” when educating customers on a program or service.**

Customer Education: ElectriCities Tools & Resources

Value of Public Power Resources

Public power has an impressive story to tell. Use the resources below to educate your stakeholders, advocate for public power, and amplify your messages about the benefits of being a public power community.



RADIO RESOURCES

Click for information about our radio resources.



VIDEO ASSETS

Click for information about our video assets.



DIGITAL ADVERTISING SAMPLES

Click for digital advertising examples.



PHOTO ASSETS

Click here to view and download photography for use.



SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Click to view and download our monthly social media toolkits.



SPECIALTY TOOLKITS

Click for information about our specialty toolkits.



ELECTRICITIES COMMS. PROGRAMS

Click to learn more about Comms. programs offered by ElectriCities.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click here for additional resources for promoting public power.



Customer Education

One area that customers frequently need to be educated on is billing and rates.

- When you look to implement a new rate or make a change to your rate, the most important thing you can do is explain and educate your customer on what it means to them.
- Customers often don't understand the difference between the different rate options
- While rate calculators go a long way, don't forget to provide customers with examples and case studies of what they can expect.

Rate Design Best Practices

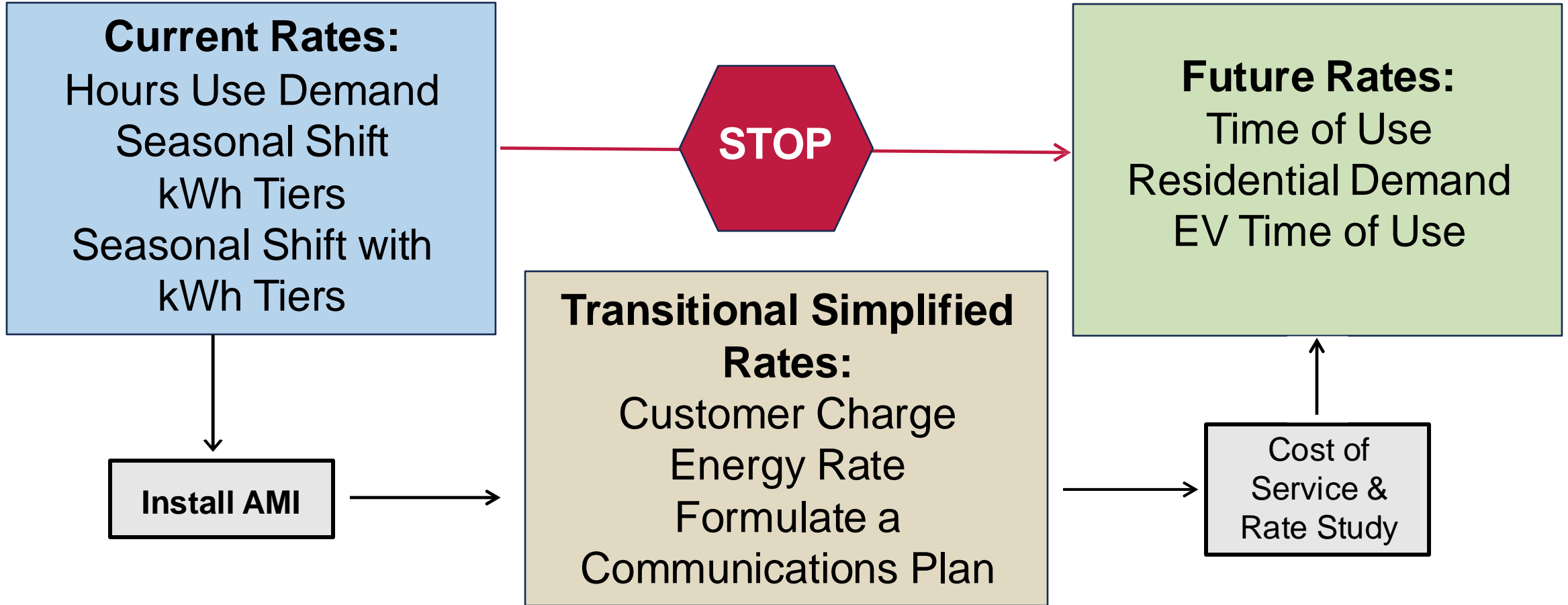
You Contact Your Customer EVERY Month

- **Your bill is the most direct contact you'll ever have with your customers**
 - Rates are at the heart of your bill
 - Do you have a fee schedule or Word version tariffs
 - When a customer is assigned a rate schedule what defines why they're there
- **Your bill tells a lot about your interaction with your customers**
 - Can a typical customer understand what they're being billed for...for any service?
 - Can a college educated customer calculate their bill?
 - Can a High School educated customer calculate their bill?
 - Can your customer service employees calculate a bill?
- **Are Charges broken down by line item on your bill**
 - Customer or Facilities Charge
 - Energy Charges (Do you have tier listed separately)
 - If you have seasonal changes...Do you notify your customers?
- **Is customer consumption history available on their bill**
 - High bill complaints...what if a customer knew what they used in the same month last year?

Future Focused Rates

- **Getting from where we are Today...to where the Industry will be in the future**
- **Where will the Energy Industry be in 10 years?**
 - Solar
 - Electric Vehicles
 - Conservation
 - Changes in wholesale power contracts metering/billing terms
- **But what about other changes that are occurring in the future (How permanent can they be?)**
 - Return of incandescent light bulbs
 - Conservation standards for dishwashers, stoves, HVAC and other home appliances going away

Moving from Current to Future Rates



Timeline 3 – 5 Years to move Residential & Small GS

Questions ???



2025 Connections Summit
Breakout Session 4B Survey



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