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Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative Releases “2011 State of the Consumer Report”

Study sheds light on what residential electric consumers want; sees American energy literacy poised for growth

SAN DIEGO - January 31, 2011- The Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative (SGCC), an independent non-profit group working to foster mutual understanding between industry and consumers to support next-generation energy infrastructure, will release the “2011 State of the Consumer Report” at the Partnering for Progress Symposium, 12:30 to 5 p.m. today at the San Diego Convention Center. The report examines consumers’ attitudes toward their electrical needs and smart grid initiatives and suggests an industry on the cusp of transformation.

The report builds on a series of focus groups sponsored by the SGCC in October 2010. The comprehensive meta-analysis of more than 80 source documents, representing over 25,000 pages, draws parallels to the introduction of the internet. Just as computer literacy has expanded exponentially, the study sees American energy literacy poised for a similar leap forward.

The findings identify a knowledge gap with few “energy literate” Americans, yet reinforce that many are open to learning more and some are willing to become energy champions. “Such knowledge,” said SGCC Executive Director Patty Durand, “can help utilities and tech vendors to provide the types of energy choices that would be welcomed by consumers and to better understand the needs and options for infrastructure investments in particular communities.”

The study also found that personal values and priorities more accurately define consumer segments than factors such as age or income. “The study suggests that consumer *motivations* are more predictive of a willingness to adopt smart energy practices than traditional demographics,” says report author Judith Schwartz of To the Point.

The commissioning of the report by a multi-stakeholder collaborative reflects an expanded effort by utilities to invest in formal listening efforts to understand consumer priorities. The presence of consumer advocacy groups among the report’s sponsors indicates an evolving role in the way consumers participate in the energy process, too.

“The goal of this study was to analyze valuable research made available by SGCC member organizations and others and to present the common findings and trends as actionable insights,” said Schwartz. It will also help set SGCC goals for 2011 and beyond, at the direction of the collaborative’s membership of consumer and environmental groups, utilities, researchers and technology vendors.

“Delivering this report was a top priority for the organization’s first year,” said Durand. “With this data, all parties can access a sound baseline examination of existing consumer resources and draw lessons that will aid our mission to listen, educate and collaborate toward our mutual goal: a consumer-friendly, consumer-safe, modernized American power system.”

The report will be released at the group’s first “Partnering for Progress Symposium” today at the San Diego Convention Center and available at www.smartgridcc.org after the event.

About the Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative (SGCC)

The SGCC is a consumer focused non-profit organization aiming to promote the understanding and benefits of modernized electrical systems among all stakeholders in the United States. Membership is open to all consumer and environmental advocates, technology vendors, research scientists, and electric utilities for sharing in research, best practices, and collaborative efforts of the group. Join @ www.smartgridcc.org.

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