Utilities are re-thinking their approach to customer engagement, CIS, and customer service strategies from the ground up. Closer, more interactive relations with consumers and C&I customers across channels means higher levels of demand response participation, increased energy efficiency, more effective demand management, and more satisfied customers - resulting in higher returns on smart grid investments.

To help utilities meet this challenge, the Smart Grid Observer will conduct the **2nd Annual Customer Engagement Virtual Summit 2014** on Thursday, January 23. The full-day, 100% online conference will provide practical guidance from industry experts who are helping utilities achieve new levels of excellence in customer service and engagement in the emerging smart grid world. The platform allows attendees to interact and learn directly from industry leaders without the expense of travel or time out of office.

Patty Durand, Executive Director of the Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative, is scheduled to discuss the Collaborative’s latest findings regarding customer awareness and receptiveness to smart metering and renewable energy.

She reports that the latest SGCC survey indicates that 75% of consumers in the U.S. either have never heard of the smart grid, or have heard the term but do not know what it means. Durand also notes that most consumers would be willing to spend an additional $2 to $4 each month to pay for the integration of solar PV in the energy mix.

“This Virtual Summit is a great way to get up to date on the very latest trends and market dynamics affecting customer attitudes and trigger points regarding smart energy,” says Daniel Coran, editor of the Smart Grid Observer. “We will be looking at behaviors and preferences for both the residential and the C&I market segments.”

Other speakers in the event include:

- Judith Schwartz, President and Founder, To the Point
- Harlan S. Coomes, Principal Engineer, Sacramento Municipal Utility District
- Vickie Dorris, Global Solutions Leader, Energy and Utilities Industry, IBM
- Doug Houseman, Vice President of Innovation and Technology, Enernex
- Brad Sileo, Vice President, iFactor Consulting
- Paul Wyman, General Manager, Smart Grid Solutions, Lockheed Martin
- Tim Ross, Senior Vice President, DST

Topics to be addressed include:

- How to energize customers to participate in smart grid services and programs
- Identifying consumer interests, priorities, and motivational triggers
- Proven strategies and best practices for N. American utilities to date
- Latest research findings and trends in consumer behavior and preferences
- How to engage C&I customers in demand response and other smart grid offerings
- Utilizing data analytics to drive more effective customer relationships
- The role of transactive energy (TE) in future demand response programs
- Best practices for leveraging mobile communications and social media
- Structuring agreements to keep C&I customers engaged and motivated
- Case studies and lessons learned from the field

“Participants are free to attend any session throughout the day, according to their schedule,” notes Coran. “The PowerPoint plus audio recordings of each presentation will be available for three months after the event.”

20% off early bird registration is in effect for this Virtual Summit through Friday, January 17. For more information and to register, visit http://www.smartgridobserver.com/agenda-cevs12314.htm.

About the Smart Grid Observer

The Smart Grid Observer is an industry information resource that delivers the latest information concerning key technology developments, business issues, and market trends driving the global smart grid industry. Each week, SGO delivers the latest developments to its constituency of industry stakeholders worldwide. As a service to the industry, we deliver this information on a complimentary basis. To subscribe, please visit www.smartgridobserver.com.