



For Immediate Release

E Source Ranks Electric and Gas Company IVR Systems

BOULDER, CO, July 25, 2007 — E Source reported its latest benchmark results for the performance of North American electric and gas company interactive voice response (IVR) systems.

Based on E Source market research, utility customers consistently report lower levels of satisfaction when they use an IVR compared to talking directly with a phone agent, dealing in person with an agent, or even interacting with their utility at the utility web site. This E Source research highlights an enormous difference between the quality of IVRs offered from one utility to another. The top-rated utilities in the E Source benchmark have designed their IVRs with their customers in mind, and they make it easy for their callers to find and use the automated services. Unfortunately, many more utilities provide systems that fail to consider the customer's experience and simply frustrate their customers before they opt to speak to a live phone agent or simply hang up.

The "E Source 2007 Review of North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs" assesses the IVR systems of 103 U.S. and Canadian utilities. This comprehensive report includes detailed benchmarking information that illuminates the state of utility IVRs. To gauge how successful electric and gas company IVRs are in serving residential customers, E Source researchers assessed the companies' IVRs from the customer's point of view. Many of the utilities included in the study gave the E Source research team temporary account access to enable a full assessment of their automated services. Between December 2006 and February 2007, four typical residential energy customers called the utility IVRs. They looked for and rated 11 tasks and functions that had been identified by earlier E Source research as the options residential customers most expect to find and use when they interact with a utility's IVR. New methodology made it possible for E Source to rank the IVRs on an index of usability and functionality.

This year, the top-rated electric and gas IVRs belong to Cleco Power, Florida Power & Light, Progress Energy (Florida), Sacramento Municipal Utility District, and Omaha Public Power District. This new study—the second E Source IVR review—is the largest, most detailed benchmark of electric and gas IVRs available. The first study was completed in 2004, and E Source found that IVR systems have changed significantly since that earlier review. The authors describe trends in areas such as self-service, speech recognition technology, and customer access to live agents.

Maggie Boys, a senior research associate at E Source, said, "Customer satisfaction with IVRs is a moving target. There have been some important changes to the technology in recent years aimed at improving satisfaction, and those changes are being reflected in today's electric and gas company IVRs. It's clear that utilities are refining their communications with customers, and their IVRs are a big part of that effort."

Sandy Goodwin, director of the *E Source Utility Customer Care Service*, added that "Highly rated IVRs are providing a convenient way for customers to interact with their utility, but they are also helping the utility to reduce operating expenses. Increasingly, good IVRs are key to the success of a utility's call center. The best systems highlighted by our review offered the functions that customers wanted and made those functions easy to find and to use."

Eastern U.S. KeySpan Energy and Jersey Central Power & Light have the best IVRs in the Eastern United States.

Midwestern U.S. Omaha Public Power District, Westar Energy, and Consumers Energy have the three best IVRs in the Midwest. The IVRs at Nicor Gas, ComEd, Oklahoma Gas & Electric, and We Energies also performed well.

Source: "E Source 2007 Review of North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs"
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Southern U.S. Cleco Power, Florida Power & Light, and Progress Energy (Florida) offer the three best IVRs in the South. Other good IVR systems found in this region include South Carolina Electric & Gas, Texas Gas Service, Orlando Utilities Commission, Atmos Energy Mid-Tex, Tampa Electric, and Kentucky Utilities.

Western U.S. In the Western region, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Avista Utilities, and Arizona Public Service provide the three best IVRs. Portland General Electric, Rocky Mountain Power, Pacific Gas and Electric, Southern California Gas, and Southern California Edison also provide good IVRs.

Canada. Fewer Canadian utilities use IVRs when customers call. Of the 13 companies that use an IVR included in the E Source review, none were placed in the top quartile. The three best Canadian IVR systems are provided by Union Gas, Nova Scotia Power, and Hydro One Networks.

NOTE: One chart follows

E Source Ranks 103 North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs

Ranking	Organization name	Overall score (maximum = 1,000)
Top quartile		
1	Cleco Power	863
2	Florida Power & Light	855
3	Progress Energy (Florida)	838
4	Sacramento Municipal Utility District	836
5	Omaha Public Power District	820
6	South Carolina Electric & Gas	811
6	Westar Energy	811
8	Consumers Energy	805
9	KeySpan Energy	802
10	Texas Gas Service	780
11	Avista Utilities	775
11	Nicor Gas	775
13	Orlando Utilities Commission	771
14	Arizona Public Service	763
15	Portland General Electric	755
16	ComEd	739
16	Jersey Central Power & Light	739
16	Oklahoma Gas & Electric	739
16	Rocky Mountain Power	739
20	Pacific Gas and Electric	730
20	Southern California Gas	730
22	Atmos Energy Mid-Tex	729
22	We Energies	729
24	Southern California Edison	721
25	Tampa Electric	719
26	Kentucky Utilities	713
Second quartile		
27	NW Natural	704
28	Duke Energy (South)	693
29	Dominion Power	691
30	Nevada Power	688
31	Union Gas	686
32	Duke Energy (Midwest)	671
32	Long Island Power Authority	671
32	Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division	671
35	San Diego Gas & Electric	669
36	PECO Energy	668
37	Georgia Power	662
37	Nova Scotia Power	662

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Ranking	Organization name	Overall score (maximum = 1,000)
39	Alliant Energy	659
39	Direct Energy (Texas)	659
39	Louisville Gas & Electric	659
39	Salt River Project	659
43	Southwest Gas	652
43	Vectren	652
45	Con Edison	650
45	Ohio Edison	650
47	Dayton Power & Light	641
48	AmerenUE	640
49	Washington Gas	636
50	Allegheny Power	633
50	CPS Energy	633
50	Peoples Gas (Illinois)	633
Third quartile		
53	Alabama Power	632
53	TXU Energy	632
55	MidAmerican Energy	630
56	Hydro One Networks	627
57	Kansas Gas Service	623
57	Progress Energy (Carolinas)	623
59	Terasen Gas	620
60	BC Hydro	614
61	PPL Electric Utilities	613
62	Toronto Hydro	610
62	Wisconsin Public Service	610
64	Xcel Energy	604
65	National Grid New York	599
66	Los Angeles Department of Water & Power	594
67	AmerenIP	590
68	Enbridge Gas Distribution	589
68	NB Power	589
70	Delmarva Power	579
70	ENMAX	579
72	NSTAR	573
73	Atlantic City Electric	568
73	Columbia Gas of Ohio	568
75	Oklahoma Natural Gas	561
76	Connecticut Light & Power	552
76	Rochester Gas & Electric	552
78	Centerpoint Energy (Minnesota)	545
Fourth quartile		
79	Central Maine Power	527

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Ranking	Organization name	Overall score (maximum = 1,000)
79	Manitoba Hydro	527
81	Aquila	515
81	DTE Energy	515
81	Northern Indiana Public Service Co.	515
84	Public Service Electric & Gas	511
85	Pepco	501
86	Silicon Valley Power	490
87	Philadelphia Gas Works	489
88	Laclede Gas	487
89	Gaz Métro	477
90	New York State Electric & Gas	473
91	Entergy	443
91	PNM	443
93	Baltimore Gas & Electric	432
93	Idaho Power	432
95	Piedmont Natural Gas	418
95	Puget Sound Energy	418
97	Questar Gas	371
98	EPCOR	352
99	Atmos Energy (Other)	323
100	Reliant Energy	299
101	Kansas City Power & Light	275
102	Hydro Ottawa	260
103	Hydro-Québec	234

About E Source

Headquartered in Boulder, CO, E Source is a leading research and information services organization, providing member organizations with unbiased, independent analysis of retail energy markets, services, and technologies. Additional information is available at www.esource.com.

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