Utility Ad Awards Contest spotlight: Solar, storage, EVs, electrification, energy efficiency, and demand response

By Hailey Walker
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The E Source Utility Ad Awards Contest is the energy industry's largest and most comprehensive ad campaign competition, attracting hundreds of entries each year.

Our goal with the contest is to recognize and reward creative excellence in utility advertising. We accomplish this by selecting a team of independent internal and external judges to review and select ad finalists based on ad effectiveness, objectives, message, visual design, and innovation.

To celebrate the upcoming launch of this year's contest, we're highlighting winners from 2022 in a series of blog posts. In this post, we're featuring the best campaigns in two categories:

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Fill out this short form to start a conversation about your needs and how we can help.

- Energy efficiency and demand response programs
- Solar, storage, EVs, and electrification

Utilities can submit their advertising campaigns through E Source Energy AdVision, the only collection of thousands of utility advertising campaigns available in the industry with detailed background information on media type, campaign strategy, ad placement, intended audience, tracking methods, and results.

Energy efficiency and demand response programs

Our energy efficiency and demand response programs category celebrates utilities that offer a variety of incentives and energy-saving solutions to customers. The winning campaigns successfully brought awareness to communities about the importance of energy efficiency and how to save energy.

First place: Consumers Energy with “Your Hometown”

Consumers Energy secured first place with Your Hometown, which was intended to counteract a lack of customer awareness of and engagement in energy waste reduction and demand response (**figure 1**). Consumers Energy introduced customers to Charles, their “next-door energy mentor” who always has neighborly advice and energy-saving tips and tricks to share.

Figure 1: Consumers Energy introduced Charles, the next-door energy mentor, to attendees at the 2022 E Source Forum

During the session “Excellence in utility advertising: Empowering the Sustainable Utility,” Riki Shook, director of residential marketing at Consumers Energy, described the utility’s campaign strategy.



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The campaign focused on residential and business customers and used engaging video, social media, and other digital marketing to pique interest in new products “through fun and a bit of humor with

Charles." In 2022, Charles delivered impressive results, including:

- More than 66 million impressions
- More than 160,000 clicks
- More than 34 million video views

Members of the Residential Marketing or Business Marketing Service can read more details about Your Hometown via Energy AdVision.

Second place: PPL Electric Utilities with "Opportunities Everywhere"

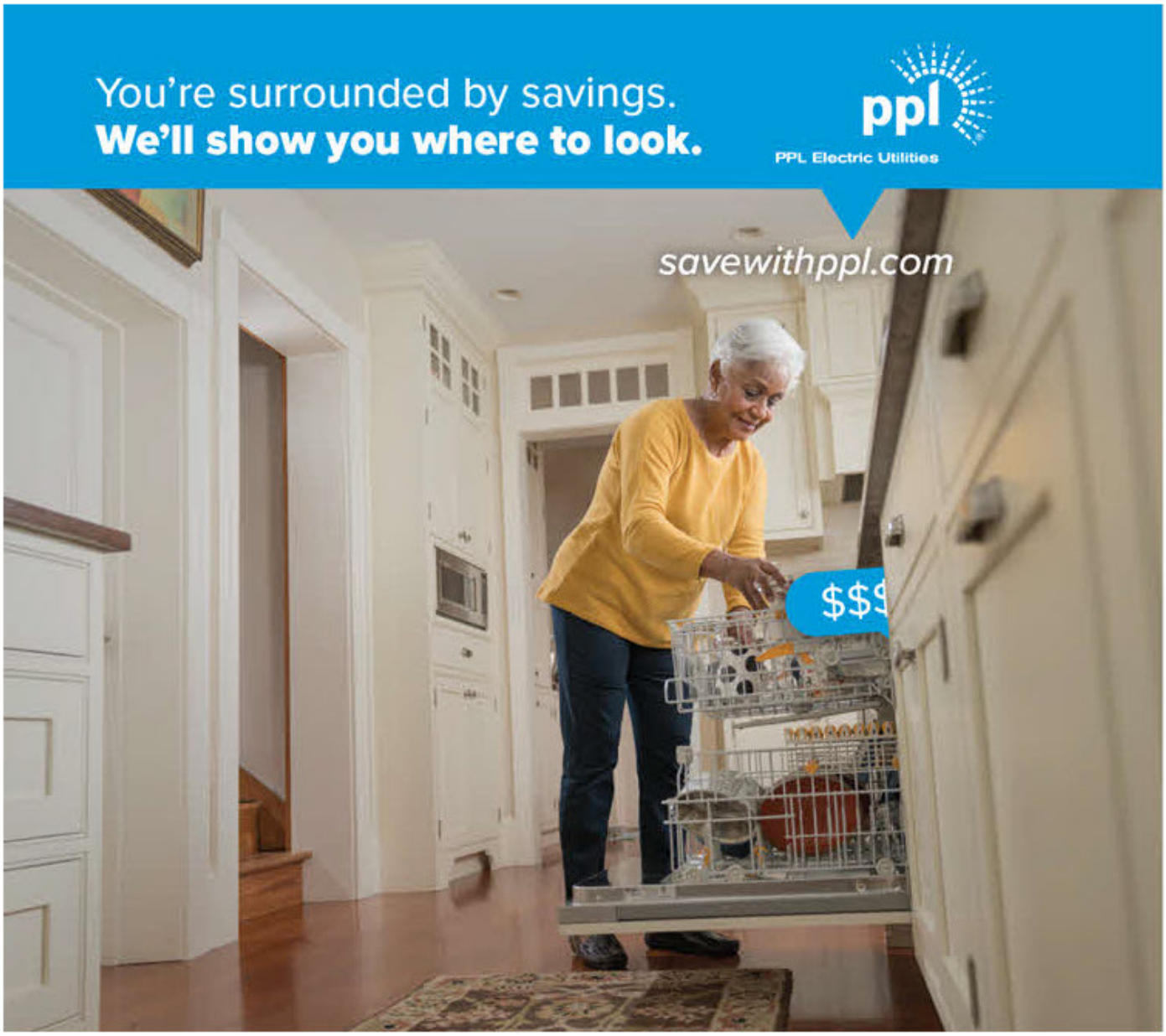
We celebrated PPL as our second-place winner for its Opportunities Everywhere campaign, which came to fruition in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a way to help "customers move forward as the community recovered from the pandemic." PPL's top goals for the campaign were to:

- Position PPL as a trusted partner
- Improve energy efficiency awareness among residential customers

PPL's strategy for the campaign was to appeal to customers' aversion to loss with simple home improvements they could complete independently to prevent "leaking money." The campaign used video, radio, social media, and printed media to "show customers (rather than tell them) how money is lost when inefficiencies exist" (**figure 2**).

Figure 2: PPL's ad, printed on large-format transit units, promoted "Opportunities Everywhere"

PPL's public transit ad launched in February 2022 with 49 large-format transit units delivering 16 million impressions across four markets. The utility chose these markets to reach as many residential customers as possible.



Source: PPL Electric Utilities

The utility included "relatable talent and scenery; and used humor and music to engage residential customers with a positive tone," resulting in more than 480,000 website visits. Members of the Residential Marketing Service can read more details about Opportunities Everywhere via Energy AdVision.

Solar, storage, EVs, and electrification

This category focuses on the importance of helping consumers make sustainable moves such as buying an EV or transitioning to solar energy. The campaigns in this category were powerful, relatable, and fun. They successfully showed customers that there's nothing to fear in the move to electrification.

First place: SDG&E with “Power Your Drive for Schools, Parks, and Beaches”

SDG&E aimed to prove that “it’s easy to lovelectric” with its Power Your Drive for Schools, Parks, and Beaches campaign in support of its LOVELECTRIC mission, which aims to increase EV adoption by spreading awareness of public charging infrastructure. By focusing on community members who would potentially use the public chargers to charge their personal vehicles, the campaign hoped to relieve residents’ concerns about owning an EV. SDG&E created a series of videos (in English and Spanish) that emphasized the ease of charging in public places like parks, beaches, and schools. The videos featured influential regional officials to connect with viewers.

We proudly awarded SDG&E first place for a campaign that resulted in more than 260,000 page views and a 7% increase in EV purchase intent among residents (**figure 3**). Members of the Corporate Communications Service can read more details about Power Your Drive for Schools, Parks, and Beaches via Energy AdVision.

Figure 3: SDG&E shared its “Power Your Drive for Schools, Parks, and Beaches” campaign with attendees at the 2022 E Source Forum

A representative from SDG&E accepted the award and highlighted the utility’s successful campaign.



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Second place: Efficiency Vermont with “Drive Electric Vermont”

Efficiency Vermont earned our second-place honor for its efforts to promote switching to EVs with its Drive Electric Vermont campaign. Efficiency Vermont found that about 45% of the money spent on energy went toward transportation and was “responsible for a significant majority of Vermont’s [greenhouse gas] emissions.” To encourage consumers to buy an EV, the campaign used clever print ad placement on various transportation modes, radio spots, and humorous videos (**figure 4**).

Figure 4: Efficiency Vermont’s creative TV and streaming ads highlighted the benefits of owning an EV

Efficiency Vermont used humor to highlight available state and federal EV incentives.



The campaign delivered more than 11.8 million media impressions and drove a 163.8% increase in traffic to Efficiency Vermont's Drive Electric Vermont website. Members of the Corporate Communications Service can read more details about Drive Electric Vermont via Energy AdVision.

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