Utility customers still have a lot to learn about EVs, and utilities can help them

Findings from the 2023 Electric Vehicle Residential Customer Survey
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Customer awareness of and interest in buying EVs has never been higher. More and more residential customers are considering buying or leasing an EV for the first time, and many are considering adding another to their household.

Residential utility customers still have a lot to learn about EVs

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But there's still a gap in understanding the future of the residential EV market among utilities. With a large impact on demand likely, utilities must be prepared to support customers' transition to efficient, electrified technologies. According to the E Source US Residential Customer Insights Center, 32% of respondents were considering an EV in 2023, a notable increase from the 23% considering an EV in 2018.

As predicted in an E Source *E News* article EV temperature check: Are utilities ready for the incoming EV wave?, there's still a lack of awareness and education around EVs. And customers don't know who to turn to for accurate information.

Lucky for them, their utility is perfectly aligned to provide them with resources, information, and programs to help support the transition to EVs.

What are customers' barriers to EV adoption?

We're still seeing the same barriers to EV adoption as in past years. In 2020, respondents to the

E Source Electric Vehicle Residential Customer Survey who were considering EVs reported cost, lack of familiarity, and concerns about range and charging as their top barriers.

And unfortunately, these were still the top barriers in 2023, with range anxiety moving to the top spot among nonowners as a barrier to EV purchase (**figure 1**).

Figure 1: Nonowners' top perceived barriers to EV purchase in 2023

Range anxiety, cost to own or lease, and lack of public charging stations were the top barriers to EV purchase in 2023. Not needing a new vehicle was also a top barrier.

Utilities can help educate customers around these barriers by providing information and education on:

- Rebates and incentives
- Public versus home charging
- The gap between perception and customer recognition of current habits

For instance, in the 2023 Electric Vehicle Residential Customer Survey, most respondents (85%) said they're driving 40 miles or fewer per day in their primary vehicle. Because of how little they're driving each day, most respondents wouldn't need to worry about running out of charge before reaching their destination.

Where is customers' EV education falling short?

There's still an opportunity to increase customers' current knowledge of EVs. For example, about two-thirds of respondents in the 2023 Electric Vehicle Residential Customer Survey didn't believe you could charge an EV at home with a standard three-prong wall outlet. And many didn't feel that they understood the rebates available for EVs.

Where will your customers go to find this information and who will they trust as a source of information on EVs?

So where will your customers go to find this information and who will they trust as a source of information on EVs? Few respondents said they knew who to trust for reliable, unbiased information about EVs. And only 4% said they'd turn to their utility for information on their next vehicle. But those looking to purchase an EV next were more likely to look to their utility for information.

How can utilities position themselves as trusted EV advisers?

Utilities should be positioning themselves as a source of reliable information on EVs for customers. Many of customers' concerns and informational pain points come down to one common goal for utilities—ensuring customers have accurate information, specifically about:

- EVs and charging
- EV tax credits
- The affordability of operating and maintaining an EV

The E Source Electric Vehicle Residential Customer Survey is designed to help utilities better

understand customers' habits, preferences, and intentions and how to communicate with customers about EVs and the necessary infrastructure to power them.

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