

# Thought Leaders Speak Out 2021

ENGAGING CUSTOMERS WITH TECHNOLOGY

## Key Takeaways: Applying Smart Meter Data to Enhance the Customer Billing & Payment Experience - Georgia Power's Flexible Rate Options A Fireside Chat with Georgia Power and Sensus (August 2021)

The Institute for Electric Innovation's *Thought Leaders Speak Out 2021: Engaging Customers with Technology* series brings together electric company executives with customer responsibilities to share lessons learned and the results of successful customer engagement strategies.

The fifth dialogue of the series focused on using smart meter data and technology to enable Georgia Power's flexible rate options and featured a discussion between Kevin Kastner of Georgia Power and Mark Newton of Sensus. Georgia Power offers multiple time-of-use (TOU) rates, demand-based rates, and guaranteed fixed bills to provide residential customers choice, certainty, and/or control over their energy costs and bills (see Figure 1). In addition, Georgia Power uses their smart meter infrastructure - installed more than a decade ago - to support the rate options. Bob Rowe of NorthWestern Energy moderated the discussion and Lisa Wood of IEI provided opening remarks. Key takeaways are summarized and highlighted below.

[Click Here for the Agenda and Speaker Bios](#)

[Watch NorthWestern Energy's Opening Remarks Here](#)

**Providing customers with pricing choices that align with their needs and expectations drives increases in satisfaction.**

 [Video Clip Here](#)

Georgia Power shares how guaranteed fixed rate products like Flat Bill and Pay-By-Day meet customer expectations for bill certainty and drive increased customer satisfaction; customers on these rates value predictability.

 [Video Clip Here](#)

Sensus explains why a robust, forward- and backward-compatible smart meter network is crucial to delivering flexible rate options to customers; technology investments today must be interoperable with technology 15 years old and compatible with what comes next.

 [Video Clip Here](#)

Georgia Power details the Flat Bill rate and how Georgia Power's modeling and load forecasting using smart meter data is accurate to the point where they are confident offering a Flat Bill option to a customer even before the customer starts service at a new residence.

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Georgia Power discusses the importance of having a conversation with the customer at the point of new service connect to recommend the best rate option based on the customer's needs and preferences (e.g., seeking bill stability? own an EV? etc.). Less than 5 years ago, 95% of customers were on the standard volumetric rate; now, 50% of Georgia Power's customers are opting for so-called non-standard rates. This rapid transition demonstrates that the new rate options are meeting customer needs.

### **Working with regulators to show customer value is key to successful implementation of smart meter infrastructure.**

 [Video Clip Here](#)

Sensus explains the value of a licensed point-to-multipoint smart meter network investment to support future applications that deliver electric company and customer value; regulators want to see technology that is robust enough to last more than a decade.

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Georgia Power provides insights on how they made the case for flexible rate options to regulators; hearing from their customers that they wanted choice in rates was crucial.

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Sensus discusses how customer engagement via online tools during the pandemic is a good example of providing customer value from smart meter data.

### **Closing Remarks**

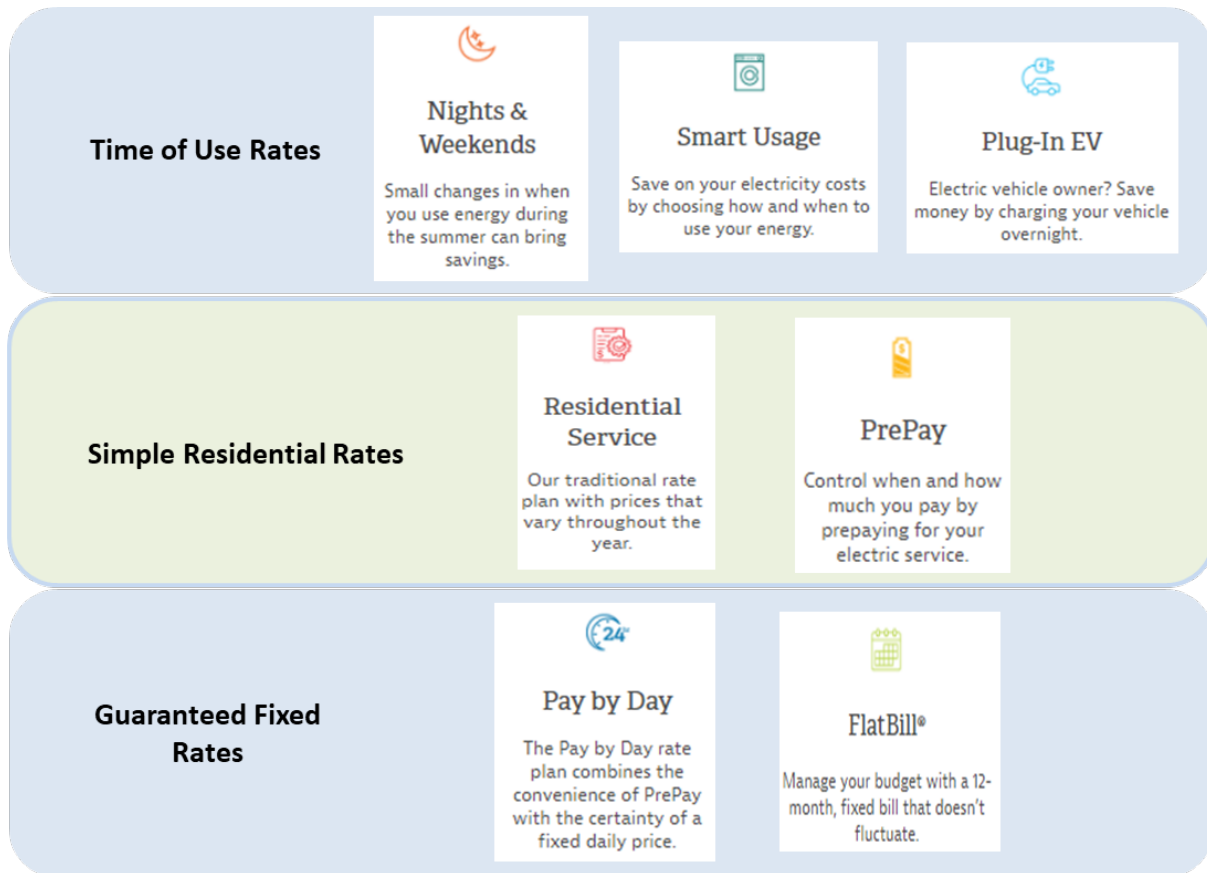
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Sensus warns that no innovation can trump energy grid security; when electric companies become more connected to customers with home devices, they are more vulnerable to cyber security threats.

 [Video Clip Here](#)

Looking to the future, Georgia Power aspires to provide customers the option to establish a set monthly bill amount and allow energy management automation to deliver bill certainty. This is another example of how data and technology are changing the ways customers manage their energy.

**Figure 1. Georgia Power Residential Billing and Rate Plans**



**Check out the Georgia Power Website below for more details!**

[Billing and Rate Plans | For Your Home \(georgiapower.com\)](https://www.georgiapower.com/Billing-and-Rate-Plans-For-Your-Home)

- [Smart Usage \(georgiapower.com\)](https://www.georgiapower.com/Smart-Usage)
- [Plug-In Electric Vehicle \(georgiapower.com\)](https://www.georgiapower.com/Plug-In-Electric-Vehicle)
- [Nights & Weekends \(georgiapower.com\)](https://www.georgiapower.com/Nights-&-Weekends)
- [FlatBill \(georgiapower.com\)](https://www.georgiapower.com/FlatBill)
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