

Straight Talk with PG&E: Robert Barnes and Justin Witte

Episode 6: Learn more about Demand Response programs and how to earn incentives

- Hey, everyone. Welcome to the final episode of this season of "Straight Talk with PG&E." Time sure flies when you're learning to save energy and money. I'm Tatihana Manning, Senior Program Manager at PG&E, and I also support our Voice of a Customer Team. Today we're gonna speak about demand response programs. I'm in studio with two of my favorite people, Robert Barnes and Justin Witte. Welcome to the studio, fellas.

- Hey, Tatihana, thanks for having us.

- Yeah, great to be here. Thank you.

- It's great to have you both. So, demand and response programs sound serious, but why should our business customers learn more about them?

- So, that's actually a really great question. You know, demand response programs are a great resource for our customers. They provide financial incentives to customers that are able to reduce their energy during times of really high grid stress. So, that would be something typically like a really hot summer day. By participating in a demand response program, customers not only help support grid reliability and help avoid rotating outages, but they can also take advantage of those financial incentives at the same time.

- I wanna add a little bit onto that, Robert, and what I want people to think about is just crowdsourcing energy. If all of our business owners, an insurance office, a retailer, even your favorite restaurant, if they can all save a little bit of energy, it equals a large amount of energy that really helps to stabilize California's grid.

- I love the way that you put that, 'cause a little bit goes a long way, which is what we're just trying to get across to the customer sometimes. We do have that strain on the grid and we need their help. So these programs help offset some of the costs that might happen during high demand times. Can you break down the different demand response programs that exist, Robert?

- Yeah, so there's a couple of different demand response programs. I think more so for the small business customers, they might be interested in something like Peak Day Pricing or the Emergency

Load Reduction Program. With Peak Day Pricing, customers are offered a discount on regular summer electric rates in exchange for a higher price during peak day hours on a peak day event. So basically what that means, when an event is called, a customer would reduce their energy use during that time to avoid that higher peak day price.

- I think that's a huge benefit that you pointed out, Robert. Justin, what are the other programs that we offer our customers?

- The next program, and this could be one of the most impactful and easy to do for our small business customers, it's called Emergency Load Reduction Program, or ELRP. This program, what happens is there will be days throughout the year when the grid is constrained and we will call upon these customers by email or a text message to save energy during certain times of the day. We're gonna pay them \$2 per kilowatt hour for any energy they save.

- So how often do these events actually happen for customers that may be interested in these programs?

- So it varies from program to program, but for Peak Day Pricing, the rate discounts occur during the summer months, which are June through September. Events can be called on any summer day between four p.m. and nine p.m., which are those peak day hours, and there's typically between 9 to 15 event days per year. Customers are usually notified a day ahead. As for the Emergency Load Reduction Program, the season is a little bit longer, so it's from May through October, and events can be called also between four p.m. and nine p.m. during those months with a maximum of 60 event hours per year.

- Well, that was really good information. I'm sure we have some listeners that may be wanting more information now. Robert, where can they go to learn more?

- Customers can actually visit pge.com and then click on Save Energy and Money. When they get to that site, they'll be able to find more information regarding demand response programs.

- Thank you so much, Robert and Justin, for being here today.

- Thank you, Tatiana. I had a great time.

- Yes, thank you for having us today.

- It's been a pleasure. A big thanks to our listeners for learning with us throughout the season. Visit pge.com/straighttalk to listen to previous episodes where we share more helpful tips and resources, as well as other programs that can help business customers save energy and money. And be sure to check out our show notes where we'll link all the tools and programs mentioned on today's episode. See you all next season.