



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Report sees Ontario consumers driving tomorrow's electricity system

TORONTO, February 2, 2017 – It's about preparing Ontario's electricity industry today for tomorrow's consumer. A new vision paper by the Electricity Distributors Association and its member local utilities proposes a new way forward for Ontario's electricity system that recognizes consumers as drivers of change and leverages new technologies to deliver high-quality electricity services.

The report, ***The Power to Connect: Advancing Customer-Driven Electricity Solutions for Ontario***, explains that the integration of local, small-scale power generation and storage technology, known as distributed energy resources (DER), will be key to achieving a more resilient system that can alleviate cost pressures.

"This vision paves a way forward to the benefit of our customers," says **Todd Wilcox, Chair, Electricity Distributors Association and President of North Bay Hydro**. "Beyond their current role in delivering safe, reliable electricity, local utilities can potentially own, operate and integrate customer owned distributed energy resources right into their local systems. Since utilities own those local systems, they are best positioned to ensure DER develops safely and efficiently, and contributes to a much more flexible grid that better meets consumer needs. It's a vision that acknowledges the growth of local DER that is shared between the customer and the utility, but works in tandem with the existing bulk power grid."

With the advent of solar power generation and growth in home battery storage, it becomes clear that today's utilities will factor prominently in this new system by leveraging DER – a statement backed up by insights gathered from over 80 per cent of Ontario's utility executives. In fact, some local utilities are already leading the charge, launching micro-grid projects and other initiatives designed to improve the local power system and enhance the customer experience:

Oshawa PUC, PowerStream (a founding utility of Alectra Inc.) and Veridian Connections are working on micro-grid projects that integrate multiple sources of clean energy and leverage the latest in energy storage technologies to create connected, self-sufficient and energy-secure communities.

Hydro Ottawa and its partners are building North America's first-ever district utility called ZIBI, where future residents will benefit from living in a brand new, green and technologically advanced community.

Niagara Peninsula Energy and Horizon Utilities (a founding utility of Alectra Inc.) have been using their customer data to develop targeted conservation programs that are achieving strong results.

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Collus PowerStream is also using its abundance of data in its new SmartMAP tool, a comprehensive solution that allows the utility to complete all their tasks in one application. It is already improving power restoration, decreasing system expansion costs, reducing power theft, producing energy savings and improving customer service.

ENWIN Utilities is one of the first utilities in Canada to use drone technology to make power restoration work more cost-effective and safer for employees.

Entegrus was the first utility in Canada to install grid-edge voltage controls to help improve power flows over long distances. The technology has already delivered many benefits and two other utilities – **London Hydro** and **ENWIN Utilities** have also installed the technology.

“Local utilities are the solution because they have the customers and they know their communities’ energy needs better than anyone else,” says Wilcox. “They also have the technical savvy to leverage new technology to offer consumers more choice in their electricity services and more benefits.”

EDA’s President and CEO, Teresa Sarkesian, adds, “The Power to Connect is aimed at enabling the sector to be ready to respond to customers’ expanding needs. It offers a roadmap to government, agencies, regulators and stakeholders to begin the conversation on ensuring that the regulatory environment is flexible and responsive to the growing range of distributed energy resources being developed in the market place and on the role of the local distribution company in enabling, integrating and orchestrating these important contributions to the electricity system.”

Attachments:

- [The Power to Connect \(an overview\)](#)
- [The Power to Connect \(complete vision paper\)](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#)
- [Distributed Energy Resources Backgrounder](#)
- [Glossary of Terms](#)
- [Emerging System Graphic](#)

About the EDA

The [Electricity Distributors Association](#) (EDA) is the trusted and vital source for advocacy, insight and information for Ontario’s local electricity distributors – the municipally and privately owned companies that safely and reliably deliver essential electricity services to over five million homes, businesses and institutions.

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For more information and to arrange interviews please contact the EDA’s Director of Corporate Affairs & Communications, Jana Manolakos at (905) 265-5337 or email to jmanolakos@eda-on.ca