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The City of Palo Alto Utilities receives national energy innovator award

Austin, Tx., June 11, 2019 — The City of Palo Alto Utilities in Palo Alto, California received an American Public Power Association Energy Innovator Award at the Association's national conference in Austin, Texas. This award recognizes utility programs that have demonstrated advances in the development or application of creative, energy-efficient techniques or technologies, provide better service to electric customers, or engage in projects that increase the efficiency of utility operations or resource efficiency. Judging criteria also includes transferability or replication by other utilities, and takes into account the project scope in relation to utility size.

The City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU) Home Efficiency Genie program provides residents with free energy efficiency advice by phone and a subsidized, comprehensive in-home assessment for energy and water efficiency. The program was designed to address the fact that while most customers want to optimize the comfort and efficiency of their homes, they often don't know where to start. The Genie program is a one-stop-shop for CPAU customers to obtain information about any of the Utility's offerings (e.g., home efficiency improvements, rate assistance program, solar installation, electrification of home and transportation, etc.).

The program is simple and designed to drive project completion. A Genie "express" aspect offers customers on-the-spot estimates where applicable, along with options for contractors, removing the barriers to finding contractors and getting bids. CPAU offers a full refund to customers on the price of the in-home assessment if they complete at least one of the top five recommended efficiency projects.

The Genie House Call program has generated a high level of trust in the Palo Alto community by providing services tailored to individual needs since each home and its occupants are unique. As a result, the program has received a high Net Promoter Score: 9 out of 10 Genie House Call customers would recommend the program, and 94% of Genie House Call customers say they are "very satisfied" with their utility, compared to 76% of CPAU customers overall. Comparatively statewide, 57% of municipal customers say they are "very satisfied" with their utility. The Genie has become a supportive and reliable resource for all of a homeowner's efficiency needs, earning APPA's Energy Innovator Award for 2019.

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The American Public Power Association is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. We represent public power before the federal government to protect the interests of the more than 49 million people that public power utilities serve, and the 93,000 people they employ. Our association advocates and advises on electricity policy, technology, trends, training, and operations. Our members strengthen their communities by providing superior service, engaging citizens, and instilling pride in community-owned power.