

# Utilities Turn Their Customers Green, With Envy

BY LESLIE KAUFMAN

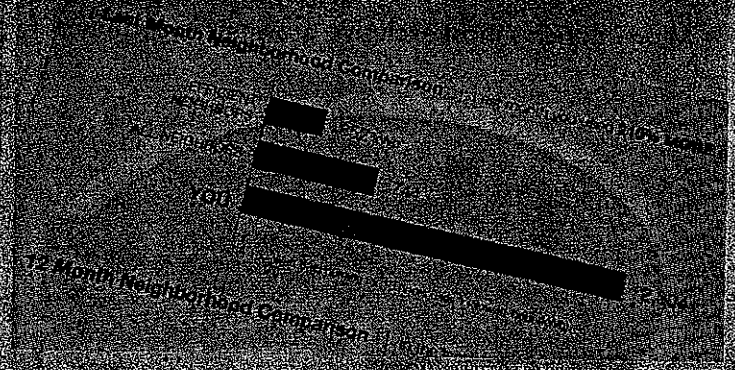
All over the city is not what most electric customers expect to see on their utility statements, but Greg Dyer got one.

He learned the utility said by using a lot more energy than his neighbors.

"I have four daughters, none of my neighbors has that many children," said Mr. Dyer, a lawyer who lives in Sacramento. He wrote back to his utility and gave it his own rating, four brown mortgages.

Two other Sacramento residents, however, Paul Geisen and his wife, Myrna, Furrell, were feeling good. They got one smiley face on their statement for energy efficiency and saw the promise of getting another.

Our report card will quickly get better, Mr. Geisen wrote in an e-mail message to the Sacra-



A desire to keep up with neighbors is spurring conservation.

mento Municipal Utility District. The district had been trying for years to prod customers into using less energy with tactics like rebates for energy-saving appliances. But the traditional approaches were not meeting the energy reduction goals set by the

nonprofit utility's board. So in a move that has proved surprisingly effective, the district decided to tap into a time-honored American pastime: keeping up with the neighbors. Last April, it began sending out

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