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New Government and Industry Initiative Launched to Drive Military Veterans to Utility Industry Jobs

The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) is partnering with a number of federal government agencies and utility industry groups to form the Utility Industry Workforce Initiative, a multi-year effort dedicated to facilitating the recruitment, training, and retention of exiting service members, veterans and their spouses into employment in the utility industry. According to the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD), the electric utility industry will need to replace almost half of its current workforce over the next decade.

“Our industry is facing significant retirements of our existing workforce, and we are working together to develop solutions and approaches to identify a talented, high-skilled, and innovative industry workforce for the future,” said EEI President Tom Kuhn. “The leadership abilities, mission focus, commitment to safety, and team orientation that military service members consistently demonstrate are exactly the skills our industry needs in its workers. We are pleased to work together with our government partners on the Utility Industry Workforce Initiative with the goal to provide veterans a

Illinois Utilities Come Together to Create More Opportunities for Diverse Suppliers

Illinois utility leaders announced on June 11 the formation of the Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council designed to grow business opportunities for diverse suppliers through closer collaboration, technical development and sharing of best practices.

The Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council members include Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Illinois American Water, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas. In 2014, these companies spent a combined total of approximately \$698 million on goods and services provided by minority, women and veteran-owned businesses. In addition, the companies spent more than \$440 million with small businesses.

Growth in utilities’ spend with diverse suppliers is due in part to the Energy Infrastructure Modernization Act (EIMA) or “Smart Grid Bill” enacted in 2011, and the Natural Gas Consumer, Safety & Reliability Act

enacted in 2013. As a result, Illinois utilities are undertaking a massive upgrade to the state’s aging energy delivery infrastructure, installing new technologies and equipment to reduce outages, improve reliability, and provide customers with programs to manage and save energy.

“Illinois utilities are making investments to modernize and improve their infrastructure, which is creating opportunities to expand our diverse supplier base. The formation of this Council will support the utilities’ efforts in driving collaboration, development and utilization of diverse businesses,” said Beth Reese, chief financial officer, AGL Resources, and former president of Nicor Gas, an AGL Resources subsidiary.

“ComEd has a long history of diverse supplier engagement, and through the investments we’re making we have a great opportunity to increase our spend with partners who are helping us to innovate and

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FROM THE STAFF

Our front page article on the launch of the Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council recounts a moment of great pride for the industry. After months of intense planning, the Council is now a reality and reflects the high level of importance the state's utilities put on making their community of suppliers look more and more like the larger communities which they serve. Congratulations to everyone who played a role in the development and launch of the Council. **IEF**

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Military Veterans

Path to rewarding energy careers."

In addition to EEI and CEWD, other participants in the Initiative include the Departments of Energy, Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs; the Nuclear Energy Institute; the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association; and the American Gas Association. **IEF**

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Diverse Suppliers

Create solutions that enhance our ability to add value to customers," said Anne Pramagione, president and CEO, ComEd.

Illinois Commerce Commissioner Sherina E. Maye participated in the event and is encouraged by the potential of the Council. "The Illinois Commerce Commission is pleased the utilities, through this Council,

now have a forum that will help them collaboratively increase procurement with diverse suppliers," said Commissioner Maye. "It is my hope that the Council will not only support best practice sharing, but also serve as a resource to the Commission and other stakeholders by keeping us apprised of common trends, developments, challenges and solutions that will support the continued growth of supplier diversity."

"Each of the participating companies has demonstrated that being inclusive at every level leads to improved services for our customers," said Richard J. Mark, president of Ameren Illinois. "By actively bringing diverse businesses into our supply chains, we're opening up new avenues for job creation and building stronger communities throughout Illinois."

Creating a uniform reporting system for expenditures with diverse certified business across all services sought by utility companies will be one of the first priorities for the new Council. "Establishing a common framework through which we can more effectively collaborate and measure the success of our efforts will help all members in their efforts to engage certified diverse suppliers," said John Kleczynski, president, Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas.

Once a year, the Council will submit a written report to inform the Illinois Commerce Commission on activities and progress toward meeting goals and objectives. The Council will also coordinate an annual meeting for diverse businesses, legislators and the ICC, to discuss the evolving state of diverse business growth spend in the Illinois utilities industry. The Council will also place an emphasis on helping the utilities with their

respective procurement goals for minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned and small business enterprises.

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Nicor Gas Supports Local Communities During the 19th Annual Volunteer Day

On Saturday, May 16, more than 400 Nicor Gas and Pivotal Home Solutions employee volunteers completed nearly 20 projects across northern Illinois during the company's 19th annual Volunteer Day, also proclaimed Nicor Gas Volunteer Day by Governor Bruce Rauner.

Volunteers partnered with community-action agencies and nonprofit organizations to complete projects designed to contribute to the well-being of 14 northern Illinois communities. The projects, which focused on environmental education and sustainability, community enrichment and energy efficiency, included beautifying nature trails and sprucing up grounds, planting community gardens and organizing food pantries.

Volunteer Day, which has taken place on the third Saturday of May since 1996, is one of the largest single-day corporate volunteer initiatives benefiting cities and towns in the Nicor Gas service area. It also culminates AGL Resources Volunteer Week, an initiative that spans six states and supports the company's ongoing mission to make a difference in the communities it serves through its philanthropic and volunteer efforts. AGL Resources is the parent company of Nicor Gas. **IEF**

DiversityInc Ranks Ameren First in the Nation

DiversityInc has ranked Ameren Corporation first in the United States on its 2015 listing of the nation's top utilities for diversity. This is the fifth consecutive year Ameren has been recognized among the top five utilities, and first time at the top of the list for creating an inclusive workplace, reaching diverse customers and having strong supplier diversity.

"To be named the top utility in the country for diversity is an honor and speaks to the years of hard work that have taken place in diversity here at Ameren," said Sharon Harvey Davis, vice president and chief diversity officer. "This recognition is not because of the efforts of one person, department or group. It is the corporate commitment of many who work to ensure that diversity and inclusion is not something we talk about but something we live."

"With more than 1,000 companies participating, the competition for a spot on the DiversityInc Specialty List was up more than 30 percent this year," said DiversityInc Founder and CEO Luke Visconti.

An important part of Ameren's diversity and inclusion approach is to foster partnerships within the community. For example, Ameren recently pledged substantial financial support to the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis' new job training center in Ferguson, Mo. This is just one of hundreds of activities by the company and its employees to support the communities it serves in Illinois and Missouri.

To increase supplier diversity, Ameren invites hundreds of entrepreneurs, diverse businesses and Ameren leaders to its annual Supplier Diversity Symposium for networking and learning about the company's procurement opportunities. In 2014 alone, more than \$272 million of Ameren's total non-fuel spend was for services rendered by more than 350 qualified diverse suppliers.

In addition, the company has consistently been ranked a top 100 military-friendly employer by G.I. Jobs Magazine and continues to support co-worker diversity and inclusion through six employee resource groups: Ameren Military-Veteran Employees; Ameren Network of Minority Employees; Powering Connections for All Abilities; Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Employees and Allies Network; Multi-Generational Resource Group; and Women Influencing Success in Energy. **IEF**

Exelon Recognized for Sustainability Leadership

Exelon was recognized for its environmental performance by ranking No. 61 among the 500 largest publicly traded companies in the U.S. and in the top five among utilities in the 2015 Newsweek Green Rankings. The company ranked No. 105 among the 500 largest publicly traded companies worldwide, up from No. 116 in 2014.

"Exelon has focused since its founding on being committed to operating in ways that minimize impacts to the environment," said Chris Gould, senior vice president and chief sustainability officer of Exelon. "A major part of our business involves helping customers make smarter use of energy and investing in new and existing sources of clean energy. The Newsweek Green Rankings are recognition of our continued commitment to sustainability."

Newsweek's Green Rankings evaluate the world's largest companies by market value and rate them based on a variety of corporate sustainability and environmental factors, such as energy, carbon, water and waste productivity. The rankings also consider company reputation and board-level oversight. The rankings are the result of analysis conducted by Newsweek and independent research firms Corporate Knights Capital and HIP Investor Inc.

Exelon operates one of the nation's cleanest power generation fleets and is a major investor and developer of renewable energy. Exelon is the nation's 12th largest wind energy producer and a major developer of solar energy, including through its Constellation business unit. In 2014, more than 98 percent of the approximately 37.9 billion gallons of water used by Exelon-operated facilities per day was directly returned to the source. In addition, the company increased its companywide recycling rate to nearly 70 percent in 2014.

In 2014, Exelon was named to the Dow Jones Sustainability North America Index for the ninth consecutive year in recognition of its strong sustainability performance. The company was also named in 2014 to CDP's S&P 500 Climate Disclosure Leadership Index for reducing carbon emissions and addressing climate change. **IEF**

NCSL Annual Meeting in Seattle

Monday, August 3, marks the beginning of the Annual Meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in Seattle. The NCSL's mission is to "improve state legislatures, foster communication among states and ensure a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system." Several Illinois legislators are members of key NCSL committees. The NCSL serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories. It is funded by the states and governed by a 56-member executive committee. For more information go to www.ncsl.org/summit.

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NARUC Summer Committee Meetings in New York City

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioner (NARUC) will hold its Summer Committee meetings in New York City, from July 12-15. State Commissioners and staff members from around the country will meet in various committees and subcommittees with an eye toward developing NARUC policy on several important issues of interest to the regulatory community.

Policies developed at the summer meetings may be acted upon at the NARUC annual meeting in Austin, Texas in November. **IEF**

Illinois Energy Forum is published monthly by the Illinois Energy Association, Springfield, Illinois. For questions or comments, please contact James Monk at 217-523-7348 or e-mail at jmonk@ilenergyassn.org.

For name or e-mail address changes, contact Erica Drake at 217-523-7348, fax at 217-523-0643, or e-mail at edrake@ilenergyassn.org.