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# ILLINOIS ENERGY FORUM

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## **Southern Company Wins 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual Edison Award**

**On** September 10, the Edison Electric Institute (EEI) awarded Southern Company with the 92nd Edison Award. Presented annually and selected by a panel of former energy industry executives, the Edison Award is the electric power industry's most prestigious honor.

Southern Company was selected for its energy storage system initiatives, including the development, commissioning, and operation of the Energy Storage Research Center (ESRC). The Birmingham, Ala., facility serves as an industry-wide destination for battery energy storage technology testing, evaluation, and large-scale demonstration. Additionally, the ESRC forms the anchor for several other Southern Company energy storage R&D initiatives that achieved key milestones in 2019, such as the Georgia Power and Alabama Power Smart Neighborhoods.

"EEI member companies continue to integrate clean energy technologies, such as energy storage, that will help pave the way for the future of our industry," said EEI President Tom Kuhn. "Southern Company's

## **ICC Initiates Transportation Electrification Rate Design & Affordability NOI**

**On** August 19, the Illinois Commerce Commission opened a Notice of Inquiry to explore electricity rate design options related to the adoption and deployment of all types of electric vehicles and supporting transportation electrification infrastructure such as charging stations. The Commission is also seeking information about the impact rate design will have on other forms of beneficial electrification, electric service and affordability.

According to United States Environmental Protection Agency, the transportation sector is among the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the country. The Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy notes that in general, electric vehicles produce fewer emissions that contribute to climate change and smog than conventional vehicles.

"Electrifying the transportation sector is an important step to improve our air for Illinois residents. While there are fewer than 25,000 registered electric vehicles on the road, it is the expectation and hope that this number will rise. As regulators, we have to ensure energy practices in Illinois do not impair electrification adoption and deployment. Equally important is to identify the impact of rate designs on electric service affordability so that we could structure our rates accordingly in the future," said ICC Chairman Carrie Zalewski.

This NOI builds on previous efforts by the Commission to study electric vehicles. In 2018, the Commission initiated an NOI to help the Commission identify issues, potential challenges and opportunities in EV deployment. Earlier this year, a policy session was held to examine the impact of an increasingly electrified future and the integration of electrification in Illinois and nationally.

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## FROM THE STAFF

**Fall** is in the air, so it must be time for an Election. And, not just any Election but a very important one on every level. Add in the complications caused by a global pandemic and it's clear we all need to think through our individual voting strategy for November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Whether you plan to vote early or vote by mail or vote in person the old-fashioned way, the most important thing is to actually have a plan. So, maybe for the first time in your life, please figure out how you want to vote and the follow through. You need to make your vote count. IEF

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### Southern Company

**Leadership** and technical expertise for the testing, development, and deployment of a diverse portfolio of energy storage solutions not only improves the resiliency and reliability of the energy grid, but also creates tremendous value for customers. Congratulations to the Southern Company team for their outstanding work and for winning this well-deserved award.

"As we prepare Southern Company to succeed in the transition to a net-zero carbon future, our many energy storage R&D initiatives – including the Energy Storage Research Center, Georgia Power and Alabama Power Smart Neighborhoods, and other pilot demonstrations – are advancing energy storage as an effective, technically viable energy solution," said Southern Company Chairman, President, and CEO Tom Fanning. IEF

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## ICC

**"Despite** the economic effects of COVID-19, the share of EV users is expected to rise. This [increase] paired with large scale transition to electric over fossil fuels will require the ICC to address the impact on the grid to ensure efficient and reliable energy while meeting our state's larger de-carbonization goals," said ICC Commissioner Maria Bocanegra.

Through the NOI, stakeholders will answer a series of questions broken into three segments: (1) rate design impacts on electric vehicle adoption; (2) rate design impacts on other forms of beneficial electrification; and (3) rate design implementation. Participants are requested to provide facts and information to support their opinions and recommendations.

The submission of initial comments is scheduled for November 16, 2020 with a deadline for reply comments to follow by December 18, 2020. The NOI manager, Jim Zolnierek, is authorized to schedule further rounds of comments and replies, with adequate public notice provided. He may be reached at [jim.zolnierek@illinois.gov](mailto:jim.zolnierek@illinois.gov).

Pursuant to Commission rules, a Notice of Inquiry proceeding is not a rulemaking, and the information gathered may or may not form the basis for the initiation of rulemaking or for other purposes at a later date. IEF

### Vistra Strengthens Commitment to Provide Laptops to Low-Income Students

**Vistra** has announced that it has capped-off a summer giving campaign to provide laptops to low-income students ahead of the 2020-21 school year. The company has partnered with Comp-U-Dopt, a non-profit organization that provides technology access and education to underserved youth. Vistra's \$230,000 donation, through its retail electric brands TXU Energy and Dynegy, supports Comp-U-Dopt programs in Chicago, Dallas, and Fort Worth, with the funds going directly to the purchase of nearly 2,000 refurbished, free-of-charge laptops for families without a computer in the home.

"We understand that this school year is different than any other," said Curt Morgan, Vistra's president and chief executive officer. "We also recognize that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted low-income Americans, including those with school-age children for whom buying the bare essentials is challenging enough – to say nothing of bridging the digital divide. The need to do so is pressing: students without a computer are at risk of losing months of educational opportunity compared to peers with the proper equipment. Comp-U-Dopt's innovative program helps ensure those children do not fall behind and are positioned for success despite the obstacles. We're proud to support their work and look forward to continuing to do so well into the future." IEF

## Ameren Recognized on Elite List of 'Top Utilities in Economic Development'

**For** the second year in a row, and in recognition of its efforts to bolster the economies of Missouri and Illinois, Ameren Corporation secured a spot on the prestigious list of Top Utilities in Economic Development in 2020 by *Site Selection* magazine.

Judged alongside energy companies across the United States, Ameren's contributions in Missouri and Illinois were evaluated on many criteria, including job growth and business expansion through competitive incentives and customer-focused programs.

"At Ameren, we have been investing in building a more modern energy delivery system to provide our businesses with even greater reliability. It's these investments, and our focus on keeping rates low, that make the bi-state region a very attractive place to do business. We are proud to be a part of the region's success," said **Richard J. Mark**, chairman and president of Ameren Illinois.

"We have accelerated significant investments in smart grid technology and modern energy delivery infrastructure through our Smart Energy Plan, improving reliability and making our area an even better place for businesses to grow and expand," said **Marty Lyons**, chairman and president of Ameren Missouri. "We also offer one of the most favorable economic development rate incentives in the country and provide innovative energy solutions to help customers meet their business goals. All of these factors help power growth in the communities we serve."

Ameren's focus on delivering reliable and affordable energy drives economic growth in the bi-state region. Several businesses have taken advantage of Ameren Missouri's Economic Development Incentive Rider, which offers a discount of up to 40% over a five-year term for qualifying energy users. Ameren Illinois has implemented new economic development incentives to encourage growth in its largely-rural service territory, and the development of "shovel ready" projects. The incentives include flexible payment options for up to 60 months for upfront costs and refundable deposit applications toward the cost of energy infrastructure for non-residential development. **IEF**

## Illinois American Water to Decrease Energy Costs Through New Solar Fields in Champaign and Peoria

**Illinois** American Water is working with Sol Systems to develop two solar fields. The energy-saving photovoltaic (PV) fields will be located on Illinois American Water property in Champaign at 560 CR 1700 N and in Peoria at 6111 N Galena Road. The PV fields, which convert light to usable energy, will be the largest of their kind within American Water's footprint, nationwide.

According to Brent O'Neill, Director of Engineering for Illinois American Water, both systems will be rated at 2,000 kW and combined, will help the company save over \$200,000 in annual energy costs. In addition, an anticipated 20 jobs will be created during construction. Sol Systems will partner with local union contractors to complete the work.

O'Neill said, "This is a really exciting project because of its multi-faceted impact to the communities we serve. Not only are we supporting local jobs and reducing operational costs which benefits our customers, but we are also reducing our environmental footprint."

To further illustrate the environmental impact, O'Neill explained, "Using EPA's Green Power Equivalency we've determined the solar fields will offset greenhouse gas emissions of 16,222 cars or 8,462,000 gallons of gasoline over 15 years of operation. That's a significant impact."

O'Neill added that solar energy is not new to Illinois American Water. Solar panels attached to an operations building in the Peoria District help to keep equipment batteries charged in inclement weather. Solar is also used at the company's Corporate office and Metro East operations in southern Illinois.

Sol Systems will access Ameren Illinois and Illinois Power Agency energy rebates to help reduce the overall cost of the project. Construction on the solar PV fields should be completed by April 2021. **IEF**

## Current Issues Seminar in New Mexico September 27-30

**The** annual Current Issues Seminar hosted by the Center for Public Utilities at New Mexico State University will be held in the state Capitol of Santa Fe on September 27-30, 2020. Among this year's participants are some of the nation's leading experts on energy policy issues.

Registration information for the Current Issues Seminar can be obtained by contacting Jeanette Walter of the Center for Public Utilities at 505-646-4812. [IEF](#)

## 2020 Virtual AGA Executive Conference

**Due** to the COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately we are unable to meet face-to-face in Dana Point, California this year, but we are pleased to announce that we will be holding a virtual Executive Conference on **Tuesday, October 13, 2020 from 11:00 am - 2:30 pm (ET)**.

Topics include the upcoming November elections, geopolitical events that could impact the energy utility sector, and innovations that could shape the future business models for utilities. Keynotes include Major Garrett, Peter Zeihan, and DOE Secretary, Dan Brouillette.

More details and final program will be available soon. Please plan to join us! [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](mailto:jmonk@ilenergyassn.org).

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