



ENERGY AWARDS
RECOGNITION PROGRAM

2024





UNITED STATES ENERGY ASSOCIATION

The United States Energy Association (USEA) convenes, educates, and provides a nonpartisan forum for the energy industry. Internationally, USEA supports energy development by expanding access to safe, affordable, and sustainable energy in partnership with the U.S. Government.

UNITED STATES ENERGY AWARD: The United States Energy Award was established in 1989 to recognize preeminent energy leadership initiatives and contributions to international understanding of energy issues. The Award Selection Committee, composed of national energy leaders, examines each nomination for a clearly articulated set of values and history of proven accomplishments and international contributions, which promote a greater understanding of energy issues.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS: With the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), USEA sponsors international energy programs between U.S. utilities and regulatory commissions and their counterparts in developing countries and emerging economies. Through these programs, U.S. energy executives have donated their time and shared their expertise and business “best practices” with other nations.

USEA applauds this spirit of volunteerism and created the International Volunteer Recognition Program to recognize outstanding individuals and organizations for their contributions to USEA activities.

2024 AWARDS

UNITED STATES ENERGY AWARD

*Nicholas K. “Nick” Akins
Executive Chair, President & CEO (Ret.)
American Electric Power (AEP)*

INTERNATIONAL PARTNER AWARD RECIPIENT

Transelectrica

USEA CORPORATE VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENT

Dragos

USEA INDIVIDUAL ENERGY VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENT

*Yok Potts
Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA)*

**UNITED STATES
ENERGY AWARD**

About the United States Energy Award

The United States Energy Award was established in 1989 to recognize preeminent energy leadership initiatives and contributions to international understanding of energy issues. The Award Selection Committee, composed of national energy leaders, examines each nomination for a clearly articulated set of values and history of proven accomplishments and international contributions, which promote a greater understanding of energy issues. Support for USEA is a major consideration.

Past Award Recipients *

2023	Robert C. Rowe – President & CEO, NorthWestern Energy (Ret.)
2022	Ralph Izzo – Chairman & CEO, Public Service Enterprise Group Inc. (PSEG)
2020-2021	Charif Souki – Executive Chairman of the Board, Tellurian, Inc.
2019	Michael W. Howard – President & CEO, Electric Power Research Institute
2018	Jack N. Gerard – President & CEO, American Petroleum Institute Thomas R. Kuhn – President, Edison Electric Institute
2017	Congressman Joe Barton – Vice Chairman, House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2016	Rex W. Tillerson – Chairman & CEO, Exxon Mobil Corporation
2015	Senator Lisa Murkowski – Chairman, United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
2014	Llewellyn King – Creator, Executive Producer & Host, White House Chronicle
2013	James E. Rogers – Chairman, President & CEO, Duke Energy
2012	John W. Rowe – Chairman Emeritus, Exelon Corporation
2011	Michael G. Morris – Chairman & CEO, AEP Corporation
2010	Peter J. Robertson – Vice Chairman, Chevron
2009	Robert B. Catell – Chairman, National Grid, US
2008	Donald P. Hodel – Chairman, Summit Power Group, Inc. & Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy and Department of the Interior
2007	Spencer Abraham – Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
2006	Lee R. Raymond – Chairman & CEO, Exxon Mobil Corporation
2005	Stephen D. Bechtel, Jr. – Chairman Emeritus, The Bechtel Group, Inc.
2004	John M. Derrick – Chairman, Pepco Holdings, Inc.
2003	Archie W. Dunham – Chairman, ConocoPhillips
2002	General Richard L. Lawson – President, National Mining Association
2001	Kenneth Lay – Chairman & CEO, Enron
2000	P.J. “Jim” Adam – Chairman Emeritus, Black & Veatch
1999	Don D. Jordan – Chairman & CEO, Reliant Energy
1998	William O. Doub – Attorney, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
1997	Daniel Yergin – President, Cambridge Energy Research Associates
1996	W.J. “Jack” Bowen – Chairman & CEO, Transco
1995	George V. McGowen – Chairman, Baltimore Gas & Electric
1994	John F. Bookout – President & CEO, Shell Oil Company
1993	Henry Linden – Founding President, Gas Research Institute
1992	John Kiely – President, Bechtel Corporation
1991	William McCollam, Jr. – President Emeritus, Edison Electric Institute
1990	Chauncey Starr – Founding President, Electric Power Research Institute
1989	Walker Cisler – Chairman & CEO, Detroit Edison Co.

**Recipient titles at the time of award presentation*



Nicholas K. “Nick” Akins

Executive Chair, President & CEO (Ret.)

American Electric Power (AEP)

The United States Energy Award was established in 1989 to recognize preeminent energy leadership and contributions to international understanding of energy issues. The United States Energy Association solicits nominations of individuals in the energy sector to receive this distinguished award. The Award Selection Committee, composed of national energy leaders, examines each individual nominated for a track record in leadership, and history of proven accomplishments including international contributions, which promote a greater understanding of energy issues. Support for the United States Energy Association is a major consideration.

The United States Energy Award is one of the most respected awards within the energy industry.

Each year, USEA announces the call for nominations of individuals to receive this prestigious award. The Award Selection Committee examines each nominee’s leadership, history of proven accomplishments, and efforts in advancing energy initiatives in the United States and abroad.

This year, the Selection Committee found the award to be a fitting tribute to Mr. Akins, for his enduring strategic vision and passionate advocacy to ensure a reliable, affordable and sustainable energy, energy grid modernization, and innovative customer solutions.

Nick not only met but far exceeded the qualities that USEA seeks in its United States Energy Award recipients. We are honored that he would accept this award in recognition of his devotion and pursuits in advancing energy access domestically and worldwide. He joins a group of elite industry leaders who share this honor and distinction.

Nick Akins is the former chair, president and chief executive officer of American Electric Power. He served as AEP’s 11th chair, and from 2011-2022 as the company’s sixth chief executive officer and 10th president.

During his tenure, AEP invested in modernization and security of the electric grid, resource diversification, and technology and innovation to enable the transition to a clean energy future while preserving universal access to the grid. Akins also led a culture transformation to engage employees in customer-focused innovation, enhance diversity and inclusiveness, and build workforce agility for a digital future.

Akins rose through the ranks at both AEP and the former Central and South West Corporation (CSW), which merged with AEP in 2000, holding various positions of increasing leadership responsibility throughout his career.

UNITED STATES ENERGY AWARD

A native of Louisiana, Akins received his bachelor's degree in 1982 and a master's degree in 1986 in electric engineering from Louisiana Tech University in Ruston. Additional training includes executive management programs at Louisiana State University, the University of Idaho and the Reactor Technology Course for Utility Executives at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is a registered professional engineer in Texas.

Akins is a former chairman of the board of directors of the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), Global Sustainable Electricity Partnership (GSEP), Nuclear Electric Insurance Limited (NEIL), the Ohio Business Roundtable (OBRT), Ohio Health, as well as the former chair of the U.S. Business Roundtable (BRT) Energy and Environment Committee. Currently, he serves on the boards of GE Vernova, Fifth Third Bancorp and DTE Energy, and also serves on the board of The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Additionally, he previously served on the boards of EEI, Institute of Nuclear Power Operators (INPO) and OBRT. He was awarded the Louisiana Tech Tower Medallion and inducted into the university's Hall of Distinguished Alumni in 2022. Other awards include the EEI Distinguished Leadership Award, the Edwin D. Hill Award and the Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award for his continued dedication to the electric utility industry.



Nick Akins participating in EEI Leadership Team Panel at the EEI Annual Convention along with Tom Kuhn, Tom Fanning, Nick, Chris Crane, and Pat Vincent Collawn.

UNITED STATES ENERGY AWARD



Nick Akins in the lobby of AEP's 1 Riverside Plaza headquarters next to a placard visiting employees.



Nick Akins playing the drums in Garage exhibit at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum (Nick plays in a band called the Power Chords that plays for many area philanthropic events).

TESTIMONIALS

Mark W. Menezes

“Nick Akins, a fellow native of Louisiana, has been a steadfast leader in the energy sector, leading American Electric Power into a new era of innovation. With degrees in electrical engineering, Nick possesses a deep technical knowledge that is fundamental to his leadership. His unique background has given him a top-to-bottom understanding of the electric grid, allowing him to effectively modernize operations and embrace new technologies. Nick has set an example through his commitment to fostering a culture of inclusiveness and agility, driving success and inspiring transformation in the industry. This award is a well-deserved recognition of his remarkable contributions.”

Mark W. Menezes, President and CEO, United States Energy Association

Vicky Bailey

“It is with great pleasure that I congratulate Nick Akins on receiving USEA’s Annual Energy Award. His profound understanding of the energy sector, from its technical complexities to its customer-focused innovations, has been instrumental in guiding the electric utility industry power through a challenging and ever-changing landscape. Nick’s experience, including his time as chairman of the Board of Directors of both the Edison Electric Institute and the Electric Power Research Institute, has helped him shape the energy industry’s direction.”

Vicky A. Bailey, Executive Chair, United States Energy Association

Dan Brouillette

Nick,

On behalf of the entire EEI Board of Directors and our EEI team, thank you for your decades of contributions to the electric power industry. Your work to shape and strengthen our mutual assistance efforts—and your commitment to safe, affordable, reliable, and resilient clean energy—have left a lasting legacy at American Electric Power and throughout our industry.

Your vision for the National Response Event framework came to life and proved its worth time and again. Having seen it in action during my tenure at the DOE, I can truly say it’s been a game-changer during those crucial moments when disaster strikes.

As chair of EEI, your drive to push us toward clean, affordable, and reliable energy and enhance our grid has really defined what we strive for daily in providing the energy solutions our customers need.

Thanks so much for your hard work and dedication—it’s made a real difference. Congratulations again on this well-deserved award!

Personal regards,

Dan

Dan Brouillette, President & CEO, Edison Electric Institute

Tom Kuhn

“Nick Akins’ dedication to leadership in the energy industry has been critical to addressing the top challenges facing the sector. Nick’s vision for a sustainable future is evident in his efforts to maintain affordable access while embracing resource diversification. His inclusive leadership style, which inspires those around him to strive for excellence, has made a lasting impact on the energy industry. His leadership in revising the industry’s mutual assistance and cyber efforts has strengthened partnerships with the Federal government through the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council, demonstrating a commitment to a resilient and secure energy grid. I am honored to celebrate his accomplishments and commend him on receiving USEA’s Annual Energy Award.”

Tom Kuhn, Member of the Board, The Edison Electric Institute

TESTIMONIALS

Gerry Anderson

“I couldn’t be more pleased to see Nick receive this award—and I am certainly not surprised! I had the pleasure of working with Nick in the industry for the better part of two decades. He was not only a great CEO at AEP—he was also a highly influential and unifying leader in the industry during a period of very significant transition. On top of that, Nick is a great guy! Congratulations Nick—well deserved!”

Gerry Anderson, Former Chairman and CEO, DTE Energy

Arshad Mansoor

“It has been my pleasure to work with Nick for a number of years. As a former EPRI board member and chair, Nick provided steady leadership and guidance, helping to build the foundation for our important work on the clean energy transition. During his lengthy tenure at American Electric Power, including serving as CEO and president for nearly a decade, he created a legacy focused on grid modernization and reliability, customer solutions, and diversity and inclusiveness. Those are the core tenets of a successful net zero future.

Nick has made an indelible mark on AEP and the overall energy industry, and I can think of no one more deserving of USEA’s Energy Award than Nick Akins.”

Arshad Mansoor, President and CEO, Electric Power Research Institute

Pat Vincent-Collawn

Nick is the ultimate statesman and spokesperson for the energy industry. Nick listens respectfully to all points of view and forges consensus among stakeholders. He is a champion of the industry’s relationship with labor, working constructively to find mutually agreeable solutions. Thank you, Nick, for all you have done for our industry.

Pat Vincent-Collawn, Chairman and CEO, PNM Resources

Lynn Good

Nick Akins devoted his career to giving a voice to customers, communities and employees, which makes him most deserving of the United States Energy Association’s Energy Award.

In an industry that is as intertwined with public policy as ours, he helped to advance legislative and regulatory reform that accelerated our nation’s clean energy transition and created value for stakeholders.

Through his decades of service, he focused on addressing the most pressing issues of the transition, including reliability and resiliency, grid security and customer affordability and continued to incent investment in the emerging technologies that are needed to close the gap to net-zero emissions.

Beginning his career as an engineer and growing in the ranks, Nick’s unique perspective allowed AEP to make the tough decisions, including the unpopular move at the time to retire coal. His deep industry knowledge also led him to develop and implement the framework for the National Response Event – an industrywide enhanced mutual assistance response.

But perhaps most importantly, he never lost sight that our employees are what makes our entire transformation possible. He focused on engaging employees, building pipelines of talent and creating a culture of diversity and inclusion throughout the industry.

As a young leader, Nick used to tell his mentees that they had the chance to change the world. Nick has undoubtedly made a lasting impact and thanks to his accomplishments, has influenced change for decades to come.

Lynn Good, President and CEO, Duke Energy

**INTERNATIONAL
PARTNER OF THE
YEAR AWARD**

INTERNATIONAL PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARD



USEA is honored to recognize Transelectrica as International Partner of the Year for 2024, in recognition of its regional leadership and commitment to helping countries across Southeast Europe achieve a clean and secure energy transition.

Romania has grown from a USAID presence country that received support to meet European Union energy sector accession requirements. Now Romania's energy leaders from Transelectrica, the country's transmission system operator, are using their experience and expertise to help other countries in the region follow in Romania's footsteps, ushering in a clean and secure energy transition across Europe and Eurasia that offers economic opportunity and decreases reliance on energy imports from malign nations.

In 1992, following the end of the Cold War, Romania's state-owned electricity utility began receiving development assistance from a USAID-funded USEA partnership to help Romania's energy leaders and engineers incorporate best practices in utility management functions: metering, billing and collections, financial management, human resource management, power plant maintenance, safety, and more. USEA helped facilitate executive exchange visits, workshops, and internships that connected Romania's new energy leaders with association members in the United States, including Boston Edison and Mississippi Power Company.

As the country's energy sector matured, Romania's electricity utility—which originally handled transmission, generation, and distribution—was restructured and corporatized. The transmission side was separated into a new business, Transelectrica, focused on transmission network operations.

Transelectrica joined two, multi-year-long, USAID-funded USEA projects focused on regional network planning. In the first project, Transelectrica and other transmission system operators across the entire Southeast Europe region worked together to develop national and regional electricity network planning models that enabled utilities, policymakers, and regulatory authorities to plan for various power sector development scenarios. In the second project, Transelectrica joined with transmission system operators across the Black Sea region to develop and analyze the region's first common transmission planning model.

As a former recipient of U.S. development assistance, Transelectrica's leaders felt a responsibility to "pay it forward" and support other maturing energy nations.

Beginning in 2020, USEA partnered with Transelectrica to support the feasibility study leading to the synchronous connection of the Ukrainian and Moldovan electricity networks with the electricity network operated by members of the European Union (ENTSO-E). Since 2022, Transelectrica has been an integral part of USAID/USEA efforts to improve Moldova's energy security by lending its expertise and experience to Moldelectrica, Moldova's transmission system operator, as it advances its integration with European electricity networks and markets. Specifically, Transelectrica is providing Moldelectrica with: executive exchange opportunities for its leaders; support in meeting the technical and business requirements for permanent ENTSO-E membership; and an agreement to construct an additional transmission interconnection between both countries that will reduce Moldova's reliance on Russian energy supply.

**USEA
CORPORATE
VOLUNTEER
AWARD**

USEA CORPORATE VOLUNTEER AWARD



USEA is honored to recognize the Industrial Cybersecurity company Dragos with the Corporate Volunteer of the Year Award for 2024 for the support provided to the Advancing Modern Power through Utility Partnerships (AmpUp) program.

Dragos is on a mission to safeguard civilization from those trying to disrupt the industrial and critical infrastructure we depend on every day. With cyberattacks against operational technology (OT) systems like electric grids and water treatment plants on the rise, OT cybersecurity is now a White House and C-Suite level discussion. The Dragos Platform gives customers visibility into their OT assets, vulnerabilities, threats, and response actions to protect infrastructure that is essential to all.

When Dragos saw that many smaller industrial organizations including utilities were struggling to address cyber risks, they created the Operational Technology - Cyber Emergency Readiness Team (OT-CERT) to improve the security posture of these under-resourced companies via free OT-specific training and other cybersecurity resources. In 2024, Dragos launched the Community Defense Program to provide US-based water, electric, and natural gas providers with less than \$100M in annual revenue free access to Dragos Platform software.

Dragos also established and secured a patent for Neighborhood Keeper, a free opt-in for the Dragos Platform that allows insights gleaned inside OT networks to be shared in real-time without sharing any sensitive data and with full anonymity of its participants. Neighborhood Keeper is deployed across major sectors of industrial infrastructure and participants including sector-specific intelligence communities, private sector industrial organizations, and select government agencies.

Dragos has been an invaluable contributor to the AmpUp's Cybersecurity and Digitalization Partnership with utilities in USAID-partner around the world. Several Dragos experts have been more than generous in providing their expertise and guidance to participants of two online courses on Cybersecurity and Digitalization for the Energy Sector in Central Asia, and in Latin America and the Caribbean. The course was designed to show why cybersecurity should be a core function of energy utilities and how utilities can implement advanced international cybersecurity practices.

Dragos' contributions to USEA include:

- Speakers at an online session on Defending Critical Infrastructure as part of the online course on Cybersecurity and Digitalization for the Energy Sector in Central Asia.
- Speaker and facilitator at an in-person regional workshop on Cybersecurity and Digitalization for the Energy Sector in Central Asia held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- Speaker and facilitator at an in-person regional workshop on Cybersecurity and Digitalization for the Energy Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Panama City, Panama.

**INDIVIDUAL
ENERGY
VOLUNTEER
AWARD**

INDIVIDUAL ENERGY VOLUNTEER AWARD



Yok Potts

Director of Policy, Research & Industry Strategy
Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA)

USEA is honored to recognize Yok Potts for her contributions to the Energy Utility Partnership Program (EUPP).

Ms. Potts, Director of Policy, Research & Industry Strategy, at the Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA), is currently focused on unlocking capabilities to accelerate carbon reduction through policy. Since joining SEPA in 2022, she has co-authored two (2) publications – *Embedding Equity in Utility Transformation* and *Utility Carbon Reduction Strategies*.

Before joining SEPA, she spent over 18 years at the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) working in various engineering and leadership roles. Starting after the Northeast blackout, she began her career in system control, working with the transmission owners to enhance reliability procedures and helping to build out the overview displays while running power flow studies and contingency analysis as an on-shift systems engineer. She helped design, test, implement, and integrate the Ancillary Services Market (a co-optimization of energy and operating reserves into electricity wholesale market systems) for operations.

She was also engaged in the Diversity & Inclusion Council and launched the Global Citizen employee resource group as chair during COVID-19, which improved employee engagement by sharing international and local cultures and experiences of staff members across the organization.

Her educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and an MBA from the University of Indianapolis.

Her contributions to USEA include:

- Presented at a workshop on renewable energy forecasting to improve variable renewable energy integration supporting Power Grid Corporation of India (formerly POSOCO).
- Provided technical assistance to XM, Colombia’s system operator, on grid code revisions needed in Colombia to incorporate variable renewable energy.
- Presented for an online course on integrating variable renewable energy for young energy professionals in Colombia.
- Presented at the World Energy Council’s 5th conference on renewables and distributed energy resources in Barranquilla, Colombia, as part of a larger USEA/USAID workshop series to advance renewable energy in Colombia.
- Served as a mentor and presenter at USEA’s “Advance Women’s Leadership in Energy to Accelerate Progress Workshop” in Medellin, Colombia, and led the conference drafting of a Global Women in Energy Charter.

USEA ENERGY VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



Eddy Wade, Principle Industrial Consultant with Dragos, presenting at a regional cybersecurity workshop in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

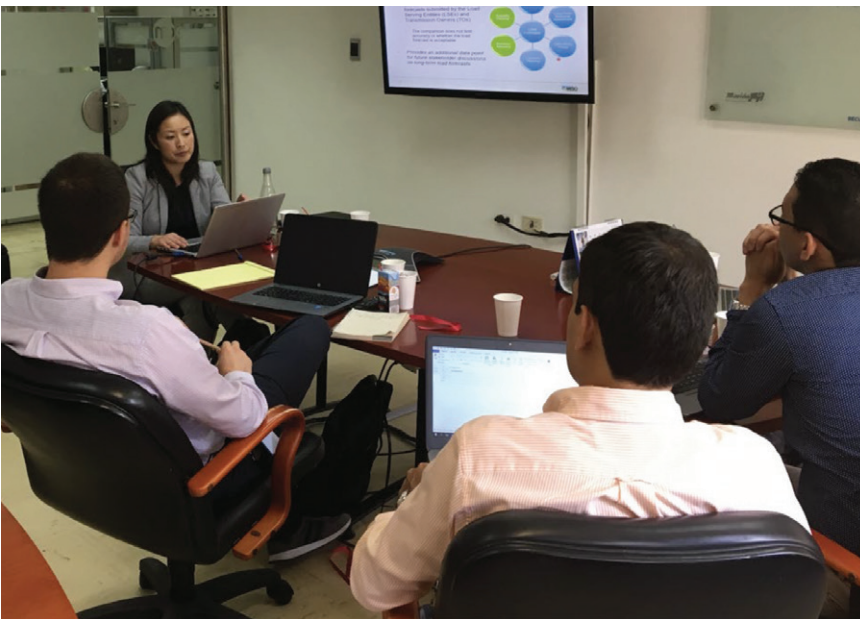


Jose Avila-Gomez, Senior Industrial Consultant with Dragos, presenting to participants from Latin America and the Caribbean during a regional cybersecurity workshop in Panama City, Panama.

USEA ENERGY VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



Yok Potts with participants of the EUPP Advance Women Leaders in Energy to Accelerate Progress Workshop in Colombia's Aburra Valley, while on a site visit to Aguas Nacionales, Empresas Públicas de Medellín's (EPM) green hydrogen plant.



Yok Potts sharing her experience at MISO with Colombia's system operator in a discussion of Colombia's proposed grid code revisions in 2017.

USEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DECEMBER 2023

MERRIBEL S. AYRES

Founder & Principal
*Lighthouse Consulting
Group, LLC*

MARIO AZAR

Chairman & CEO
Black & Veatch

VICKY BAILEY

President & Founder
*Anderson Stratton
International, LLC*

JOHN BUCHOVECKY

Partner
Van Ness Feldman, LLP

KHARY CAUTHEN

Vice President, Federal
Government Affairs
Cheniere Energy, Inc.

ROBERT GEE

President
Gee Strategies Group LLC

KAREN HARBERT

President & CEO
American Gas Association

DONALD HOFFMAN

President & CEO
Excel Services Corporation

SHEILA HOLLIS

Of Counsel and Chair
Washington Office
Duane Morris, LLP

KRISTA JOHNSON

Head of U.S. Corporate
Relations, Chief of Staff
to the President
Shell USA, Inc.

NATHAN JOHNSON

Director, Laboratory for Energy
& Power Solutions
Arizona State University

BRIAN KEARNS

Chief Financial Officer & Chief
Operating Officer
United States Energy Association

MARIA KORSNICK

President & CEO
Nuclear Energy Institute

THOMAS KUHN

President and CEO
Edison Electric Institute

MICHAEL LECLAIR

President & CEO
Babcock Power Inc.

ARSHAD MANSOOR

President & CEO
Electric Power Research Institute

DAVID MARVENTANO

Senior Vice President,
Government Relations
Fluor Corporation

MAJIDA MOURAD

Senior Vice President
Government Relations
Tellurian, Inc.

MARK MENEZES

President and CEO
United States Energy Association

RICH NOLAN

President & CEO
National Mining Association

STANLEY PORTER

Vice Chairman - U.S. Energy
Resources, & Industrials Leader
Deloitte LLP

JAMES ROBB

President & CEO
*North American Electric
Reliability Corporation*

RANDALL ROE

Vice Chairman (Ret.)
Burns & Roe

EDMUND SCHWEITZER III

President, Chairman of the Board
& Chief Technology Officer
*Schweitzer Engineering
Laboratories, Inc*

MIKE SOMMERS

President & CEO
American Petroleum Institute

DENA WIGGINS

President & CEO
Natural Gas Supply Association

ALBERT WILLIAMS

Vice President, Corporate Affairs
Chevron Corporation

DANIEL YERGIN

Vice Chairman
S&P Global



United States Energy Association
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Suite 550 Washington, DC 20004
Ph: 202-312-1230
Fax: 202-682-1682
www.usea.org
[@USEnergyAssn](https://twitter.com/USEnergyAssn)