

# SEPA's Grid Evolution Summit 2018: The Place to Be

The Smart Electric Power Alliance held its 2018 Grid Evolution Summit on July 9-12 in Washington D.C. featuring a host of fascinating electric industry stakeholders discussing topics on how the grid will continue to modernize and integrate distributed energy resources.

The Summit was a goldmine of information with deep dives into topics as diverse as smart grid interoperability, DER interconnection processes, demand-response initiatives, decoding blockchain, microgrid applications, and frankly too many to mention here. But attendees were provided numerous opportunities to learn, interact and speak with high-profile industry members from all facets whether regulators, utilities, academia, legal or business.

The keynote address on July 10, *Rising to the Challenge*, was given by Alice Jackson, president, Xcel Energy, Colorado, and winner of SEPA's 2018 Power Player of the Year Award. Jackson received the award for being Xcel Energy's point person for the utility's 2016 and 2017 global settlements initiative that brought together twenty-six stakeholders to create a plan for Xcel Energy and their customers to surpass the state's thirty-percent renewable energy standard by 2020.

Under Jackson's leadership, Xcel Energy proposed a three-year roadmap to continue providing economical clean energy options for customers, while ensuring a safe and reliable electric grid.



At the SEPA Power Players Awards banquet on July 10, sports legend and now renewable energy entrepreneur, Dusty Baker, was the highlighted speaker. Here, Baker high-fives SEPA president and CEO Julia Hamm.

She gave an honest talk about the challenges in bringing together the diverse stakeholders and understanding changing preferences of customers.

After months of hard work, in an August 15, 2016 filing with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, Xcel Energy and twenty-two of twenty-six intervenors agreed, in total or in part, on a global settlement on three Xcel Energy filings. Those included the company's Phase II Electric Rate Case, Solar\*Connect, and the 2017 Renewable Energy Plan.

On November 9, 2016, the Colorado PUC approved the settlement. The decision allows customers more control over their energy choices, brings more renewable and carbon-free energy to Colorado via new technologies, and provides affordable and reliable energy to further power the state's economy.

Additional talks from that global settlement group resulted in a May 2017 Xcel Energy filing with the state commission that focuses on Xcel's proposal for an advanced grid intelligence and security upgrade, including upgrades to the utility's network of meters and customers' homes and businesses.

Jackson pointed out that customers were moving faster than the company was. Jackson called the entire process emotional and called upon the audience to imagine the day when what the customer wants drives what the utility does, because that is the path Xcel Energy has started going down.

That evening at the awards ceremony, baseball legend Dusty Baker, who owns a renewable energy company, Baker Energy Team, entertained the audience with stories of his halcyon days in baseball. He said Hank Aaron was the best baseball player Baker ever played with because of his great vision, concentration and foresight, which are skills everyone in the room obviously must use in their businesses.

But the best laugh of the evening must have come when investor-owned utility of the year award winner, Hawaiian Electric Company CEO and president Alan Oshima picked up the award for his company and said, quoting Kermit the frog, "It's not easy being green." **PUF**



From left to right: Moderator Eric Lightner, director of DOE's federal smart grid task force; Tammie Rhea, senior product manager, Westar Energy; William Ellis, manager, demand side management, PEPCO Holdings; Jon Pettit, manager, advanced metering system program, Oncor Electric Delivery; Dave Herlong, senior director distribution control center and smart grid operations, Florida Power & Light. Panel on Voices of Experience.



Moderator Julia Hamm, president and CEO, SEPA; Cris Eugster, co-chair, PREPA's Transformation Advisory Council; Nisha Desai, former board member, Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority; José Román Morales, former president, Puerto Rico Energy Commission; Noel Zamot, revitalization coordinator, Financial Oversight and management Board for Puerto Rico; and Christian Sobrino Vega, chief economic advisor, Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico. Panel on Our Future Grid: Lessons from Puerto Rico.



Alice Jackson, president, Xcel Energy Colorado gave the keynote address, Rising to the Challenge. Jackson also was winner of SEPA's 2018 Power Player of the Year Award.



From left to right: Moderator Tanuj Deora, executive v.p. and chief content officer, SEPA; Asim Haque, chairman, PUC Ohio; Julie Blunden, executive v.p., business development, EVgo; and Carlos Nouel, v.p. of new energy solutions, National Grid. Panel on Making it Real: On the Road to the 51st State.



Tanuj Deora, SEPA's executive v.p. and chief content officer moderates a panel investigating the use of blockchain technology.

At the SEPA Power Players Awards banquet, Walter W. Haase, general manager of the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, received the visionary of the year award. >>



Sharon Allen, SEPA's chief innovation officer, moderates a panel that investigates how key markets and technologies can converge to create a more resilient and responsive grid. >>



At the SEPA Power Players Awards banquet, Hawaiian Electric president and CEO Alan Oshima accepted the investor-owned utility of the year award on behalf of Hawaiian Electric Companies.



From left to right: Moderator Sharon Allen, chief innovation officer, SEPA; Steve Wemple, general manager, utility of the future, Con Edison; Brien Sheahan, chairman, Illinois CC; Francis O'Sullivan, director of research and analysis, MIT Energy Initiative; Gregory Dudkin, president, PPL Electric Utilities. Panel on Grid Planning for a Future in Flux.