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MMWEC Annual Conference

Municipal Utilities Adapting to Evolving, Hybrid Grid

LUDLOW, Mass. – May 7, 2019— Addressing the needs of the evolving electric customer and adapting to the new hybrid grid were just some of the areas of focus for the 2019 Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) Annual Conference. The conference, entitled, “Charging Forward,” was held May 1 and 2 at the Colonial Hotel in Gardner, Mass.

The first day of the conference, aimed at MMWEC project participants, included presentations on all of MMWEC’s projects, including Seabrook Station, Millstone Unit 3, Stony Brook Energy Center, Wyman Station and Berkshire Wind. Attendees also received updates on two projects under development—Berkshire Wind Phase 2, which is expected to reach

commercial operation in July, and a peaking generator to be located in Peabody, Mass., which is scheduled to go online in 2021.

MMWEC staff presented on its innovative peak alert forecasting and remote dispatch services, which help its municipal utility members determine when they should deploy their energy storage systems and other distributed energy resources. Attendees also had the opportunity to visit the Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant battery storage unit and see it dispatched live by staff located in MMWEC’s offices in Ludlow.

The evening’s speakers included Dennis Murphy of Ventry Associates, who provided updates on pending state legislation with potential impacts on municipal utilities; Eric Johnson of ISO New England, who addressed the hybrid grid and where ISO-NE sees the industry going in the future; and Will Lauwers of the state Department of Energy Resources, who provided details on some of the emerging technology initiatives being developed in the state.

MMWEC recognized two individuals and a municipal light department with awards at the conference.



Diane Dillman, retired manager of the Paxton Municipal Light Department, received the James E. Baker Service Award. Dillman served as manager in Paxton for 12 years. She also served on the MMWEC Board of Directors and was the chair of MMWEC’s Audit Committee.



Ipswich Electric Light Department Manager Jonathan Blair accepted the Francis H. King Leadership Award on behalf of the Ipswich Utility. IELD is a founding member of MMWEC, and representatives of the utility have served in many roles in support of MMWEC. IELD participates in several MMWEC power supply projects and all of its energy efficiency programs.

The Ipswich Electric Light Department received the 2019 Francis H. King Leadership Award, named in honor of one of the founders of MMWEC. This award recognizes exceptional leadership and dedication to public power joint action, demonstrated by a long-term commitment to the ideals of public power and the philosophy of MMWEC.

Diane Dillman, retired manager of the Paxton Municipal Light Department, received the 2019 James E. Baker Service Award, named after the influential former manager of the Shrewsbury municipal utility. This award recognizes distinguished service to the MMWEC organization, including service as a director, officer or member of an MMWEC committee for at least five years.

Longtime Mansfield Municipal Electric Department light board Commissioner Jess Aptowitz received the 2019 Philip W. Sweeney Public Service Award, named in honor of the former director of MMWEC and chairman of the Marblehead Municipal Light Board. This award recognizes exceptional service to the public or in the public arena that advances the goals of public power.

The second day of the conference began with a presentation by Jordan Grimes of Morgan Stanley. Grimes presented his insights into market trends and the outlook for wholesale power prices, load growth and peak demand.

Following Grimes' talk, MMWEC staff addressed various topics, including changing the traditional municipal light plant (MLP) customer relationship, the ways that technology is driving new relationships between MLPs and customers, and the MMWEC strategy for incorporating carbon-free resources into the power portfolio. MLP managers, staff and commissioners learned about MMWEC efforts and programs addressing the evolving hybrid grid, and how they can be proactive in meeting the needs of customers. ∞



Jess Aptowitz of Mansfield received the Philip W. Sweeney Public Service Award for his extensive service to public power. Aptowitz has been a Select Board member and MMED Commissioner for 12 years, also serving as chairman of the Board of Light Commissioners. Aptowitz has been a great advocate for public power and has worked tirelessly to keep electricity affordable and reliable for customers.