

# AEIC 2025 Achievement Award Winners

Advancing Operational Excellence

By AEIC CEO Steve Hauser



The Association of Edison Illuminating Companies (AEIC) recently announced the winners of its 2025 Annual Achievement Awards at the organization’s 141st Annual Meeting in Charleston. AEIC’s Achievement Awards are presented each year to member companies who have clearly demonstrated significant contributions to advancing operational excellence in the electric utility industry.

This year, AEIC selected eleven award recipients from more than fifty submissions received from member companies. These award winners earned recognition for developing innovative and transformational solutions to some of today’s most challenging operational issues that have achieved success by demonstrating measurable results.

“Each of these award-winning projects exemplifies AEIC’s culture of innovation and collaboration both within and across our member companies,” said Steve Hauser, AEIC CEO. “The ability to align diverse team members and stakeholders around a shared vision is instrumental to the success of projects of this scale and magnitude. Their success has not only addressed immediate operational challenges within their own utilities but also laid the foundation for future knowledge-sharing, scalability, innovation throughout the industry.”

## Ameren Illinois

### Driving Efficiency: Automating Fleet Invoice Processing with RPA

Ameren Illinois was recognized for implementing a solution using robotic process automation (RPA) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to reduce inefficiencies for processing and paying vendor invoices. The Ameren Illinois Fleet Services team partnered with the Ameren Center for Automation to develop a bot – affectionately named DW – that automatically extracts key data from the invoices and stores it in a shared file. Employees then review a validation screen to ensure accuracy, maintaining strong internal controls and accounting standards.

“Ameren has been focused on utilizing new technology to gain efficiencies wherever possible,” said Patrick Smith, Senior Vice President, Operations and Technical Services. “This project exemplifies how our teams are applying strategic thinking, cross-functional collaboration, and new technologies to improve work processes in ways that benefit our employees, vendor partners, and customers.”

This solution saved approximately three thousand hours of manual data entry annually and significantly reduced human error, such as number transpositions and missed entries. It also allowed employees to reduce stress and improved work-life balance by shifting their focus to strategic initiatives and career development.

## Arizona Public Service

### Virtual Power Plant for Targeted Grid Support

Arizona Public Service (APS) was recognized for its virtual power plant built on customer partnerships. Over the past several years, APS has significantly expanded its virtual power plant capabilities, transforming what started as a pilot into a critical grid resource. APS now operates one of the largest virtual power plants in North America, approaching two hundred megawatts. This network includes thousands of customer-owned devices, such as smart

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thermostats, batteries and electric vehicles, which collectively act as an energy resource to reduce demand during peak periods.

“The programs offered as part of our virtual power plant are a major asset during extreme heat when demand on the power grid is high, as technology advances, we will continue to diversify and expand our programs, and remain focused on delivering reliable and affordable power for all

APS customers,” said Kerri Carnes, Director of Customer to Grid Solutions, APS.

Using its virtual power plant, APS became one of the first utilities to initiate a location-based demand response event after a severe microburst last summer caused damage to power poles and electrical equipment in Phoenix. APS partnered with customers enrolled in its Cool Rewards program to call a targeted conservation event. By using locational insights data, APS was able to identify the customer-sited technologies located near the impacted area to ease pressure on the grid exactly where it was needed, helping prevent outages and keep power flowing reliably to homes and businesses.

## Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.

### Crew on Site Tagging for Safe, Automated Switching

Central Hudson was recognized for development of a new tagging



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mechanism within its Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS) called Crew on Site that adds critical decision-making logic to automated switching plans by factoring in the locations of field crews. This tag serves two critical functions: it provides a clear visual indicator to control room operators of crew locations, and it blocks automated switching for electronic devices in the vicinity of those crews.

“The Crew on Site tag is a simple, yet powerful, innovation that reinforces our commitment to safety without compromising grid functionality, said Eric Kiszkiel, VP Operations & Safety at Central Hudson. “As Central Hudson deploys automated switching, clearly communicating to front-line crews how their safety is ensured – while also improving system reliability – has been a critical component of change management.”

This innovative tagging process has strengthened trust between control room operators and field personnel, reinforcing a shared commitment to protecting life and property. This development, implementation, and communication of this tag to Central Hudson’s workforce, underscores the utility’s commitment to worker safety and has contributed to faster adoption and support from field personnel.

## Dominion Energy Data Center Capacity Request Solution

Dominion Energy was recognized for its Data Center Capacity Request Solution, a transformative initiative designed to meet the surging demand for electric service in Virginia. With annual capacity requests nearing one thousand megawatts and individual projects now requesting gigawatt-scale service, the company faced a critical need to modernize its project intake and tracking processes and systems.

The solution – a robust, integrated platform combining a

customer-facing portal, internal project management tools, automation, and data governance – has revolutionized how Dominion Energy manages these large load capacity requests. It delivers transparency, efficiency, and scalability, setting a new standard for customer service and operational excellence in the electric utility industry.

“The primary challenge addressed with this solution was the inability to scale manual and disparate processes and tools to handle

the exponential growth in data center demand,” said Matt Heartwell, Manager Data Center Practice. “Our team addressed this challenge by automating workflows to reduce human error and processing time, integrating GIS tools to visualize substation locations and circuit availability, and enabling two-way data exchange between the customer and various internal teams, ensuring real-time updates.”

The solution has delivered measurable improvements in efficiency, transparency, and customer satisfaction including faster project turnaround times due to automated workflows and real-time tracking; improved data accuracy through centralized governance and integration with GIS; and enhanced customer experience via a self-service portal with real-time status updates.

## Eversource Energy AI-Powered HPFF Monitoring System

Eversource Energy was recognized for Smart Detection, Safer Grid: Eversource’s AI-Powered High Pressure Fluid Filled (HPFF) Monitoring System. The HPFF system utilizes cables insulated by a high-pressure dielectric fluid that enhances electrical insulation and aids in heat dissipation.

Despite its advantages, the HPFF system suffers from the risk of fluid leaks, which could pose significant environmental hazards. Detecting these leaks presented a formidable set of challenges that led Eversource to develop an innovative, AI-powered monitoring system for its HPFF transmission lines. This in-house, cost-effective solution combines machine learning, pressure-derived pump start analysis, and real-time dashboards to detect fluid leaks significantly faster – reducing detection time from days to hours, enhancing operational efficiency and environmental protection.

“The core achievements of our project include innovative

## PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNER

### Florida Power & Light

#### NextEra Energy's NERC Information Command Center (NICC)

Florida Power & Light (FPL) received AEIC's President's Award, the association's highest honor, for NextEra Energy's NERC Information Command Center (NICC), the industry's first automated real-time continuous monitoring compliance system designed to meet an expanding set of regulatory standards governed by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC).

Co-developed by FPL and its parent company, NextEra Energy, the NICC embodies a comprehensive compliance intelligence platform supported by a dedicated enterprise data warehouse powered by automation, AI and analytics, and smart controls – both preventative and detective. The NICC recognizes that compliance is not a static set of obligations but a dynamic, living function that requires intelligence, integration, and intentional design.

"The NICC is more than a technological innovation, it represents a shift in mindset," said Bob Wargo, FPL senior director of the NERC Compliance Center of Excellence. "By operationalizing compliance and embedding it into the very fabric of how work is performed,

the NICC ensures that FPL and NextEra Energy are not only compliant but are also continuously demonstrating it, efficiently and transparently."

Beyond regulatory compliance, the NICC adds substantial business value. By enabling real-time compliance oversight, the NICC allows for targeted cost tracking, long-term cost savings, and strategic capital investment. This strategic alignment allows FPL and NextEra Energy to meet its regulatory

obligations while maintaining cost discipline and improving resilience.

"The energy industry is at an inflection point. As threats evolve and compliance expectations rise, utilities must think differently about how they deliver assurance," said Steve Hauser, CEO, AEIC. "The FPL and NextEra Energy NICC offers a blueprint for innovating with purpose, integrating with rigor, and leading with resilience – setting the industry standard." ○



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use of pressure variation data, machine learning-based dynamic threshold setting, development of a comprehensive visualization dashboard, and dramatic reduction in leak detection time," said Eversource Senior Vice President of Engineering Digaunto Chatterjee. "Together, these achievements signify a transformative approach to managing HPPF system integrity, combining data-driven insights with advanced analytics and machine learning to safeguard environmental and operational assets."

The HPPF leak early detection project has not only driven substantial operational improvements within Eversource but has made a measurable impact across the utility industry and has influenced other utilities to explore their own data for similar tools.

### Exelon Corporation

#### POSEIDON: Personalized, & Optimized Storm ETR Information Delivery & Outage Notification

Exelon was recognized for POSEIDON – Personalized, &

Optimized Storm ETR Information Delivery & Outage Notification – a cutting-edge AI analytics engine that delivers real-time Estimated Time of Restoration (ETR) during storms, offering enhanced, granular insights by seamlessly integrating historical and live storm restoration data.

Traditionally, managing storm response has relied on manual data aggregation and broad regional estimates, often resulting in inaccurate or delayed customer communication. By generating customer-specific ETRs from the onset of a storm, POSEIDON tailors the customer experience and ensures accurate, personalized updates throughout the event. Developed entirely in-house, from concept to implementation, POSEIDON is live at all of Exelon's six operating utilities and is actively utilized during live storm events.

While many ETR tools are designed from an operational perspective to help storm teams plan the restoration process, POSEIDON uniquely focuses on addressing customer needs

during these hectic times. This customer-centric approach differentiates POSEIDON from existing and upcoming tools in the industry. POSEIDON has a meaningful impact on all aspects of outage communication, including strategic planning, call centers, web and mobile services, and messaging and process streamlining.

## Salt River Project

### IBR Operational Readiness

Salt River Project (SRP) was recognized for its Operational Readiness (OpR) Program that enabled the company to add 2,600 MW of inverter-based resources (IBRs) to a balancing authority with 8,500 MW summer peak and 3,500 MW springtime load.

“This OpR program began addressing challenges four years in advance so the transition to a highly variable renewable fleet would be a planned process rather than reactionary,” said Scott Anderson, Operational Readiness Director, SRP. “The more than thirty projects under the program included increasing operational flexibility, re-calculating reserve requirements due to increased variability, performing the first electromagnetic transient (EMT) studies, recommendations on IEEE 2800 adoption, and how to best utilize battery storage.”

Program successes include the creation of a new role, Unit Manager, to shepherd these new resources from inception through operation, improved solar forecasting, creating oscillation detection and mitigation operating practices, and optimizing regulation using batteries. In addition, the OpR program has poised SRP to respond to unexpected issues and has been replicated to address similar challenges with data center load growth.

## Southern Company

Southern Company was recognized for three innovative technology solutions for data analytics, storm planning, and contractor management:

### RAMP

Ramp is a data analytics platform to monitor all Reliability Analytics, Metrics, and Performance across Southern Company. To enhance service toward Southern’s mission, the Power Delivery Data Analytics team developed RAMP, a cloud-based application to analyze, report, and address reliability issues and opportunities across the service territory. RAMP is designed to be used by all organizational levels, from first-line engineers to company leaders.

RAMP now makes real-time data accessible to all levels of the organization, on any device connected to the network. It reduces lag between requests for and delivery of executive metrics and allows field engineers to address reliability concerns in real time before they become a burden for our customers. RAMP was

officially launched in 2024 at Alabama Power Company. As a result of its resounding success, Georgia Power and Mississippi Power deployments are currently underway.

RAMP is paving the way for countless other data projects by creating a replicable, scalable approach to safely and securely moving data to the cloud. This is actively changing data products across Southern Company, enabling rapid delivery of tools that enable data-driven decisions in every facet of our business.

### SPEAR

SPEAR is an application for Storm Planning, Estimated Time of Restoration (ETR), and Reporting to anticipate and prepare for severe weather across the Southern Company footprint. It is an advanced web-based and mobile-friendly application that enhances Southern Company’s storm response capability by providing unparalleled weather and system impact prediction data.

By enhancing forecasting capabilities, Southern Company can better prepare teams and resources for the severe weather ahead, enabling the company to act faster and more efficiently. SPEAR compares multiple predictive weather models alongside real-time radar to estimate how severely an upcoming storm will impact our system. Users can visualize predicted impact with a five-day lead time.

Beyond planning resource movements and analyzing the effectiveness of historical restoration efforts, the ETR module provides a holistic view of active outages on the system. As a storm progresses, SPEAR provides the most up-to-date information and restoration estimates, reducing the manual guesswork of resource management. The ability to monitor and adapt to changing conditions allows Southern Company to strike the delicate balance between safety of employees and customer experience.

### WorkerPass

Southern Power Company, in partnership with Veriforce, launched WorkerPass, an Electronic Contractor Management platform to simplify, streamline, and fortify the onboarding process for SPC contract workers. This SaaS solution enables contract partners to capture, verify, and report critical employee information in adherence to safety and compliance standards.

WorkerPass serves as the single platform where prospective contractors at SPC generating facilities will fulfill all authorization and certification requirements prior to arrival. Drug tests, background checks, environmental and safety certifications, safety awareness and training, and proof of identification will all be handled in this single application.

Southern Power has used Veriforce WorkerPass to revolutionize contractor management, achieving more than half a million dollars in savings, gaining more than one thousand days of productivity, and ensuring worker compliance upon site entry across all defined areas of business. 