Introducing AEIC’s 2021 Committee Chairs

AEIC has seven active committees and five subcommittees, as well as the AEIC Data Analytics Council, all of which concentrate on the operational aspects of the electric energy industry.

There are over 550 member company associates involved in the work of AEIC’s committees/council. Their volunteer involvement not only brings significant value to each AEIC member company but also, through shared information exchange, benefits the entire electric energy industry.

This issue of the AEIC Committee/Connection focuses on the top leadership – the chairs – of each of the AEIC committees, subcommittees, and council. Reading through these short biographies will unveil the vast work experience and expertise that these volunteer leaders bring to the work of the Association.

Cable Engineering Committee
Najwa Abouhassan

Najwa Abouhassan is the Chair of AEIC’s Cable Engineering Committee. She is the Key Manager of Distribution Standards at ComEd in Oakbrook Terrace, IL. Before this role, she worked for DTE in Detroit, MI as the Engineering Supervisor in Underground, Overhead, Relay, and SCADA Performance. She received her BSEE and MSEE degrees from Wayne State University. She was awarded the Engineering Excellence Award in 2015 for her technical contributions at DTE.

Ms. Abouhassan serves on the Board of Directors of Wayne State University’s Alumni Association. With the Association of Edison Illuminating Companies Cable Engineering Committee, she works on developing specifications and guides for underground cable systems. She is the recipient of the Electric Power and Research Institute’s (EPRI) Tech Transfer Award in 2019. She is also an active member of the Society of Women, where she is currently serving as the Vice President of Professional Development – Detroit Chapter. She was awarded the Key Contributor award by the Society of Women Engineers in 2016. She has held several positions with the Arab American Women’s Business Council where she has empowered Arab American women by developing and providing networking, workshops, and professional development opportunities.

Customer Service Committee
Monica Whiting

Monica Whiting is the Chair of AEIC’s Customer Service Committee. She is Vice President, Customer Experience, for Arizona Public Service Company (APS). Based in Phoenix, AZ, APS is Arizona’s largest electric company and serves nearly 1.3 million customers across the state.

Whiting has nearly 30 years of experience, most recently from Tampa Electric Company (TECO) & Peoples Gas Systems (PGS), where she served as Vice President of Customer Experience for the utility’s 1.2 million customers. She was responsible for TECO’s customer strategy and transformation, including customer revenue, strategic customer
accounts, customer experience centers, digital customer experience, energy efficiency and renewable programs, customer systems administration, corporate communications, and market research.

She cares deeply about customers and has extensive knowledge and practical experience in leading customer experience organizations. Before TECO, she spent three years as the Chief Customer Officer at Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) and had an 18-year career at Colorado Springs Utilities where she served as the General Manager of Customer Revenue and Service, as well as other roles. During her career, she has consistently transformed customer service operations, strategies, and experience ratings, resulting in industry-leading J.D. Power transformations.

Whiting has spent her career serving on various boards, commissions, and industry groups. Monica earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in public relations and journalism from the University of Southern California.

### Load Research & Analytics Committee

**Keith Kaysing**

Keith Kaysing is the Chair of AEIC’s Load Research & Analytics Committee. He is the Principal Electric Load Research Analyst at CPS Energy in San Antonio, Texas where he has been employed for the past 15 years. He has over 20 years of combined electric utility rates and load research experience with extensive expertise in both residential and commercial demand response.

A “graduate” of the AEIC Load Research and Analytics Committee’s Load Research courses, Keith has been a member of the Load Research and Analytics committee since 2015, and its Vice-chair for 2018 and 2019.

Keith is an avid outdoorsman with more hunting, fishing, and hiking experience than electric utility experience. He currently resides in Selma, Texas with his wife, Lita. They have two children, Shayn, who is a construction engineer and currently resides in Dallas, Texas, and Cianna, a college sophomore who recently contracted with the Army in their ROTC nursing program.

### Power Generation Committee

**Jim Heilbron**

Jim Heilbron is Chair of AEIC’s Power Generation Committee. He serves as Senior Vice President and Senior Production Officer of Southern Company’s West Production Group, sitting on the Management Councils of Mississippi Power and Alabama Power Company. In this role, Heilbron oversees electric power generation of 14,303 megawatts from Mississippi Power Company and Alabama Power Company Plants.

Previously, he was Senior Vice President and Senior Production Officer for Alabama Power Company, where he was responsible for the company’s generation functions, including 24 fossil and hydro units totaling about 12,200 megawatts of electric power generation. Heilbron also has served as Senior Vice President and Senior Production officer for Southern Power. In this position, he oversaw the operations of more than 8,000 megawatts of electric power.

He joined Georgia Power Company, a subsidiary of Southern Company, in 1998 as a plant engineer and was named plant manager at Georgia Power’s Plant Wansley in 2006. Before this position, he served as plant manager of Southern Power’s Plant Franklin. Previously, Heilbron has worked in many facilities in various roles, including maintenance, operations, and large project management.

A native of Florida, he is a graduate of Auburn University, where he received a bachelor’s degree in civil/ environmental engineering and a master’s degree in environmental engineering. He completed a master’s in business administration at Emory University in 2001.
Kerry Barnette is the Chair of AEIC’s Meter and Service Committee. He has worked for Duke Energy for more than 34 years in the Meter Services group. His job responsibilities have been region engineering, project management and engineering for metering projects, support for high-end metering products such as generation plant and interchange metering, and support for Duke Energy metering systems throughout the corporation. His present assignment is Supervisor of Meter Engineering and Support for the DEC Jurisdiction. He has an electrical engineering degree from Clemson University and is a registered professional engineer in both North Carolina and South Carolina.

Jim Vespalec serves as Chair of AEIC’s Electric Power Apparatus Committee. He is Director of Asset Planning and Engineering at American Transmission Company. He is responsible for the asset renewal program, system protection engineering, and equipment rating methodology. Vespalec has been with ATC for twenty years, working in project management and managing many groups within the Asset Management Department, including Commissioning Engineering, System Protection, Engineering Services, and Design Engineering.

Before American Transmission Company, Vespalec spent approximately nine years with We Energies in various engineering roles and two years with an electrical testing and maintenance contractor. Vespalec earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the University of Notre Dame and a master’s degree in business administration from Marquette University.

Denise Ralston is the new Chair of AEIC’s Data Analytics Council. She is Director, Customer Service Analytics for FirstEnergy Utilities, a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp. Denise leads activities associated with strategic and capital planning for the Customer Service organization. She works across the company to expand data analytics and provides project management oversight for forecasting and performance, customer research, and technology initiatives.

She has extensive experience in the utility industry and has held several different positions in the Customer Service and Finance areas. She is past Chair of the EEI Corporate Accounting Committee and served as an instructor for the EEI/AGA Introduction to Public Utility Accounting course for several years. She is a former small business owner, receiving a state Business of the Year award. Denise received her B.S. degree in accounting from Fairmont State University, Fairmont, WV; MBA from West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV and is a Certified Public Accountant.
Greg Ferree is the new Chair of AEIC’s Power Delivery Committee. He is Vice President of Distribution in the Transmission and Distribution (T&D) organization at Southern California Edison (SCE). Elected to that position in December of 2013, he is responsible for all aspects of engineering, planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and inspection of the overhead and underground distribution system that serves a population of 15 million people across 50,000 square miles within Central, Coastal and Southern California.

Previously, Ferree led the Corporate Storm Performance Improvement Program to identify and implement company-wide process and technology improvements related to SCE’s emergency response activities. Before that, he was the Director of Business Process and Technology Integration, responsible for translating the operating vision of T&D into a comprehensive set of technology and process improvement initiatives, including the execution of a portfolio of smart grid projects and the incorporation of those technologies into operations.

Ferree joined SCE in 1984 and has held a variety of craft, line, staff, supervisory, and senior leadership positions, including working as a district manager, system supervisor of grid operations, service crew foreman, troubleman, lineman, and meter reader.

Ferree earned a Bachelor of Science in business and management from the University of Redlands and an MBA from The University of Southern California.

Tammy Mason is Chair of Power Delivery’s Human Resources Subcommittee. She is the Labor Relations Manager for Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. where she provides strategic partnership in all aspects of human resources, with a focus on labor relations, for two coal-fired power plants. She has participated in many arbitration hearings and has assisted in conducting several collective bargaining negotiations.

She serves as a business advisor to resolve issues in a prompt, amicable fashion to minimize the disruption to normal business operations. Tammy manages a team of human resource professionals who advise employees and leaders on all aspects of human resources. She previously was the Labor Relations Manager at CenturyLink, where she supported employees and managers in several states by providing leadership and direction for HR policy, union contract application, and grievance management. Tammy is a graduate of the College of Business at the University of Missouri – Columbia. She enjoys traveling, eating at ‘mom & pop’ restaurants, and attending concerts.

James Berger Chairs Power Delivery’s Project Management Subcommittee. He is Managing Director-Transmission Engineering, with American Electric Power. Currently, he has responsibility for AEP’s transmission substation, line, P&C engineering, and engineering support services. Previously since 2009, he served as Managing Director-Transmission Projects. His responsibilities included project management and project controls for AEP’s transmission line and station capital projects.

He also held the positions of Director-Transmission Station Projects Engineering, Director-Transmission Line Projects Engineering, and Director - Standards and Work Management. During his 36-year career, he has held other
positions in distribution engineering and business operations.

Berger earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Texas A&M University and is a registered professional engineer in Texas and a certified Project Management Professional. He attended the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia in 2007, the Executive Leadership Development program at The Ohio State University in 2002, and Management School at Texas A&M in 1989.

Power Delivery Cost Optimization Subcommittee

Joseph F. Somma
Robert Locke

Joseph Somma and Robert Locke Co-chair the Power Delivery Cost Optimization Subcommittee.

Joseph Somma is General Manager of Project and Work Resource Management for Electric Operations at Con Edison Company of New York. He has electric operations responsibility for program/project management, the work management system, and a group responsible for oversight of cost optimization initiatives.

He also held the positions of General Manager for underground construction activity and Department/Section Manager for various positions including Energy Services, Distribution Engineering, Gas Operations, and the Transformer/Network Protector rebuilding facility in his 32-year career.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from SUNY Maritime College and an MBA in management from Fairleigh Dickinson.

Robert H. Locke Vice President - Distribution Operations, Dominion Energy Virginia. He is responsible for the construction, operations, and maintenance aspects of Dominion Energy’s electric distribution system, which supports 2.7 million regulated customer accounts across Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. Locke joined the company in 1998 as a natural gas pipeline materials and services buyer. He was a manager in the Supply Chain and Benefits departments, before being promoted to Director–Total Compensation Strategies. In 2010, he was named Director–Strategic Sourcing and Supplier Diversity, and in 2012 became Director–Electric Distribution Operations. In 2016, he became Director–Electric Safety & Training and was promoted to his current role in 2020.

Locke received his bachelor’s degree in industrial management from Carnegie Mellon University and received his master of business administration degree from Virginia Tech.

Power Delivery Distributed Energy Resources Subcommittee

Mark Esguerra

Mark Esguerra is Chair of Power Delivery’s Distributed Energy Resources Subcommittee. He has been with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) for 23 years, where he has held various leadership positions in electric utility operations and asset management that include the areas of transmission and distribution grid planning, electric generation interconnection analyses, and engineering design for transmission and substations.

Currently, Mark is the Senior Director of PG&E’s Electric Asset Strategy where he leads PG&E’s T&D asset life cycle and risk management strategies. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from San Francisco State University. He also obtained a Master’s degree in Business Administration from the Masagung School of Business at the University of San Francisco. Esguerra is a registered Professional Electrical Engineer in the State of California.
Power Delivery Storm Team

**Keith Hull**

**Scott Moore**

Keith Hull and Scott Moore are Co-chairs of the Power Delivery Storm Team.

Keith Hull is Vice President, Distribution Operations for Oncor. He has 39 years of experience across a broad range of areas in the electrical utility industry. Keith has managed various engineering, distribution construction, maintenance, and operations organizations. In his current position he is responsible for Distribution Operations, Distribution Services, Distribution Major Projects, System Streetlights, and Health and Safety.

Scott Moore is Senior Vice President of Power Delivery at Alabama Power Company, where he leads both the Transmission and Distribution organizations. His responsibilities include the maintenance and reliable operation of the company’s electric system. He has nearly 30 years of experience in the electric utility industry. In his current position, Moore oversees a system with more than 1.5 million poles and towers and more than 84,000 miles of power lines spread across 45,000 square miles.

Moore began working at Alabama Power Company in 1988 as a co-op student from the University of Alabama. After receiving his degree in 1993, he began his full-time career in Alabama Power Company’s Engineer in Training program in the Mobile Division.

He held jobs of increasing responsibility in Birmingham, Mobile, Enterprise, Montgomery, Eufaula, and Gulf Power (Florida). Most recently, Moore was Alabama Power Company’s Vice President of Transmission.

In addition to his Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering, Moore earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of Alabama and is a registered professional engineer.

“Like having 30 expert cable consultants available for little or no cost”

One member of the AEIC Cable Engineering Committee (CEC) likened membership to having 30 expert cable consultants available to answer any questions about underground cable systems—at any time.

The networking and information exchange that is shared by AEIC committee members, both during and between regular meetings, has proven to be a valuable asset to AEIC member company operations.

Membership in AEIC allows company associates to join AEIC’s seven active committees, five subcommittees, and Data Analytics Council. AEIC has 180 member companies with over 450 associates on AEIC working groups.

The collective knowledge and influence of AEIC experts makes AEIC a powerful force to help improve the operations of not only AEIC member companies but the industry as a whole.

Find out more about AEIC by visiting [www.aeic.org](http://www.aeic.org) and ordering or downloading AEIC information packets.

People are talking about AEIC. And so can you.