

Tom Kiernan

President ▸ AWEA



“AWEA works hard to attract new and diverse groups to the conference each year, with the goal of sparking new conversations, new connections, and innovative ideas.”

▸ What went into planning this year’s WINDPOWER?

Attendees from all over the globe take time out of their schedules to attend WINDPOWER, and we don’t take that lightly. It is important to ensure those days are filled with top-tier speakers, world-class education, cutting-edge technology, and premium networking, and we work hard to make the event as efficient as possible for both attendees and exhibitors.

The planning process begins with our WINDPOWER marketing task force, which is made up of executives from industry-leading companies. They help us identify ways to be forward thinking and innovative across each touchpoint on the show floor. This year, the task force developed the show theme of Wind Plus — how wind connects so effectively with other energy technologies in serving an increasingly diverse customer and community base. On the show floor, in the education theaters, and throughout the event space, we will be highlighting wind’s collaboration with other renewable technologies and traditional energy.

The education team is continuing to work with our program chairs, Miguel Prado, EDPR North America CEO, and Silvia Ortin Rios, E.ON North America COO, on developing a robust and timely agenda that will capitalize on the conference being located in the energy capital of the world. The development of the program involves an extensive stakeholder collaboration process with industry, government, and academics working to develop sessions that will help grow the industry with timely insights and research.

▸ What should attendees expect in the way of presenters?

Regardless of your expertise in the renewable energy industry, it’s essential to know what’s on the horizon for the U.S. wind-energy market and, more broadly, the utility-scale renewable market, how to influence it, and how to ensure success across the industry. That’s why the education program at WINDPOWER 2019 is vital to any serious professional in renewable energy.

Presenters this year will range from experts in siting, transmission, energy storage, and finance and investment to those who focus on operations and maintenance, offshore, supply chain, and electrification.

▸ Will there be any presentations devoted to offshore wind?

The potential offshore wind pipeline in the U.S. swelled to over 25,000 MW in 2018 as states committed to developing large amounts of offshore wind as part of their electricity mix. It is clear that companies see enormous business potential in developing offshore wind projects.

This year’s WINDPOWER will kick off with a pre-con seminar that will provide helpful insights for companies looking to enter this market by estimating the supply-chain deliverables, both in terms of quantities and cost; shedding light on the procurement process; and laying out timelines.

In addition to the pre-con, we will also have WINDPOWER sessions focused on innovating offshore wind technology by leveraging other offshore energy advances and balancing co-existence of offshore wind with other users of the ocean. There will also be discussions around financing offshore projects.

▸ With Texas being a leader in U.S. wind energy production and the show’s venue being in Houston, are there any special tie-ins?

Texas is known to be a big producer and consumer of energy, but many Texans find it surprising that the state leads all states in wind-energy production by a large margin. With 16 percent of generation coming from wind, there’s great potential for the state to become an even bigger player in clean energy. A recent study conducted by Rice University finds that Texas could easily generate most of its energy through wind and solar due to the state’s unique geography. One of our panels will include energy leaders in Texas who will discuss what needs to happen for the state to reach its



Last year's WINDPOWER in Chicago, Illinois, was a big success. (Courtesy: Wind Systems)

clean-energy potential and reap the economic and environmental benefits of a cleaner grid.

We'll have many of our Texas companies well represented this year with Shell, BP Energy, EDPR, E.ON, and Pattern all having important roles in the program. In addition, this year's event will have "on the road" learning opportunities throughout Houston that attendees can choose to add on. These local learning sessions include a boat tour of the Port of Houston, blade services safety and repair demonstrations at the WindCom facility or a tour of the EDF trade floor.

► **If I were a first-time exhibitor, what should I expect to gain by attending the show?**

AWEA works hard to attract new and diverse groups to the conference each year, with the goal of sparking new conversations, new connections, and innovative ideas. My hope is that exhibitors are able to meet and connect with prospective customers, while strengthening bonds with existing customers, learn about new developments in the industry, and strengthen their brands — all in a few busy days. Our goal is to make that process as efficient as possible over the course of three days.

Five education stations, plus the ePoster gallery, will be located on the exhibition floor for convenient learning opportunities for attendees and exhibitors. This keeps attendees from being pulled off the floor and away from booths throughout the day. Tuesday wraps up with a happy hour on the show floor to allow for attendees to continue exploring the hall and networking with additional exhibitors.

We are also implementing a "workforce development Thursday" that will keep attendees engaged until the very end. This new initiative will spotlight job opportunities in wind, as well as the growing operations and maintenance segment of the wind industry. Field staff and wind technicians are invited to register for the Thursday program for free or attend the full event at a significantly discounted

rate. Participating exhibitors will highlight current job openings and staff their booth with individuals ready to discuss opportunities within their company.

In addition, the last day of the show will have educational sessions that focus on relevant technical and operations and maintenance topics, as well as safety demos on the show floor.

► **Could you give a quick preview of what attendees will learn from your opening address?**

Wind energy is the largest renewable energy source in the country and will become, along with solar and storage, the dominant long-run players on the clean grid of the future. While that future is exciting, getting from here to there is worth significant consideration and discussion.

In my remarks, I look forward to discussing how those of us in the wind and utility-scale renewables industry need to evolve our thinking, our behavior, and our companies to profitably move from our businesses of today to business models of the future. I will also share, importantly, how this growth and rapid evolution will create even more clean energy jobs in America, more opportunities for veterans, and greater prosperity across the rural and urban landscapes of America.

► **What are you personally looking forward to at this year's show?**

The vision behind this year's theme, Wind Plus, is to bring together not only those working in wind but across energy sectors, local communities, individual land owners, and corporate energy buyers. This year's program focuses on wind energy's ability to thrive through innovation and collaboration while building alliances to propel the industry forward. I am really looking forward to taking this next step forward to powering the future, together! ✈

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