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Take us through your process in developing the conference program for WINDPOWER 2014. What were your initial thoughts and concerns?

After working with AWEA to decide on some broad topic categories, many of which have proven popular at previous WINDPOWER events, they always kick off the educational program with a call for proposed papers and presentations on a very wide variety of subjects— development, finance, technology, construction, O&M, etc. There are two program chairs for the event; in this case Jayshree Desai from Clean Line Partners is the other chair focusing on the financial side of the industry. Together with the AWEA staff we put together a panel of session's chairs who can really focus the program and keep the sessions both engaging and informative. I believe we were able to put together a real dream team this year and I am very excited about both the quality and variety of the program. Our goal was to create a program where every session had valuable insight and key takeaways that attendees will be able to build on

and improve their business or work, and in turn make this industry grow and prosper. AWEA received hundreds of great proposals and the team met in October to begin to shape the individual sessions, filling in with other industry experts as needed to round out the sessions. Some of the top abstracts that we couldn't fit into a session will be presented as posters on display in the exhibit area. Attendees will even be able to vote on their favorite.

Were there any topics that stood out in your minds as essential for inclusion in the program?

This year, we are expanding the emphasis on operations and maintenance from several viewpoints as growing the profitability of existing sites is critical in today's power market. There will still be a lot of exciting information on site development, new technologies and, of course, tax and finance issues.

On the technical side, there are both practical sessions on wind resource planning, innovative construction planning, equipment reliability and new components. There will also be a good session featuring a turbine manufacturer round table and another, one of my favorites, featuring a panel of owners discussing their O&M successes and methodologies.

In addition, there are several scientific sessions where the latest ideas for improving equipment and wind park design are explored as well as new challenges and solutions for offshore design construction. On the less technical side, there are many great topics including how to gather local support for projects, market

updates and reports on the state and local policy fronts.

How will this year's conference topics be structured?

There will be seven concurrent tracks at WINDPOWER – The Business of Wind, Project Development, Driving Demand, Wind Resource and Planning, Technology and the Future, Wind Project Operations and Community/Distributed Wind. The Business of Wind will examine both the onshore and offshore markets in the U.S. and the latest in financing projects; Project Development will delve into engaging stakeholders and various siting challenges; Driving Demand takes a deep look at utilities and various market mechanisms driving wind power here and globally; Wind Resource Planning will broach a wide range of topics including resource assessment, integration, and interconnection; Technology and the Future will take both a technical and scientific look into turbine components and subsystems, wind plant aerodynamics, future of technology and the top executives from leading OEMs will share their perspectives; my favorite track, of course, will be the Wind Project Operations where we will look at the latest thoughts regarding operations, maintenance safety, performance and reliability; and finally a dedicated track focused on issues affecting Community and Distributed Wind.

Who should attend these sessions?

These sessions are really put together for people who are active in the wind industry already and

need good information for planning and forecasting the development or operation of successful, profitable projects. Of course, there is a ton of information for those who are looking to enter the wind energy market at any level, so I guess the sessions really function as an introduction as well as master classes for professionals, depending on your perspective.

How will participants benefit from the conference sessions?

New attendees will get a broad exposure to the many hot topics that affect today's industry as well as good insight into the future of wind. The wind professional will learn new approaches to assure successful projects whether their interest is in development or operation. Additionally, the exhibits will offer a lot of opportunities to explore new information and technology in ways that are different from the presentations.

What are your expectations as far as attendance and participation?

AWEA is predicting a good year as the industry seems to be stabilizing and the future is looking bright. Las Vegas is a popular and inexpensive venue for an event of this size. There will be well over 400 booths at the exhibition and we expect more than 10,000 people to attend.

What are knowledge hub sessions?

In order to allow for more in-depth discussion or for more sensitive questions, the presenters and the session chairs will stay in the room after the sessions and will be available to meet and talk with attendees.. This is a great networking time for the attendees and valuable as additional information on the session is discussed during this time.

After the conference is over, how can industry personnel best put what they've learned into action?

I always learn a lot from these sessions and make some great industry contacts as well. We really try to get

the experts and the decision makers together. The overarching goal of the industry is to reduce the effective cost of generation and these discussions of best practices, new technologies and innovative ways to improve reliability should prove profitable to everyone. ↘

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