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Excellence Personified: IUCX Presents Its 2025 Excellence Awards Winners and Finalists

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Sherman, TX, Monday, March 31, 2025– Arizona’s capital city and its Phoenix Convention Center are the site for the 49th Innovate UtilityCX conference during the week of May 5 – 8, 2025. There, IUCX CEO Rod Litke will announce seven company Excellence Award winners and three finalists at Wednesday’s general session and three individual Excellence Award winners at Thursday’s. Company awards in four categories recognize utilities in two levels: Level I (utilities with annual revenue greater than \$1B) and Level II (utilities with annual revenue less than \$1B). During each presentation, highlight videos will showcase the projects, innovations and professionals who are industry role models. “Saluting these utility companies who have delivered successfully on high tech and high touch projects is an honor I relish,” said Litke, “because they represent the best, the most innovative and the apex of project execution.” He continues, “Our individual award winners are household names at their own utilities because of their work habits and organizational impact, so we are pleased to raise up their exceptionalism to a national and international audience.”

Best CIS Implementation– Salutes major implementations of customer information systems (CIS), evaluated on budget and schedule adherence, operational efficiency and effectiveness after go-live, innovative solutions and improved customer experience/service delivery.

Level I: **Winner** - Eversource¹

Finalist - Piedmont Natural Gas²

¹ Phased implementation of Omni, an industry-leading CIS solution that supports its 2.1M Massachusetts customers. Pioneered the use of Scaled Agile Framework methodology, which has been embraced as a future technology initiative model.

² Replaced an outdated CIS to address technical obsolescence, supportability risks, increase the speed to market for products and services, enhance marketing and sales effectiveness for non-commodity products and services, realize efficiencies with a modern system, leverage analytics capabilities and reduce cost-to-serve customers.

Level II: **Winner** - New Mexico Gas Company³

Finalist - Eugene Water & Electric Board⁴

³ Comprehensive replacement of its 25-year-old billing system and transition to an industry leader’s solution on a private cloud. Project anticipates a 30% reduction in operating and maintenance costs and a 30% savings in internal IT support in its first year.

⁴ Replaced its 30-year-old legacy customer information and financial systems with an industry leader’s solution. Besides core meter-to-cash process updates, the new system features improved functional integration, customer portals for applications and program in-take needs, unified service notifications and process automation.

Innovation in Digital Engagement – Showcases technologically complex projects that improve services in the meter-to-cash CX lifecycle through digital engagement.

Level I: **Winner** - Consolidated Edison of New York⁵ **Finalist** - DTE Energy⁶

⁵ Launched its outage communications messaging center (OCME) in three phases to deliver multichannel, emergency, ad hoc notifications to millions of customers with almost no notice. Uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate voice messages.

⁶ Streamlined assistance initiatives for low-income customers for seamless coordination between agencies and the utility by implementing a scalable and adaptable digital CX platform for agencies. Key features include pledge management, agency approval and payments on behalf of customers.

Level II: **Winner** - City of Round Rock, TX ⁷

⁷ Two-phased project involving its customer payment portal to empower customers with real-time usage information and customizable alerts for leaks and consumption thresholds to make informed decisions and avoid high bills.

Innovation in People & Process – Awards projects that emphasize soft skills, low-tech solutions and non-automated approaches to engage customers and improve services in the meter-to-cash CX lifecycle.

Level I: **Winners** - PSE&G ⁸ and AES ⁹

⁸ Created streamlined process for residential customers applying for solar and EV services, reducing long application waits, enhancing service delivery, and freeing up engineering and field resources for other tasks since the customer care team now handles these requests.

⁹ Implemented transformative program to create and sustain a customer-centric culture with four core principles of how they want to treat customers and each other. Soft skills training programs, new call flow processes, scorecards and coaching feedback are key program elements.

Innovation in Field Automation – Features utilities that have completed a recent implementation that optimized field services in areas like mobile workforce and asset management, deployment of advanced meter infrastructure (AMI) and automatic meter reading, and use of geographic data and advanced analytics to improve response time and streamline back-office processes.

Level I: **Winner** - Duke Energy¹⁰

¹⁰ Implemented enterprise omnichannel notification system (EONS) to deliver critical, real-time emergency updates to customers with a 99.9% delivery rate of accurate, timely information during and after major weather events and natural disasters. When Duke lost normal field operations and systems during recent historic hurricanes, EONS proved particularly effective to coordinate field response efforts, provide real-time integration with site intelligence and improve outage response workflows.

Distinguished Leader: Chima Chijioke¹¹

¹¹ Georgia Power's Vice President, Customer Service, Chima Chijioke possesses deep industry knowledge and uncanny abilities to connect with people across organizational levels. His short tenure of just two years at this utility belies the wide impact and impressive operational results he and his team have achieved. With a data-driven approach, Chijioke has introduced training days for the entire customer service team. He has also established comprehensive scorecards to track key metrics and provided a roadmap that fosters a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Rising Stars: Antoya Debarros¹² and **Debbie Seman**¹³

¹² One of Consolidated Edison of New York's department managers, Antoya Debarros played key roles in its recent multi-year CIS replacement project. Under her leadership of the testing workstream, the program achieved over 99% pass rate for thousands of cases. She was selected for these responsibilities because of her wide operational background at ConEd, educational achievement and business acumen. Besides testing, she and her team were responsible for creating over 200 custom reports and system deployment which involved business continuity planning, dress rehearsals and cutover activities.

¹³ As the City of Round Rock, TX's Utility Billing & Revenue Supervisor, Debbie Seman spearheaded its consumption portal project where she collaborated with IT, various departments and vendors as its project manager. She possesses a remarkable talent for implementing creative problem-solving techniques, approaching challenges collaboratively and refining processes with an unwavering can-do attitude, according to her nominator. Streamlining processes, introducing innovations and fostering a positive work environment are other accolades typical of Seman's work ethic.

Excellence Awards remains a highlight of IUCX's in-person events and programs. Their presentations at general sessions raise up programmatic examples for others to emulate and leaders to follow. "The breakneck pace of technology in today's utilities is hard to keep up with, whether you're a small or large utility. At IUCX, we salute where utilities are today, knowing that tomorrow the landscape will have changed. It's not about chasing the next shiny object though. Utilities carefully plan, schedule, staff, budget and execute these large projects and initiatives, sometimes at significant costs and high risks. Company winners are invited to present workshops on Thursday to provide more details and so attendees can ask questions," Litke concluded.

The week of May 5 – 8, 2025 includes many other IUCX events and programs including:

- Executive Summit
- Key Account Forum
- Deep Dives
- ENGAGE311
- Benchmarking Roundtable
- LeadNext
- Conference
- Women in Utilities

Visit [IUCX](#) to learn more about the target audiences, planned agendas, speakers and activities for each.

About Innovate UtilityCX or IUCX

IUCX is the premier educational and networking conference serving electric, gas and water/wastewater utility professionals across North America and around the world. It provides learning and connection opportunities in support of the utility CX lifecycle: Billing & Payments, Contact Center, Credit & Collections, Digital Engagement, Disruptors, Field Services, and Strategies & Analytics. Leadership Development, Excellence Award winner presentations and Sponsor Solutions round out the two-day workshop agenda. Its content and delivery model are rooted in four core values:

- **Innovation:** We believe every customer - utility touchpoint can be improved through a collective commitment to information sharing, thought leadership, continuous improvement and technology adoption.
- **Objectivity:** As an unbiased, nonprofit organization, IUCX puts the advancement of the utility industry ahead of marketing interests in everything we do.
- **Transparency:** With an honest, customer-first exchange of ideas, IUCX helps the utility industry evolve the CX and keep up with the pace of change.
- **Community:** IUCX fosters a familiar, collaborative culture where utility professionals and industry experts meet and support each other where they are in their CX journey.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, IUCX appeals to attendees from utilities of all sizes. It enjoys support from scores of industry partners, sponsors and exhibitors. IUCX offers year-round and digital content to keep attendees connected with stories that showcase utility success stories, marketplace updates, and trends from other industries influencing utility programs and services. Advisory panels shape and focus all IUCX events and programs, ensuring content is aligned with IUCX mission and reflects current challenges and issues. For more information, visit

www.iucx.org

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