



MID-GRID 2035 Quarterly Symposium

Tuesday-Wednesday, September 29-30, 2026

111 East Wacker Dr., Ste. 222 - IDEA STUDIO | Chicago, IL 60601

Day 1 - Tuesday, September 29, 2026

- 9:30 am** **Optional Tour - Invenergy Control Room | [Separate Registration Required](#)**
The tour at Invenergy will include a tour of the control room and focus on topics including interregional transmission and resource adequacy, and siting and community engagement.
- 12:15 pm** **Lunch Provided**
- 1:20 pm** **Welcome and Introductions**
 - [Jesse Heier](#), Executive Director, Midwestern Governors Association
- 1:30 pm** **Panel Discussion: A Midwestern Perspective on Wildfire Risk**
Wildfires are posing an escalating risk for electric utilities and their customers. Natural disasters are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change, forest management practices, and an increase in population across wildland urban interfaces. This ongoing situation poses challenges to utilities and communities regarding operational stability and operational health. This panel will explore emerging practices from utilities and government actors to improve wildfire risk management and responsiveness.
 - [David Springe](#), Executive Director, National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA)
 - [Mark Tiemeier](#), Director, Power System Risk Management, Midwest Reliability Organization
 - [Chris Villarreal](#), Regulatory Affairs Director, Pano AI
- 2:45 pm** **Break**
- 3:15 pm** **Panel Discussion: Preparing Policy Makers for the Political Changes Happening this Fall Across the Region**
This fall's elections will bring changes to governors' offices across the country, and the MGA will welcome a number of new governors in 2027. This panel will explore what incoming governors and their energy policy teams need to know as they take office and begin navigating increasingly complex energy issues. Panelists will share lessons from their own experiences, including what they wish they had known when they stepped into their roles, the challenges new policymakers are likely to encounter, and how state officials can prepare to make informed decisions early in their tenure. The discussion will also consider how industry, consultants, nonprofits, and other stakeholders can help provide the knowledge and perspective new administrations need to succeed.
 - [Sarah Freeman](#), Principal, Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP)
 - [Maria Redmond](#), Director, Wisconsin Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy
 - [Pete Wyckoff](#), Vice President for Policy, Evergreen Action
 - [Nick Wagner](#), Vice President of Regulatory, Black Hills Energy

- [Carrie Zalewski](#), Senior Vice President, Regulatory Government Affairs and Policy, Constellation
- **Moderator:** [Jesse Heier](#), Executive Director, Midwestern Governors Association

5:00 pm **Day 1 Wrap-up/Preview of Day 2**

5:15 pm **Reception: Theory Chicago Bar** [[Website](#)] - 9 W Hubbard St, Chicago, IL 60654
Join the MGA at Theory Chicago for a post-conference reception and happy hour.

Day 2 - Wednesday, September 30

8:15 am **Breakfast Available**

8:45 am **Guest Speaker: MGA EEPIC Framework**

Overview of the recently completed MGA [EEPIC](#) Framework, which supports multi-stakeholder energy security planning at both state and regional scales. This resource does not replace existing plans or regulatory requirements: it gives states a structured resource to align their policy goals, regulatory authorities, and planning processes into a single cohesive approach for all stakeholders to use.

- [Braxton Duncan](#), Director, Converge Strategies

9:25 am **Panel Discussion: Large Load Policy: Deploying Transmission Lines, Minding Jurisdictional Lines**

Appropriately accommodating large load continues to be the primary stress on system planners and operators. With the advent of FERC Show Cause Orders in June 2026, the goal is “to push our country’s electric markets and economy into the future by speeding the integration of large energy users, like data centers and manufacturing operations, onto the electric grid.” This panel will explore how regional grid operators are working alongside their stakeholders to advance regional preparedness for large loads.

- [Stephen Bennett](#), Senior Manager, Regulatory and Legislative Affairs, PJM Interconnection
- [Kim O’Guinn](#), Senior Director of Regulatory Policy, Southwest Power Pool (SPP)
- [Brian Tulloh](#), Executive Director - External Affairs, MISO
- **Moderator:** [Benjamin Stafford](#), Senior Policy Manager, Energy Systems, Great Plains Institute (GPI)

10:40 am **Break**

11:00 am **Panel Discussion: Building the Backbone - Challenges of Building 765KV Transmission**

As electricity demand grows and the grid evolves, 765 kV transmission offers an opportunity to move large amounts of power efficiently across long distances while strengthening reliability and expanding transfer capability. This panel will explore the practical challenges of developing these backbone projects and what will be needed to move 765 kV transmission from proposal to reality.

- [Fairman Campbell](#), Principal Engineer, ITC Holding Corps.
- [Kenneth Collison](#), Vice President at ICF Consulting
- **Steve Purdy**, Technical Director Engineering Policy, Southwest Power Pool (SPP)
- [Nick Wagner](#), Vice President of Regulatory, Black Hills Energy
- **Moderator:** [Diana Gastelum](#), Policy Specialist, Energy Systems, Great Plains Institute

12:30 pm **Wrap-up/Adjourn Meeting /Box Lunch Provided**