



41ST ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

September 29-30, 2026
AT&T Conference Center - Austin

CONFERENCE Kara Beckmann, NextEra Energy Resources
CHAIRS: Bryan Sams, Constellation Energy

LARGEST REGIONAL GATHERING OF POWER PROFESSIONALS THIS YEAR!

850+ Attendees Expected!

Prominent Industry & Government Speakers

Timely Session Topics & Discussions

PLUS Cocktail Reception on September 29th

[REGISTER FOR FALL CONFERENCE NOW](#)

Pre-Conference Activity Add-Ons on Monday, September 28th

- *Who Pays for the Grid?* Transmission Cost Allocation in ERCOT Workshop from 1:00 - 4:30 PM
- Welcome Reception from 5:00 - 6:30 PM.

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Hotel, Room Reservation & Parking

GCPA has a room block with a limited number of rooms for the nights of Mon 9/28 - Tue 9/29 at the AT&T Conference Center Hotel. **Single or double occupancy rooms are available at the special rate of \$249 per night.** Reservations must be received on or before the room block cutoff date of Tuesday, September 8.

[CLICK HERE TO RESERVE YOUR ROOM ONLINE](#)

Call 512.404.3600 if you need assistance; mention the room block

TO VIEW THE AT&T CONFERENCE CENTER WEBSITE: [Click Here](#)

Parking is available at Hilton Americas standard rates which are currently a max of \$21 for self parking (8-24 hours) in the attached garage and \$21/day OR \$38/overnight for valet parking.

Continuing Education Credit Information

PEs: As part of the Continuing Education Program requirements for Professional Engineers in Texas, each licensed engineer is required to earn 15 hours per year of Professional Development Hours (PDH). Attendees will receive 9.0 hours of credit if all conference sessions are attended and 3.0 hours of credit for the workshop.

CPAs: GCPA is a Board Registered CPE Sponsor with the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy. This registration does not constitute an endorsement by the Board as to the quality of our CPE program. The learning objectives for CPAs attending the conference are: to gain in-depth knowledge on the upcoming legislative session; stranded asset risk; price shape erosion; grid connection strategies for large loads; large load interconnection after Batch Zero; water-energy nexus; customer cost-bearing under grid expansion; job skills forecast in future Texas energy market; AI enabled grid optimization; and the 2050 ERCOT grid.. There are no prerequisites. The learning objective for the workshop is: to gain in-depth knowledge on transmission cost allocation in ERCOT. Attendees will receive 10.8 hours of credit if all conference sessions are attended and 3.6 hours of credit for the workshop.

Attorneys: GCPA will be applying with the Texas State Bar for MCLE credit approval for portions of this conference. Please check back for updates.

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CONFERENCE OVERVIEW - [REGISTER NOW](#)

***Join us at this year's leading electric power conference
for the ERCOT/Gulf Coast region.***

850+ attendance expected based on 2025 attendance of 875 with approximately one-third of these attendees holding upper level management titles ranging from CEO to Vice President.

Conference Check-In & On-Site Registration - Monday, September 28

- Check-In and On-Site Registration opens at 12 PM on Monday.

Pre-Conference Activity Add-Ons - Monday, September 28

- Who Pays for the Grid? Transmission Cost Allocation in ERCOT Workshop from 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM
- Welcome Cocktail Reception for Attendees from 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Fall Conference Day One - Tuesday, September 29

- Registration and Continental Breakfast opens at 7:30 AM
- Conference opening welcome at 8:20 AM
- Session and keynoter presentations from 8:30 AM - 5:15 PM
- Rooftop Cocktail Reception at The Grove from 5:15 PM - 7:00 PM

Fall Conference Day Two - Wednesday, September 30

- Registration and Continental Breakfast opens at 8:00 AM
- Session and keynoter presentations from 8:30 AM - 11:50 AM
- Conference adjourns at 12:00 PM

Thanks to Our Planning Committee

Conference Chairs:

Kara Beckmann, Sr. Director, Regulatory & Political Affairs, NextEra Energy Resources
Bryan Sams, Vice President, Government & Regulatory Affairs, Constellation Energy

Michael Boldt, Greenberg Traurig
Amanda Frazier, Guadalupe Valley Electric Coop
Ryan King, ERCOT
Will McAdams, McAdams Energy Group

Evan Neel, Lancium
Jenni Rochelle, Customized Energy Solutions
Ben Utley, Texas-New Mexico Power

Agenda - Tuesday, September 29

7:30 AM	REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST	
8:00 AM	GCPA President's Welcome Recognition of Chairs Conference Introduction	Brian Lloyd , Vice President, Oncor Barbara Clemenhagen , Executive Director, GCPA Kara Beckmann , Sr. Director, NextEra Energy Resources Bryan Sams , Vice President, Constellation Energy
	emPOWERing YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AWARD PRESENTATION	
8:30 AM	KEYNOTE: A Conversation with Rob Gaudette and Pat Wood III: Building the Grid of 2050 NRG's CEO, Rob Gaudette , opens the conference across the table from Pat Wood III — the former FERC Chairman who helped write the rules this market still runs on. Two very different vantage points on the same grid, in a conversation built to be unscripted.	
9:00 AM	Session I - The Road to the 90th: A Legislative Preview Every conference-goer knows the drill: Austin in September, a legislative session six months out, and a room full of people who want the real read before the headlines catch up. This panel doesn't play it safe — sitting Texas legislators dig into data center growth, transmission investment, grid reliability, and the tens of billions of dollars in transmission costs ERCOT has piled up over three years. Expect substantive disagreement, not talking points, on what's realistic, what's political theater, and what utilities, generators, and consumers should actually watch for when the gavel comes down in 2027. Moderator: Will McAdams , President & Founder, McAdams Energy Group Panelists: Rep. David Cook , Representative, Texas House Of Representatives Rep. Ana Hernandez , Vice-Chair, House State Affairs Committee Rep. Ken King , Chair, House State Affairs Committee Rep. John McQueeney , Representative, Texas House of Representatives	
9:45 AM	Session II - The Vanishing Spark Spread: What Price Erosion Means for New Investment Solar and batteries are flattening the price curve that used to reward new thermal capacity — and this panel doesn't tiptoe around the fallout. What happens to gas investment and BESS economics when scarcity spikes disappear? Can Texas's pipeline system keep up with the load growth behind BYOG and data centers? And as spark spreads compress, how are retail electric providers repricing risk — and what does that mean for customer bills? Panelists who genuinely disagree square off on whether this is a structural shift or a cyclical blip, and what rising LNG exports do to basis and forward prices either way. Moderator: Jeff McDonald , Director, IMM, Potomac Economics Panelists: Keith Collins , Vice President, Commercial Operations, ERCOT Steve Reedy , CEO, CIM View Consulting Brandon Stanislaus , Vice President, Origination, Vistra	
10:30 AM	NETWORKING BREAK	
11:00 AM	Debate: Point / Counterpoint: Does ERCOT Need a 765kV Backbone? Brian Lloyd , Vice President of Regulatory Policy at Oncor and Brent Bennett, Ph.D. , Policy Director, Life:Powered at Texas Public Policy Foundation go head-to-head on one of ERCOT's highest-stakes infrastructure bets: does Texas need a 765kV backbone, and who foots the bill? No moderator softening the edges — just two sharp advocates, a hard question, and a room full of people who'll be paying for whichever answer wins. Relocated from the workshop to Day 1 of the main conference, giving the full attendee base a front-row seat.	

Agenda - Tuesday, September 29 (Continued)

11:30 AM

Session III - Build It, Bypass It, or Share the Grid? Weighing Large-Load Connection Strategies

Large loads have three real paths to power — connecting to the grid, building private behind-the-meter generation, or some hybrid of both — and each one carries a different mix of costs and benefits for the load, the grid, and the community around it. This session weighs those trade-offs honestly: the economic development and tax base a new facility can bring, the strain and cost it can add to shared infrastructure, the PUC case law shaping private-use network configurations in Texas, and the legitimate questions communities are raising around data centers, new transmission, and pipeline siting. Expect real disagreement, including a contrarian voice making the case for bypass — the goal is a clear-eyed look at what each path actually costs and delivers, not a verdict.

Moderator: **Stephanie Kroger**, President & CEO, Hunt Energy Network

Panelists: **Ray Fakhoury**, Policy Manager, Energy, Amazon Web Services

Liz Jones, Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, Oncor

Adrian Shelley, Director, Texas Office, Public Citizen

JohnBinh Vu, Vice President, Electric Utilities, Stack Infrastructure

12:15 PM

LUNCHEON

1:45 PM

KEYNOTE - FIRESIDE CHAT: *One Decision at a Time: ERCOT and PUCT on the Path to 2050*

ERCOT CEO **Pablo Vegas** and PUCT Chairman **Thomas Gleeson** sit down together to talk through the decisions in front of them right now — on market design, reliability, and investment — that will define what the Texas grid looks like in 2050. An unscripted look at building the future one decision at a time, from the two people making the calls.

2:15 PM

Session IV - Post-Batch: Where Large Load Interconnection Stands After Batch Zero

By September, the dust from Batch Zero should be settling — or it won't be, and that's exactly the conversation this panel is built for. A clear-eyed look at what actually got delivered, what got deferred, how much of the load forecast is real demand versus speculative reservation, and what's coming next for the queue. With vocal Batch Zero critics on stage alongside the utility building the infrastructure, plus the "Bring Your Own Generation" angle reshaping how loads plan to connect, this is where the theory of large-load interconnection meets what's actually happening on the ground.

Moderator: **Warren Lasher**, President, Lasher Energy Consulting

Panelists: **Bill Barnes**, Sr. Director, Regulatory Affairs, NRG

Shannon Caraway, President & Co-Founder, Eolic Development Partners

Kristi Hobbs, Vice President, System Planning & Weatherization, ERCOT

Jason Ryan, Exec. VP, Regulatory Services & Government Affairs, CenterPoint Energy

3:00 PM

NETWORKING BREAK

3:30 PM

Vignette - The Water-Energy Nexus: What Power Plants and Data Centers Are Competing For

Heather Hayward, Founder, Heather Hayward Consulting, LLC on the collision nobody's pricing yet: cooling water for power plants versus cooling water for data centers. With Corpus Christi's restrictions already biting, this one's no longer hypothetical.

Agenda - Tuesday, September 29 (Continued)

- 3:45 PM **Session V - Affordability Under Pressure: Keeping the Lights On Without Breaking the Bank**
Every dollar spent building the grid of 2050 lands on somebody's bill — the question this panel refuses to dodge is whose. As billions flow into expansion and new generation, this session tackles rate impacts and low-income protections head-on, examines how large loads are reshaping cross-subsidization across the rate base, and asks the uncomfortable question of whether ERCOT's competitive market is still delivering the affordability it was designed to promise.
Moderator: **Ben Barkley**, Public Counsel
Panelists: **Krista Davis**, Chief Marketing Officer, Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative
 Chris Ercoli, President & CEO, REAL
 Dr. Will Gorman, Asst. Leader, Energy Markets & Planning Department, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab
 Margo Weisz, Executive Director, Texas Energy Poverty Research Institute
- 4:30 PM **Session VI - Live Podcast Recording: The Energy Evolution Podcast from S&P Global**
S&P Global Commodity Insights records a live episode of the Energy Evolution podcast right on the GCPA stage, with host Dan Testa pressing guests on how the industry's emissions push is colliding with the realities of Texas load growth. Guest lineup locks in around Labor Day, timed to whatever's actually moving the market that week.
Host: **Dan Testa**, Co-host, Energy Evolution podcast, S&P Global Energy Platts
- 5:15 - 7:00 PM **COCKTAIL RECEPTION**

Agenda - Wednesday, September 30

- 8:00 AM **REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST**
- 8:30 AM **ANNOUNCEMENTS - Barbara Clemenhagen**, Executive Director, GCPA
- 8:35 AM **KEYNOTE - TBA**
- 9:05 AM **Session VII - Jobs in 2035: The Skills the Texas Energy Economy Will Need**
If you had a kid starting college today, what should they study to have a real career in the Texas energy industry a decade from now? This panel puts economists, legislators, educators, and technologists in the same room to work through the workforce side of the energy transition — from electricians commanding six figures to AI engineers building the systems that run the grid to the robotics talent nobody's training enough of yet. A rare session that treats the labor market, not just the megawatts, as core infrastructure.
Moderator: **Brian Korgel**, Director, University of Texas at Austin Energy Institute
Panelists: **Rep. Keith Bell**, Representative, Texas House of Representatives
Dr. Ning Lin, Program Manager, Chief Economist, UT Center For Energy Economics
Panelist TBA
- 9:50 AM **NETWORKING BREAK**
- 10:20 AM **KEYNOTE - Two Rivers, One Grid: Leading LCRA into Texas's Energy and Water Future**
Rudy Garza, General Manager, LCRA
Garza took the helm at LCRA in July 2026 after leading CPS Energy through a period of major growth in San Antonio — and he's stepping into one of the most consequential public utility roles in Texas at a moment when growth, water stress, and grid transformation are colliding. In this keynote, Garza shares his early vision for LCRA's role in Central Texas's next chapter: expanding generation, managing the lower Colorado River's water resources under mounting demand, and building the trust and infrastructure Texans will need through 2050.
- 10:50 AM **Vignette - AI-Enabled Grid Optimization: What's Actually Being Deployed Today**
ERCOT's own CTO, **Venkat Tirupati**, on what AI is actually doing inside grid operations today — not the vendor pitch, the practitioner's view.
- 11:05 AM **Session VIII - The 2050 ERCOT Grid: A Multi-Generational Vision**
The conference closes the way its theme demands: by handing the mic to four different generations who will all still be living with today's decisions. A near-retirement veteran envisions the grid after they're gone. A brand-new entrant lays out where they think ERCOT is actually headed. Two bridge generations fill in what happens in between. It's deliberately structured to surface real disagreement across generational lines — not a retrospective, a genuine argument about where this market goes next.
Moderator: **Barbara Clemenhagen**, Executive Director, GCPA
Panelists: **Kristy Ashley**, Director, Market Intelligence, Customized Energy Solutions
Trip Doggett, Former ERCOT CEO & MISO Board Member
Juliana Gianni, Policy Analyst, Goff Policy
Tiffany Wu, Consultant, McAdams Energy Group
- 11:50 AM **CLOSING REMARKS**
- 12:00 PM **CONFERENCE ADJOURNS**

Pre-Conference Half-Day Workshop: Monday, Sep. 28 - 1:00-4:30 PM

"Who Pays for the Grid?" — Transmission Cost Allocation in ERCOT

1:00 PM **Workshop Welcome & Framing**

1:15 PM **Vignette - Bill Shock: Reading a Real Transmission Cost Statement Line by Line**

Cathy Webking, Partner at Spencer Fane, walks a real transmission cost statement line by line — what 4-CP produced, what 12-CP would change, and what PUCT's still-open rulemaking leaves hanging. Abstract policy, made concrete in fifteen minutes.

1:30 PM **Panel I - 4-CP to 12-CP: What the Shift Actually Changes — and Who Pays**

A technical and policy deep dive into the mechanics of the transmission cost allocation overhaul: what the 12-CP methodology actually changes for generators, industrials, cooperatives, and IOUs; how utilities are adapting rate structures; what the shift means for NOIE-territory LSEs; and where PUCT Project No. 58484 stands heading into the 90th Legislature.

Moderator: **Carrie Collier-Brown**, Partner, Husch Blackwell

Panelists:

Amanda Frazier, General Counsel & CRO, GVEC

Jennifer Schmitt, COO, Rhythm

Melissa Trevino, Asst. VP, Oxy

Panelist TBA

2:15 PM **NETWORKING BREAK**

2:45 PM **Vignette - Mapping the Load Growth Wave: Where ERCOT's Forecast Demand Actually Lands**

Juan Arteaga, PhD, Principal Analyst at Enverus, maps where ERCOT's forecast demand is actually landing — and how much of it plans to bypass the grid it still depends on. The data behind Panel 2's fight over who pays.

3:00 PM **Panel II - Who Really Pays? Cross-Subsidization and the Affordability Tension**

Billions of dollars in new transmission are about to hit rate base — and somebody has to cover the bill. This panel puts the fairness question on the table without flinching: how cross-subsidization actually flows between customer classes, whether large-load financial security requirements are doing their job, and what happens to everyone left on the grid when the biggest loads find a way to bypass it. A consumer advocate and a cooperative voice keep the conversation grounded in what affordability actually looks like for the people footing the bill.

Moderator: **Mark Bruce**, Principal, Cratylus Advisors

Panelists:

Eric Blakey, Director, Reg. Affairs, Pedernales

Chris Brewster, Of Counsel, Lloyd Gosselink

Beth Garza, Sr. Fellow, R Street Institute

Panelist TBA

3:45 PM **Panel III - From Rulemaking to Reality: What the 90th Legislature Should Do About Cost Allocation**

The rulemaking will still be open when this panel takes the stage — which is exactly the point. A legislator or senior staffer, a PUCT voice, a generator making real capital decisions off of cost allocation signals, and a consumer or co-op representative debate what the 90th Legislature should lock into statute, what it should leave to the regulator's judgment, and what a framework that can actually survive the political process looks like heading into 2027.

Moderator: **Ben Utley**, Director of Government Affairs, Texas-New Mexico Power

Panelists:

Ned Bonskowski, VP Texas Regulatory Policy, Vistra

Katie Coleman, Partner, O'Melveny

Michael Jewell, Founder, Jewell & Assoc.

Panelist TBA

4:30 PM **WORKSHOP ADJOURNS**

Pricing Information

CONFERENCE PRICING

Price includes one and a half day conference on 9/29 - 9/30, welcome reception on 9/28, and cocktail reception on 9/29.

CONFERENCE	Early Bird Registration through 9/8	Regular Registration 9/9 - 9/25	Onsite Reg. 9/26 - 9/30
GCPA Members	\$1000	\$1200	\$1400
Non-Members	\$1300	\$1500	\$1700
RTO/ISO & .gov	\$415	\$415	\$465
GCPA Members in Job Search Mode	\$500	\$600	\$700
Non-Members in Job Search Mode*	\$800	\$900	\$1000
Full-Time Students	\$200	\$200	\$300

WORKSHOP PRICING

Price includes half day workshop on 9/28, beverages and snack.

WORKSHOP	Early Bird Registration through 9/8	Regular Registration 9/9 - 9/25	Onsite Reg. 9/26 - 9/28
Fee w/ conf. registration	\$280	\$340	\$440
Fee W/OUT conf. reg.	\$390	\$450	\$550

WELCOME RECEPTION

Welcome reception on Mon. 9/28 includes one drink ticket and hors d'oeuvres. Additional cocktails can be purchased at the bar. Reception is complimentary to conference and/or workshop attendees only and is not available as a stand-alone purchase for non-conference attendees. PLEASE RSVP WHEN REGISTERING FOR THE CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP.

REFUND POLICY

Cancellations must be received by 5 PM on Friday, September 11 in order to receive a refund or a credit. A 10% service fee will be charged against all refunds. Please direct all cancellation requests to Mary Armstrong at marmstrong@gulfcoastpower.org.