



# 11th Annual emPOWERing Women Leadership Conference

**INNOVATE, LEAD, THRIVE – POWERING THE FUTURE TOGETHER**

NOVEMBER 7, 2025 | AT&T HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER | AUSTIN, TEXAS

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## Conference Overview

Join 200+ energy industry leaders for a transformative day that will reshape how you think about leadership, innovation, and your career trajectory. This isn't just another conference—it's where the future of women in energy takes shape.

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## Why This Day Will Transform Your Career

- ✨ Connect with 200+ energy industry leaders from across the Gulf Coast and beyond
- ⚡ Learn from executives who are shaping the future of energy
- 🚀 Gain actionable strategies you can implement immediately
- 💡 Discover how AI and technology are creating new opportunities
- 🤝 Build relationships that will accelerate your career
- 🎯 Join our new mentoring program and find your next guide

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## Conference Details

**Date:** November 7, 2025

**Location:** AT&T Hotel & Conference Center, Downtown Austin, Texas

**Registration:** Opens September 2, 2025

**Expected Attendance:** 200+ industry professionals

# FULL PROGRAM SCHEDULE

## THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6:

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5:00 PM **Pre-Conference Reception**

- 7:00 PM Have a cocktail and enjoy some pre-conference networking.

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7:

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8:10 AM **Conference Welcome & Announcements**

Setting the stage for a day of inspiration, connection, and transformation.

8:20 AM **STEM Pathways: Inspiring the Next Generation**

**Wendy Newberg**, Development Manager, Ann Richards School Foundation

Discover how we're building the pipeline of tomorrow's energy leaders—starting today.

8:30 AM **Opening Fireside Chat – AI: The Frontier for Women in Energy – Navigating Disruption and Shaping the Future**

### FEATURING:

- **Cindy Falschlehner**, Cloud Consulting Director, South Region and Incubating Industries, Google
- **Roz Thilmany**, Head of Google Cloud, Sales Engineering, Google

A dynamic conversation between two accomplished Google leaders bringing complementary perspectives to the energy transformation. Cindy will share strategic insights from her consulting leadership across the South region, while Roz will provide practical perspectives from her engineering and AI implementation experience. Together, they'll explore how AI is reshaping the energy landscape and address the critical question: How can women leverage this disruption to drive meaningful change?

This engaging dialogue will tackle the challenges and opportunities that AI presents in energy, highlighting how women are uniquely positioned to lead in this evolving industry.

9:00 AM **Panel 1 – Tech Forward: Powering the Future – Innovation in Grid Modernization, Clean Energy, and Digital Transformation**

**MODERATOR: Donna Benefield**, Senior Vice President and Head of NRG Services, NRG

### PANELISTS:

- **Ramya Ramaswamy**, Director Energy Efficiency, PUC
- **Kera Gautreau**, Houston Energy Transition Initiative
- **Rumeet Anand**, NRG
- **Felek Abbas**, Chief Technology Officer, SPP

A deep dive into the real-world applications of grid modernization technologies, clean energy initiatives, and digital transformation, highlighting the role of women in driving these advancements. How AI enables new efficient energy distribution and what new regulations may be necessary.

*Discover the technologies that are reshaping our industry and learn how you can be at the forefront of this transformation.*

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

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### 9:45 AM **Break**

Network, recharge, and connect with fellow energy leaders

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### 10:15 AM **Keynote – Thriving, Not Just Surviving: A View on Gen Z & Millennial Aspirations in the Workplace – Fueling Well-being and Finding Purpose**

**Georganne Hodges**, Board Member

This keynote will share leadership perspective and strategic insights on the Deloitte 2025 Gen Z and Millennial Survey, revealing how these generations—74% of the workforce by 2030—pursue the "trifecta" of money, meaning, and well-being in their careers.

Explore how power industry leaders can respond to Gen Z's work/life balance priorities versus traditional advancement paths, address financial security concerns while maintaining competitive compensation strategies, and create purpose-driven opportunities when 89% of Gen Z consider meaning essential. Learn practical strategies for supporting mental well-being in demanding power industry environments and navigating environmental concerns during the energy transition.

As an experienced leader, Georganne will provide practical advice on how power industry organizations can adapt their leadership approaches, talent strategies, and workplace cultures to attract, develop, and retain emerging talent while maintaining operational excellence.

*The future workforce is here. Are you ready to lead them? This keynote sets the foundation for building bridges across generations.*

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### 10:45 AM **Panel 2 – Building the Future Workforce: Innovating and Empowering Through New Perspectives - A Generational Conversation**

**MODERATOR: Georganne Hodges**, Board Member

**PANELISTS:**

- **Michele Canino**, VP Regulatory & Political Affairs, NextEra Energy Resources
- **Jennifer Schmitt**, Head of Operations, Rhythm
- **Lauren Rodriguez**, Data Engineer, El Paso Electric
- **Tasha McCarter**, Vice President, Cleantech Innovation, RWE

A moderated discussion exploring real-world differences in intergenerational workforces. Hear perspectives on overcoming these differences and discover what strategies panelists think organizations can use to open leadership opportunities to the next generation of executives.

*What happens when different generations collaborate? Magic. Learn how to harness the power of diverse perspectives.*

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### 11:30 AM **Lunch**

Continue the conversation over lunch and expand your network

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

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1:00 PM **Keynote – Amplify Your Voice: Pathways to Leadership – Creating an Inviting Energy Future**

**FEATURING:**

- **Renita Joyce Smith**
- **Tracy Reneé Williams**

The energy sector needs your voice, your vision, and your leadership. Yet many talented women find themselves technically brilliant but struggling to be fully heard or to advance into leadership roles they're ready for.

This keynote reframes leadership as both a personal journey and a collective opportunity. Join nationally recognized leadership strategists Renita Joyce Smith and Tracy Reneé Williams—TEDx speakers and reformed corporate leaders—as they share proven strategies for confidently expressing your ideas, articulating your vision, and advocating for yourself and others.

Through powerful stories and practical insights from working with senior executives, you'll discover how to:

- Lead with clarity and confidence, even in high-stakes situations
- Create inviting environments that support your advancement and others'
- Navigate power dynamics while building collaborative relationships
- Advocate effectively for yourself and your team

This isn't abstract inspiration—it's actionable guidance for leading boldly while creating space for others to rise. You'll leave equipped with tools to amplify your impact and ready to dive deeper into the collaborative strategies explored in Panel 3: Breaking Barriers and Forming Allies.

*Your voice matters. Learn how to make it heard and create space for others to rise with you.*

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1:45 PM **Panel 3 – Breaking Barriers and Forming Allies: Climbing the Leadership Ladder Together**

**MODERATOR: Allison Wall** (invited)

**PANELISTS:**

- **Cindy Anderson**, COO, SGA Natural Gas Association
- **Sean Kelly**, CEO, Amperon
- **Imane Mrini**, Director, Corporate Compliance Programs, Austin Energy
- **Lauren Haller**, Senior Director, Counsel - Operations, Pattern Energy (invited)

Exploring practical strategies for breaking down barriers and fostering allyship, creating actionable insights for both women and men in the energy sector.

*Ready to accelerate your career? This panel reveals the strategies that actually work.*

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CONT.)

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### 2:30 PM **Break**

Refresh and prepare for the final sessions

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### 3:00 PM **GCPA Brad Jones Mentoring Network Launch**

#### SETUP & INTERACTIVE OPPORTUNITY:

- **Mary Armstrong, Deputy Executive Director, Gulf Coast Power Association**

Announcing the formal mentoring program launch with an interactive opportunity for conference attendees to set up their mentoring profiles.

*Your next career breakthrough could start with a conversation. Join our mentoring community.*

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### 3:15 PM **Panel 4 (Interactive) – The Balancing Act: Thriving in a Demanding World – The Mentorship Advantage: Nurturing Your Well-being and Career**

**MODERATOR: Daryl Brown**, Executive Director South Region, MISO (invited)

#### PANELISTS:

- **Dawn Constantin**, COO, BP Gas & Power Trading Americas, BP Energy
- **Kristi Hobbs**, VP System Planning & Weatherization, ERCOT
- **Kevin Gresham**, RWE

**SPECIAL INTERACTIVE FORMAT:** This panel will explore the importance of establishing a supportive and tight-knit network and maintaining your boundaries. It will include 15 minutes of interactive live mentoring through Slido's Q&A feature, allowing attendees to ask questions and receive real-time insights from our expert speakers. Drawing on leadership insights, the panel will explore strategies for achieving healthy work-life integration and preventing burnout.

*Get real-time mentoring from industry leaders. This is your chance to ask the questions that matter most to your career.*

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### 4:15 PM **Conclusion**

Take your next steps toward powering the future together

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### 4:15 PM **Cheers to a Fabulous Conference!**

- 5:30 PM Conclude your day with wine, beer, charcuterie and friends.

## Conference Pricing

	Early Bird Registration Through 10/17/25	Regular Registration 10/18/25 - 11/05/25	On-Site Registration 11/07/25
GCPA Members	\$660	\$770	\$820
Non-Members	\$900	\$1,010	\$1,060
Government & Grid	\$290	\$290	\$340

**CONFERENCE PRICE:** Includes full day conference on 11/7 with breakfast, lunch, and breaks **PLUS** the pre-conference cocktail reception on Thursday 11/6 from 5-7 PM.

**EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION PRICING:** Available through Tuesday 10/17/25

**ONLINE REGISTRATION CLOSING:** Closes on Wednesday 11/5/25 at 12:00 Noon.

**ON-SITE / WALK-IN REGISTRATION:** Opens at 5:00 PM at the pre-conference cocktail reception on Thursday, November 6 and again at 7:15 AM on Friday, November 7.

**REFUND POLICY:** Cancellations must be received by COB Monday 10/20/25 in order to receive a refund. A 10% service fee will be charged against all refunds. Please direct all cancellation requests to Mary Armstrong ([marmstrong@gulfcoastpower.org](mailto:marmstrong@gulfcoastpower.org)).

**REGISTER ONLINE NOW**

## Venue, Parking & Hotel Information

**VENUE:** The conference and reception will be held at the AT&T Hotel and Conference Center at 1900 University Avenue, Austin, TX 78705.

**PARKING:** Parking is available in the attached Conference Center Garage. Guests may self-park for 8-24 hours for \$21 per day. Valet services are also available at the University Avenue entrance for \$21 per day or \$38 for overnight.

**HOTEL ROOMS:** The AT&T Hotel and Conference Center is sold out of rooms for the conference. [Click here to view hotels near the AT&T Conference Center.](#)



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**Conference Planning Team**

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Since 1983, GCPA has served Texas and the Gulf Coast as a regional electric power trade organization dedicated to promoting an improved understanding of the issues and opportunities impacting contemporary power markets. Our emPOWERing Women program provides opportunities for support, development and networking to women currently working in the electric power industry.

**Learn more:** [gulfcoastpower.org/empowering-programs](http://gulfcoastpower.org/empowering-programs)

**Gulf Coast Power Association**

9600 Escarpment Blvd., Ste. 745, PMB223, Austin, TX 78749 - [www.gulfcoastpower.org](http://www.gulfcoastpower.org)

**Executive Director:** Barbara Clemenhagen - 512.670.6702 - [bclemenhagen@gulfcoastpower.org](mailto:bclemenhagen@gulfcoastpower.org)

**Deputy Executive Director:** Mary Armstrong - 281.460.3054 - [marmstrong@gulfcoastpower.org](mailto:marmstrong@gulfcoastpower.org)

**Membership & Event Services Manager:** Donna Foy - 503.574.2130 - [dfoy@gulfcoastpower.org](mailto:dfoy@gulfcoastpower.org)

**Membership & Event Services Coordinator:** Kathleen Spriggs - [kspriggs@gulfcoastpower.org](mailto:kspriggs@gulfcoastpower.org)