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Launch Event for NextGrid: Illinois' Utility of the Future Study to be Held September 28th in Chicago

CHICAGO: The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), Ameren Illinois, ComEd, and the NextGrid lead facilitator, the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at the University of Illinois (UIUC/ECE), today are announcing a free Launch Event for the NextGrid: Illinois' Utility of the Future Study. The event will be held on Thursday, September 28, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the University of Illinois Forum in Chicago.

"Innovations in technology, energy efficiency and the push for renewables, like wind and solar, are putting a mandate on states to re-evaluate and modernize the electric grid. Illinois is among the states leading the charge, initiating NextGrid, an 18-month consumer-focused collaborative study to transform Illinois' energy landscape and economy," said ICC Chairman Brien J. Sheahan.

The NextGrid study builds on other Illinois initiatives that have led the way in energy policy, including the Energy Infrastructure Modernization Act (EIMA) which provided for the installation of a smart grid in Illinois, and the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) which will pivot Illinois to a clean energy economy.

NextGrid will explore what the utility of the future could look like in Illinois, taking into consideration the growth and technological advances of distributed generation and storage, demand response, energy efficiency, interconnected smart devices and appliances, micro-grids, electric vehicles, data, and analytics.

NextGrid will also explore innovative opportunities that exist to fully integrate renewables and large-scale storage onto the electric grid, as well as to leverage data available as a result of the smart grid, to create a safer, cleaner, more reliable and resilient grid.

"As the use of smart technology continues to grow and evolve, public utilities and regulatory agencies must be prepared to handle the increasing demand for reliable, resilient, affordable and clean energy. By bringing together stakeholders and experts in technology, energy, business, and government – as well as consumer advocates - we will produce a clear blueprint to guide us into the future," said ICC Executive Director Cholly Smith.

The launch event will begin with presentations by ICC Chairman Brien Sheahan and the team of UIUC/ECE lead facilitators on their vision and expectations for NextGrid. The event will feature panels and speeches by experts and thought leaders in the energy industry from Illinois and around the nation. Robert F. Powelson, Commissioner with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, will keynote the event.

In the months following the launch, seven working groups will meet regularly to discuss and make recommendations on a variety of topics, including: New Technology Deployments & Grid Integration; Electricity Markets; Consumer & Community Participation; Regulatory, Environmental & Policy Issues; Metering, Communications & Data; Reliability, Resiliency, & Cyber Security; and Ratemaking. A Technical Advisory Group comprised of national and international

experts will be available to offer input and expertise on these issues. An Advisory Council will represent the perspectives of the various statewide stakeholders.

Under the management of the ICC, the UIUC/ECE facilitator team will use the information and recommendations collected by the working groups to compile the comprehensive NextGrid final report.

The NextGrid launch is expected to draw up to 500 attendees including representatives from the energy industry, large corporations, technology companies, government officials, and the general public.

“Expanding customer energy choices to keep costs competitive and affordable, and the potential for communities and customers to generate, store and redistribute power back into the grid, will all be a part of the discussion. We encourage public participation and comment during the NextGrid study and invite all those interested to attend the launch,” said Sheahan.

For more information or to register for the free NextGrid Launch Event please visit the [NextGrid](#) website.

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About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and repossession agencies. The Commission’s Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices and bureaus, click [here](#). If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint [here](#). For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

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