Illinois Commerce Commission

**NEWS**

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**ICC Hosts Second Annual Supplier Diversity Policy Session**

Chicago - The Illinois Commerce Commission today hosted its second annual supplier diversity policy session to discuss Illinois utilities’ effort and results in creating a more diverse base of businesses providing goods and services to them. Under state law, in addition to filing an annual report on the amount of funds spent with diverse businesses, each utility must present to the Commission the goals and results of its programs designed to encourage greater participation by women-owned, minority-owned and veteran-owned businesses in the utilities’ procurement opportunities.

“The reporting requirement created by the state legislature offers the Commission the opportunity to push the utilities for greater use of diverse business suppliers,” said Commissioner Miguel del Valle. “Fundamentally, we want the utilities’ business partners to reflect the diversity of the people and communities they serve.”

At the policy session, presenters included State Representative Will Davis (D-30); O. Kate Tregasser, partner at Krieg DeVault; Ron Pate, senior vice president of operations and technical services at Ameren Illinois Company; Anne Pramaggiore, president and chief executive officer of Commonwealth Edison Company; Polly Eldringhoff, chief of staff and director of strategy and performance for Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas; Bruce Hauk, president of Illinois American Water; and Beth Reese, chief financial officer and past president of Nicor Gas Company.

Each company presented an overview of their procurement goals and actual spending with diverse businesses from the previous year. The reports also describe each utility’s internal and external outreach activities to diverse businesses and identify the organizations and events in which the utilities participate to promote procurement diversity. The utilities’ reports can be found on the ICC website at [www.icc.illinois.gov/filings/mwvs/default.aspx](http://www.icc.illinois.gov/filings/mwvs/default.aspx).

“Diversity in business recognizes the strength, innovation, and prosperity that results from embracing a wide range of thoughts, ideas, and perspectives,” said Commissioner Sherina Maye. “By bringing attention to this topic, we encourage the utilities to work to remove barriers to market entry for minorities, women and service disabled veterans, and we help emerging businesses grow and have a direct and positive economic impact on society, as diverse suppliers tend to hire more black, Latino and other underrepresented employees than their counterparts.”

The policy session culminated in a Commission-led roundtable discussion in which utility presenters were joined by representatives of certified diverse businesses Drexel Hamilton, MZI Construction, and United Building Maintenance. The dialogue, which embraced a collaborative spirit, focused on common trends in supplier diversity, procurement challenges and triumphs, and solutions for sustaining and improving the pool of qualified vendors.

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***About the Illinois Commerce Commission***

The Illinois Commerce Commission’s mission is to pursue an appropriate balance between the interests of consumers and existing and emerging service providers to ensure the provision of adequate, efficient, reliable, safe and least-cost public utility services. The Commission pursues this mission through three bureaus: the Consumer Services Bureau provides educational information on utility issues, resolves customer/utility disputes and develops rules on utility service and consumer protection; the Public Utility Bureau focuses on financial and operational analysis, policy development, public safety and enforcement activities related to electric, natural gas, water, sewer and telecommunications companies; the Transportation Bureau includes trucking insurance and registration, railroad safety, relocation towing, safety towing and household goods moving company enforcement activities. The ICC’s five commissioners are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Illinois State Senate for five-year terms.