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Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance Announces 2019 Inspiring Efficiency Award Winners

Chicago, IL – The Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) today announced winners of the 15th annual Inspiring Efficiency Awards, honoring leaders who delivered groundbreaking advancements in energy efficiency in five categories; Leadership, Education, Impact, Innovation and Marketing. This year, Leadership Awards will be awarded to the Honorable Mayor Rahm Emanuel, mayor of Chicago and Richard Mark, Chairman and President of Ameren Illinois.

“Now, more than ever, it is up to local leaders to develop plans for a sustainable 21st century economy,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “From moving to 100 percent renewable energy in our public buildings, to supporting our private partners as they work to reduce emissions, Chicago is showcasing to the world the impact that cities can have on climate change for their residents and for people around the world.”

“One of my goals has been to ensure that all utility customers, regardless of income, have an opportunity to receive real and meaningful savings from the energy efficiency programs they have been paying for,” said Richard Mark, Chairman and President of Ameren Illinois. “I’m proud that the success of our inclusive energy efficiency programs is being acknowledged by the MEEA.”

Winners will be recognized during an awards ceremony as part of the Midwest Energy Solutions Conference in Chicago on February 21, 2019. The 2019 winners have shown exemplary leadership in advancing energy efficiency across the Midwest.

“This year’s Inspiring Efficiency Award winners have proven to be champions of energy efficiency within their communities,” said MEEA Executive Director Stacey Paradis. “The Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance is proud to recognize and honor the commitment of these individuals and organizations for saving energy, creating economic opportunities, protecting the environment and advancing clean energy across the Midwest.”

The full list of 2019 honorees:

- **LEADERSHIP**

Through the development of his *Sustainable Chicago Action Agenda*, **Mayor Rahm Emanuel** has undertaken numerous sustainability initiatives that position Chicago as a national leader in energy efficiency. As part of this initiative, Mayor Emanuel created Chicago’s **Smart Lighting Project** with plans to install 270,000 energy-saving lights by 2021. The new, efficient LED street lights use between 50 to 75 percent less electricity than traditional high-pressure sodium lamps. This is the largest smart street lighting project in the United

States. In November, Mayor Emanuel launched the Renewable Energy Challenge, a voluntary leadership effort to accelerate the installation of renewable energy in commercial and institutional properties across the City. The initiative builds upon the City's commitment to using 100% renewable energy to power all City buildings by 2025.

Under **Richard Mark's** leadership, Ameren Illinois is implementing a ground-breaking initiative to open-up access to energy efficiency programs for moderate-to-low income customers. This effort, which Mark calls "Energy Efficiency for All," is funding critical workforce development and training programs and investing nearly \$12 million to increase jobs by expanding the number of diverse-owned businesses which deliver energy efficiency services. In addition, more than \$20 million is being utilized to assist in the weatherization of homes for customers in historically underserved communities.

- **EDUCATION**

Ameren Illinois' Program Allies are the secret behind the success of its Energy Efficiency Program. These specially trained contractors help customers access Ameren Illinois incentives to implement energy-saving measures. Each year, Ameren Illinois changes the lives of 18 students through its Ameren Illinois Opportunities Scholarship Program, which helps train the next generation of workers in energy-efficient Construction Management and HVAC. Ameren Illinois' commitment to creating diverse, skilled labor professionals through its Program Ally network is shaping the way we challenge and create an energy efficient workforce.

- **IMPACT**

The **Minnesota Army National Guard** created the Energy Efficiency Challenge (EEC), a peer-to-peer competition that serves to motivate and encourage facilities to achieve the greatest energy use intensity (EUI) reduction. This program instills a commitment in facilities to reduce energy consumption to achieve maximum operational efficiency, lower energy related costs and maintenance costs.

- **INNOVATION**

Focus on Energy's Wisconsin SEM Leaders Initiative has laid the foundation for SEM as an ongoing offering to the next wave of customers who are ready and committed to improving their energy performance. Since launching in 2015, the initiative has redefined regression modeling techniques and presentation formats, adjusted customer engagement and coaching principles, and challenged program reporting and evaluating assumptions. Today, there are 27 participants in the program, with 14 on track to achieve ISO 50001 status.

- **MARKETING**

The "Wisconsin Is In" campaign designed by **Focus on Energy** aims to specifically highlight energy efficiency in rural communities throughout the state of Wisconsin. A 2016 study found that rural areas were underserved by incentives, technical resources and services, as well as additional Focus on Energy program benefits. To address these issues, Focus on Energy partnered launched a campaign to broaden rural awareness of reduced energy waste and the benefits that accompany energy-efficient upgrades and renewable energy. The campaign resulted in a 15.72 percent increase in rural business incentives and total energy savings of more than 6.48 million MMBtus.

The annual Inspiring Efficiency Awards will take place on Thursday, February 21, during the Midwest Energy Solutions Conference in Chicago, Illinois. The award dinner and gala will begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Chicago Hilton & Towers, 720 S. Michigan Avenue. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.mwalliance.org/events/2019-inspiring-efficiency-awards>

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ABOUT THE MIDWEST ENERGY EFFICIENCY ALLIANCE:

The Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) is a collaborative network advancing energy efficiency in the Midwest for sustainable economic development and environmental stewardship across 13 states. MEEA is the Midwest's key proponent and resource for energy efficiency policy, helping to educate and advise a diverse range of stakeholders on ways to pursue a cost-effective, energy-efficient agenda. Through partnerships, programs and a dynamic annual conference, we curate a forward-thinking conversation to realize the economic and environmental benefits of energy efficiency. www.mwalliance.org.

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