

# Nebraska Power Association 2023 Annual Conference



## **Scott Benson Manager, Resource and Transmission Planning, LES**

Scott Benson is the Manager of Resource and Transmission Planning at Lincoln Electric System, a position he has held since 2012. His area's primary responsibilities consist of planning for the utility's future generation resource needs, including acquiring and administering renewable energy power purchase agreements, and planning transmission system upgrades and additions to serve those resources and the LES service area.



## **Jim Macy, Director, Nebraska Department of Energy & Environment**

From 2012 to 2014, Macy served as the Director for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Financial Assistance Center which provides funding for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects. During his tenure in this position, Macy developed and executed a plan to produce annual reports to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which had become an issue during EPA audits of the agency. He also developed and executed on a \$54 million plan to address underutilization of drinking water grant and loan funds to address concerns raised by an Inspector General's review of the program.

Previously, Macy has served in a variety of capacities throughout the Missouri Department of Natural Resources including roles as the Environmental Compliance Section Chief, the Division Director of Field Services, the Regional Director of the Kansas City Regional Office, a Soil and Water District Coordinator, and an Environmental Specialist.

Macy holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with an emphasis in Animal Science and a master's in education with a focus on Vocational/Technical Education from the University of Missouri-Columbia. In 2001, Macy received the EPA National Notable Achievement Award for Outstanding RCRA Stakeholder Involvement Team of the Year.



## **A.J. Singletary, Associate, Van Ness Feldman**

A.J. Singletary is an Associate with Van Ness Feldman and works on clean air and climate law, policy, and transactions. He represents power plant owners and operators, vehicle and engine manufacturers, policy institutes, and related clients on matters including strategic direction related to environmental law and policy, air quality permits under the Clean Air Act, regulation of vehicle emissions, and new and existing climate change laws and regulations.

A.J. also advises startup companies and organizations. He helps founders, partners, and stakeholders establish organizations with a societal benefit, including benefit corporations. He has experience determining strategy, writing founding documents, and working with state regulators. He also supports carbon credit transactions.

Before entering private practice, A.J. served at the U.S. Department of Transportation where he coordinated climate change initiatives in the Office of the Secretary, assisted in developing fuel economy and greenhouse gas standards for light-duty and heavy-duty vehicles, and helped plan federal investments for sustainable and livable communities. He served as Acting Senior International Advisor for the Office of Environment and Energy at the Federal Aviation Administration. A.J. also worked for Airlines for America where he focused on advancing environmental goals critical to all major airlines. A.J. has a JD from Northwestern's Pritzker School of Law, an MBA from Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, and a BA in Earth and Planetary Sciences from Washington University in St. Louis.

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## **Chris Wright, CEO, Liberty Energy**

Self-described tech nerd turned entrepreneur, Chris Wright serves as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Liberty Energy. Chris is a dedicated humanitarian with a passion for bringing the benefits of energy to every community in the world. This passion has inspired a career in energy working not only in oil and gas but fusion, solar, and geothermal. Chris embraces all sources of energy if they are abundant, affordable and reliable.

Chris has become a bold advocate, bringing rational thought to the energy dialogue. He has spoken on energy and the merits of the Shale Revolution to the UK House of Lords, and state and federal lawmakers, with multiple appearances on network TV, documentaries and podcasts. Recently, Chris' #ThankYouNorthFace campaign went viral with over 5 million views, forcing a sober discussion on the multiple uses of oil and gas in products.

Chris completed an undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering at MIT and graduate work in Electrical Engineering at both UC Berkeley and MIT. Chris founded Pinnacle Technologies and served as CEO from 1992 to 2006. Pinnacle created the hydraulic fracture mapping industry and its innovations helped launch commercial shale gas production in the late 1990s. Chris was Chairman of Stroud Energy, an early shale gas producer, before its sale to Range Resources in 2006. Additionally, Chris founded and serves as Executive Chairman of Liberty Resources and Liberty Midstream Solutions and sits on the Board of Directors for Urban Solutions Group, DEPA, and the Federal Reserve Bank, Denver Branch.

Chris grew up and currently lives in Colorado with his wife, Liz. He is a passionate father, skier, cyclist, climber, and outdoor enthusiast. He serves on the board of numerous nonprofits including PERC, ACE Colorado, ACE Montana, PRI and the YCCF.



## **Michael Mace, Managing Director, PFM Financial Advisors, LLC**

Mike is a managing director in PFM's Charlotte office and currently co-heads the firm's national public power and utility group. His focus is to bring new and innovative approaches to help municipal issuers overcome challenging situations and take maximum advantage of market opportunities.

Mike has spent the majority of his 28-year career in public finance working with some of the largest public power entities in the country. These include the Intermountain Power Agency, the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, the New York Power Authority, the Piedmont Municipal Power Authority, Energy Northwest, and the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Authority. He has been directly involved in the issuance of over \$30 billion of utility bonds.

Before joining PFM in 2003, Mike had been responsible for managing new and derivative product efforts, public power, and quantitative strategies and training at various investment banking firms.



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## **Sue Kelly, Board Member, North American Electric Reliability Corporation**

Susan (Sue) Kelly was elected to the NERC Board of Trustees in February 2021 and serves on the Compliance, Corporate Governance and Human Resources, and Finance and Audit Committees. Ms. Kelly also serves as the observer for the Standards Committee.

Ms. Kelly previously served as president and CEO of the American Public Power Association (APPA) from 2014 to 2019, where she led the national trade association serving public power utilities, having come to the organization in 2004 as its senior vice president of Policy Analysis and General Counsel responsible for APPA's energy policy formulation and policy advocacy before FERC, the federal courts, and other governmental and industry policy forums.

Ms. Kelly has served on a number of committees, including the Steering Committee of the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (2014 to 2019), the Commodity Futures Trading Commission's Energy and Environmental Markets Advisory Committee (2015 to 2019), the U.S. Department of Energy's Electricity Advisory Committee (2008 to 2009 under the Bush Administration; 2012 to 2014 under the Obama Administration), and as the president of the Energy Bar Association (2010 to 2011). She was also a member of the E Source Advisory Board and served on the Board of Directors of the Center for Energy Workforce Development. She currently serves as chair of the Energy Bar Association Master's Council and has helped start a virtual mentoring program for Energy Bar Association members.

Ms. Kelly was named one of Washington's "Most Powerful Women" in the November 2015 issue of Washingtonian magazine in the "Business, Labor, and Lobbying" category. In March 2017, she was honored as Woman of the Year by the Women's Council on Energy and the Environment. In January 2020, she received Public Utility Fortnightly's Owen Young Award to honor her exceptional contributions to the electric utility industry.

Ms. Kelly earned her bachelor's degree in Honors Interdisciplinary Studies and Economics from the University of Missouri and her juris doctorate from George Washington University, both with high honors.



## **Lam Chung, Vice President and Engineer for Strategy, Innovation, and Finance, Midwest Reliability Organization**

Lam Chung joined MRO in September 2019 as vice president and engineer for strategy, innovation and finance. Previously with Manitoba Hydro, Chung has more than 20 years of experience in the electric utility sector, responsible for progressively senior roles in engineering and design, operations, Independent System Operator/Regional Transmission Organization markets, regulatory affairs, and compliance.

He has experience at the national and international levels, having served on the NERC Member Representatives Committee, which provides policy input and elects individuals to serve on the NERC Board of Trustees, and the Canadian Electricity Association, serving as vice chair of the Electric Regulatory Advisory Committee. He has also collaborated on work with the United Nations Office for Project Services.

Chung earned both his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and his Master of Business Administration degrees from the University of Manitoba and is a licensed Professional Engineer.

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## **Jason Fortik, Vice President, Power Supply, Lincoln Electric System**

Jason Fortik has held Vice President of Power Supply position since 2011 and has worked at LES since 1995. Prior to this role, he served as the Manager of Resource & Transmission Planning in the Power Supply Division. He also held several engineering positions in both the Power Supply and Energy Delivery Divisions at LES. Jason earned a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering and an MBA from the University of Nebraska Lincoln and is a Registered Professional Engineer. His duties include oversight of generating resource planning, transmission planning and the related Southwest Power Pool (SPP) interactions, energy marketing functions, natural gas procurement, environmental compliance, generation operations and maintenance, and generation projects engineering. He also serves as a board member for the Nebraska Utility Corporation, serves as the Administrator of the District Energy Corporation, serves as the Chair of the Nebraska Power Association's Joint Planning Subcommittee, and is the current municipal sector representative on the SPP Corporate Governance Committee.



## **Dustin Thorne, Manager, Cyber Security, LES**

Dustin Thorne is the Cyber Security Manager at the Lincoln Electric System where he oversees all aspects of Cyber Security, including corporate, SCADA, substation, Internet of Things (IOT) and Payment Card Industry (PCI). He manages a Cyber Operations Center (CYOC) which handles incident response, firewall configuration, e-mail defense, and vulnerability scanning. Additionally, he manages the governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) function, which creates corporate policies, audits other functions of IT, and ensure compliance is met for various regulatory requirements.

Dustin enlisted in the Air Force in 1998 and spent 20 years fulfilling various roles around the globe. During this time, he was stationed in Wyoming, South Korea, Germany, Georgia, Japan, Hawaii and Nebraska. He also deployed to Qatar, Bahrain and Kyrgyzstan.

Dustin has been awarded his bachelor's degree in Business Analysis from Bellevue University as well as his Master's in Business Administration. He currently holds a Certified Information System Security Professional (CISSP) and a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification.

## **Lourdes Herling, Manager, Cyber Security Governance, Risk, & Assurance, NPPD**

Lourdes Herling currently serves as Nebraska Public Power District's Cyber Security Governance, Risk & Assurance Manager. She joined NPPD in June 2016 as a Cyber Security Analyst. She became the Corporate Cyber Security Manager in December 2018 and was moved to her current role in April 2022.

Before joining NPPD Lourdes has worked as a developer/software engineer for a Department of Defense contractor and a manufacturing company. She also spent 13 years in academia teaching Computer Science at Wayne State College and Information Technology at Central Community College.

Lourdes has a B.S. in Computer Science & Mathematics, Texas A & M – Commerce, a master's degree in computer science from Colorado State University, and an Ed.D. Adult & Higher Education from the University of South Dakota. She lives in rural Colfax County with her husband David. They have two grown children and one grandchild.



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## **David Levy, Partner, Baird Holm Law Firm**

David Levy represents clients in zoning, land use, energy, environmental and general real estate matters. He regularly appears before various elected and appointed bodies. David's expertise includes land use and development, real estate finance and incentives, and renewable energy development and permitting.

David is a registered lobbyist in the State of Nebraska. In 2014, David successfully concluded a multi-year effort to pass a 20-percent state tax credit for rehabilitation of historic buildings in Nebraska. Since then, he has helped public and private clients generate millions of dollars in tax credits while making significant investments in historic rehabilitation projects across Nebraska. In 2016, David played a central role in legislation

that significantly streamlined the regulatory process for wind and solar energy generation facilities. In 2018, David helped lead a successful effort to overhaul the tax-increment financing statutes in Nebraska.

David has taught Land Use Law at the University of San Francisco School of Law and legal writing at Creighton University School of Law. Since 2011, David's peers have selected him for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America in Land Use & Zoning Law. He is civically active, and he serves on numerous boards and committees, frequently in a leadership role.

David is an alumnus of the University of California, Berkeley undergraduate and Master's in City Planning programs and has his law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. He is a native of Lincoln, Nebraska.



## **Michaela Valentin, Manager, Government & Community Relations, OPPD**

Michaela Valentin, JD, is the government and community relations manager for the Omaha Public Power District (OPPD). In this role, Michaela is responsible for building relationships with all local public officials and administrative leaders in OPPD's 13-county service territory.

Michaela served as legal counsel to the Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee and has lobbied for 15 years at the state and federal levels for the insurance and home care industries. Michaela also has account sales and service management experience. She received her JD from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 2001. Prior to that, she

completed her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology while serving as a law enforcement officer in Fremont.

Michaela is an active member of the Nebraska State Bar Association (NSBA) and a member of the NSBA's Natural Resources and Environmental Law Section and the Government and Administrative Practice Section. She holds Sickness, Accident and Health and Property/Casualty insurance producer licenses in Nebraska. Michaela is a member of the Nebraska Legal Diversity Council Board of Directors, the Pathways to Law Mentoring Program and the Concord Mediation Center Board of Directors. She has expertise in solar energy development in local jurisdictions in Nebraska. Michaela is on Metropolitan Area Planning Agency's Heartland 2050 Regional Planning Advisory Committee and is a member of the Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association.

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## **Scott Corwin, President & CEO, American Public Power Association**

Scott Corwin became President & CEO of the American Public Power Association on August 16, 2023. He previously served as executive director of the Northwest Public Power Association in Vancouver, Washington, where he worked on behalf of more than 500 utility and associate members in ten western states and British Columbia. Prior to NWPPA, he served as the executive director of the Public Power Council, advocating for public power's access to federal power from the Bonneville Power Administration. Corwin has extensive experience developing and advocating for federal policy positions before Congress, executive branch agencies, industry partners, and the media. He has served on numerous industry task forces relating to power supply, has been an expert witness before Congress, and served on various charitable and community boards.

Corwin graduated from Dartmouth College, has a law degree from the University of Washington and is a member of the Oregon Bar Association and the District of Columbia Bar Association.



## **Kenneth A. Schmutz, Supervisory Special Agent, FBI Omaha, Cyber Task Force**

SSA Schmutz graduated from Utah State University with a Bachelors and Master's degree in Information Systems. SSA Schmutz worked for 13 years in the private sector for IT companies prior to joining the FBI in 2004. SSA Schmutz investigated computer intrusions his whole career which included his time in Seattle, Chicago and the FBI's Cyber Division in Washington DC where he focused on cyber threats to the critical infrastructure. In August of 2012, SSA Schmutz was transferred to the Omaha Field Division where he serves as the supervisor of the FBI's Cyber Task Force (CTF).