

2025 Energy Connect Conference Agenda

The Verve Hotel Boston-Natick, Tapestry Collection by Hilton
1360 Worcester Street, Natick, MA 01760

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

9:00 am Pre-Function	Registration/Continental Breakfast
9:45 am Apollo I&IV	Welcome Mike Hyland Executive Director, NEPPA
10:00 am – 11:00 am Apollo I&IV	General Session #1: Seeing Through the AI Hype: Useful Ways to Actually Use AI Ryan Knight, Team Lead of Data & AI, Insource <i>Learn how AI can have a practical impact on your work through real-world examples. Ryan will guide you through understanding the fundamentals of where AI can / can't help and the "Do's and Don'ts" of rolling out AI as a change process.</i>
11:00 am – 11:15 am Pre-Function	Break and Visit with Sponsors
11:15 am - 12:15 pm Apollo I&IV	General Session #2: Tales from the Crypt: Cybersecurity Lessons Learned from Those Who Have Faced Them Nick Lawler, General Manager & David Ketchen, Assistant General Manager, Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments <i>This session examines the Volt Typhoon cyber-attack on Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments (LELWD), where Chinese state-sponsored hackers infiltrated the utility's IT network for over 300 days via a vulnerable FortiGate firewall. Attendees will learn about detection strategies, response efforts, and key lessons for safeguarding critical infrastructure.</i>
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm Apollo I&IV	Lunch
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm Apollo I&IV	General Session #3: How to Attract the right hire and how to set them up for growth: Recruiting/Succession Planning
2:15 pm – 2:30 pm Pre-Function	Break and Visit with Sponsors

Tuesday, October 21, 2025 – continued

<p>2:30 pm – 3:30 pm Apollo I&IV</p>	<p>General Session #4: Utilities Unplugged! How to Navigate Changing Systems <i>Jackie Lemmerhirt, President, Lemmerhirt Consulting and Jessica Barbier, Sales Manager, NISC</i></p> <p><i>This session will explore the real-world challenges utilities face when upgrading or replacing core systems. We'll highlight the benefits of leveraging technology and going paperless, share best practices that keep transitions smooth, and discuss common pitfalls to avoid so operations stay on track. Attendees will walk away with practical strategies to embrace change without disruption.</i></p>
<p>3:30 pm – 4:30 pm Stardust</p>	<p>Welcome Reception</p>

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

<p>7:00 am Pre-Function</p>	<p>Registration</p>
<p>7:30 am – 9:00 am Pre-Function</p>	<p>Breakfast Buffet</p>
<p>8:30 am Apollo I&IV</p>	<p>Welcome & Opening Remarks</p>
<p>8:45 am – 10:15 am Apollo I&IV</p>	<p>General Session #5: NOW SHOWING: “Lifecycle of an Employee” by the NEPPA Players (Human Resources Best Practices Skit and Interactive Discussion) <i>Lead by: Anne Finley, Administration Assistant/ Public Utility Accounting, Hull Municipal Light Plant & Haleigh Dufour, Business Services, Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments</i></p> <p><i>The “NEPPA Players” (a team of volunteer members) will serve as actors and commentators as they bring the audience through a series of skits showing the dos and don’ts of hiring, evaluating and firing employees. This presentation will include time for discussion regarding the best way to handle these situations.</i></p>
<p>10:15 am Pre-Function</p>	<p>Break and Visit with Sponsors</p>
<p>10:30 am – 11:30 am Apollo II&III Apollo I&IV</p>	<p>Breakout Sessions</p> <p>Energy Innovation Track: From Politics to Power: Understanding the Forces Shaping Utility and Data Center Needs <i>Elizabeth Whitney, Managing Principal, Meguire Whitney</i></p> <p>Business Track: Diversity Panel: Sharing Our Stories, Challenges and Finding Support/Guidance <i>Facilitator Ben Thivierge, Sustainability & Commercial Development Specialist, Taunton Municipal Lighting Department Panelists: Ashon Avent, Commissioner at Norwich Public Utilities; Sean Martin, Senior Sales Engineer at HiReli; Jackie Pratt, General Manager at Stowe Electric Department; Ruth Slater, Energy Advisor at Braintree Electric Light Department; Catherine Vollmer, Project Manager at GreatBlue Research, Inc.</i></p>

Thursday, October 24, 2024

<p>7:00 am Pre-Function</p>	<p>Registration</p>
<p>7:30 am – 9:00 am Apollo I&IV</p>	<p>Breakfast Buffet</p>
<p>9:00 am – 10:00 am Apollo I&IV</p>	<p>General Session #6 Leading through Change: What Should be Changed, when and How to Lead Through it <i>Josh Vanada, Leadership & Business Growth Coach</i></p> <p><i>Change is happening more than it ever has while simultaneously feeling more difficult than it ever has. Timing, attitude, and presentation have a lot to do with how effective our change management efforts will be. In this session, you'll learn what, when, and how to lead through change in ways that create effective and enduring results.</i></p>
<p>10:00 am Pre-Function</p>	<p>Break and Visit with Sponsors</p>
<p>10:15 am – 11:15 am Apollo II&III Apollo I&II</p>	<p>Breakout Sessions</p> <p>Customer Service Track: Taking A Strategic Approach To The Use Of Media and Social Media Channels <i>Robin Schnell, Senior Counsel and Partner, Jackson, Jackson & Wagner</i></p> <p><i>When it comes to building relationships with local media and exploring the use of various social media channels, we are all at different levels of experience. Regardless of where you fall on the experience scale, taking a strategic approach can help you work smarter, not harder when communicating externally.</i></p> <p>Business Track: Panel Discussion: Managing Key Accounts <i>Facilitated by Mike Hyland, Executive Director, Northeast Public Power Association</i></p> <p><i>When it comes to Key Accounts what are the Best Practice you use and want to share.</i></p>
<p>11:15 am Pre-Function</p>	<p>Break and Visit with Sponsors</p>
<p>11:30 am – 12:30 pm Apollo II&III</p>	<p>Breakout Sessions</p> <p>Energy Innovation Track: Getting Pumped Up About Heat Pumps, What You Need to Know About Heat Pumps</p> <p><i>Paxton Halsall, Associate Program Manager, Decarbonization Services and Terry Bean, Residential Decarbonization Advisor, Adode Energy Management</i></p> <p><i>This session will provide an overview of heat pump technologies and share lessons learned from Abode's consultations in partnership with utilities and community-based programs across New England. Using real project data and field experience, we'll highlight adoption barriers, support strategies, and opportunities to help residents make informed choices about heat pump adoption and energy efficiency improvements.</i></p>

Thursday, October 24, 2024 – continued

<p>11:30 am – 12:30 pm</p> <p><i>Apollo I&IV</i></p>	<p><i>Business Track:</i> Beyond Affordable and Reliable: Building Public Power One Story At a Time <i>Holly Baird, Director of Utility Accounts and Samantha Hart, Owner/ Chief Executive Officer, Milepost</i></p> <p><i>Public power has long relied on being "affordable and reliable" but in today's competitive energy landscape, that's no longer enough. While IOUs spend millions on marketing campaigns, public power's greatest competitive advantage lies in something they can't buy authentic community connection. The "Three Stories Framework" is a practical approach that helps every staff member understand when and how to share public power's unique value proposition.</i></p>
<p>12:30 pm</p> <p>Pre-Function</p>	<p>Grab and Go Lunch</p>
<p>1:30 pm</p>	<p>Adjourn</p>