The Energy Learning Exchange is a member of the Illinois Energy Workforce Consortium, a collaboration of industry employers, cooperatives, educators, and government from across the state who have partnered to develop a pipeline of qualified candidates for energy industry jobs in Illinois. The goal is to serve as a resource for educators and students, sharing information, data and real-world examples of the types of careers available in the energy industry in Illinois. The group meets to discuss workforce development efforts, outreach across the state, and progress of two task forces.

The Career Awareness Task Force is developing the plan for promoting Careers in Energy Week, October 12-18, 2015. In 2014, IEWC sent a letter to 1,000 high school principals and administrators along with a Get Into Energy “Explore Exciting Careers in Energy” booklet and poster, and an “Are You Ready for a Career in Energy?” flyer. School teachers were encouraged to submit for one of three $200 classroom grants by emailing a description and photos of how the items were utilized during Careers in Energy Week. Teachers awarded: Karen McDonald of Donovan Junior-Senior High School, Kelli Thompson at Lincolnwood High School, and Karen Jones at Tonica Grade School.

Careers in Energy Week events are part of the nationwide effort by the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) to increase public awareness of energy careers. Students are encouraged to learn about how energy companies operate, careers currently available and expected in the future, and the importance of energy companies in the local economy. Information is provided on the ELE website for teachers to use, www.energy.illinoisstate.edu/careers/.

The Education Task Force is working to get Consortium members more involved in Career Cruising, which helps interested students to be connected to career partners. They are also working on more information to provide on the Consortium website, http://consortia.getint.energy.com/illinois/ including programs available in Illinois, and listing academic and non-profit organizations involved. The group also finalized their brochure, “Considering a Career in the Energy Industry?” which includes five entry-level academic and workplace competencies (see image, bottom of the page).

Members shared workforce development efforts within their companies, plus outreach efforts across the state. Discussion also included the newly formed Utilities Business Diversity Council designed to grow business opportunities for diverse suppliers through closer collaboration, technical development, and sharing of best practices. Council members Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Illinois American Water, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas, and Peoples Gas have spent several months in the planning of the council to promote supplier diversity, but that could expand to overall workforce diversity.

Consortium members at the June meeting included (photo clockwise, starting top left) Stephen Bell (Illinois Green Economy Network), Co-Chair Betsy Miller (Ameren), Kathy Thigpen (ComEd), Sharon Booker (ComEd), Jeritt Williams (Illinois State University), Jim Monk (Illinois Energy Association), Stephanie Marum (Exelon), Margaret Felts (Mt. Carmel Public Utility Company), Kathleen McIntosh (Ameren), Mary Zitek (Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives), Kristine Gunby (Primera), Margi Schiemann (Nicor Gas), Scott Tryner (Exelon), and David Loomis (Illinois State University). Erica Johnson (Integrys) and Janet Niezgoda (Illinois State University) were also present.
Center for Energy Workforce Development Holds Midwest Meeting

The Center for Energy Workforce Development held their Midwest Regional meeting in Chicago in June. The Energy Learning Exchange is a member of the Illinois Energy Workforce Consortium, developed by the CEWD. Members in attendance represented 11 states, discussions included Career Awareness, Career Pathways, Workforce Planning, Development, Education, and Best Practices.

ELE Encourages Students to Find New Solutions to Energy Problems

Students were challenged to find energy problem solutions, and final presentations were held in Chicago in June. The ELE worked with students from Williamsfield High School, Urbana High School, Washington Community High School, and Glenbrook South High School. The event was presented by The Illinois Science & Technology Coalition and Research & Development Learning Exchange, at Motorola.

Other recent outreach events included having an energy exhibit at the Normal CornBelters’ Education Day, held during their baseball game in May. It was a perfect day for an outdoor exhibit. The event welcomed about 3,000 students who enjoyed the hand-on experiences provided at our tables! Even Corny, the mascot for the baseball team, stopped by to learn about energy and energy careers!

Energy Learning Exchange Participating Members:

- Advance Renewables Sustainability Consulting
- AGL Resources
- Alliance Pipeline, Inc.
- Ameren Illinois
- Argonne National Laboratory
- Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives
- Bloomington Area Career Center
- BP
- Career Preparation Network, Education for Employment Regions 060 and 330
- Caterpillar, Inc.
- Chicago Public Schools, Early College & Career Ed.
- College of DuPage
- College of Lake County
- ComEd
- Constellation New Energy
- Cook County Workforce Investment Board
- Danville Area Community College
- DuPage Workforce Board
- East St. Louis District #189
- Eastern Illinois University
- Economic Development Council of the B-N Area
- EDP Renewables
- EMB Consultants, Inc.
- Excelon Corporation
- Excelon Generation
- Geronimo Energy
- Get IN Chicago
- Homewood-Flossmoor Com. H.S. Dist. 233
- IBEW-NECA Technical Institute
- Iberdrola Renewables
- Illinois Business Roundtable
- Illinois Chamber of Commerce
- Illinois Commerce Commission
- Illinois Community College Board
- Illinois Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
- Illinois Dept. of Employment Security
- Illinois Energy & Recycling Office, IL DCEO
- Illinois Energy Association
- Illinois Green Economy Network
- Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, WIU
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Illinois Municipal Electric Agency
- Illinois Solar Energy Association
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Initiative for Sustainability and Energy, NU
- Integrys Energy Group
- Inver Energy
- Joliet Junior College
- Kankakee Community College
- Lake County Workforce Investment Board
- Lewis & Clark Community College
- Maistros Ventures, LLC
- Mainstream Renewable Power
- McHenry Co. Workforce Investment Board
- MidAmerican Energy
- Midwest Generation EME, LLC
- Midwest ISO
- Mt. Carmel Public Utility Company
- National Corn to Ethanol Research Center, SIU
- North Shore Gas
- Northern Illinois University
- Northern Kane Co. Reg. System/EFE 110
- Northwestern University, ISEN
- NPL
- Office of the Governor
- Operation Green Jobs
- Pembroke School District #259
- Peoples Gas
- Peoria JATC Local 34
- PJM Interconnection
- Pontiac Township High School
- Prairie State Generating Company
- Primera Engineers
- PROactive Strategies, Inc.
- S&C Electric Company
- SEIU Local 73
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- Straughn’s Solar
- Sustainable Strategies
- Suzlon
- Teamsters Local 786
- Three Rivers Education for Employment System
- Trane/Ingersoll Rand
- University of Illinois
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- Urbana School District #116
- Utility Workers Union of America, Local 18007
- WES Engineering
- Western Illinois University
- Williamsfield CUSD 210
- Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago
- Workforce Investment Board of Will County