
Illinois Commerce Commission Names NextGrid Lead Facilitator

By Christopher N. Skey, Christopher J. Townsend / Aug 08, 2017

On August 1, 2017, the Illinois Commerce Commission ("ICC") announced that the lead facilitator for the *NextGrid* Utility of the Future Study will be a group of professors from the University of Illinois. The facilitators are part of the Power and Energy System Area of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which has been involved with a variety of national energy research projects funded by federal government agencies and industry groups.

NextGrid is designed as an 18-month inclusive, collaborative, statewide study, paid for by the Illinois electric utilities, to identify new technologies that will modernize the state's electric grid. Under the guidance of this facilitator, *NextGrid* will evaluate potential regulatory and legislative actions that can be taken to transform the way utilities, regulatory bodies, and consumers interact with the evolving electric utility system in order to maximize benefits for the Illinois economy and the state's citizens.

The proposal submitted by the University of Illinois highlighted a team of six professors who have particular expertise in engineering and other technical aspects of power system design, emerging technologies, and grid operations. Less apparent is their expertise in areas such as competitive market dynamics, large energy user issues, utility rate design, and innovative regulatory approaches. However, the proposal indicated an intention to:

- Create a representative Advisory Board, "whose membership includes industry, government and public interest groups, to guide the activities of the facilitation/coordination process."
- Hold "workshops, training sessions and focused events to encourage the submission and discussion of Illinois-specific ideas and issues."
- Engage "appropriate experts for the training sessions and public forums."

We anticipate more details about this process will be released by the ICC and the facilitator in the next two to four weeks.

More Information

The ICC initiated *NextGrid* in March 2017. The selection of the *NextGrid* facilitator follows the submission of [initial comments](#) from over 40 interested stakeholders and an RFI process for facilitator proposals. The ICC's Press Release regarding the selection of the *NextGrid* facilitator and other information about *NextGrid* is available on the [ICC's NextGrid web page](#).

If you are interested in participating in NextGrid or have any questions, please contact [Chris Townsend](#) or [Chris Skey](#).