

## 2005 International conference

Attendees to the 2005 annual International WiNUP Conference heard from experts across the industry as well as guests whose leadership roles set inspiring examples for pursuing careers in unusual professions. Attendees also overwhelmingly gave exuberant “thumbs up” to their conference experiences.

Highlights of speaker messages follow:

- Kevin Walker, president and chief operating officer for AEP Ohio, shared his Sept. 11, 2001 experiences regarding the effectiveness of an emergency response plan vs. not having a plan in place. He emphasized the need to consider the experiences of every member of an emergency response team, which generates the best success in a crisis situation. He also suggested that organizations such as WiNUP can use members’ expertise to influence policymaking in the utility industry.
- Holly Koeppel, executive vice president for AEP Utilities East, closed the conference program with her thoughts about the topic: Manager vs. Leader. Citing Colin Powell as an example, she said effective leaders create an environment of learning, encouragement, integrity, open communication and are detail oriented.
- Keynote speaker Dr. Kathy Sullivan, former astronaut and director of COSI, spoke about functioning in a world where there are barriers to your dreams. Sullivan noted it is important to focus on the stars not the obstacles you encounter. Sullivan challenged attendees to pick a star and focus while reaching for that star.
- Karl Pfirrmann, senior vice president of PJM, spoke about the value of organized electric markets and how to deal with the changing world of energy, safety, operations and reliability. He said reaffirming the electric industry brings about reliability of power and fair price of electricity. He also talked about the effectiveness and benefits of regional transmission organizations (RTOs) in the utility industry.
- Frankie Coleman enlightened attendees about the daily chores of being first lady of Columbus. She stated her day is no different than other working mothers, who manage a family, a home and a career.
- Panelists Jolene Thompson, Ohio Municipal Electric Association and AMP-Ohio; and Jody Parrish-Polen, Washington Electric Cooperative and Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives; spoke about issues facing municipalities and cooperatives. Thompson focused on how to meet challenges while ensuring benefits for customer/owners. Parrish-Polen spoke about business continuity, planning and interaction with public utilities.
- Judy Jones, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, highlighted challenges the PUCO faces in helping setting up utilities in other countries. She also spoke about rate stabilization programs and setting up the South Asian Region Regulatory program, which helps to develop metering and billing for customers abroad.
- Venita McCellon-Allen, senior vice president of AEP Shared Services, presented lessons from her favorite book, “The Complete Life’s Little Instruction Book.”
- Bob Skaggs, president and CEO of NiSource, talked about the challenges of downsizing and losing more than 600 experienced employees as well as the high gas prices that challenges the gas industry as well as other utilities.

- Stacey Emert, leadership consultant, encouraged attendees to play up their strengths and values and bring them in line with their respective organizational goals.
- Dr. Evan Blumer, executive director of the Wilds, gave his audience an appreciation of the Wilds, a wildlife preserve and research facility that cultivates learning through science by providing an opportunity to experience nature first hand.



**Frankie Coleman and Kathy Sullivan**



**Members gather in the hospitality suite to network, visit and create their Mardi Gras masks for the banquet.**



**Oklahoma chapter members accept pole-climbing challenge while touring Columbus Line Training Facility.**