



AWE NEWS



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"Courage is a Renewable Resource"

Advancing Women in Energy (AWE) is chock-full of inspiring and dedicated energy professionals, so it's no surprise that our Fourth Annual Meeting with keynote speaker Carla Walker-Miller engendered a memorable and energizing evening for all who attended.

More than 50 AWE members and guests came together in Detroit at Walker-Miller Energy Services for a celebratory evening full of food and spirits, connecting with their professional peers, and to hear about AWE's stellar year, as well as gain inspiration from the meeting's featured speaker.

AWE President Monica Martinez kicked off the night by recapping a highly eventful year with events taking place in Lansing, Detroit, D.C. and beyond. All of these events offered a variety of ways for members and others to meet and learn, including members-only events, like speed mentoring and lunch panels, as well as educational tours and skill-building, including AWE's first-ever golf lesson and scramble.

Monica went on to congratulate and celebrate special member transitions and accomplishments, and highlight events and new things to come in 2020. After a special thanks to the meeting's annual sponsors, including platinum sponsor, the DTE Foundation, she then turned it over to Carla.

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As sincere and she was comedic, Carla shared her personal professional journey, finding her “strut,” and the importance of learning to “lean out” of our comfort zones.

Carla opened up by remarking what a privilege it is not only as a woman, but as a woman of color, to have the podium. She took the audience with her back to the start of her career in corporate America and how she stepped out of her comfort zone and into the world of entrepreneurship to start Walker-Miller Energy Services. She spoke candidly about her struggles along the way, remarking, “In public I was strutting; at night, I was in the fetal position.”

As an introverted and sometimes hard-headed individual, it wasn’t always easy for Carla, but she made the conscious choice that she was going to make herself known. And to do it? She decided to “lean out” and embrace the discomfort. She added, “My contention for most of us is that we need to lean out. We need to place ourselves in the environment and ecosystems we are not comfortable in.”

And that’s just what she did.

In sharing her personal journey and struggles, Carla touched on the importance of diversity and the many ways in which she’s sought to grow it in her business and personal life. She asserted that we all have to struggle and learn “vocabularies of respect” toward those who are different from us, even when it’s uncomfortable or painful. “Courage is a renewable resource,” she said.

She left event-goers with the advice that it’s easier to talk about diversity and inclusion if you value people, operate outside of your natural tendencies, cultivate abiding relationships with people who are not like you, and “curate warriors.”

AWE Summer Rewind

AWE had a jam-packed summer and we can’t believe how quickly it flew by! The organization’s leadership, members and newcomers covered ground all over the state — from the AWE-sponsored Michigan Energy Providers Conference on Mackinac Island to touring Enbridge’s Stockbridge Terminal and the IBEW Local 58’s Zero Net Energy Center in Detroit and more!

We were also proud to celebrate the continued achievements of our members, including those who moved on from AWE to serve in new and important energy roles here in Michigan. In June, we congratulated Brandy Brown as she stepped down from the AWE Board of Directors to [serve as climate and energy advisor to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy](#). Shortly thereafter, we celebrated AWE Secretary [Tanya Paslawski’s appointment to the the U.P. Energy Task Force](#).

In July, we announced further changes to AWE’s leadership, with [Monica Martinez](#) becoming president and former president [Tanya Paslawski](#) transitioning into the role of secretary; [Katie Abraham](#) was named treasurer, while [Katherine Peretick](#) continued to serve as vice president.

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Host an AWE Event!

We’re looking for sponsors for networking events in Michigan and beyond! Host at your facility or a local establishment.

[Contact us](#) and we’ll help you make it happen!

Read on for highlights of these AWEsome events, energy insights, a member spotlight with Julie Metty Bennett, and more!

Enbridge Stockbridge Terminal Tour

In early June, AWE members and other participants were treated to an exclusive tour of Enbridge's impressive 2.8 million-barrel crude oil storage facility in Stockbridge — a terminal that connects refineries in Michigan, Ohio, and eastern Canada. The facility's supervisor, Rob Kitchen led the tour and provided an in-depth look at how the terminal works, the underlying structural and environmental requirements, and daily actions and safeguards in place to ensure the facility's safe operation.



The second highlight of the tour was hearing the stories of dynamic Enbridge leaders who shared their personal and professional journeys to their current positions.

Speakers included:

- Amber Pastoor, Project Manager for Line 5 Straights Replacement Project
- Lara Hamsher, Community Engagement Advisor, Great Lakes Region
- Anna Mooney, Government Relations, Great Lakes Region
- Sabrain Zayed, Supervisor, CORE Projects



Each representative detailed their unexpected paths into energy and Enbridge, specifically. Pastoor, for instance, began her career in journalism and now oversees the Line 5 Straights replacement project. An energetic leader, she encouraged participants to be who they are — even when operating in a traditionally male environment — sharing how she likes to wear dresses and work boots. We dig your style, Amber!

Lunch and Learn with Representative Donna Lasinski

Later that month, AWE members and other guests had the special opportunity to attend a lunch with Michigan Representative Donna Lasinski — vice chair of the House Energy Policy Committee — at Troppo in Lansing.

Rep. Lasinski spoke candidly with the group, recalling her career path that began with a position at DTE in downtown Detroit.

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She detailed her time in college, to later getting her MBA at Northwestern University, taking time off to be a stay-at-home mom, and eventually, participating in workshops to transition back into the workforce. After starting and running her own company for a decade, she entered into her current role as a state representative.

She shared that having worked in energy as a young 20-something-year-old prepared her for where she is today and how complicated but intellectually rewarding a career in energy can be.

Attendees had the opportunity to ask Rep. Lasinski questions about her career and thoughts on energy-related issues.

When questioned about the challenges in the energy industry at present, she expressed that she didn't predict the pricing of natural gas being as stable going forward and highlighted the difficulties with introducing energy choice for once and for all. When asked about which energy issues she was most optimistic about, she shared that she was hopeful about integrated resource planning, as well as major utilities achieving targets decades earlier than planned and an increase in consumer interest as time goes on.



Michigan Energy Providers Conference



In late June, AWE sponsored — and members attended — the 2019 Michigan Energy Providers Conference. The annual forum educates attendees on energy issues, fosters partnerships and facilitates communication around energy policy in the state.

Some notable moments for AWE included Tanya Paslawski moderating a fireside chat with the commissioners of the Michigan Public Service Commission and Katherine Peretick speaking during a panel session on energy storage.

AWE Golf Lesson and Mini Scramble

Ever been asked to participate in a work or charity-related golf outing but declined because you'd never played or felt too rusty? Yeah, us too. That's why, at the end of July, AWE held its first-ever golf lesson and mini scramble to help members learn the game or simply brush up on their skills!

Members spent a picturesque day on the golf course at Lansing Country Club, practicing their golf game and receiving professional instruction on putting, chipping, and iron shots from one of the club's golf pros. The lesson was followed by a fun, competitive 3-hole scramble. Team W was the winner over Teams A and E. A big thanks to Consumers Energy for providing swag for the participants!



AWE Tour of IBEW Local 58's Zero Net Energy Center

In early August, a group of about 15 AWE members, old and new, gathered at the IBEW Local 58's Zero Net Energy Center in Detroit — the largest of its kind in the state. The group was treated to tasty appetizers and beverages before enjoying a welcome from Jennifer Nephert, director of business development, and an [introductory video](#) showcasing how the facility originated and its unique elements.

Nephert shared how, in spite of some technological challenges along the way, the project was a "tremendous success" and met their goals of providing a state-of-the-art training center and Detroit landmark; generating as much energy through renewables as the building consumes; and fully eliminating gas consumption, all while reducing carbon emissions.

Diana Nash, Energy Science's Client Solutions Consultant — Business Development also spoke about her organization's role in the center's development and the collaboration that was instrumental in pulling the project off. Energy Sciences partners with utilities, governments and businesses to provide custom-designed energy solutions that optimize use and reduce waste using sustainable practices.

Following the tour, AWE raffled off some Consumers Energy goodies and attendees mingled and networked.

To learn more about the impressive center, visit www.zeronetenergymi.com.



SPEED MENTORING



AWE Members-Only Speed Mentoring — Redux

Back by popular demand, AWE held another members-only speed mentoring event in September — once again generously hosted by the Lansing Board of Water & Light at the historic REO Town Depot in Lansing.

The following mentors made themselves available to roughly 20 attendees to share their unique perspectives and professional advice, and answer career-related questions and more:

- Brandy Brown, Climate and Energy Advisor for the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy
- Charlene Hudson, Superintendent of Sebawaing Light and Water
- Heather Shawa, Chief Financial Officer and Executive Director for the Lansing Board of Water & Light
- Kristin Beltzer, Founder and President of KB Collaborative

Participants enjoyed partaking in rotating, small-group discussions where both mentors and mentees had meaningful opportunities to share their strengths and vulnerabilities.



Member Highlight: Julie Metty Bennett

The following is an excerpt — find the [full interview](#) on the AWE website!

Please describe your current role: I serve as the CEO of Public Sector Consultants (PSC), a nonpartisan public policy research and consulting firm in Lansing.

How did you get into/what is your former experience in the energy industry? I started out as a lobbyist for the Michigan United Conservation Clubs and one of my focus areas was energy policy. I advocated on behalf of the organization for state policies that promoted the use of renewable energy, energy efficiency and other low-carbon energy technologies to protect our natural resources. I then went to the National Wildlife Federation and worked in a similar capacity only focusing on the regional and federal level.

What's some of the best professional advice you've received? Have a growth mindset and when setbacks occur, learn from what happened and keep going.



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Why do you think it's important that women have a larger presence in the energy industry? The energy industry has a strong STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) focus and for a long time, women weren't introduced to these types of career paths or were perhaps steered away because there was this perception that women could not be successful in this space. Today, however, we know better. Without this misperception of what women are capable of, we're seeing with clearer eyes just how powerful and effective we are in this and all fields.

What do you think it will take to advance women in energy policy and government or are we already seeing that happen? As far as policy goes, I think we're already starting to see that happen. There's been a lot of effort promoting STEM, and I think we're seeing that effort bear fruit, including many women who are currently the heads of Michigan's energy organizations.

What words of wisdom do you have for someone just starting in the energy industry and which personal attributes or experiences do you ascribe to your success as a professional? Get to know yourself! Reflect on your passions and interests and figure out what makes you tick. After doing some deep thinking in preparation for a speech I had to give a few years ago, I realized that my ability to resolve conflict and find middle ground is my "superpower" and is what helps me satisfy client needs and develop and encourage my employees, who continue to diligently grow our business. And you know what? Everyone has a superpower: your most positive and impactful personality asset.

How do you navigate responsibilities outside of work while continuing to be successful in your career? I'm 100 percent dedicated to both being a mom and leading PSC, and I believe you really can have it all if you work for an organization that is flexible and promotes a work-life balance.

In Case You Missed It

Be sure to also [follow us on Twitter](#) to keep up with our member events and happenings in real time! And if you're on LinkedIn, search "Advancing Women in Energy (AWE)" under "groups" to make a request to join and stay connected there, too.



AWE @MI_AWE · Oct 2

Catch AWE board member Laura Sherman's article in [@UtilityDive!](#)

Michigan EIBC @MI_EIBC

Read [@MI_EIBC](#) President Laura Sherman in [@UtilityDive](#) on how to jumpstart corporate renewable energy purchasing in Michigan
utilitydive.com/news/the-midwe...





AWE @MI_AWE · Jun 14

AWE members cover ground all over the state! Today, @TPaslawski and Katie Abraham of @MIPublicPower are all the way up north in Marquette speaking at the U.P. Energy Summit!



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Heads Up!

AWE has switched over to Square to better track membership statuses and manage renewals. If you haven't already received an email invoice for your membership renewal, please be on the lookout as your membership expiration date nears.

Quote of the Quarter

"I always did something I was a little not ready to do. I think that's how you grow. When there's that moment of 'Wow, I'm not really sure I can do this' and you push through those moments, that's when you have a breakthrough."

— **Marissa Mayer**, American software engineer and businesswoman

Annual Meeting Sponsor Spotlight

A special thanks to AWE platinum sponsor, the DTE Foundation, for its generous support of this year's Annual Meeting!

