



Western Region Newsletter

A publication of the
American Association
of Blacks in Energy®
Ebony Amato, Editor

Reflection: AABE 2011 National Conference "Our Energy, Our Future: Creating Sustainable Communities"

An Interview with BPA Electrical Engineer, first time AABE National Conference attendee, Jerry Jackson...

Q: What were your thoughts about the 2011 national conference?

A: I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. It was refreshing to be in an environment that had seasoned professionals in my field that were friendly and approachable.

Q: What was the most valuable aspect about attending 2011 national conference?

A: The first day of seminars were targeted to young professionals. The topics included general diversity and 'do's and don'ts' for social media in the workplace. Both were surprisingly insightful and both had industry experts as panelists. As the rest of the days went by I was able to receive information in the oil and gas industry, government and policy issues, and entrepreneurship endeavors.

Q: Were there any highlights that you would like to share?

A: I would say the highlight of the conference was meeting people and developing contacts nationwide. I'm anticipating on seeing many of the people I met last year at future conferences, which could form into meaningful points of



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AABE Regional Chapters

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Educate to Innovate

President Obama has launched an "Educate to Innovate" campaign to improve the participation and performance of America's students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This campaign will include efforts not only from the Federal Government but also from leading companies, foundations, non-profits, and science and engineering societies to work with young people across America to excel in science and math. As part of the campaign, this Administration hopes to do a series of events, announcements and other activities that build upon the President's "call to action" and address the key components of national priority. For more information go to www.whitehouse.gov

Bill Dickens

Sr. Economist Tacoma Power & AABE PNW Local Chapter President

WA-OR

Executive Committee Members

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If you are interested in the current vacant position. Please contact bdickens@ci.tacoma.wa.us



Did you know?

1. The same amount of electricity is used whether washing a partial or full load. To get the most for your money, wash full loads.
2. When purchasing a new appliance, look for models with the ENERGY STAR® label—they are more energy efficient and will help keep costs down.
3. Water heating costs are affected by the type of water heater you have, its efficiency, its temperature setting & the number of gallons of hot water you use. Gas water heater costs account for about 16% of the average bill, while electric water heater costs account for about 28% of the average bill. Keep in mind, the higher the temperature setting of the water heater, the more it will cost to operate.

Most energy consumers focus attention on the price of gas used to power their preferred cars and vehicles. This brief note however looks at the “other gas” price which is essential for power generation, natural gas. Current market fundamentals suggest the natural gas market is undergoing swift transition and evolution. Some of the key market fundamentals shaping natural gas prices are:

- Lower production from new gas wells, less new drilling and depletion of older wells. Gas rig counts have fallen due to the higher spot price for oil.
- Gas pipeline capacity and storage.
- New gas sources, i.e., shale and/or tight sands.
- New gas-fired electricity generation.
- Environmental risks of shale gas.
- Export potential of US LNG.
- US economic growth path.

Natural gas is the marginal fuel in standard power generation economic dispatch models. It is relatively clean, easily dispatchable base load resource and currently enjoys a price advantage over fossil fuels like coal and oil. While current spot natural gas prices at the Henry Hub are in the \$4 mMBTU range, most economists believe this price over the long-run (20 years forward) will exhibit significant upward price movement. Several reasons are offered for why the long-run natural gas price will increase.

First, US economic growth is projected to be more bullish over the forecast. Most economic forecasters are predicting the US economy will grow 2.5-3.0 percent through 2025. Due to improved general economic conditions, increased activity in gas to liquids plants built in North America will also put upward pressure on gas price.

Second, the production costs for shale gas will rise over time, due to higher economic rents, e.g., higher land costs, higher royalty rates, higher taxes and higher drilling costs. Supply adjustments reflect normal market adjustments when unexpected shocks like shale discovery emerge as a fuel source. The quest for shale will impose land-use costs and raise the relative price of this fuel. More drilling will be diverted to finding liquids and away from gas production.

Third, the environmental costs associated with shale gas production may increase due to EPA regulation on fracking technology. Recent research by a team of Cornell University researchers show increased environmental risk of shale. These preliminary findings suggest significant methane leakage is attributable to shale gas exploration and thus contributing to GHG emissions.

Fourth, if oil costs remain high (say over \$100/barrel) this will gradually pull up gas costs. Ultimately this is an empirical question and can only be answered with economic evidence about the cross-price elasticity between oil and gas.

Fifth, a more dominant and integrated global market shaping the natural gas market thorough US-led Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports could pull up long-run gas prices. At present time, FERC is only considering one LNG project for export potential, Chenier Energy’s Sabine Pass, for permitting status.

In sum, even if shale gas development continues to move forward, any or all of these fundamentals could put upward pressure on an inflation adjusted gas price. If my market forecast is plausible this suggests higher wholesale power prices in the Pacific Northwest thus making energy conservation relatively more attractive.

President Obama signs debt ceiling bill

Just hours before the Aug. 2 deadline, President Barack Obama signed a last-minute compromise plan into law, ending the possibility of a government default. The bill pairs an increase in the government's debt limit (the total amount of money the United States is authorized to borrow to meet its existing legal obligations) with promises of more than \$2 trillion of budget cuts over the next decade.

The measure also creates a joint congressional committee that will be tasked with developing a broader plan to control the government's debt. The bipartisan panel, to be named this month, is likely to confront the same ideological divide that caused an almost crippling impasse in the debt-limit debate.

For more details, see the CNN story, "Obama signs debt ceiling bill, ends crisis" and "A summary of the debt ceiling compromise" from CBS News. On Aug. 5, Standard & Poor's, one of the nation's three major credit rating agencies, downgraded the nation's AAA rating for the first time. S&P said it downgraded the rating to AA+ because the deficit reduction plan passed by Congress Aug. 2 did not go far enough to stabilize the country's debt situation. The other two rating agencies, Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Rating, have said they will maintain the nation's AAA rating with a "negative" outlook.

On Aug. 8, President Obama sought to reassure the public that America remains a "Triple A country" and voiced hope that the S&P downgrade will prod the two parties to reach agreement on a long-term plan to cut the nation's deficit. (For more details, see "Obama says U.S. remains 'AAA country,'" published Aug. 8 in The Los Angeles Times. For article, please click [here](#)

Hairston vaults to national compliance scene

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There's the frying pan, and then there's the fire. John Hairston, BPA's chief compliance officer, just agreed to work in both at the same time. For the next three years, while continuing his regular job, Hairston also will help refine the rules North American utilities will follow to comply with reliability requirements.

Hairston will represent federal utilities on the Compliance and Certification Committee of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation. NERC writes and enforces the rules for running the grid in the United States, Canada and portions of Mexico.

As Hairston sees it, NERC is caught between a rock and a hard place. "If there's an outage, they'll have to show Congress they did everything possible to prevent it," he says. "But how you enforce the standards could make a huge difference. Moving the industry toward results-based standards rather than just compliance through documentation is going to be important."

"We should be seeking the most efficient means to manage reliability," BPA Administrator Steve Wright told industry regulators at a national technical conference last year. He called for a reliability leadership forum where best practices could be shared by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, NERC, Canadian regulators, utilities and others involved with operating North America's bulk electric system.

Hairston's new role throws him straight into this long-term national debate. His bi-coastal overtime in the months ahead could save overtime for BPA employees in years to come. Wish him well.

Courtesy of BPA

Grand Opening of the June Key Delta Community Center

On **Wednesday, August 10, 2011** the Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the Piedmont Rose Connection, Inc. will host the Grand Opening of the June Key Delta Community Center from 4:00pm to 8:00pm. The event will celebrate completion of a one year construction project seeking to attain Living Building accreditation.

The project, a collaborative effort between the Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and Piedmont Rose Connection, Inc., is a Living Building demonstration project seeking to serve as an example of how equity, economic development and environmental stewardship can be achieved at the grassroots level. What is a Living Building? Just like the name implies. It pulls together progressive thinking from worlds of architecture, engineering, planning, landscape design and policy. While there are many LEED buildings in Portland, few are living buildings, and this is the only one built and owned by a group of African-American women. It incorporates characteristics from 7 Petals (or core principles):

1. Site - such as limits to growth, urban agriculture and habitat exchange (such as our community garden)
2. Water - such as net zero water, ecological water flow (we're capturing rain water and run off for potable water uses).
3. Energy - net zero energy (while not totally off grid, naturally we have incorporated energy efficient products, lighting, ground source heat pumps and other measures, and soon will be adding solar panels)
4. Health - such as a civilized environment, healthy air (urban areas have higher exposure to health risks - the site will offer many teachable moments for adults and children alike on healthy lifestyles - mentally, physically and emotionally. Our community garden is a step towards achieving that goal.)
5. Materials - including a red list, embodied carbon footprint, conservation and reuse (the ReBuilding Center has been instrumental in providing recycled materials, all building materials from lumber to paint have to meet strict code requirements as well as purchased within a limited radius, and we have incorporated cargo containers [that you see on trains] into the design element)
6. Equity - such as democracy and social justice, rights to nature
7. Beauty - it's a beautiful site!

EVENT DETAILS

What: Grand Opening of the June Key Delta Community Center

Date: Wednesday, August 10, 2011

Time: 4:00pm-8:00pm, the building dedication program to begin at 6:00pm

Location: 5940 North Albina Ave. (at the corner of N. Albina Ave. and Ainsworth St.)

Program: The program will include the construction leadership team, elected officials and other notable partners. Details will be distributed on site.

For additional Information, please contact Margaret Lewis (503) 230-7552 direct.



2011 Rendering of the June Key Delta Community Center courtesy of Colas Construction

IEEE Nano 2011 Conference

The IEEE NANO 2011 Conference will be held in Portland, Oregon at the [Portland Marriott Waterfront Downtown](#) on Monday, August 15, 2011 through Friday, August 19, 2011.

NANO is the flagship IEEE conference in Nanotechnology, which makes it a must for students, educators, researchers, scientists and engineers alike, working at the interface of nanotechnology and the many fields of electronic materials, photonics, bio-and medical devices, alternative energy, environmental protection, and multiple areas of current and future electrical and electronic applications. In each of these areas, NANO is the conference where practitioners will see nanotechnologies at work in both their own and related fields, from basic research and theory to industrial applications.

Overview

IEEE NANO 2011 is the sequel to meetings held in Maui (2001), Washington (2002), San Francisco (2003), Munich (2004), Nagoya (2005), Cincinnati (2006), Hong Kong (2007), Arlington ([2008](#)), Genoa ([2009](#)) and Seoul ([2010](#)).

[Portland Marriott Waterfront Downtown](#)

Please book your hotel room at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront to receive the **EXTENDED IEEE NANO Conference DISCOUNT Rate of US\$179.00** as there is limited number of rooms available. *To make an online reservation please [click here](#)* – On the [Portland Marriott Waterfront Downtown](#) website, select “Attendee” in the left hand corner and proceed to make your reservation.

Southern California Edison Offers Free Class in Torrance to Help Customers ‘Go Solar’

Southern California Edison (SCE) is hosting a free solar class for residential customers considering purchasing a solar electric generating system for their homes. **The class will be 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, August 15, at SCE’s Torrance/South Bay Service Center, 505 Maple Ave., Torrance.**

The California Solar Initiative, or CSI, offers rebates to customers of the state’s major investor-owned utilities — SCE, Pacific Gas and Electric and San Diego Gas & Electric — who install solar equipment at their homes or businesses. The program’s goal is to promote solar-generated electricity and move California toward a clean energy future.

Customers will learn about:

- Solar energy basics.
- The benefits of installing a solar energy system.
- Financial incentives available through the CSI program.
- Tax credits and financial models that can help reduce costs.

The 90-minute, nontechnical and easy-to-understand classes are held at convenient locations throughout SCE’s 50,000-square-mile service territory. Classes are free, but require registration because space is limited. Customers are advised to confirm their reservations, as the classes are subject to change. To register or get more information, visit www.sce.com/solartraining or call (866) 970-9221.

Courtesy of SCE

11th Annual AABE Golf Tournament

August 24, 2011 8:00AM - 5:00PM

Location:

Deer Creek Golf Club
7000 West 133rd
Overland Park, KS

The tournament will be held at: Deer Creek Golf Club 7000 West 133rd Overland Park KS More details to follow as the event date approaches.

For additional information and/or to register, please click here:

www.golfinvite.com/aabe