



March 2014 • Membership eNewsletter



**Women in Energy:**

# **Making it Happen**

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**Colette Honorable**

Chairman, Arkansas Public Service Commission  
President, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners  
AABE Member



**AABE 37th Annual National Conference:  
Looking Ahead to Houston**

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## A Message from Paula Jackson, AABE President and CEO: Coming Together in Houston



March is Women's History Month and I'm proud that our newsletter will feature "Women In Energy", turning our attention to honoring leading African American women who have successfully navigated careers in the complex energy industry.

We also recognize the importance of celebrating women's achievements and reflect on the growth and influence of African American women across the country and the world. In a **2013 Center for American Progress report** it was noted that the 1.1 Million African American women owned businesses represent 42% of all businesses owned by women of color and 49% of all African American owned businesses.

Additionally, almost one in four African American women have a college degree or higher, 12% are professional managers and 3.3% of the Fortune 500 Board Directors are African American women. Yet while we celebrate the achievements of these women, we also understand that equity hasn't been reached and progress is ongoing. Over the coming months AABE will continue to celebrate the achievements of some of our industry's best and brightest through our newsletter spotlights. I hope you enjoy this month's feature profiling intriguing careers and outlooks.

With the **37th AABE National Conference** is just a few weeks away, I wanted invite you all to join us in Houston, April 8-11, 2014 at the Hiltons Americas Hotel. This year's conference, Global Energy: Resources. Sustainability. Solutions, promises to deliver countless opportunities for professional growth and development as well as networking with the leading thinkers in the industry.

There will be engaging sessions led by dynamic speakers. To learn more about the conference, you can visit the website at [www.aabeconferences.org/2014](http://www.aabeconferences.org/2014).

I invite you to join me in acknowledging our women in energy and look forward to seeing you in Houston.

Best,



**Paula R. Jackson**  
President  
American Association of Blacks in Energy



Follow Paula on Twitter: [@prjackson](https://twitter.com/prjackson)

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### A Message from Your Member Services Department

Welcome to the AABE membership eNewsletter as we begin to focus on coming together in Houston.

Our goal remains to deliver a better membership experience to you and we want to hear from you to help enrich your AABE membership with the news and the insight you need to move forward.

Thank you for your continued membership and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.



**LaKeesha Wilson**  
AABE Member Services  
e: [lwilson@aabe.org](mailto:lwilson@aabe.org)  
phone: (202) 371-9530



## Women in Energy: Making It Happen

### Colette Honorable

Chairman, Arkansas Public Service Commission  
President, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners



Colette Honorable admits that her stellar career in energy was a welcomed surprise.

Like most women and minorities, she never imagined the boundless possibilities the field had to offer. But in her role as Chairman of the Arkansas Public Service Commission, she's making strides in the industry for her commitment to preparing the next generation of leaders.

"I didn't set out to become chairman of the commission but it's the most rewarding career choice that I've ever made," said

Honorable who also serves as president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). "The women that I have encountered in the field have been so receptive and supportive. That's been the beautiful thing about working in this sector."

Since she joined the commission in 2007, Honorable says she's seen the number of women and minorities in leadership positions decline.

"There simply aren't enough of us. I can't tell you how many times I've walked into a room and I'm the only person of color," Honorable said. "If I do see someone of color, it's usually a black male."

Nonetheless this accomplished role model is committed to using her positions as a conduit to educating young women and others on the diverse range of career opportunities in the energy sector.

"It's the responsibility of those of us in the industry to educate others on the possibilities in energy through concerted efforts," Honorable said. "I am governed by the quote that says 'you can't be what you can't see' so it's important that young people see us but we need to do a better job of coordination."

As president of NARUC, one of the cornerstones of Honorable's platform is encouraging workforce diversity. Under Honorable's leadership, the organization has also continued its outreach efforts to young professionals through their internship program. She's hopeful that her efforts will impact those she serves to enter the industry she has grown to love.

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## Women in Energy: Making It Happen

### Hilda Pinnix-Ragland

Vice President, Corporate Public Affairs  
Duke Energy



Thirty-year energy vet Hilda Pinnix-Ragland knows the power of paying it forward.

"I've always vowed to leave this industry better than I found it," said Ragland who has witnessed the progression of the role of women and minorities in energy.

"I came to the company at a time when there were very few women and African-Americans in the field."

The iconic trailblazer wasn't deterred by the shortage in cultural diversity. Instead, she committed to changing the trajectory.

Her tenacity and drive led her to be named the first African-

American female officer at her company and a leading example of what's possible for women in energy.

"Unless you know how to navigate the cultural environment in this industry, it's very hard to succeed but I learned to ask important questions, take on the challenging assignments, and be intolerant of mediocrity," Ragland said. "The eyes are on us and assumptions are made but I was determined to defy the odds."

For this industry powerhouse, defying the odds wasn't limited to displaying excellence in the field. She realizes her professional success is as equally important as establishing a legacy defined by what she's contributed to helping others. Consequently, through her work as a member of the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges, she's championed the need for African-Americans to become better equipped in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) fields. And most importantly, she never misses the opportunity to mentor the next generation.

"I've taken the road less traveled and I vowed to never turn an African-American down that has called me for assistance. My goal is to listen to them, to challenge them and to get them to devise a plan that allows them to be the best they possibly can be," Ragland said. "When you reach out to me, you'll get a book to read and some work to do. I'm not the easiest when I challenge people but I do it lovingly because I want them to be the best."

Ragland knows the importance of mentorship because it was a cornerstone in her own personal growth and development. "I firmly believe that I was put here because of the strong supportive family and mentors in my life. You must build a foundation of people who trust your ability but you have to perform."

Ragland is a longtime board member of AABE and has been instrumental in steering the course of the organization at the top.

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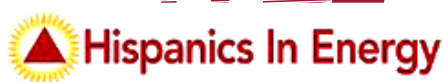
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## AABE Announces New Partnership: Energize Community Conversation about Jobs and Workforce Readiness

The American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) and **Hispanics In Energy (HIE)** are convening a series of community based conversations on the outlook and best ways to prepare diverse constituents for opportunities in the Energy industry, today and in the future.

This dialogue of national and local experts and thought leaders will examine and provide suggestions for preparation and full participation in the industry, from field level positions to executive opportunities. We invite you to attend an event in a market closest to you.



### Where Will These Sessions Be Held:

AABE & HIE will convene these **“Conversations in Energy”** in geographic areas noted for having “existing organizational footprint”; significant representative African American and Latino communities.

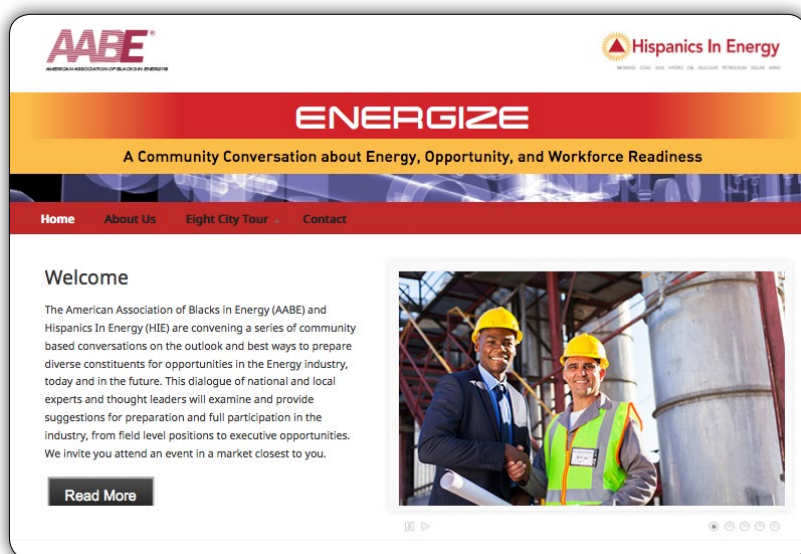
These populations will also be location in regions that are proving to be hubs of job creation due to changes in the U.S. oil/gas production.

- Chicago, IL
- Philadelphia, PA
- Detroit, MI
- Charlotte, NC
- Youngstown, OH
- Las Cruces, NM
- Bakersfield, CA
- Pueblo, CO



For More Information about the partnership, visit the **Energize Community Conversation Website:**

<http://aabe-hieenergize.com>



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## Latest Energy Industry and Scholarship News

### WALL STREET JOURNAL:

#### U.S.'s Real Weapon Against Russia Is Energy (VIDEO)

Vladimir Putin's trump card against the West is its oil business, which supplies fully 30% of Europe's energy needs. But the oil boom in the U.S. could pose a real threat to Russia's oil monopoly, columnist John Bussey says on MoneyBeat.

[Learn more](#)

### WIRED:

#### The Navy's Plan to Beam Down Energy From Orbiting Solar Panels

For decades, the Pentagon has been the world's largest oil consumer, and as global petroleum prices continue to rise, the military has been searching for feasible energy alternatives. Now they're looking in space. [Learn More](#)

### HOUSTON CHRONICLE:

#### US energy boom demands \$641B in infrastructure, study finds

Former Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Frederick J. Smith recently posted an Op-Ed discussing a renewed focus on energy security. [Learn More](#)

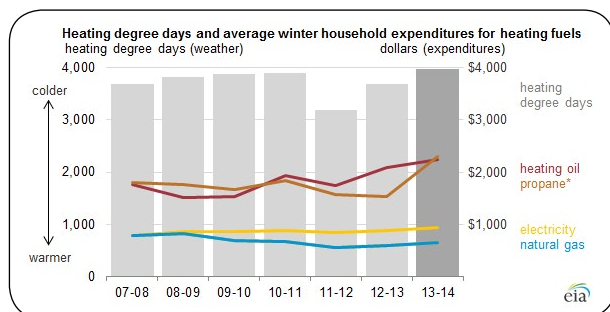
### USEIA:

#### Heating fuel expenditures rise this winter, especially for propane-heated homes

Persistently cold weather east of the Rocky Mountains drove up demand for all heating fuels, depleted inventories, and put upward pressure on prices. Propane

prices experienced an especially high spike during several weeks in January and February. EIA's current estimates for winter heating expenditures are significantly higher than the pre-winter forecasts in the October 2013 Short-Term Energy Outlook.

[Learn More](#)



### Tell Us Something Good

Send us your news or let us know about your latest activity, event or special notice you would like to share with AABE members.

e-mail us at [news@aabe.org](mailto:news@aabe.org) and we'll be in contact to help get your posting inserted in our next newsletter.

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## Members and Chapters on the Move

### Birmingham Chapter Founding Member Retires

Thomas Wilder, Manager of Multifamily Market Retention, retired from Alagasco on December 31, 2013 after 24 years of service. Alagasco is the largest natural gas utility in north and central Alabama. Wilder is one of the founding members of the Birmingham Chapter of AABE, and was elected to the AABE Board of Directors in 1989.

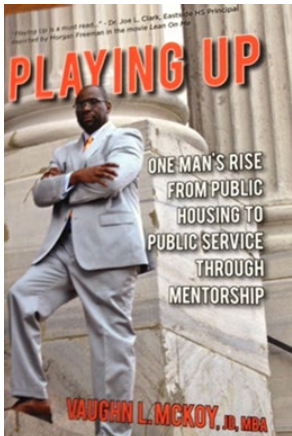
Wilder’s career at Alagasco has included multiple roles within various departments including Human Resources, Commercial Office Administration, Consumer and Community Affairs, Operations, Community Development and Customer Retention. Prior to his last position, as Manager of the Rebuild Assistance Program, Wilder served as Alagasco’s liaison to various communities in the company’s service territory that were affected by the tornadoes of 2011.

In his retirement, Thomas Wilder will pursue full-time work in the ministry at Bethel Baptist Church, where he has served as pastor for the past 25 years. The historical Bethel Baptist Church, located in the Collegeville neighborhood in Birmingham, Alabama, was formerly led by Civil Rights Foot Soldier, the late Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth.



### NJ Chapter’s Vaughn McKoy: New Autobiography Praises the Role of Mentorship

On February 27, PSEG employees gathered to celebrate Black History Month during a special lunch ‘n learn session co-hosted by the American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) and Minority Interchange (MI) employee resource groups.



The event featured special guest Vaughn McKoy, PSEG’s general state regulatory counsel to a standing room only crowd, who shared his inspiring journey in becoming an accomplished attorney and published author of his revealing autobiography, Playing Up: One Man’s Rise From Public Housing To Public Service Through Mentorship.

Among those present were PSEG Chairman of the Board, President and CEO Ralph Izzo who introduced Vaughn and Rick Thigpen, VP State governmental Affairs and AABE National Board Member.

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## The AABE National Conference: Get Connected and Stay Ahead

The **37th Annual National Conference** of the American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) will be held in the United States Energy Capital—Houston, Texas, April 8–11, 2014.

With the second largest energy complex in the world, Houston’s international appeal is ideal for the conference theme “Global Energy: Resources. Solutions. Sustainability.”

During the four-day conference, the AABE Southwest Region Committee will host more than 600 energy industry and community leaders who will convene to discuss: emerging policies, issues and technology advancements that impact global energy resources; strategic innovative solutions and trends in the energy industry; and, partnering opportunities designed to create a sustainable future through; environmental stewardship, social responsibility, entrepreneurial inclusion, and career advancement.

Details

The conference will feature:

- Energy Information Sessions and Workshops
- A Workshop focused on career development and education
- An Entrepreneurs Session
- A Community Partnership Event
- Our popular Legislative Crossfire
- Exhibitors

**It’s not too late to register - visit [aabeconferences.org](http://aabeconferences.org) for more information.**



## Upcoming AABE Events

- April 8, 2014
- April 8, 2014
- April 24, 2014
- May 2, 2014
- May 9, 2014
- May 29, 2014
- June 27, 2014
- July 31, 2014

AABE 2014 National Conference- Houston, TX  
 First Time Attendees Session - 2014 Annual Conference  
 Energy Summit - “Be The Energy”  
 1st Annual AABE South Jersey Chapter Scholarship Golf Event  
 Officers and Executive Committee Board Meeting  
 Tennessee Chapter General Membership Meeting  
 AABE Michigan Chapter George C. Turner 21th Annual Scholarship Golf Outing  
 Tennessee Chapter General Membership Meeting (Valero Tour)

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