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**Northeast Energy and Commerce Association Honors Energy Industry Leaders
Alicia Barton and Vamsi Chadalavada**

BOSTON, September 9, 2020 –The Northeast Energy and Commerce Association (NECA) will hold its 7th Annual Awards Night event on October 21, 2020. Due to the pandemic, this year’s celebration will be held virtually with live and pre-recorded presentations. NECA will honor two visionaries in the energy industry: FirstLight Power’s Chief Executive Officer, Alicia Barton as its Innovation Award recipient and ISO New England’s Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Vamsi Chadalavada as its Vanguard Award recipient.

In announcing this year’s award recipients, NECA President Tanya Bodell remarked, “Given the challenges we all have faced this year, it is a pleasure to continue to honor leaders in the energy industry. This year’s awards recognize the tenacity and perseverance that moved the energy industry forward in the midst of the pandemic. We are pleased to be able to recognize this year’s awardees, along with the essential workers in our industry who made personal sacrifices to help us power on. I am very proud to be honoring their contributions in the Northeast energy industry.”

INNOVATION AWARD: ALICIA BARTON

On the Award for Innovation, President Bodell noted, “Innovation has been infused into the DNA of Alicia Barton’s career in energy. At each step along her journey, she’s found a new approach to harness the power of the clean energy economy and ensure its vibrancy while being mindful of the economic justice issues at stake in its success.”

Ms. Barton recently became the CEO of FirstLight Power, operator of the Northfield Mountain energy storage facility and other hydroelectric, solar, and energy-storage assets in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Before joining FirstLight, she served as President and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) from 2017-2020, and before that as CEO of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) from 2012-2015, helping northeastern states advance and implement nation-leading clean energy strategies. She also co-chaired the Energy and Cleantech Practice at the leading Boston law firm Foley Hoag LLP and served as chief of operations for SunEdison’s global utility business unit, leading teams building utility-scale wind and solar projects.

While at NYSERDA, in direct response to the pandemic, Ms. Barton lead NYSERDA to ensure that clean energy gains continued. She worked with the NY PSC and NYISO to ensure reliability, and rolled out stimulus programs for clean energy businesses, accelerated milestone payments to maintain cash flow for small businesses, provided training for the industry to adapt, and supported low-interest loans to stimulate demand, particularly residential projects. Environmental justice was a focus while Ms. Barton was at NYSERDA, and she instituted several initiatives to invest in underserved communities.

Ms. Barton expressed her appreciation, “I am honored and humbled to accept this recognition of the important work I have had the opportunity to help lead alongside so many partners in charting a course to a cleaner energy future for the Northeast. The urgency of the climate crisis demands that the energy industry innovate faster than we have at any time in our history, and that we work to overcome this moment of unprecedented challenges to follow through on our efforts to deliver an energy system that is clean, affordable, reliable and equitable. I look forward to working with partners across the industry, and with NECA, to continue the hard work of making that vision a reality.”

VANGUARD AWARD: DR. VAMSI CHADALAVADA

On the Vanguard Award, President Bodell remarked, “The hallmark of Dr. Vamsi Chadalavada’s career has been his ability as a person and professional to be the ‘calm in the eye of the storm,’ whether during market disruptions, a polar vortex, catastrophic storms, or a global pandemic.”

Dr. Chadalavada is responsible for System Operations, Wholesale Markets Development and Operations, System Planning, Information Services, and Program Management at ISO-New England. He previously served as the company’s Senior Vice President, Market and System Solutions. Before joining ISO New England in 2004, Dr. Chadalavada held a number of positions at Siemens Power Transmission and Distribution, including Vice President and General Manager of Siemens’ Energy Management and Information Systems (EMIS), with responsibility for the North and South American region.

Dr. Chadalavada’s actions, along with those of his colleagues at the ISO and within the energy industry, helped ensure that the New England power system and electricity markets continued to function reliably and as designed under a novel work set-up while continuing to comply with long-established business processes. These changes were also essential in order to ensure the health, safety and productivity New England residents. ISO New England plans and prepares for emergencies such as pandemics; however, this situation presented many unprecedented challenges. In order to ensure power system reliability during the pandemic, Dr. Chadalavada and the ISO took many steps to protect the power system by developing innovative strategies to ensure 24x7 operations, coordinating with transmission companies to share best practices, communicating with resource owners about operational challenges, and overseeing implementation of various technology and other measures to ensure minimal business disruption.

Dr. Chadalavada said, “It is humbling to accept this on behalf of the ISO and the broader industry including transmission, generation, and demand entities that were all instrumental in maintaining bulk system reliability in New England. Words cannot adequately express my appreciation to all the people in this industry for their hard work, dedication, and sacrifice. They are the driving force behind maintaining reliability.”

RECOGNITION OF THE ENERGY INDUSTRY’S ESSENTIAL WORKERS

In addition to our award recipients, during this year’s unique ceremony, the NECA Board and Members will also be thanking and celebrating the energy industry’s essential workers for their hard work and sacrifices. Both award recipients voiced their enthusiasm that this often overlooked group will be acknowledged as part of the awards event.

ABOUT NECA

NECA is New England’s oldest and most broadly-based, non-profit trade association serving the energy industry. NECA enables a community of professionals and organizations active in the Northeast energy industries to share knowledge, build relationships and collaborate on opportunities and challenges created by evolving markets, technological innovation, public policies, and climate change.

For more information about NECA and the seventh annual Awards Ceremony, please visit our website:

www.necanews.org