

Momentum in Wind Power

Coming off of a stellar 2017 for the wind power industry, Wind Power 2018 is all about carrying that momentum forward.

Alex Cannella, Associate Editor

Wind Power 2018 is here, and it's not resting on its laurels.

On the back of a successful 2017, AWEA's show is looking to carry that success forward and keep the ball rolling with the motto "Powering Forward to Reach New Heights." This year, the focus is on momentum and pushing the envelope further.

"We wanted to convey all the energy and enthusiasm and momentum that we have coming off of a really great 2017 and pushing that forward to continue growth and business success in this year and beyond," Stefanie Brown, VP of Education and Conferences at AWEA, said.

2017 saw quadruple the ongoing wind project development projects over previous years. The cost of developing wind power is a third of what it was in 2009. Wind turbine technician jobs are springing up everywhere across the Rust Belt. In short, the wind power industry is at the top of its game, and AWEA wants to spur it even higher.

As with past shows, educational offerings are an important part of that push. Wind Power's general sessions are seeing the biggest change out of any component of the show. Instead of having industry leaders present in a big panel, they'll be individually giving a series of shorter TED Talk-esque presentations throughout the event. Topics will include but not be limited to grid monetization, digitization, offshore wind and machine learning.

Some of those topics might sound a little bit out of place at a wind power conference, and that's because AWEA wants to expand the scope of their educational offerings to include more topics, many of which are becoming increasingly relevant in modern industry.

"We're going after some topics that are not traditionally covered in this type of format," Brown said. "And part of the continued strong growth of the industry—as well as this show—is continuing to innovate, and so this is an area we wanted to represent within the general sessions."

May 10, the last day of the show, will also feature an endcap on the previous two days of general sessions with a less formal town hall meeting where attendees will be able to interact with AWEA speakers, ask questions and tackle topics that are "innovative and on the forefront of the industry."

Education stations make their return in 2018. Like in past years, each station will have a mix of various presentations

ranging from individual lectures to full panels ongoing throughout the show. This year, there will be five different stations, each focusing on a different topic: Power, Operations, Project Development, Tech and the Thought Leader Theatre.

The Wind Power 101 pre-conference seminar is also back, but it's also being joined by two new pre-conference seminars. One is the Wind Power 201 seminar, which as the name might suggest, gets more in-depth into topics like project development for attendees that are more experienced in the field. Also planned is a seminar discussing the Icebreaker Wind project, the first project of its kind in the Great Lakes area.

Alongside AWEA's educational





standbys, there will be a few new experiments this year. Traditionally printed educational posters are being modernized into an e-Poster Gallery with digital posters and opportunities for poster authors to present on their work. In addition, "collaborative learning tables" will be set up in a specific lunch area on Tuesday and Wednesday. The idea is that AWEA will be soliciting topics from visitors, and based on the responses, assigning questions to different tables, and you sit yourself down at the table that has whatever topic interests you most. Other people interested in that topic sit down, as well, and you all have a topic to get to know each other over as well as something to learn about all in one.

Think one part icebreaker, one part networking with like-minded individuals, one part mini impromptu panel between yourselves.

"Traditionally in a trade show, it's the organizers that say 'here are the topics you need to learn about,' and attendees don't always have a lot of input on that," Brown said. "So this way, they'll be able to submit topics ahead of time to us and we can have those available."

On the trade show floor, Wind Power expects 400 exhibitors, including 100 new companies, on the floor. Wind Power has previously enjoyed a steady stream of fresh visitors each year, but as with their educational offerings, the number of new exhibitors might be in part due to the fact that the show is

expanding its scope and reaching out to new segments of the industry.

"We're definitely reaching out to companies that are in those segments of the industry that we're adding in to other areas to make sure they understand that we're going to be discussing that component of the industry and of course would love to have them for exhibitors," Brown said.

There is going to be a new change on the exhibitor floor, as well. AWEA is introducing the Green Exhibitor Program, which is the latest part of Wind Power's ongoing efforts to create a green, sustainable trade show. The program lays out some best practices for reducing a booth's footprint, and in return, gives those that sign up and follow its tenets some free advertising.

"We work closely with the venue that we're in as well as our different partners with the show and we always have a goal of exceeding the venue's average waste diversion rate by at least 10 percent..." Brown said. "We always work a lot behind the scenes to try to make the show as sustainable as possible, but the exhibitor program is a way for us to help encourage them to be good stewards and promote their commitment to sustainability to attendees. It's a win-win!"

Wind Power 2018 is right around the corner, and much like the industry itself, it'll be coming in fast, roaring on all cylinders. **PTE**

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