
Communications & Energy Services Subcommittee

Massachusetts - April 9, 2026 - The Communications and Energy Services (CES)

Subcommittee of the Municipal Electric Association of Massachusetts (MEAM) hosted its Annual Conference on April 1st and 2nd. The event brought together public power utility leaders, energy and communications professionals, and industry partners from across Massachusetts for two days of collaboration, expert insight, and forward-thinking discussions.

Formed in 1953, MEAM is a statewide association representing all 40 public power utilities in Massachusetts. For more than a century, these utilities have offered a reliable, affordable, safe, and community-focused alternative to investor-owned utilities. MEAM remains steadfast in its commitment to uphold and enhance this proven model, ensuring ongoing value for communities across the Commonwealth. The organization's core mission is to champion the public power model and secure its future success, inspiring other communities to adopt these best practices for generations to come.

The MEAM Communications & Energy Services Subcommittee (MEAM-CES) meets regularly to exchange information on energy and customer services, public communications, and key account management and to provide recommendations to members as needed. MEAM-CES leadership, Chair Dani Taylor, Middleborough Gas & Electric Department (MGED), Vice-Chair Sharon Clement, Town of Danvers, Clerk Ben Thivierge, Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant (TMLP), Member-at-Large Anne Finley, Hull Municipal Light Plant (HMLP), and Member-at-Large Patrick Collins, Shrewsbury Electric & Cable Operations (SELCO), guide the subcommittee with a strong commitment to collaboration, innovation, and shared success among Massachusetts utilities.

Subcommittee members actively research new programs, services, and training opportunities designed to enhance the value and efficiency of member utilities in their communities. Reporting to the MEAM Executive Committee, MEAM-CES is organized into five work groups: Conference, Survey, Education, Energy Services, and Communication. A dedicated Website task force is currently working to merge, modernize, and streamline MEAM's online presence.

This year's conference saw record attendance with 67 participants. Discussions focused on strengthening partnerships, enhancing customer service strategies, and exploring innovative solutions to address the evolving needs of Massachusetts public power utilities and the communities they serve.

Attendees engaged in presentations and panel discussions covering key topics such as:

- Loan Programs
- Liens & Shutoffs
- The Utility Ambassador: Employees & Customers
- The Customer Journey: Demographics, Needs, & Touchpoints
- Public Power Week: Planning, Messaging, & Impact

“The MEAM-CES Annual Conference is an event we look forward to each year. It provides employees with a valuable opportunity to collaborate, share expertise, ask questions, and continue to strengthen the foundation of public power utilities in Massachusetts,” said Dani Taylor, MGED, Chair of MEAM-CES. “By working together, we help shape the future of public power and ensure that both employees and communities remain well informed about its many benefits.”

The MEAM-CES Annual Conference demonstrates a continued commitment to empowering Massachusetts public power utilities by fostering shared resources, cultivating strategic partnerships, and championing forward-thinking initiatives. The event offers a dynamic platform for meaningful networking and the exchange of innovative ideas, actively advancing public power throughout the Commonwealth.

Each year at the conference, MEAM-CES recognizes outstanding contributions by members through its “Rising Star” award. The “Rising Star” award recognizes exceptional communications, community outreach, or project management achievements by public power employees who have been in a communications or energy services position for fewer than five years.

This year, two members received the “Rising Star” award recognition, Michael Hall, Energy Programs Manager for Marblehead Municipal Light Department, and Danielle Teel, Customer Service Representative for Merrimac Municipal Light Department.

Michael has made an exceptional impact in his first year at Marblehead Light, bringing warmth, creativity, and innovation to the department’s communication strategy and positioning himself as a strong candidate for MEAM-CES’s Rising Star award. He has strengthened customer engagement through initiatives like “Trivia Tuesdays,” revitalized Marblehead Light’s social media presence with over 4,400 engagements and steady follower growth, and introduced high-quality video content featuring drone footage and clear, customer-focused messaging. Michael has also expanded community outreach by partnering with the local library to provide tools that help customers explore energy-efficient technologies, particularly benefiting renters and lower-income households, and he continues to innovate by exploring programs that reduce customer costs and peak system demand. His relaunch of the long-dormant *Lightkeeper* newsletter has been met with widespread community praise, and his consistent use of local imagery and accessible communication stands in stark contrast to more corporate utility messaging. Michael’s outstanding work, customer-centered approach, and commitment to meeting the community exemplify the qualities of a true Rising Star.

Danielle joined the Merrimac Municipal Light Department with extensive customer service experience at Verizon and a deep personal connection to the community she grew up in, quickly becoming an invaluable asset to Merrimac Light. She strengthened the department’s presence by transforming its social media communication, making Merrimac Light more transparent and

accessible, and by creating impactful community events such as the Giving Tree, a family movie night, and the annual Christmas tree lighting. Drawing on her private-sector expertise, she brought a warm, knowledgeable, and community-focused presence to the front office, significantly improving customer interactions and building trust—particularly during the challenging period when the town explored selling the Light Department. Danielle’s remarkable ability to elevate community engagement, foster goodwill, and enhance customer service in such a short time has greatly benefited both Merrimac Light and its residents, making her a standout example of the impact a dedicated customer service professional can have within a municipal utility.

Looking ahead, MEAM-CES is inspired by the success of this year’s conference and remains committed to showcasing the public power model through collaboration and a unified vision among Massachusetts public power utilities and their dedicated employees. The organization sincerely thanks all attendees, presenters, and partners whose contributions made the 2026 Annual CES Conference such a success and is eager to continue this momentum in the year ahead.

For more information about MEAM and MEAM-CES, please visit www.meam.org

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