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Women of Wind Energy's luncheon
honors industry's top women with record attendance

High energy event features industry leaders and branding milestone of fast-growing organization

Chicago, IL—Women of Wind Energy (WoWE), a fast-growing organization that promotes the engagement, professional development, and advancement of women in the wind industry, honored the industry's top women at its record-breaking annual luncheon on May 5 at the American Wind Energy Association's (AWEA) WINDPOWER 2009 Exhibition and Conference held in Chicago, IL. Far surpassing previous years, over 440 people gathered to celebrate the contributions of women to the industry.

WoWE honored Karen Conover, Founder of Global Energy Concepts (GEC) and current Director of Wind Energy for DNV-GEC for her extensive contributions to the industry. Ms. Conover has over 20 years of experience with wind energy technology and other renewable energy applications, many of which continue to be employed in the industry today. Since 1995 she has served on the AWEA Board of Directors as the first and only woman.

“Karen has been a trailblazer, innovator, mentor, and friend for many of us in the industry,” said Trudy Forsyth, WoWE Steering Committee member. “We held off on giving Karen this award for a few years because we didn't want to appear biased in recognizing one of our steering committee members – but for someone with Karen's contributions and vision this award is long overdue.”

In addition, WoWE honored an emerging leader through its 2009 Rising Star Award. Sarah Wright, Founder of Utah Clean Energy (UCE), won the award this year for her accomplishments in promoting wind, renewable energy and efficiency within the state of Utah. In addition to serving as UCE's executive director, Ms. Wright serves on Governor Huntsman's Energy Advisory Council and the Blue Ribbon Advisory Council on Climate Change.

“Sarah's efforts have literally reshaped how her state views wind energy, creating a paradigm shift towards clean energy solutions,” said Liz Salerno, Manager of Policy Analysis for AWEA and recipient of the 2008 Rising Star award.

This year's luncheon marked an exciting milestone for WoWE as it announced the formation of its own independent non-profit and search for a full-time executive director. Coupled with this news, was the major launch of a new WoWE brand and mission statement that focuses on organizational growth and women's leadership.

“In a short time, WoWE has tapped into a vital need to support the explosive growth of women entering the industry, as well as contributing to the professional advancement of women in wind power. We are experiencing incredible interest and support for our group,” said Michelle Montague, WoWE Steering Committee member.

Windustry and its executive director, Lisa Daniels, received special recognition for their foundational support of WoWE in its fledgling years.

WoWE also recognized the 2009 Rudd Mayer Memorial Fellows, generally university students from around the country, who are interested in pursuing careers in wind energy. The Fellowships support their participation at WINDPOWER, while also exposing them to wind energy companies that are seeking skilled and talented people for future workforce growth. Of the 26 fellows sponsored in the last four years, nearly all are connected to the wind industry today.

The 2009 recipients included: Abigail Breazleale, a Master’s Degree student in sustainable energy systems at Northern Arizona University; Anna Carlson a recent graduate from Bemidji State University interested in pursuing a career in community wind; Jessica Strauss, an MBA student at Yale University interested in sustainable business and energy; Kristen Radecky, a Master’s Degree student a Humboldt University focusing on renewable energy technologies; Myra Blaylock, a second year Ph.D student in Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering at the University of California, Davis; Sarah Russell-Smtih, a Master’s Degree student in Atmosphere/Energy within the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Stanford University; and Sherry LeDuc, a student in Wind Energy Technology at Cloud County Community College in Kansas.

About Women of Wind Energy:

WoWE was founded in 2005 to support the professional development and advancement of women in the wind industry. Since that time, WoWE has grown to an organization with 16 local chapters, an annual luncheon at WINDPOWER, and a growing grassroots network of more than 1,000 women. In 2008, WoWE launched an on-line mentoring program. The organization is supported through hundreds of volunteer hours and the generous contributions of Acciona, the American Wind Energy Association, DNV Global Energy Concepts, enXco, First Wind, GE Energy, NRG Systems, Shermco Industries, and other leading wind energy companies.

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