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Duquesne Light and University of Pittsburgh’s Swanson School of Engineering Partner to Advance the Electric Power Industry

Program includes financial and physical resources to build an urban microgrid

PITTSBURGH – Today, Duquesne Light and the University of Pittsburgh’s (Pitt) Swanson School of Engineering announced their intent to partner to help redefine the future of the energy landscape in the region. This strategic partnership will include projects designed to provide Duquesne Light with critical knowledge to help inform future grid design and potential new product and service offerings, while helping to enable expanded research opportunities for students and faculty in the University’s energy and electric power programs.

The partnership is one of the first steps in Duquesne Light’s long-term strategy to reinforce its leadership in grid infrastructure, sustainability and management, while also furthering its interest in new technologies that will be key to evolving the grid into a dynamic network that enables reliable, seamless two-way flow of power. Details of the partnership include:

- Design and installation of an urban microgrid at Duquesne Light’s Woods Run Facility located in Pittsburgh’s North Shore. With support from the Swanson School’s Electric Power Systems Laboratory and its Electric Power Program, the installation will serve as a real-world laboratory to research microgrid resiliency and the integration of distributed and renewable energy resources into the electric power distribution grid, as well as other key enabling technology areas such as power electronics controllers, direct current (DC) infrastructure, energy storage systems, and smart grid technologies.
- Duquesne Light will make a \$500,000, multi-year financial contribution to help fund electric power research, energy efficiency, laboratory facilities, and equipment at Pitt, in addition to providing the necessary expertise to interconnect any new electric power laboratory facilities to the existing electric power grid.

“Partnering with one of the most prestigious universities in the region and a leader in electric power research will accelerate the advancement of new technologies and enable the transformation of our grid,” said Rich Riazzi, CEO of Duquesne Light. “Pitt brings unrivalled technical expertise and value to this partnership which, combined with Duquesne Light’s 135 years of transmission and distribution experience, will help us develop the next chapter of electric power in our region.”

“This is a great opportunity for Pitt to work with Duquesne Light to help advance grid infrastructure and support the community,” added Patrick D. Gallagher, Pitt Chancellor. “This initiative creates an environment for research faculty and students to advance research and develop new technology that will help reimagine the grid for an economical and sustainable future.”

While Duquesne Light built and operates the local electric power transmission and distribution grid, it also maintains a sophisticated, redundant electric “network” infrastructure that powers the City of Pittsburgh and minimizes outage frequency primarily in the downtown Central Business District. In addition, Duquesne Light has and will invest more than \$2.6 billion in infrastructure and technology upgrades between 2010 and 2020, furthering its commitment to maintaining the region’s critical transmission and distribution system. This is the first time that Duquesne Light is partnering with the Pitt’s Swanson School of Engineering.

“Pitt and the Swanson School are proud to partner with Duquesne Light to develop solutions that advance electric power distribution grid technology, and we are grateful for their support,” noted Gregory Reed, PhD, Professor and Director of Pitt’s Center for Energy and the Swanson School’s Electric Power Initiative. “This collaboration will greatly benefit our students, who will be able to engage in hands-on research with Duquesne Light. Since the birth of the electric power industry happened in Pittsburgh thanks to innovators like George Westinghouse and Nikola Tesla, it’s fitting that the evolution of the grid should establish a foundation here as well.”

About Duquesne Light Company

Duquesne Light Company is a leader in the transmission and distribution of electric energy, offering superior customer service and reliability to more than a half a million customers in southwestern Pennsylvania.

About Pitt’s Center for Energy

Established in 2008, the Center for Energy is dedicated to improving energy technology development and sustainability, including energy delivery and efficiency, advanced materials for demanding energy technologies, carbon management and utilization, and energy diversification. The Center for Energy's key goals include attracting world-class faculty to Pitt, training high-level engineers and scientists to work in key areas of energy research, facilitating technology transfer related to energy for economic development, increasing energy support, and raising the stature of our region as a leader in energy.

About the Swanson School of Engineering

The University of Pittsburgh's Swanson School of Engineering is one of the oldest engineering programs in the United States. The Swanson School has excelled in basic and applied research during the past decade and is on the forefront of 21st-century technology, including sustainability, energy systems, bioengineering, microsystems and nanosystems, computational modeling, and advanced materials development. Approximately 120 faculty members serve more than 3,200 undergraduate and graduate students in six departments: bioengineering, chemical and petroleum engineering, civil and environmental engineering, electrical engineering, industrial engineering, and mechanical engineering and materials science.

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