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EEI, IBEW Present Edwin D. Hill Award to Nick Akins and Lonnie Stephenson

WASHINGTON (March 13, 2023) – The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) today presented the Edwin D. Hill Award to American Electric Power (AEP) Executive Chair Nick Akins and to IBEW International President Emeritus Lonnie Stephenson.

Akins became executive chair of AEP in January and previously had served as chair, president, and CEO. Under his leadership, AEP invested in energy grid modernization and security, cleaner energy resources, and technology and innovation to enable the transition to a resilient clean energy future. Akins also led a culture transformation to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) throughout AEP’s workforce. During his tenure as EEI chair, he led industry efforts to enhance and refine the industry’s response to large-scale outages. He continues to serve in EEI leadership.

Stephenson started his career as an apprentice wireman in 1975, joining IBEW Local 145 in Rock Island, Ill. He served as business manager, international representative, and Sixth District international vice president before rising to international president in 2015. During his tenure as international president, Stephenson strengthened the IBEW’s organizing efforts, growing IBEW membership annually. Stephenson deepened the IBEW’s commitment to DEI as a steward of the IBEW Strong program. He also supported the Code of Excellence, a labor-management program that demands excellence and fair working conditions from workers and employers alike.

Akins and Stephenson both helped to lead the industry’s recent advocacy efforts with Congress, which were instrumental to the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the clean energy tax package included in the Inflation Reduction Act. These monumental new laws are creating good-paying union jobs and are putting IBEW members to work building the energy infrastructure needed to deliver resilient clean energy across the economy.

“Nick and Lonnie are true champions and leaders for organized labor and the electric power industry,” said EEI President Tom Kuhn. “They have worked hard to make our labor-industry partnership stronger than ever. Each of these leaders is highly deserving of this recognition, and it is an honor to present them with this award.”

“Lonnie and Nick’s careers are testaments to the power of labor-management partnerships in the energy industry,” said IBEW International President Kenneth W. Cooper. “Because of their



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leadership and vision, the IBEW and the energy industry are working closer than ever to ensure a modern electrical infrastructure, good energy jobs, and a low-carbon future for America.”

Under the leadership of former IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill, the IBEW and EEI came together to create the National Labor and Management Public Affairs Committee (National LAMPAC). National LAMPAC strives to foster collaboration and partnership among electric company executives and IBEW leaders to address the nation’s energy challenges and to achieve the common goals of running a well-managed, efficient business with a safe and highly skilled workforce.

Hill was a transformative trade unionist who modernized and shepherded the IBEW through one of the deepest recessions in history. During his tenure, the IBEW held fast to its history and traditions while making key changes to modernize and to preserve the IBEW’s influence as one of North America’s most powerful voices for working people.

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EEI is the association that represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies. Our members provide electricity for 235 million Americans, and operate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. As a whole, the electric power industry supports more than 7 million jobs in communities across the United States. In addition to our U.S. members, EEI has more than 65 international electric companies as International Members, and hundreds of industry suppliers and related organizations as Associate Members.

The IBEW represents approximately 775,000 active members and retirees who work in a wide variety of fields, including utilities, construction, telecommunications, broadcasting, manufacturing, railroads, and government. The IBEW has members in both the United States and Canada and stands out among the American unions in the AFL-CIO because it is among the largest and has members in so many skilled occupations.