

# Doubling Down and Forging Ahead

**After getting positive feedback on changes made to the show last year, AWEA Wind Power is doubling down and taking their ongoing transformation even further.**

Alex Cannella, News Editor

**Much like the industry it serves, AWEA Wind Power is a trade show in flux that's focused on self-improvement.** And it shows. Going into their 2017 show, Wind Power is running with the motto: Brand New Attitude, and they're working to live up to it. According to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)'s Senior Vice President for Member Value and Experience, Jana Adams, the motto has a triple meaning to reflect both a changing industry and show.

On the industry side, big investor names are starting to become more and more common and the industry's public face is shifting. Last year, wind power became both the largest overall and fastest growing provider of renewable energy in the U.S. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Wind Turbine Technician" is the fastest growing job in the country. The industry now provides 5 percent of the country's electricity (that's over 17.5 million homes), and some individual states get up to 30 percent of their power from wind. Between all the new faces and growth, the wind industry is changing. Wind power isn't a nascent experiment to produce cleaner energy anymore. It's an established industry taking its place at the big boys table, and there's optimism both in the industry and at AWEA that it will keep growing. The AWEA believes that the wind power industry could provide 10 percent of the nation's energy — effectively double in size — by 2020.

"Wind the industry has a new attitude," Adams said. "We aren't this up-and-coming, new, emerging technology. We're established...We're kind of demonstrating that established 'we're here, we're a significant part of the U.S. economy, we're a great American resource.' And we really want to drive that home with this brand new attitude."

Wind Power the trade show started reflecting the industry's "new attitude" with a number of changes at their last show in 2016. Amongst the changes AWEA made, the most prominent were the introduction of "education stations" and the decision to change their registration to all-access.

The education stations were introduced last year as hubs for the show's scheduled educational programming. Seminars covering everything from finance to maintenance happened directly on the trade show floor. And with the all-access pass, all attendees had full access to the entire show, educational programming included, as opposed to having to choose between just walking the trade show floor or paying for an expensive ticket for the full conference.

"We really revolutionized the event last year where we did away with the distinction between companies or indi-

viduals coming to attend education programming or just going to the trade show or just going to these individual segments," Adams said. "It's now all-access, so if you come to the event, you can access anything you want with one simple registration, really streamlined the way people participate in the event, and more importantly, drove everything to the exhibit show floor, so whether you're going to have a private meeting with a company, visit the exhibit hall or attend a conference session, it's all right there on the trade show floor."

According to Adams, last year's changes have been met with a wide range of positive feedback, and both the education stations and the all-access passes are making a return this year.

"It makes it such a different experience to pop in and listen to a 25-minute presentation on a cool topic, and then walk next door and meet with your big customer," Adams said. "It really changes the dynamic of how people look at their schedules and plan their days at Wind Power, and we saw a massive increase in the consumption of the education."

In addition to returning changes from last year, AWEA is continuing to tinker with their trade show's formula to further centralize the show experience and save time for attendees. The main focus is on getting the entire show onto the same convention floor. Alongside the exhibitor booths and education stations, Wind Power will now also have meeting rooms both for individual business meetings as well as larger conferences to discuss industry policies. The idea is that the more Wind Power centralizes its functions, the more attendees will be able to focus on business or enjoy the show instead of wasting time in transit.

"The changes that we're making to the show make it so much of a different experience to be involved," Adams said. "I used to talk to people who would come to Wind Power. The amount of steps they would get on their little watches that track their fitness level would just be ridiculously astronomical because they're constantly running between the trade show floor and their company booth, then going two miles away to a hotel to have one meeting and then running back to go to a program in the convention center. And now that we've really driven all of that activity to one convention center trade show floor where you can do all of that right there makes it so much more of an interactive, networking experience."

And if you liked last year's educational offerings, you're in luck: AWEA is expanding their educational curriculum at the show this year.

“[We’re] always looking for ways to grow that value that people get for their investment in the show, and expanding the hours that people are able to learn was definitely a goal,” Adams said.

According to Adams, the goal was to expand the number of hours of education available without expanding the number of sessions. This translates into some changes in focus, such as focusing more on seminars with wide-reaching appeal instead of having a number of smaller sessions all running simultaneously.

This also means a focus on Wind Power’s “general sessions,” which will also be taking place on the main trade show floor this year. The general sessions are the show’s mainstay panels and seminars. One session focused on the day’s overall theme will be presented each morning.

Another small change the show is making is to open the trade show floor during the general sessions. However, the sessions will also be simulcast throughout the exhibit hall for those who can’t see it in person, as well as online. If you can’t make it out to Wind Power but are still interested in hearing some educational seminars from some of the show’s biggest names, the general sessions can be watched online for free! The general sessions will take place 10 am PST on each morning of the show. Tuesday morning (May 23) will feature the Wind Industry Leaders Panel. Wednesday will focus on positioning the market competitively against other industries. Thursday will look at what market forces and trends might affect the industry in the future.

Between the changes to further centralize the show and a strong, growing industry to cover, Wind Power 2017 is expecting a strong year. According to Adams, every measurable sign of attendance is on-pace to outdo 2016. She believes wind power, both the industry and the show, have a bright future ahead.

“I think we will see and feel that in Anaheim,” Adams said. **PTE**

**For more information:**

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