

## 2026 SGA Awards Finalists: Chair's Rising Leader



Nominee: Jacob Isaac K. Abraham,  
P.E. (MS, UT)

Company: Williams

*What makes this individual a rising leader in the natural gas industry?*

I proudly nominate Jacob Isaac K. Abraham, P.E. (UT), Manager of Gas Storage (LNG & UNGS) at Williams, for the SGA Rising Leader Award. Jacob is an exceptional operational leader who expertly bridges the communication gap between technical teams and executive management. Known as an innovator in process optimization, he balances analytical rigor with creative problem-solving to uncover new commercial and operational opportunities.

Jacob's dedication to advancing the natural gas industry is most evident in his proactive leadership within the SGA Natural Gas Association (SGA). As the 2025 Chair of the SGA Storage Committee, he championed initiatives that fostered critical knowledge-sharing among the association's operators. During his tenure, he prioritized collaborative discussions on continuous improvement in Storage Integrity Management Programs (SIMP), risk modeling, and operational reliability. His leadership provided a unified space for technical experts to align on best practices, ensuring operators were equipped to safeguard asset integrity while optimizing performance.

Recognizing a critical need for focused collaboration around supply reliability, Jacob subsequently founded and serves as the 2026 Chair of the SGA Peak Shaving Taskforce. He established this taskforce to provide a dedicated platform for the industry to elevate the conversation around the vital importance of Gas Storage. Under his guidance, the taskforce actively explores how operators can expand and adapt this critical gas infrastructure to meet the rapidly evolving, high-capacity energy demands of the future. By bringing together diverse subject matter experts to strategize on grid resilience and infrastructure growth during peak demand, Jacob is not just preparing for the future of the natural gas industry—he is actively designing it.

His industry advocacy is matched by his tangible operational success at Williams. Serving as the Engineer of Record for the Clay Basin DeltaX Expansion and leading the feasibility analysis for the Mississippi Gas Storage Expansion Design, Jacob consistently translates strategic vision into bottom-line results. He empowers multidisciplinary teams through a "Speed, High Energy, Fit for purpose" approach, creating an inclusive environment where frontline insights are synthesized into tangible business solutions.

Jacob's ability to unite operators around a shared vision for resilient, scalable energy infrastructure makes him a true example of forward-thinking leadership and the ideal recipient of the Rising Leader Award.

*What meaningful contributions has this person made to their organization or the industry?*

Jacob consistently translates his leadership roles into tangible, high-impact outcomes for the natural gas industry. Combining a deep technical background in Gas Storage engineering, risk modeling with a talent for strategic change management, he excels at mobilizing industry experts to navigate complex regulatory landscapes and protect critical infrastructure. Two recent initiatives perfectly demonstrate his ability to drive results that echo far beyond his immediate role.

During his tenure as the 2025 Chair of the SGA Natural Gas Association's Storage Committee, Jacob spearheaded the industry's response to the July 2025 DOT/PHMSA Underground Gas Storage Direct Final Rule (DFR). Anticipating the need for a unified, technically sound voice, Jacob proactively restructured the committee's approach by establishing specialized subcommittees. He specifically empowered the Regulatory subcommittee, ensuring it consisted of a well-rounded mix of both Operator and Associate members to capture diverse industry perspectives. Through this highly collaborative structure, Jacob led the drafting of a comprehensive joint industry response. This critical document supported the advancement of robust Storage Integrity Management (SIMP) practices while pragmatically urging the federal government for necessary enforcement discretion. The quality and depth of the SGA draft were so exceptional that both the American Gas Association (AGA) and the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America (INGAA) utilized it as the foundation for their own filed comments. The direct outcome of his leadership was the successful passing of the DFR, coupled with the vital granting of enforcement discretion in late Q4 2025, which provided operators the operational flexibility needed to maintain safety and compliance.

Furthermore, Jacob demonstrated exceptional agility and foresight in Q4 2025 when the AGA abruptly disbanded its Supplemental Gas Committee. Recognizing a sudden and critical void for operators of LNG, Propane-Air, and high-deliverability UNGS facilities, Jacob immediately consulted with his extensive industry network and identified a complete lack of alternative trade association forums. As the Manager of Gas Storage for Williams—the nation's third-largest operator of peak shaving LNG—Jacob viewed this gap as an unacceptable risk to industry collaboration, safety sharing, and overall grid reliability. Within just a few weeks, he conceptualized, vigorously advocated for, and successfully founded the SGA Peak Shaving

Taskforce. This rapid, decisive action ensured that Williams and the broader community of operators maintained a dedicated platform to share best practices and strategize on the future of peak shaving infrastructure.

These two distinct initiatives highlight Jacob's defining leadership qualities: the strategic foresight to build effective organizational structures, the collaborative mindset to unite diverse industry stakeholders, and the relentless drive to ensure critical gas infrastructure continues to safely meet the nation's evolving energy demands.

*How does this nominee embody SGA's mission to Share, Grow, and Advance?*

Jacob is a catalyst for industry-wide collaboration and professional development, consistently transforming isolated industry challenges into opportunities for collective growth. He operates with the understanding that the natural gas industry is only as strong as its shared knowledge, and he actively creates the forums necessary to move the industry forward.

When a tragic Underground Gas Storage (UNGS) fatality occurred in Nebraska in December 2025, prompting an NTSB investigation, Jacob immediately recognized the critical need for industry alignment. Rather than retreating into silos, he leveraged his leadership within the SGA Natural Gas Association to convene a joint industry meeting, successfully bringing together a majority of UNGS operators to discuss the incident and its safety implications transparently.

He then expanded this immediate response into a sustained professional development initiative. In January 2026, he organized a virtual joint industry UNGS meeting dedicated to educating operators on the history of API's recommended practices and evaluating risk management best practices. To further bridge the gap between operations and compliance, Jacob has been instrumental in organizing a major in-person joint industry event in tandem with the AGA, scheduled for May 2026 in St. Louis, Missouri. This landmark event will provide an unprecedented open forum for operators to collaborate directly with Federal and State regulators on the continuous improvement of Storage Integrity Management.

Jacob's commitment to building collaborative spaces is equally evident in his proactive establishment of the SGA Peak Shaving Taskforce. When the previous AGA Supplemental Gas Committee was abandoned in late 2025, he spearheaded the formation of this new taskforce. By establishing a true nationwide platform, he ensured that operators across the entire country have a unified space to collaborate on the future of LNG, Propane-Air, and high-deliverability UNGS.

Crucially, Jacob's dedication to professional development extends far beyond these broad industry events; it is deeply personal in how he mentors his own leadership teams. As he looks toward eventually rotating off his current chair positions, he has intentionally structured the leadership hierarchies of both the Storage Committee and the Peak Shaving Taskforce to serve as incubators for future executives. By actively empowering his vice-chairs and subcommittee leads with critical, high-visibility responsibilities—such as spearheading the DOT/PHMSA DFR

response or moderating the upcoming St. Louis regulator forums—he ensures they gain the high-stakes exposure necessary to grow into industry leaders themselves. Jacob is not just building successful taskforces; he is actively cultivating a pipeline of highly capable successors who are now exceptionally well-positioned to step up, take the reins, and leave their own lasting marks on their respective fields.

*What potential do you see in this individual's future leadership in the industry?*

Jacob is precisely the type of forward-thinking leader the natural gas industry needs to navigate the unprecedented challenges and opportunities of the coming decade. He is an invaluable investment because he possesses a rare combination of elite technical acumen—holding an MS in Petroleum Engineering, an MBA, and a P.E. license (MS, UT)—and the interpersonal skills required to lead high-stakes change management. He doesn't just understand the complex risks associated with Gas Storage; he knows how to translate those models into actionable business strategies, effectively bridging the communication gap between field operations and the executive boardroom.

At Williams, Jacob is positioned at the very center of the company's future growth, overseeing a massive, diverse portfolio of 17 underground gas storage facilities and 3 LNG plants spanning the East, West, and Gulf Coasts. As U.S. power demand skyrockets—driven by the rapid expansion of AI data centers, widespread electrification, and surging LNG exports—reliable natural gas storage has become the critical linchpin for grid stability. Jacob's visionary operational leadership on major infrastructure projects, such as the Clay Basin Delta Pressure and the unnamed Mississippi Gas Storage Expansion, ensures that Williams can meet this surging demand. By continuously optimizing storage integrity, capacity, and commercial offerings across this vast geographic footprint, he is directly enabling the firm, reliable baseload power that the next generation of digital and industrial infrastructure requires.

Beyond his own organization, Jacob is actively shaping the future of the broader natural gas sector. His impact on the industry is not merely local or regional; he is a forward-thinking architect for the national gas grid. As the national discourse increasingly focuses on grid resilience in the face of extreme winter weather and demand spikes, the importance of peak shaving and high-deliverability storage cannot be overstated. Through his prominent national roles as the 2026 Chair of the AGA Underground Storage Committee and the founder and 2026 Chair of the nationwide SGA Peak Shaving Taskforce, Jacob is writing the blueprint for how operators from coast to coast collaborate to overcome supply bottlenecks. He is actively designing the regulatory and operational frameworks that will allow the industry to safely scale this critical infrastructure nationwide, ensuring that natural gas remains the resilient, affordable energy source driving the economy forward. Investing in Jacob is a direct investment in the safe, innovative, and reliable future of the entire U.S. energy grid.



## Nominee: Alex Buck

Company: Atmos Energy

*What makes this individual a rising leader in the natural gas industry?*

Alex Buck is an exceptional early-career professional whose leadership, initiative, and commitment to service have already made a meaningful impact on the natural gas industry. In just four years, Alex has progressed from an Operations Assistant in Olathe, Kansas to the Manager of Public Affairs for Colorado — a rapid, cross-functional rise that reflects talent, adaptability, and the trust earned across multiple departments and states.

Alex brings a rare blend of operational understanding, strategic communication skill, and community-centered leadership. As a natural gas advocate, Alex engages confidently with policymakers, community partners, and customers. Work educating elected officials in Chaffee County on the implications of a proposed electric-preferred building code demonstrates an ability to translate complex energy issues into clear, actionable information. Alex's leadership helped local officials understand the importance of energy choice and the role natural gas plays in reliability and affordability.

*What meaningful contributions has this person made to their organization or the industry?*

Alex Buck has delivered measurable impact by leading a multi-stakeholder initiative in Steamboat Springs that united excavators, first responders, and city officials to strengthen safe-digging practices reduce third party risk and improve coordination. she also played a key role in educating Chaffee County policymakers on energy choice, helping inform decision that directly affect natural gas reliability, affordability, and long-term community energy planning.

*How does this nominee embody SGA's mission to Share, Grow, and Advance?*

Alex exemplifies SGA's mission by actively sharing knowledge across agencies and communities, translating complex energy topic into clear, actionable insights. She fosters collaboration by convening diverse stakeholder to improve safety and outcomes. Alex contributes to professional growth through employee engagement, AtmoSpirit facilitation, and mentorship, while advancing the industry through education, innovation outreach, and community driven solutions that strengthen public trust and awareness.

*What potential do you see in this individual's future leadership in the industry?*

Alex Buck shows strong potential to become a senior industry leader who operates comfortably at the intersection of operations, policy, and community engagement. Her ability to translate technical energy concepts into clear public messaging, while also coordinating complex multi-stakeholder efforts, positions her well for leadership roles.

Alex consistently builds trust. That credibility combined with her collaborative approach and willingness to lead from the front in both policy discussion and community settings suggest she has the foundation to become a highly influential voice for the industry.



## Nominee: Ben Carlisle

Company: Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline

*What makes this individual a rising leader in the natural gas industry?*

Ben has consistently demonstrated a commitment to excellence and innovation in the natural gas industry throughout his nearly eight-year career. His active involvement with the Southern Gas Association (SGA)

and the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America (INGAA) reflects his deep passion for industry advocacy and advancement.

Ben began his journey at Southern Star as a Project Permitting Specialist and has steadily progressed to his current role as Manager of Environmental Compliance and Permitting. In this capacity, he leads teams responsible for NEPA permitting and comprehensive environmental compliance, including methane reduction initiatives. Under his leadership, Southern Star has achieved a remarkable 63% reduction in methane emissions since their 2020 baseline. Ben chairs the company's Methane Reduction Team, which launched the innovative Methane Champions program, a competitive initiative that fosters a culture of sustainability across the operational footprint.

*What meaningful contributions has this person made to their organization or the industry?*

A visionary leader, Ben recognizes the importance of preparing the natural gas industry for the future by attracting and mentoring emerging talent. He has served as a mentor in multiple Southern Star programs, helping to guide and develop the next generation of industry professionals. Ben also spearheaded Southern Star's Natural Gas Ambassadors initiative, assembling a cross-functional team to create an internal training program that empowers all employees to confidently advocate for natural gas. This program includes a dynamic Resource Library, developed in partnership with Corporate Communications, that provides accessible, self-populated content to enhance industry knowledge.

Ben's thought leadership is widely recognized. He has been a featured speaker at numerous industry events, including SGA Environmental and Operations Conferences, SGA and Iconic Air webinars, and the Methane Mitigation Summit. He is the chair of the SGA Environmental Technical Conference Committee and also recently assumed the role of Management Conference Chair. Additionally, Ben serves on the board of the RAISE Collaborative, led by GTI Energy.

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*What potential do you see in this individual's future leadership in the industry?*

Ben's performance, approach to leadership, and willingness to take on more responsibility demonstrate a strong upward trajectory, which is why he has been identified internally as a high-potential leader. As we navigate a period of heightened growth at Southern Star and in the natural gas sector, the importance of disciplined environmental stewardship cannot be overstated. Ben's leadership will help ensure we execute responsibly while maintaining momentum, and that we continue setting the standard for our industry.



## Nominee: Josh Coffman

Company: Hope Gas

*What makes this individual a rising leader in the natural gas industry?*

Josh Coffman (Age: 35) is the Director of Safety & Training for Hope Utilities and Hope Water nationwide, serving gas and water utilities in West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Texas, and Arizona. He has worked for Hope for the past 9 years and has steadily risen through the ranks since joining in 2017. He has held previous roles in the organization including Director - Safety, Land & Environmental, Director of Technical Services, Manager - Gas Safety & Training, Projects Leader, Sr. Business Performance Analyst, Gas Account Manager, Business Performance Analyst, and Associate Business Performance Analyst. In 2025, he led the construction of a \$13M natural gas

Training facility project in Clarksburg, West Virginia for Hope Gas. It will serve as the nationwide Training facility for Hope Utilities gas companies including Hope Gas, Northeast Ohio Natural Gas, Sycamore Gas, and Frontier Natural Gas. The new facility is equipped with multiple classrooms and labs tailored to training the workforce. As well as, a 2-acre Safety Town that includes multiple mini homes with over 10,000 ft of pipe running as mains and services throughout the town. All of the pipe comes into the control center with over 20 different leak scenarios for training possible on natural gas, hydrogen blended gas, or air. The facility will also head up all Operator Qualification testing for employees including CBT's, written exams, and hands-on performance evaluations. Not only has he led the project, but he has envisioned the future of the industry by incorporating Hydrogen blended gas into the facility. Josh has built partnerships with DOE, NETL, and PITT University to install Hydrogen testing scenarios to aid the government in research initiatives on how Hydrogen gas and blended gas affects pipelines and services to homes. He has also built partnerships with High School Technical Centers across West Virginia, who have had their students build the mini homes for the Safety Town at the new Edward M. Smith National Career & Life Skills Development Center. He is also assisting with developing Apprenticeship Programs and accredited High School Technical Programs for students at the facility hosted by his Training team. Josh also takes his role as Director over the Safety department extremely personal. He advocates to build a safety culture across all the companies he is over that prides itself on hazard identification and making the choice to be safe every single day. He takes every accident personal, taking the approach that there is something he could've done differently to have prevented that employee from being

injured. He implemented in 2025 a new safety slogan across Hope Utilities, "Our Choice, Our Culture", to help drive safety engagement across the workforce.

Josh works diligently to foster a great team atmosphere with his reports, supporting them, challenging them, and giving them opportunities to be successful. He developed the Safety & Training team in 2022 as a manager, with only one member on the Safety team and one on the Training team. He now has 17 team members supporting operations and continuing to grow.

Josh was recognized in 2025 by The State Journal of West Virginia and WVNews as a 'Generation Next 40 Under 40' recipient. In 2023-2024, he was selected and participated Leadership Harrison through the Harrison Chamber of Commerce. Beyond his professional life, he is deeply involved in his community. He actively volunteers for veteran support initiatives, gives time to his church, and coaches youth sports.

Colleagues and peers describe Josh as a hardworking, compassionate, and dependable leader who brings integrity and excellence to everything he does. Known for his problem-solving mindset, he is someone others turn to when challenges arise - always ready to help, regardless of the task.

*What meaningful contributions has this person made to their organization or the industry?*

In 2022, Josh served as the Project Leader for the organization and led the sale transition of Dominion Energy West Virginia (DEWV) to Hope Gas for \$690M purchase by Ullico. He oversaw the sale from start to finish including Transition Service Agreement (TSA), formal closing communication plans, and Day 1 Cutover Plans. The sale and post-close transition went extremely smoothly for both the seller and buyer.

In 2025, Josh oversaw the planning and construction of the first ever Hope Training Facility. An over \$13M investment by the organization to leverage skills, equipment, and technologies to reduce risk and properly train all employees and contractors. In addition to hosting and managing all Operator Qualifications for Hope Utilities gas companies. The project kicked off in early 2025 with a hard deadline by end of 2025. The project is on track to be completed a few weeks ahead of schedule.

A few additional notable projects that Josh has been over include:

- Multiple large facilities projects ranging from \$5M-\$15M projects.
- Managed rebranding campaign for organization in 2022.
- Led merger of DEGP from DTI (now BHE) to Dominion Energy West Virginia in under 30 days from PSC notice of approval. Including transitioning 80 employees, 200+ fleet, multiple offices, compressor stations, and roughly 2,000 miles of natural gas pipelines.
- Project Manager for DEWV on federal Transportation Security Administration Security Directive 1 and 2 to ensure company complied to federal cyber security directives put in place in 2021 and 2022.

- Led company-wide Innovation Program for Dominion Energy across West Virginia operations from 2018-2020.

*How does this nominee embody SGA's mission to Share, Grow, and Advance?*

Josh has always taken the approach to never become complacent, looking for ways to challenge himself, and learn new things. He is a firm believer that in order to grow you have to challenge yourself to step outside of your comfort zone. He believes by garnering new skills and experiences, he is able to be a stronger leader for his team and the organization. Understanding points of views from every department to aide him in making stronger more disciplined decisions that set up the organization and the workforce for success! This is the reason he has been so successful at a young age and risen through the organization in just 9 years.

Josh sits down with his organizational direct reports monthly to hear how things are working, and what needs improvement. He utilizes this time as an open dialogue discussion to ensure his employees feel they are being heard and have a chance to hold Josh accountable as a leader. This has been a huge success, building trust and teamwork!

He also takes initiative to delegate opportunities for his employees, to foster career development opportunities. In addition to, challenging them to create solutions to advance the organization to being an industry leader.

*What potential do you see in this individual's future leadership in the industry?*

Josh has become a leader that others go to for advice and guidance. He has touched many different departments in his time with the organization which make him extremely valuable. Many have stated they see Josh becoming an executive for the organization in time. That is his personal goal to reach and leverage his experiences, skills, and knowledge to build the organization for long term success and growth. Josh is well known around his community for volunteering and being highly involved in youth sports. Where children look up to him and his positive encouragement.

From an industry perspective, Josh will help transform natural gas and hydrogen blended gas in the Northeast with new technologies and advancements.

His attitude, hard work, teamwork, and willingness to take on any challenge will help him be successful no matter where his career takes him in the industry!



## Nominee: Jammal Davenport

Company: TECO Peoples Gas

*What makes this individual a rising leader in the natural gas industry?*

In 2025, Jammal did a great job with PGS's lone worker initiative. In addition to the completing 6 Lone Worker High Risk Reviews, implementing 3 significant operational controls to reduce lone worker risks, he led the BETTER Employee Resource Group with thought and intent. His leadership in this employee resource group allows him to help develop future leaders in PGS. He is also a people coach, and does a good job leading his team and providing them with oversight, encouragement and feedback. His team consistently does work that helps move the PGS safety culture forward.

*What meaningful contributions has this person made to their organization or the industry?*

Jammal was assigned an initiative, "Lone Worker High Risk Review".

He was responsible for evaluating risks of Lone Workers and address risks by putting controls in place to prevent reduce risks that could lead to serious injury or fatality.

Two project teams were established to review 6 high risk lone worker tasks. These teams were facilitated by an Occupational Health and Safety Supervisor. The teams met weekly to analyze the 6 high risk lone worker tasks, while offering suggestions, researching and suggesting operational controls that would mitigate risks. As a result of the work 3 significant operational controls were implemented:

- Gas detection Device Policy - A detailed policy delineating the differences in the gas detection devices approved for use at PGS. In this collaboration, 25 team members received wearable multi-gas monitors to reduce the risk of exposure to non-odorized hazardous gases.
- Updated process for locator response - The process described critical triggers such as locates required in areas where 5 lanes of roadway in 3 directions or more were present. This is a high-risk area that requires additional precautions. If these conditions exist with the critical triggers, locators are to contact their performance coach (supervisor) for guidance on how to proceed.

- Updates to GIS mapping - High-risk intersections were identified and flagged in our system to help locators know when to call for help. These maps are being integrated with our ticket management system with a "high-risk" indicator before the technician attempts to locate the pipeline.

Each of these changes required collaboration between multiple departments such as safety, standards, operations, design & construction, IT, GIS, and damage prevention.

*How does this nominee embody SGA's mission to Share, Grow, and Advance?*

Through the comprehensive Lone Worker High-Risk Review and the implementation of significant operational controls, this work exemplifies SGA's mission to **Share, Grow, and Advance** the natural gas industry. By proactively identifying critical risks faced by lone workers and translating those insights into practical, field-ready controls, this initiative **shared best practices** that elevate safety awareness across organizations. It **grew industry capability** by strengthening risk management frameworks, standardizing expectations, and empowering frontline employees to work more safely and confidently. Most importantly, it **advanced the industry** by setting a higher standard for operational safety, demonstrating how collaboration, innovation, and leadership can meaningfully reduce risk while supporting reliable and responsible natural gas operations.

*What potential do you see in this individual's future leadership in the industry?*

I believe Jammal is capable of more than he can imagine. He consistently reviews processes, data, technology and people, while looking for ways to continuously improve and advance safety in PGS. Future leadership in the industry may include advancing at PGS and leading committees in organizations such as SGA and AGA.



## Nominee: Melissa Reidy

Company: Washington Gas

*What makes this individual a rising leader in the natural gas industry?*

Melissa Reidy is a rising leader in the natural gas industry because of her relentless focus on continuous improvement and measurable results. She consistently challenges the status quo, identifying smarter, more efficient ways to strengthen operations and improve safety outcomes across Washington Gas. Her ability to translate insight into action has led to meaningful process improvements that protect employees, customers, and the communities Washington Gas serves.

Through a people-first leadership style rooted in respect, accountability, and professional growth, Melissa has built trust and inspired high performance among her teams. She creates an environment where individuals are empowered to speak up, collaborate, and develop—driving stronger

engagement and delivering lasting impact across the organization.

She brings a strong sense of purpose to her work and works hard to educate others about the value that natural gas plays in their daily lives.

*What meaningful contributions has this person made to their organization or the industry?*

Melissa has significantly improved operational efficiency and safety at Washington Gas by modernizing the organization's resource planning and dispatch functions.

She continuously leverages advanced work management systems, including data analytics and emerging AI capabilities to drive a strong operational foundation rooted in safety and effectiveness.

Melissa was also a leader on the team that first implemented Washington Gas' Distribution Integrity Management Program (DIMP), which continues to make an impact more than 10 years after implementation.

Serving as the ultimate team player, Melissa acts as a subject matter expert across numerous continuous improvement initiatives, helping teams identify gaps, reduce inefficiencies, and translate operational challenges into actionable solutions.

*How does this nominee embody SGA's mission to Share, Grow, and Advance?*

Melissa's career progression reflects her commitment to growth and advancing operational excellence.

She began her career in Customer Service at Washington Gas, where she built a strong customer centric foundation that continues to inform her leadership approach. Having spent more than half of her career in the operations space, she now serves as Senior Manager of Resource Planning and Dispatch, bringing deep operational expertise aligned with a commitment to customer service.

Through it all, she has consistently demonstrated her commitment to her peers and to the industry at large. Melissa frequently represents Washington Gas at conferences and has built her own network within the natural gas industry.

*What potential do you see in this individual's future leadership in the industry?*

Melissa has established herself as a proven, forward-thinking leader with a strong operational foundation and a demonstrated ability to navigate complexity in an evolving energy landscape. She combines deep technical understanding with strategic foresight, positioning her to lead not just within Washington Gas, but across the broader natural gas industry as it modernizes and adapts to new challenges.

Her leadership is marked by a disciplined focus on safety, coupled with a thoughtful and effective adoption of new technologies that strengthen system performance, resilience, and customer outcomes. Melissa has shown that innovation and operational excellence are not competing priorities, but complementary ones—and she consistently delivers solutions that create long-term value for the organization, employees, and the communities it serves.

Looking ahead, Melissa has the potential to be a defining leader in the next generation of the natural gas industry. She is well-positioned to champion innovative practices, influence industry standards, and mentor future leaders, while advancing a modern, responsible, and reliable energy system. Her track record, vision, and ability to lead through change signal a leader who will continue to shape the direction of the industry for years to come.



## Nominee: Alex Sammet

Company: Spire

*What makes this individual a rising leader in the natural gas industry?*

In this role, Alex oversees the acquisition of all project land rights, including easements, leases, railroad contracts, franchise agreements, and underground storage rights for Spire's natural gas projects. He is also responsible for enforcing Spire's existing land rights, including midstream right-of-way clearing and encroachment enforcement. His leadership ensures projects are delivered safely, on schedule, and in support of reliable energy service for the communities Spire serves.

Alex leads by example as he manages both internal staff and external consultant teams, setting clear expectations and driving high performance across all phases of land acquisition and management of Spire's existing facilities. His work requires close coordination with engineering, field operations, legal, regulatory, and community stakeholders, and he is consistently relied upon to navigate complex land issues, ensuring projects move efficiently.

Alex Sammet exemplifies what it means to be a rising leader in the natural gas industry. In a consistently busy role spanning seven states and supporting both distribution and midstream operations, he demonstrates the ability to navigate complex challenges, build strong relationships, and deliver results that directly support Spire's project success. His steady leadership presence far exceeds his years of experience.

Throughout his career at Spire, Alex has repeatedly stepped forward to take on new and unfamiliar challenges, particularly during periods of organizational growth. As Spire has acquired new companies, Alex has been on the front lines of integrating these territories into the broader enterprise. He played a critical role in aligning land processes, systems, and stakeholders across newly acquired regions, ensuring continuity, compliance, and operational stability. His ability to guide teams through change demonstrates a level of adaptability and judgment that is rare this early in a career.

Alex's leadership extends well beyond his day-to-day responsibilities. He has stepped into industry-wide leadership roles, serving on the SGA Land Committee and speaking at last year's Ops Con conference. At the conference, he partnered with the Engineering Committee to share insights and best practices on addressing complex railroad issues. In addition, he currently serves as the International Right of Way Association (IRWA) Region 3 Chair of the Oil & Gas

Committee, a position in which he advocates for the industry while strengthening collaboration across organizations. On the local level, he serves on the Board of the Missouri Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA). His willingness to contribute at this level reflects both his commitment to the profession and his growing influence across the broader utility landscape.

Alex is known for stepping into complex situations, aligning diverse stakeholders, and driving initiatives to completion. For these reasons, Alex stands out as an emerging leader whose impact is already being felt within Spire and across the natural gas industry.

*What meaningful contributions has this person made to their organization or the industry?*

Alex Sammet has made significant and lasting contributions to both Spire and the broader natural gas industry. Within the organization, he has transformed how land acquisition and land management are executed across Spire's footprint, bringing consistency, structure, and strategic alignment to functions critical to project delivery and long-term system reliability. His leadership has enhanced Spire's ability to navigate complex land issues, mitigate risk, and maintain strong relationships with landowners, regulators, and community partners.

One of Alex's most impactful contributions was his leadership during the unprecedented challenge surrounding the Spire STL Pipeline, a 24-inch interstate pipeline running through Missouri and Illinois. Constructed in 2019, the pipeline became the first fully built and in-service natural gas pipeline in industry history to have its FERC certificate vacated in 2021, an extraordinary situation that brought landowner opposition and restoration concerns to the forefront. At this time, Alex was entrusted with rebuilding relationships, restoring trust, and resolving long-standing concerns with impacted landowners. Over four years, he worked directly with these landowners, addressing restoration issues, negotiating fair resolutions, and demonstrating Spire's commitment to responsible stewardship. His efforts resulted in the successful settlement of nearly all claims and played a critical role in restoring confidence in the project. Alex's leadership and persistence were instrumental in helping Spire regain its FERC certificate and secure the long-term viability of the STL Pipeline.

In addition to his organizational impact, Alex is making meaningful contributions to the natural gas industry as a whole. Taken together, Alex's contributions reflect a leader who not only excels in his role but also actively works to elevate his organization and the industry at large. His impact is both tangible and far-reaching, making him an exceptional candidate for the SGA Rising Leader Award.

*How does this nominee embody SGA's mission to Share, Grow, and Advance?*

Alex shares his knowledge generously, whether through his active role on the SGA Land Committee, his presentation at OpsCon, or his day-to-day leadership within Spire. Alex consistently brings forward lessons learned, best practices, and practical insights that help peers across the industry navigate complex land and stakeholder challenges. His willingness to

openly share his expertise strengthens not only his own teams but also the broader community of professionals working in land management and right-of-way.

He demonstrates growth, both personally and organizationally, by stepping into some of the most challenging situations in Spire's recent history. From integrating newly acquired companies into Spire's land processes to working directly with cattle and sheep ranchers in Wyoming to secure land rights for Spire's \$250 Million dollar storage expansion, Alex has shown exceptional adaptability, resilience, and strategic thinking. His leadership has helped create more consistent, scalable processes across Spire's footprint, while also fostering the growth and development of the teams he leads.

Alex consistently advances the industry by contributing his time and expertise beyond his day-to-day responsibilities. He has been an active member of several professional organizations, including SGA, APWA, IRWA, and previously YPP, where he supports knowledge sharing and collaboration across the energy and infrastructure sectors. His ongoing involvement reflects a genuine commitment to strengthening the industry and supporting the next generation of professionals.

*What potential do you see in this individual's future leadership in the industry?*

Alex has exceptional potential to become a leading voice in land acquisition and stakeholder engagement within the natural gas industry. This potential is especially important as the natural gas industry faces increasing political scrutiny, regulatory complexity, and growing opposition from landowners and other stakeholders. These pressures are likely to intensify in the years ahead, making it essential to have leaders who can guide organizations through challenging processes with expertise, transparency, and a strong sense of stewardship. Alex not only brings this capability to his daily work, but he also carries these experiences back into the broader industry through his involvement with organizations such as SGA, ensuring that lessons learned are shared and that the industry continues to advance collectively.

In short, Alex's trajectory points toward a future where he not only leads within his organization but also plays a significant role in advancing the industry as a whole.



## Nominee: Allison Satterfield

Company: BHE Gas Transmission & Storage (BHE GT&S)

*What makes this individual a rising leader in the natural gas industry?*

Allison Satterfield has taken on mission-essential SGA roles that have further strengthened her leadership capabilities and value within BHE GT&S—delivering practical results for both SGA and BHE GT&S. She leads with vision and clarity and is often called upon for critical strategic assignments and deliverables, most recently in the field application of AI. As part of her SGA leadership roles, she defined clear deliverables, executed to deadlines, and created reusable materials (charters, templates, transition notes, and communications) that incoming leaders can

pick up immediately. Her work improved the committee's effectiveness, increased BHE GT&S participation, deepened training engagement, and accelerated efforts to convert SGA activity into day-to-day value. Allison creates momentum and keeps team members engaged, aligned, and executing – no bystanders when she's leading, just visible progress.

*What meaningful contributions has this person made to their organization or the industry?*

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Allison consistently turned SGA activity into usable information for BHE GT&S. She delivered quarterly SGA updates to executives, coordinated conference “learn-backs” for attendees, and circulated targeted call-outs so employees could quickly find and use relevant SGA training, webinars, and committee opportunities. By creating a repeatable cadence (updates, follow-ups,

and next steps), she increased internal awareness and helped more employees enroll in courses, attend events, and participate in committees.

*How does this nominee embody SGA's mission to Share, Grow, and Advance?*

In 2025, Allison served as Chair of the SGA Management Conference, Past Chair of the Innovative Opportunities Section Managing Committee, and an active member of the Women in Leadership Committee. In these roles, she tightened how the committees operated by documenting scope, roles, and annual deliverables; setting meeting rhythms; and standardizing agendas and follow-up notes. She also produced and shared chair resources (charters, timelines, and handoff checklists) so that incoming section and conference chairs can reuse proven structures rather than rebuilding them each year.

During BHE GT&S' time as Chair, Allison acted as chief of staff to keep execution moving. She drove strategy, coordinated the BHE GT&S internal SGA support team, tracked priorities and owners, and ensured materials were ready for SGA touchpoints (briefings, meetings, and transitions). She also captured the operating model in written onboarding/transition content—who does what, what needs to happen when, and what “good” looks like—so the next chair organization can start with a working playbook.

As part of the Innovative Opportunities Committee, Allison increased participation by putting structure around the work: she set a practical agenda focused on “what companies are doing now,” recruited speakers with real-world implementations, and ensured sessions ended with takeaways members could apply. She facilitated peer discussions on AI, satellite monitoring, cybersecurity, and digital modernization, and connected member companies to solutions and partners that had already been piloted in similar environments.

In 2025, Allison helped increase BHE GT&S representation across SGA committees by identifying gaps, recruiting the right internal SMEs, and making it easier for new participants to get started (clear role expectations, meeting schedules, and points of contact). She also tracked participation and shared updates so leaders could see where BHE GT&S time was being spent and what was coming back from SGA. The result was broader involvement and a tighter feedback loop between SGA committee work and operating-company needs.

Allison helped make the SGA brand refresh in 2025 actionable—not just announced. She coordinated with SGA leadership and BHE GT&S communications to align internal talking points, update materials used in committee and conference settings, and ensure messaging stayed consistent as the refresh rolled out. The updated branding and supporting communications made it easier to explain SGA's purpose and offerings to employees and member companies, which supported renewed interest in committees, training, and cross-company collaboration.

*What potential do you see in this individual's future leadership in the industry?*

### **Leadership Beyond SGA:**

Outside of SGA, Allison has delivered the same hands-on leadership inside BHE Pipeline Group and BHE GT&S. She led work to re-invent the Business Optimization & Innovation (BO&I) program—resetting how work is sourced and prioritized, clarifying roles and decision points, and building repeatable practices so ideas move from intake to execution with clear owners and timelines. She partnered successfully with key stakeholders and front-line field team members to ensure real business value was realized and recognized. She is now leading much of the work at BHE GT&S around AI strategy, engagement, and internal networks by organizing stakeholders, connecting teams to relevant use cases and external learnings, and creating practical forums for sharing what is working.

### **Community Engagement & Volunteer Leadership**

Allison also demonstrates leadership through local community volunteer work. She regularly gives her time outside of work, takes on organizer responsibilities when needed, and follows through on commitments—coordinating people, schedules, and resources to get things done. This consistent service reflects the same strengths she brings to SGA and BHE GT&S: reliability, initiative, and a focus on practical outcomes that benefit others.