

For Immediate Release

Ontario's award-winning utilities demonstrate value of local electricity services

(TORONTO – March 28, 2017) Top-performing electricity utilities from across Ontario were honoured on March 27th at the industry's premier Awards Gala, hosted by the Electricity Distributors Association (EDA).

"In tune with the needs of their customers and communities, Ontario's local electricity utilities have pushed forward on many game-changing initiatives that have, and will continue to, deliver exceptional service to customers amid significant system transformation," says **Vinay Sharma, Chair of the EDA**. "We are proud of the many achievements that our member utilities have accomplished."

Receiving the award for overall **Performance Excellence** – sponsored by Ontario Power Generation, was **Veridian Connections**. A respected leader in innovation, operational excellence and customer service, Veridian boosted its overall performance score to 97.4 per cent according to its Service Quality Composite Index. Veridian also achieved 1.5 million hours worked without a lost-time injury, exceeded its energy savings target and set aside \$2 per customer (or \$225,000 in 2016) for community sponsorships and donations.

London Hydro was recognized with the **Conservation Leadership Award** – sponsored by the Independent Electricity System Operator. The utility created a turnkey solution to help confront energy poverty in the city by providing over 50,000 lighting and 700 appliance retrofits and upgrades to more than 3,000 social housing dwellings. The program is saving tenants and the London & Middlesex Housing Corporation about \$450,000 per year.

Essex Powerlines and Collus PowerStream's joint Digital Grid 2.0 project earned the **Innovation Excellence Award**. Leveraging the latest in utility software, the two companies fused different operating systems through the same universal platform, resulting in improved reliability and service. With built-in capabilities to support the adoption and integration of new technologies, this forward-thinking project is preparing the local grids and customers for the future of electricity distribution.

Burlington Hydro received the newly launched **Public Electrical Safety Excellence Award** – sponsored by the Electrical Safety Authority, for its "Power to be Safe" program. Integrating both new and existing programs, such as Rob Ellis' MySafeWork and the Creative Kids Contest – which engaged students in grades 4-8 to design a safety-themed ad, helped teach important electrical safety lessons to people of all ages.

Festival Hydro, London Hydro and Whitby Hydro received the award for **Customer Service Excellence** for collaborating to enhance their online customer engagement solutions. This included launching Green Button – a standard, easy-to-use platform for customers to access and take charge of their energy usage data. By working together, these utilities reduced their costs while providing their customers with more service options online.

Hydro Ottawa was recognized with the **Communications Excellence award** for successfully driving customer engagement and raising community awareness of the value of the utility's services through a comprehensive social media and video content strategy. Hydro Ottawa made use of live-streaming services and drone footage to engage their customers in real time.

About the EDA

The Electricity Distributors Association is the trusted and vital source for advocacy, insight and information for Ontario's local electricity distributors, the municipally and privately owned companies that deliver essential electricity services to millions of homes, businesses and public institutions.

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