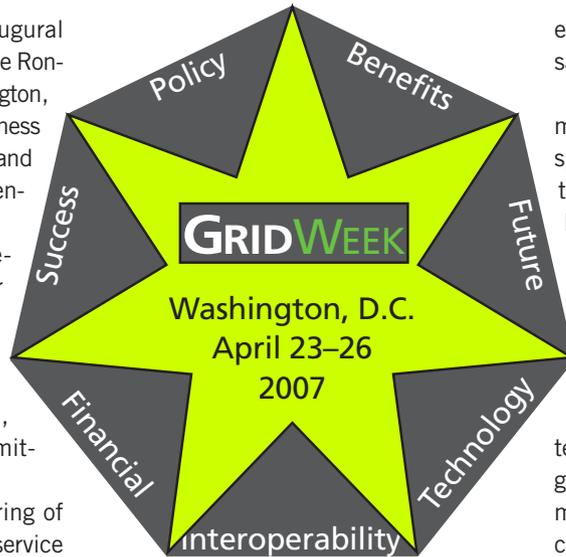


GridWeek Electrifies the Nation's Capital

ON APRIL 23–26, 2007, the inaugural GridWeek event took place in the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C. The purpose was to raise awareness and generate support for advancing and modernizing the grid and bring attention to an impending problem.

"It is estimated electricity demand will increase 50 percent over the next 50 years. This will require the construction of approximately 1,900 generating plants," said Rick Boucher (D-Va.), chairman, House of Representatives Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality.

GridWeek was a national gathering of utility companies, technology and service providers, smart grid initiatives, federal and state regulators and lawmakers, electricity consumer groups, and other observers. GridWeek was developed in support of President Bush's National Energy Policy and the provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.



"The energy bill will help ensure that consumers receive electricity over dependable modern infrastructure ... We have a modern interstate grid for our phone line and our highways. With this bill, America can start building a modern 21st century

electricity grid as well," President Bush said at the act's signing.

Among the events were committee meetings, panel discussions, keynote speakers and informational presentations. One of the featured events was the National Town Meeting on Demand Response hosted by the Demand Response Coordinating Committee (DRCC), whose mission is to build a demand response community as the renewable and environmental community.

The cost and availability of oil, alternative energy, efficiencies, security and green sustainable renewable sources were main topics of discussion. GridWeek focused on the vision that the Internet is becoming necessary to manage and automate the new world of the electric grid. A new idea is emerging that energy generation will transform into decentralized components.

For more information, visit www.gridweek.com.

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AFCIs Increase Safety from Fires

ACCORDING TO THE most recent data from the United States Fire Administration, home electrical problems are responsible for an estimated 67,800 fires every year, resulting in 485 deaths, 2,300 injuries and more than \$868 million in residential property loss. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates AFCI protection in homes nationwide could prevent more than 50 percent of these fires.

Arc-fault circuit interrupters were developed in response to an identified electrical problem that causes home fires. The use of AFCIs is endorsed by the National Fire Protection Association, the National Electrical Contractors Association, the CPSC, the Electrical Safety Foundation International and other prominent organizations.

"Over 30 years ago, ground-fault cir-

cuit interrupters seemed like a major innovation, and now they're just part of the electrical safety landscape we all take for granted," said Brooke Stauffer, NECA's executive director for standards and safety. "In a few more years, AFCIs will seem just as familiar. The new 2008 *National Electrical Code* rules are an important step in reducing the risk of electrical fires."

Arc-fault circuit interruption technology offers protection by detecting arc faults, which can create heat as high as 10,000°F. This dangerous condition can produce burning particles that may easily ignite such surrounding material as wood framing or insulation.

The National Electrical Manufacturers Association's (NEMA's) Low Voltage Distribution Equipment Section (LVDE) announced the launch of a Web site de-

voted to educating homeowners, electrical contractors and those involved in home construction about arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs)

"AFCIs are a technological leap forward in home safety, and they have significant potential to save lives and loss of property caused by electrical fires in the home," said Gerard Winstanley, LVDE technical program manager for NEMA. "The new Web site is NEMA's way to make homeowners, builders and electrical contractors aware of the safety benefits that AFCIs provide."

The 2005 *National Electrical Code* (NEC) currently requires that AFCIs be installed in bedroom power and lighting circuits in new homes. The forthcoming 2008 NEC proposes to expand AFCI requirements to branch circuits throughout new homes.

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