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IUCX Announces 2026 Excellence Awards Winners Recognizing Innovation, Leadership and Transformation in Utility CX

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Tampa, FL, Thursday, April 16, 2026 – Innovate UtilityCX (IUCX) convened utility leaders from across North America at the Tampa Convention Center in Tampa, FL on April 16, 2026, for its annual conference, where the organization recognized the industry's most innovative utilities and professionals through its prestigious Excellence Awards.

During the conference, IUCX CEO Julio Morales announced the 2026 Excellence Award winners, honoring utilities and individuals delivering measurable impact across the customer experience (CX) lifecycle through technology, strategy and operational excellence.

"The pace of change across the utility landscape continues to accelerate, and these award winners represent what's possible when innovation is paired with disciplined execution and a customer-first mindset," said Morales. "Each of these organizations is not only solving today's challenges but setting the standard for where our industry is headed."

The Excellence Awards recognize top-performing utilities across multiple categories and two utility tiers: Level I (annual revenue greater than \$1B) and Level II (annual revenue less than \$1B).

Best CIS Implementation | Salutes major implementations of customer information systems (CIS), evaluated on budget and schedule adherence, operational efficiency and effectiveness after go-live, innovative solutions and improved customer experience/service delivery.

Level I Winner: Nashville Electric Service (NES)

As part of its multi-year Encompass transformation, NES implemented a modern CIS and meter data platform replacing a decades-old legacy system while integrating real-time payments, outage notifications and customer self-service capabilities. The project included seven full mock conversions and complex system orchestration, culminating in a highly successful go-live that delivered exceptional billing accuracy and improved customer responsiveness.

Level II Winner: ECOGAS (Sempra Global)

ECOGAS executed a large-scale enterprise transformation, replacing a fragmented 20-year legacy environment with a unified platform integrating customer, billing, field operations and self-service capabilities. Spanning multiple regions and time zones, the initiative eliminated data silos, automated key processes and established a scalable, digital-first operating model supporting more than 170,000 customers.

Innovation in Digital Engagement | Showcases technologically complex projects that improve services in the meter-to-cash CX lifecycle through digital engagement.

Level I Winner: Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E)

PG&E transformed its customer experience by replacing a legacy IVR system with a conversational AI platform, "Peggy," enabling customers to interact naturally rather than navigate complex menus. The solution introduced multi-channel engagement, reduced customer effort by more than half in key journeys and created a scalable foundation for AI-driven service innovation across a highly regulated environment.

Level II Winner: Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust (OCWUT)

Delivered a unified digital engagement platform that brought multiple customer services into a single, cohesive experience—eliminating fragmentation and simplifying how customers interact with the utility. The initiative drove strong adoption and engagement while improving accessibility, streamlining service delivery and creating a scalable foundation for future digital innovation.

Innovation in People & Process – Awards projects that emphasize soft skills, low-tech solutions and non-automated approaches to engage customers and improve services in the meter-to-cash CX lifecycle.

Level I Winner: ENMAX

Introduced a first-of-its-kind AI-powered knowledge assistant within a Canadian utility, transforming how customer service agents access and apply information. The solution significantly reduced search time across thousands of knowledge articles, improved consistency in responses, reduced call center strain and was delivered under budget with rapid adoption across more than 250 employees.

Level II Winner: City of Clearwater, FL

Transformed operations across seven utilities by implementing a unified, data-driven customer service platform. By replacing estimation-based management with real-time analytics, the city improved agent utilization, reduced call abandonment and enabled faster, more reliable service delivery across all customer channels.

Innovation in Field Automation – Features utilities that have completed a recent implementation that optimized field services in areas like mobile workforce and asset management, deployment of advanced meter infrastructure (AMI) and automatic meter reading, and use of geographic data and advanced analytics to improve response time and streamline back-office processes.

Level I Winner: SoCal Gas

Modernized field operations by replacing decades-old scheduling and dispatch systems with an integrated workforce management platform featuring GIS-enabled routing and real-time analytics. The initiative improved operational visibility, strengthened coordination between field and dispatch teams and enhanced both service delivery and regulatory compliance across a large service territory.

Level II Winner: City of Naperville, IL

Leveraged AMI data and internal engineering expertise to transform grid planning and field operations without relying on external consultants. By replacing assumption-based planning with real usage data, the utility improved transformer sizing decisions, reduced unnecessary infrastructure upgrades and enabled proactive, data-driven system management.

Distinguished Leader: Timothy Davis, VP, CX & Energy Services, Memphis Light, Gas & Water

Recognized for his “People First” leadership approach, Davis has demonstrated exceptional ability to stabilize operations, rebuild trust and lead transformational change across his organization. His leadership combines accountability, empathy and strategic vision, fostering a culture of continuous improvement while developing the next generation of utility leaders.

Rising Stars:

Krysti Morales, Mgr Customer Billing & Accounting Quality & Training, Salt River Project

Honored for building a high-performing department from the ground up and dramatically accelerating employee training timelines from nearly two years to just 16 weeks. Her leadership in knowledge management and operational improvement has transformed how teams learn, scale and deliver results.

Leroy Peter, Business Process Solutions Mgr, City of Tallahassee

Recognized for leading complex, cross-functional transformation initiatives beyond his formal role, including mapping over 185 business processes and supporting major CIS and system integrations. His work has significantly improved operational alignment and positioned the organization for future modernization.

A highlight of the IUCX conference, the Excellence Awards presentations showcase real-world examples of innovation in action, demonstrating how utilities are navigating complex transformations while improving service delivery and customer outcomes.

The week of April 13 - 16, 2026 included many other IUCX events and programs:

- Conference 2026
- Executive Summit
- Key Account Forum
- ENGAGE311
- Deep Dives
- Women in Utilities Sunrise Event
- LeadNext
- Benchmarking Roundtable
- Introducing FlowForward and CIS Collaborative

Together, these programs provide a platform for utility professionals to connect, share insights and explore the trends shaping the future of customer experience. Find out more about each at www.iucx.org

About Innovate UtilityCX or IUCX

IUCX is the premier educational and networking conference serving electric, gas and water/wastewater utility professionals across North America and around the world. It provides learning and connection opportunities across the utility CX lifecycle, including Billing & Payments, Contact Center, Credit & Collections, Digital Engagement, Disruptors, Field Services and Strategies & Analytics.

As a nonprofit organization, IUCX is guided by four core values:

- **Innovation:** We believe every customer - utility touchpoint can be improved through a collective commitment to information sharing, thought leadership, continuous improvement and technology adoption.
- **Objectivity:** As an unbiased, nonprofit organization, IUCX puts the advancement of the utility industry ahead of marketing interests in everything we do.
- **Transparency:** With an honest, customer-first exchange of ideas, IUCX helps the utility industry evolve the CX and keep up with the pace of change.
- **Community:** IUCX fosters a familiar, collaborative culture where utility professionals and industry experts meet and support each other where they are in their CX journey.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, IUCX appeals to attendees from utilities of all sizes. It enjoys support from industry partners, sponsors and exhibitors. IUCX offers year-round and digital content to keep attendees connected with stories that showcase utility success stories, marketplace updates, and trends from other industries influencing utility programs and services. Advisory panels shape and focus all IUCX events and programs, ensuring content is aligned with IUCX mission and reflects current challenges and issues. For more information, visit www.iucx.org

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