

FORTNIGHTLY TOP INNOVATORS

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2026 Public Utilities Fortnightly Top Innovators Awards Nomination Form

Introduction & Eligibility

Progress across today's energy landscape depends on bold innovation and active collaboration among utilities, technology companies, regulators, and industry partners. Presented by *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, the Fortnightly Top Innovators Awards recognize the organizations and leaders shaping the utility and energy sectors through practical, high-impact, commercial-grade solutions.

These awards honor outstanding achievements, visionary leadership, and technology deployments that demonstrate measurable business impact, technological boldness, market scalability, and category excellence.

This year's framework features five core categories, each anchored by a pioneering historical figure. For the first time, the ceremony audience will cast a live, real-time vote among the five category winners to name the Top Innovator of the Year.

Important Guidelines:

- **Deployment Required:** All nominations must focus on projects, technologies, or strategies actively deployed within the last 18 months (January 2025 – June 2026). Conceptual, theoretical, or pre-commercial ideas will not be considered.
- **Evidence-Based:** Submissions must provide concrete data demonstrating business impact, efficiency gains, safety improvements, or environmental benefits.
- **Award Acceptance:** An executive representative from the winning company, or the individual awardee, must accept in person at the Fortnightly Top Innovators Awards ceremony in Washington, DC on October 29, 2026. For global nominees, a U.S.-based

representative may accept on their behalf.

- **Submission Deadline:** All materials must be submitted via the online form by September 2, 2026.

Section 1: Contact Information

Please list the primary contact followed by each company, organization, or partner involved in this nomination and provide a single point of contact for each additional company, organization, or partner. This information will be used by PUF for follow-up purposes only.

- **Project Name (As it should appear on the award):**
- **Primary Organization or Individual Name:**

Primary Nominator (Point of Contact)

- **Your Name:**
- **Your Title:**
- **Organization:**
- **Email Address:**
- **Phone Number:**

Relationship to Nominee:

- Self
- Colleague
- External Partner/Vendor
- Other

Additional Project Participants (Up to 6)

List any key collaborative partners, utilities, vendors, or team members who actively participated in this initiative.

- **Participant 1** (include organization name, contact person's name, title, email, and phone)
- **Participant 2** (include organization name, contact person's name, title, email, and phone)
- **Participant 3** (include organization name, contact person's name, title, email, and phone)
- **Participant 4** (include organization name, contact person's name, title, email, and phone)

- **Participant 5** (include organization name, contact person's name, title, email, and phone)
 - **Participant 6** (include organization name, contact person's name, title, email, and phone)
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Section 2: Award Category Selection

Select **one** category that best aligns with the submission. Nominations are evaluated within the context of the chosen category, and outcomes are assessed relative to its specific strategic purpose.

1. Leadership in Innovation (George Westinghouse Award)

- **Focus:** Honors an executive leader or enterprise initiative that demonstrates visionary corporate strategy, culture change, and organizational transformation across the utility sector.
- **Eligible Initiatives may include (but are not limited to):** Enterprise-wide utility modernization; multi-operating-company programs; bold regulatory/business-model innovation; executive-led change management frameworks.
- **Target:** Nominees should clearly demonstrate visionary leadership, organizational transformation, and measurable business or cultural impact. Evaluated on outcomes, leadership influence, and collaborative impact.

2. Grid Infrastructure, Safety & Resilience (Edith Clarke Award)

- **Focus:** Recognizes physical infrastructure, transmission/distribution expansion, grid-hardening, DER integration, operational safety, and field workforce protection that strengthen power system reliability and worker safety.
- **Eligible Initiatives may include (but are not limited to):** Advanced conductors, dynamic line rating (DLR), capacity expansion; substation modernization, undergrounding; utility-scale VPPs, storage deployment, automated DER orchestration; AI-driven vegetation management, satellite/drone hazard ID, wildfire mitigation; advanced gas pipeline safety, leak detection; wearable worker safety tech, robotics, high-voltage protection.
- **Target:** Nominees should demonstrate technical novelty, measurable reliability/resilience/safety gains, and clear potential for replication across grid operations.

3. AI, Digital Grid & Cyber Defense (Nikola Tesla Award)

- **Focus:** Honors deep-tech software, machine learning applications, predictive analytics, and pioneering cybersecurity architectures that protect critical utility infrastructure and transform decision-making from reactive to proactive.
- **Eligible Initiatives may include (but are not limited to):** AI-driven wildfire, storm, and extreme-weather early warning; computer vision and satellite/drone analytics for automated asset inspection; predictive maintenance platforms for heavy assets;

zero-trust security frameworks for SCADA and OT environments; automated cyber threat detection and incident response; secure supply-chain and device-authentication protocols.

- **Target:** Nominees should demonstrate technological boldness, predictive accuracy, and actionable operational integration into existing workflows.

4. Water, Hydropower & Resource Stewardship (Nora Stanton Barney Award)

- **Focus:** Celebrates innovations across hydroelectric power generation, municipal water utilities, dam/aqueduct modernization, and the Water-Energy nexus.
- **Eligible Initiatives may include (but are not limited to):** Hydroelectric asset modernization, pumped-storage expansion, turbine efficiency upgrades; advanced leak-detection, AMI software, smart municipal water delivery platforms; environmental remediation, water-quality chemistry, watershed protection; hydro-flow predictive analytics and generation dispatch algorithms.
- **Target:** Nominees should demonstrate resource efficiency, hydraulic or environmental performance improvements, and sustainable infrastructure stewardship.

5. Clean Baseload, Gas Generation & Load Shaping (Lise Meitner Award)

- **Focus:** Honors advancements in baseload power innovation (Nuclear, Advanced Gas, Geothermal, Hydrogen) OR consumer software (TOU, Demand Response, EE) that shapes load to match clean generation.
- **Eligible Initiatives may include (but are not limited to):** Advanced nuclear (SMR/fission), engineered geothermal, high-efficiency thermal generation; gas utility decarbonization, hydrogen blending, carbon capture (CCUS); Time-of-Use (TOU) pricing engines, behavioral energy efficiency, load-shaping platforms; EV managed charging, residential automated demand response.
- **Target:** Nominees should demonstrate clear carbon-abatement impact, continuous baseload availability, or measurable customer demand-flexibility outcomes.

Which award category does this project align with?

*Please select the **one primary category** that best aligns with your project. To ensure a focused evaluation, each submission should target the single category where it possesses the strongest alignment. For additional details on the focus of each award, please refer to the category descriptions above.*

Leadership in Innovation (George Westinghouse Award)

Grid Infrastructure, Safety & Resilience (Edith Clarke Award)

AI, Digital Grid & Cyber Defense (Nikola Tesla Award)

Water, Hydropower & Resource Stewardship (Nora Stanton Barney Award)

Clean Baseload, Gas Generation & Load Shaping (Lise Meitner Award)

Section 3: Core Nomination Questionnaire

Please answer the following four sections thoroughly. The panel of energy executives, technical experts, and PUF editorial leadership will score each submission on a strict 100-point rubric based on these fields.

1. Business Impact & ROI (Scored out of 30 Points)

Provide quantifiable results demonstrating real-world value. What are the concrete data points showing cost savings, capacity added, uptime improved, emissions reduced, safety incidents prevented, or customer benefits achieved? *(Reminder: Projects must be actively deployed; concepts will not be scored).*

(limit 500 words)

2. Technological Boldness (Scored out of 30 Points)

Describe the degree to which this initiative represents a novel, forward-looking, or paradigm-shifting approach. How does it break through a traditional technological, structural, or operational constraint rather than serving as a standard incremental optimization?

(limit 500 words)

3. Scalability & Viability (Scored out of 20 Points)

Explain the degree to which this model, technology, framework, or methodology can be easily adapted, replicated, or scaled across other utilities, markets, sizes, or geographic regions.

(limit 500 words)

4. Category Alignment & Historical Spirit (Scored out of 20 Points)

Explain how this initiative directly aligns with your chosen category's strategic focus and the pioneering spirit of its historical figure anchor (Westinghouse, Clarke, Tesla, Barney, or Meitner).

(limit 500 words)

Section 4: Uploads & Verification

Please assemble any supporting materials that corroborate the data and achievements cited in your application (e.g., case studies, system performance charts, third-party validations).

- **Upload File (One file, 5 pages max)** *(Optional)*
- **Attestation:** (check box) *I certify that the project detailed in this nomination is fully deployed and the results provided are accurate.*