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IEEE-USA and the IEEE's Power Engineering Society Team Up To Teach Congressional Staff Power System Basics

by **Bill Williams**

The IEEE's [Power Engineering Society](#) (PES) and IEEE-USA's [Energy Policy Committee](#) (EPC) joined forces on 23 May to bring PES' educational course, "Power System Basics for Non-Engineering Professionals," to Capitol Hill for the benefit of congressional staff. Course presenters explained to attendees basic electrical terminology and concepts in simple terms with regard to design, construction, operations and maintenance of power plant substations and transmission and distribution lines.

IEEE Senior Member Steven Blume, president and CEO of Applied Professional Training, Inc., in Carlsbad, Calif., taught the three-hour course. Blume has traveled the country extensively teaching a longer, three-day version of the course to non-engineering professionals, such as power marketers, energy agency leaders and business executives to give them a better understanding of electric power systems planning, operations and regulatory frameworks. "We want to help non-engineering professionals understand the fundamentals of electric power system operations to improve their contribution in whatever role they play in this industry," said Blume.

Most congressional legislative aids tasked with helping their bosses make informed decisions about important matters affecting the electric power system do not have the benefit of an engineering background. Approximately 25 congressional staffers attended the course, including the general counsel for the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The course covered a broad array of technical topics and details not normally found in policy and legislative deliberations. In attendance at the event, EPC Chair Fernando Alvarado noted, "The presentation discussed in detail many of the technologies in use today, as well as the various tradeoffs associated with the way the power system is designed and operated."

IEEE-USA coordinated with congressional staff to stage the event, and is working to host future educational seminars on telecommunications and other technology related issues.

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