

Introductory remarks for I2T Summit
By Administrator and CEO Mark A. Gabriel

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the fourth Inclusion, Innovation and Technology Summit.

Innovation is key to our future success as a federal agency and power provider. The change around us in the industry is accelerating, and what we “knew for a fact” five years ago, or even two years ago, is irrelevant today.

Here are only a few examples of the different flavors of change we are seeing in the industry.

- A company that transports batteries on trains has requested regulation from FERC as a non-wires alternative to delivering power.
- Tesla is selling more cars than Infinity, Mercedes-Benz and Audi.
- In April, renewable energy generation beat out coal, 22% to 20%.
- Guzman Energy offered to buy three coal plants to shut them down.
- Duke is offering customers Bloom Energy distributed fuel cell technology instead of providing their own power.
- California investor-owned utilities are pre-emptively cutting power due to fear of wildfires caused by power lines.
- In response, companies like SimpliPhi are offering residents energy storage solutions.

To accommodate all these changes and remain successful, relevant and valuable in the energy frontier, we need to be an innovative organization. Innovation is at the core of our business. Our mission and organization thrive on the creativity of our people to develop smarter and more efficient ways to get the job done. It is the root of our core value to “Be curious, learn more, do better. Repeat.”

Innovation takes many forms. Invention is the most common, and the form most frequently recognized. However, it is not the only innovation we commend at our I2T summits. The measures that find new efficiencies and improve productivity are just as crucial and remarkable as the inventions.

I particularly enjoy this year’s theme, The Everyday Innovator, because it is something I believe: Everyone can be an innovator. If you have ever acted on an idea, congratulations, you are an innovator. Even if it failed.

- Abraham Lincoln failed as a businessman, was a mediocre lawyer at best and failed to be elected in five different elections for various positions.
- Henry Ford filed for bankruptcy before achieving success.

Thomas Edison, another innovator unafraid of failure, is quoted as saying, “Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration.”



Among his many accomplishments, Edison worked on battery storage—something we are still working on today. Edison’s work involved more than 10,000 experiments with different chemicals and materials to develop his alkaline storage battery.

A friend asked him, “Isn’t it a shame that with the tremendous amount of work you have done you haven’t been able to get any results?” Edison replied, “Results! Why, man, I have gotten lots of results! I know several thousand things that won’t work!”

At WAPA, we embrace a culture of psychological safety, which encourages employees to try new things and identify possible issues without fear of retaliation or retribution.

Innovation comes with risks of failure, but to echo a famous quote attributed to Wayne Gretzky, “You miss 100 percent of the shots you don’t take.” Finding results that do not work is valuable and leads to a new path forward.

Many of the award winners and honorable mentions here today and in the past were employees that saw something that could be done better or faster and seized the initiative to make it happen. These innovations include both inventions and improvements to processes and systems—those day-to-day requirements that can bog down an entire organization and divert resources from the mission.

From automation and improved databases to taking the lead to delist a “not-so-endangered species,” these innovations, along with their invention counterparts, support our Critical Pathway of Business, Technology and Organizational Excellence to complete our mission in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible while also staying in step with industry advances.

At WAPA, I encourage all of you to look for innovative opportunities in your own sphere of influence. To get started on becoming an Everyday Innovator, talk to people around you about what is missing and what could be done better. Consider your own workload or the workload of your office. Ask questions, and come up with an idea to improve the way you do business.

In today’s world, we all must seek ways to do more with limited resources. Efforts that will save time, money and other resources are worth the attempt to improve. Every employee at WAPA has the opportunity to be an innovator; you only need to be brave enough to take it. Bringing home the power of the everyday innovator, a few of our employees have been recognized beyond the I2T Summit for their ingenuity and positive impact on the country.

Nine employees from three teams were recently recognized with the Gears of Government awards.

The Gears of Government award is given to individuals and teams across the national federal workforce whose dedication supports exceptional mission results, customer service and



accountable stewardship. Just over 200 awards were given out, and WAPA won three of them. Most agencies received zero.

We received the certificates and awards from Secretary Perry this week, and I could not wait to hand them out. Unfortunately, not everyone could attend today's presentation, so please take a moment to recognize these employees today however you can.

Patricia Hoffman introduction

It is my honor today to also introduce our first keynote speaker, Patricia Hoffman who is the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Electricity.

I have worked with Patricia for years, collaborating with her and her staff on the criticality of WAPA to the Department of Energy, our customers and the nation's electric grid. She is an incredible ally to WAPA and the power marketing administration program, and is a well-known though leader and technical expert who is frequently asked to speak at industry events.

Patricia has a long history at DOE, particularly with grid-related matters and is no stranger to the importance of innovation in government and the energy industry.

In the past, as the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Electricity, Patricia was responsible for providing national leadership in efforts to modernize the electric grid; enhancing physical security, cybersecurity and reliability of the nation's energy infrastructure; and facilitating plans and processes to recover from disruptions to energy supply, both domestic and international.

As the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research and Development and Chief Operating Officer within the Office of Electricity, she developed the long-term research strategy and improved the management portfolio of research programs for modernizing and improving the resiliency of the electric grid.

Before joining the Office of Electricity, she was the Program Manager for the Federal Energy Management Program within the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at DOE, responsible for promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy and smart energy management at federal agencies before these initiatives were the trend in our society.

Patricia holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Ceramic Science and Engineering from Pennsylvania State University.

Please join me in welcoming Patricia Hoffman.

