

Ameren announces industry veteran as new Illinois chairman and president

Ameren Corporation has chosen Leonard “Lenny” Singh, an executive with more than 30 years of utility experience, as the new chairman and president of Ameren Illinois, an electric and natural gas delivery utility subsidiary of Ameren Corporation.

Singh joined Ameren on July 1, assuming the role on Aug. 1 that former chairman and president Richard Mark vacated with his retirement.



Singh

Singh has extensive experience in both electric and natural gas operations. He most recently served as senior vice president for Consolidated Edison Company of New York.

“Lenny’s deep experience and industry knowledge are well-suited to lead service to our 1.2 million electric customers and more than 800,000 natural gas customers in the state of Illinois,” said Marty Lyons, chief executive officer of Ameren. “He has a proven track record of developing and executing strategic plans as well as demonstrating a steadfast focus on safety, customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, action and accountability. He is also known as a highly effective coach and mentor, skilled in motivating teams

to produce positive results and reliable service for customers. We look forward to his strategic input as a member of Ameren’s Executive Leadership Team.”

During his time at Con Edison, Singh served in a variety of roles, including leading Customer Energy Solutions, Manhattan Electric Operations as well as serving as chief engineer and general manager of Gas Operations.

Singh holds a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a master’s degree in electrical engineering from Polytechnic University, and a master of business administration degree from Columbia University.

“I am thrilled to join Ameren,” Singh

said. “This is an exciting time of change and transition in the energy industry, and I am ready to draw on my many experiences in the industry to help the company prepare for the future as we power the quality of life for our electric and natural gas customers. I look forward to building on the work that’s been done at Ameren Illinois by helping to drive the success of the business in the next phase of the energy transition – for the benefit of communities across the state.”

Singh is married and has two children. A native of Guyana in South America, Singh immigrated to the New York vicinity in the 1980s. He and his family are now looking forward to relocating to southern Illinois.

Construction employment climbs, but lack of jobseekers leaves positions unfilled

The construction industry added 13,000 jobs in June as the number of jobseekers with construction experience plunged to a record low for the month according to an analysis of federal employment data released today by the Associated General Contractors of America. Association officials said the industry would likely have added even more jobs in June had it not been for the shortage of available workers.

“Although nonresidential contractors were able to add employees in June, the industry needs more as demand for projects is outpacing the supply of workers,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “With industry unemployment at a record low for June and openings at an all-time high for May, it is clear contractors can’t fill all the positions they would like to.”

The unemployment rate among jobseekers with construction experience tumbled from 7.5 percent in June 2021 to 3.7 percent last month, the lowest rate for June in the 23-year history of the data, the economist noted. The number of unemployed



construction workers fell by 345,000, or 47 percent, to 385,000, suggesting there are few experienced jobseekers left to hire.

There were 466,000 construction-industry job openings at the end of May, a jump of 130,000 or 39 percent from a year earlier and the largest May total since that series began in 2000, Simonson added, citing govern-

ment data released on Wednesday.

Total construction employment moved up by 13,000 employees to 7,670,000 in June, as nonresidential gains offset the first decline in residential employment in 14 months. Nonresidential firms added 16,500 employees, including 600 at general building contractors, 11,400 at nonresidential specialty trade contractors, and 4,500 at

heavy and civil engineering construction firms. Employment in residential construction—homebuilders, multifamily general contractors, and residential specialty trade contractors—dipped by 4,100.

Association officials said they were working to attract more people into the construction industry. The association has launched a nationwide targeted digital advertising campaign, Construction is Essential, to identify and recruit new workers, including from segments of the population not typically involved in the industry. And they have launched a workforce retention campaign as well, called Culture of Care. But they urged public officials to also take steps to expose workers to construction career opportunities.

“The industry is working hard to recruit new people into the many high-paying career opportunities that are available,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s chief executive officer. “But too few current and future workers are ever even exposed to construction as a career choice, undermining interest in an industry that everyone sees but too few appreciate.”

Grant to support military spouses seeking remote positions

Swansea-based independent wealth management firm Archford Capital Strategies has donated \$4,500 to help fund career training for military spouses through a partnership with Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois.

The donation was presented to the Friends of Military Families private organization at Scott Air Force Base to offset training costs for military spouses seeking fully remote positions in the financial field. The goal is to allow spouses to retain employment and benefits even as their families are assigned to other duty stations across the country.

The donation was part of Archford Capital’s fifth annual Archford Angels campaign, which encourages employees to actively serve in their communities.

Each Archford team member receives an initial \$1,000 grant to partner with a local nonprofit organization on a project. The employees then compete amongst one another for additional grant money. Jacob Hong chose the Leadership Council and worked with its staff and the Scott AFB Airman & Family Readiness Center to develop the military spouse training program for remote positions.

Hong was awarded 3rd place and received an additional grant of \$2,500.

Then in the spring of 2022, an additional \$1,000 was donated, bringing the grand total to \$4,500.

“I served in the US Navy and remember how stressful the job search can be for a military spouse as duty stations change so this is close to my heart,” said Hong. “The potential for a military spouse to maintain uninterrupted employment alongside their spouse over a 20-year career would be a complete game-changer for that family.”

“Options for continuous, uninterrupted remote work offers military spouses the opportunity to grow their careers rather than having to stop and start each time they make a move with their service member spouse,” said Monica Stouffer, Flight Chief with the Airman & Family Readiness Center.

Archford Capital Strategies, a private wealth management firm founded by James D. Maher, is represented by a skilled team of advisors with more than 75 advanced degrees, professional designations, accreditations, and certifications. The firm offers a wide range of financial services to clients, including wealth management, retirement planning, business consulting, data management and philanthropic services.

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At press time, the story was still unfolding about a group of Explorer Scouts who recently learned first-hand about apprenticeship programs and the benefits available by working in the skilled trades. Participating Scouts had the recent unique opportunity to “train” one-on-one with experienced journeymen and apprenticeship instructors at the sites of different apprenticeship training programs each day during their week-long camp.

Be sure to check out this IJB special story available through the Illinois Business Journal’s website at ibjonline.com.



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