

# Navigating a Transforming Utility Landscape

## NWESS 2026

University of Washington  
Alder Hall  
April 1-2, 2026



**Speaker:** Darrin Kinney

**Title:** *Bridging Top-Down and Bottom-Up Load Forecasting for Modern Distribution Planning*

**Abstract:** Electric utilities are facing unprecedented uncertainty in load growth driven by electrification, distributed energy resources, and large emerging loads such as data centers. Traditional forecasting approaches—whether purely top-down or purely bottom-up—often fall short when used in isolation, creating challenges for distribution system planning, capital investment decisions, and regulatory engagement.

This presentation explores how utilities can combine top-down system-level forecasts with bottom-up, customer- and asset-level insights to create more actionable and defensible load projections. The discussion will focus on practical techniques for integrating multiple forecast perspectives, aligning them with planning time horizons, and translating results into inputs that can be used directly in distribution planning and engineering tools.

Through real-world utility examples, the presentation will highlight how integrated load forecasting approaches can improve visibility into localized growth, support electrification and climate goals, and reduce risk in long-term infrastructure planning. Attendees will gain insight into how modern forecasting workflows can better support today's rapidly evolving utility landscape.

**Bio:** Darrin Kinney is a business development leader at **Integral Analytics**, where he works with electric utilities across North America on advanced load forecasting, distribution planning, and grid modernization initiatives. His work focuses on helping utilities translate emerging load drivers—such as

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electrification, distributed energy resources, and data center growth—into actionable planning inputs that can be integrated with existing engineering and planning tools.

Mr. Kinney collaborates closely with utility planning, engineering, and regulatory teams to align forecasting methodologies with real-world decision-making needs, supporting capital planning, system studies, and long-term resource strategies. He has extensive experience working with utility stakeholders on both top-down and bottom-up load analysis approaches and their application in modern distribution system planning.

