

Navigating a Transforming Utility Landscape NWESS 2026

University of Washington
Alder Hall
April 1-2, 2026



Panel: Travis Metcalf (Moderator), Mike Miller, Eleanor Ewry, Kevin Ludwig

Title: Data Centers: The Opportunity, The Risk, and The Reality

Abstract: Data center growth is reshaping the energy landscape at an unprecedented scale. While some utilities face multi-gigawatt interconnection requests, others are just beginning to prepare for what may come. The challenge extends far beyond simply meeting new load—utilities must simultaneously navigate electrification, clean energy mandates, transmission constraints, and rate affordability pressures.

This panel brings together perspectives from technology companies, utilities, and transmission planners to examine both the opportunities and risks inherent in this transformation. We'll explore the scale of the challenge, discuss innovative solutions ranging from dynamic line ratings to customer-owned infrastructure, and address critical questions about generation mix, workforce development, and utility-tech partnerships.

Bios:

Eleanor Ewry – Eleanor is the Manager of Transmission Strategy and Planning at Puget Sound Energy. In this role, she supports the planning and development of transmission projects to maintain system reliability and resiliency, facilitate resource and load interconnections, and enable the delivery of remote generation resources to PSE customers. With over 16 years of experience in transmission planning, Eleanor has engaged across the industry on technical, regulatory, and financial aspects of transmission development. She has a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering with a focus on power systems, and is a licensed Professional Engineer in Washington State.

Kevin Ludwig – Kevin is Black & Veatch's Vice President and Integrated Grid Execution Director and leads initiatives focused on transmission and distribution execution. He is responsible for ensuring valid execution plans are in place and project delivery is adhered to for high profile and complex projects

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focused on Grid infrastructure. Ludwig has extensive experience in project execution on transmission/distribution facilities, both large and small power generation facilities and large energy intensive industrial facilities. Ludwig has spent his career focused on all facets of the electric utility industry and has a keen understanding of electricity markets.

Travis Metcalf - As a Senior Energy Strategy Manager for Amazon Web Services, Travis currently supports the development of energy projects to power data centers across North and South America. Prior to AWS, Travis spent 20 years with a vertically integrated municipal utility holding various leadership roles and led initiatives around strategic planning, integrated resource planning, enterprise asset management, O&M budgeting, LT Debt management, Capital portfolio & project management, training & apprenticeship programs, and corporate performance analytics. Travis is a licensed Professional Electrical Engineer in Washington State, a certified Project Management Professional, and has certifications in OKR Management, Data Storytelling, and Change Management. He has an MBA from the University of Washington and degrees in Electrical Engineering and Physics from Seattle Pacific University. He is committed to developing as a leader and inspiring excellence in his teams.

Mike Miller – Mike is the Senior Vice President of Transmission Services at Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). Mike started at BPA in 1992 as an Electrical Engineer in the Protective Relaying Design Group. He has worked in many positions over his 33 years in the electric utility industry, gaining business knowledge and leadership experience. Mike has been married for 30 years and has three children.

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