The 2015 Appalachian Energy Summit (AES), July 13 – 15, marks the fourth annual gathering for the University of North Carolina Energy Leadership Challenge. During the summit, campus leaders from our 17 public institutions and seven private colleges and universities convene to share best practices and build peer relationships. This year representatives from other states’ university systems are invited. Our goal is to jumpstart a national transformative effort across higher education.

We encourage participants to embrace this year’s theme, “A New State of Energy,” and challenge attendees to leverage the University of North Carolina system’s (UNC) leadership in energy innovation across the public and private sectors of the state’s emerging energy economy.

The Opportunity: During times of restrictive budgets and heightened fiscal accountability, higher education in North Carolina must lead the way in transforming future energy use. In the 2013-2014 academic year, UNC spent over $233 million on utility costs, or approximately $1,000 per student per year. The AES’s significant momentum is evidenced by the $103 million in avoided utility costs in this same year. Looking forward, we seek to save the state $1 billion by the year 2020. These savings serve as a springboard to further pursue transformational practices and deliver greater savings and broad benefits to the entire state.

Overall Objectives: Embraced by UNC General Administration as a system-wide initiative, our objectives include:

- Educate our students to be leaders of tomorrow;
- Reduce and stabilize the UNC system’s average annual energy expenditures;
- Transform and stimulate the North Carolina economy;
- Position our colleagues in the UNC system and private universities as national leaders;
- Create a culture of environmental and economic sustainability.

Energy Summit Framework: For the fourth consecutive year Amory Lovins and the Rocky Mountain Institute will share in our visioning for the Summit. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is our keynote speaker and David Orr, renowned higher education sustainability expert, also will be a valued contributor. The true value of the Summit, however, is the collegiality and dialogue among the diverse audience. This impressive group includes:

- University Chancellors, Provosts and Finance Officers;
- Active faculty members from across all disciplines with knowledge and experience in energy;
- Campus leaders for Sustainability, Physical Plant, and Design and Construction
- Energy Management and Transportation professionals;
- Students from across all disciplines and all of our diverse campuses.

The Appalachian Energy Summit affords our participants, who are driving transformation of North Carolina’s energy future, an unprecedented opportunity for collaboration, education and networking.
The Working Group Model: When over 300 professionals of this caliber gather, great connections and rich conversation ensue. However, great things do not always occur in big meetings. That being so, during the course of the Summit, we group professionals in small teams by skill sets, interests, and job responsibilities. Beyond the three-day event, we facilitate year-round collaboration, enabling the six Working Groups to deliver on the innovation inspired at the Summit.

Listed below are the Working Groups, and the peer classifications that anchor each of these specialized teams:

- Academic Integration: Academic and Faculty Leaders;
- Campus Based Energy Efficiency: Energy Managers;
- Finance, Regulatory, and Energy Generation: Senior Facilities Officers;
- High Performance Campus Design: Design and Construction Leaders;
- Transportation Opportunities: Transportation managers;
- Student Leadership and Engagement: Student Leaders and Business Partners.

Business Partner Engagement: Only select industry partners with the ability to affect North Carolina’s efficiency and clean energy economy are invited to attend the Summit and contribute to the content. Our industry guests share in the Summit’s collaborative environment, interacting with the robust group of UNC decision makers and the best and brightest minds representing the student population of North Carolina. Limiting industry involvement contributes to the collegiality of the event and enables a sense of partnership and collaboration among all participants.

The Appalachian Energy Summit: July 13 – 15

The Appalachian Energy Summit is held in Boone, NC on the campus of Appalachian State University, a tranquil and cool location during even the warmest North Carolina summers. Although the event is by invitation-only, the keynote presentation (Monday evening, July 13) is open to the public so that all might experience the Summit’s collective energy and sample our vision for the future. Over three days, Summit participants will attend a series of plenary presentations, experience panel discussions featuring industry experts, and work together in breakout sessions designed to both organize and inspire our future collaborative efforts. Students are invited to connect with our vibrant business partners this year and leverage UNC’s demonstrated leadership into North Carolina’s public and private sectors. To learn more about how to participate, visit our web site.

sustain.appstate.edu/energy-summit