

## MRO Announces Annual HERO Award Recipients

December 2, 2021

**SAINT PAUL, MN.** Today, at the Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) Annual Member and Board Meeting, the board recognized the recipients of MRO's Annual HERO Award. This prestigious award provides MRO the opportunity to recognize individuals for their exemplary initiative and commitment to advancing the concept and principles of Highly Effective Reliability Organizations (HEROs) throughout the MRO region and in support of MRO's vision and mission.

The HERO Award is part of MRO's [Volunteer Recognition Program](#) that was implemented in 2020 to acknowledge industry volunteers for their hard work and contributions to the success of MRO.

In August, MRO solicited nominations from industry for the HERO Award and several very qualified candidates were submitted. The board's Organizational Group Oversight Committee (OGOC) reviewed the nominees at its September meeting, and after much discussion, selected two finalists to receive the award.

Please join us in congratulating the following individuals!

- **Mark Buchholz**, Compliance Manager, Western Area Power Administration
- **Sharon Koller**, Reliability Standards Compliance Strategist and Assurance Manager, American Transmission Company

OGOC Chair Keri Glitch from Midcontinent Independent System Operator said, "Both Mark and Sharon exemplify the qualifications of the HERO Award and have made significant contributions to assuring a highly reliable and secure North American bulk power system." Due to his dedicated involvement across the ERO Enterprise, Mark has become a conduit between MRO and multiple SPP, NERC, and other industry groups. His unique perspective helped avoid duplication of efforts during the development of various MRO initiatives. Buchholz was also essential in spearheading the coordination of multiple registered entities' event analysis programs, resulting in a more effective and efficient means of understanding power system events in a portion of MRO's footprint that has multiple owners and operators.

Koller has been an invaluable contributor to MRO and the ERO Enterprise for many years. She was instrumental in providing clarity on the Critical Infrastructure Protection standards through her participation on several MRO Subject Matter Expert Teams that produced continent-wide recognized standard application guides for industry's implementation of security requirements. She also shares her expertise with, and participates on, NERC Standards Drafting Teams that develop and modify the CIP standards.

Glitch added that the OGOC struggled again this year to select a single finalist, as both Buchholz and Koller demonstrated extraordinary commitment to MRO's vision of a highly reliable and secure

North American bulk power system. The committee ultimately determined that the contributions of both individuals merit receipt of this important award.

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*Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the reliability and security of the bulk power system in the central region of North America, including parts of both the United States and Canada. MRO is one of six regional entities in North America operating under authority from regulators in the United States through a delegation agreement with the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) and in Canada under similar arrangements. The primary focus of MRO is developing and ensuring compliance with reliability standards and assessing the grid's ability to meet the demands for electricity.*