

Rhode Island Energy Announces Operations Leadership Appointments

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (July 7, 2026) – Rhode Island Energy (RIE) today announced two leadership appointments within its Operations organization, strengthening the company's continued focus on safety, reliability, and operational performance for customers across the Ocean State.

Michele Leone, currently Vice President of Gas Operations, has been named Chief Operations Officer of Rhode Island. She succeeds Al LaBarre, who will retire effective August 1 after 38 years of service with the company.

Leone brings more than 26 years of experience in the New England utility industry, with leadership roles spanning gas, electric, environmental, and sustainability operations. In her new role, she will oversee electric and gas operations across Rhode Island, focusing on improving performance, strengthening cross-functional coordination, and maintaining a strong commitment to safety and reliability.

"Michele's deep experience and proven leadership make her exceptionally well-suited to lead our operations in Rhode Island," said Greg Cornett, President of Rhode Island Energy. "Following Al's many years of dedicated service, Michele is well positioned to build on that strong foundation as we continue delivering safe, reliable energy for our customers and communities."

Leone holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering from Syracuse University and a Master of Science in Environmental Engineering from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. She is a graduate of the 2016 Leadership Rhode Island Core Program and has served on the Leadership Rhode Island Board of Governors since 2018.

In addition, Kathy Castro, currently Vice President of Electric Distribution Operations, has been appointed Vice President of Gas Operations.

Castro brings 23 years of utility experience in the New England region, with leadership roles across engineering, asset management, distribution planning, customer project development, field operations, and regulatory strategy. She is known for her collaborative leadership style, strong focus on safety and reliability, and commitment to developing teams.

"Kathy brings a wealth of operational experience and a collaborative approach that will serve our gas business, customers, and communities well," Cornett added. "She has consistently championed safety, reliability, and strong performance while helping drive the work needed to build a stronger, more resilient energy future."

Castro holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and a Graduate Certificate in Power Systems Management from Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

A selection process to fill the role of Vice President of Electric Operations will take place in the coming weeks.

About Rhode Island Energy

Rhode Island Energy provides essential energy services to over 770,000 customers across Rhode Island through the delivery of electricity and natural gas. Our team of more than 1,300 employees is dedicated to helping Rhode Island customers and communities thrive, while supporting the transition to a cleaner energy future. Rhode Island Energy is part of the PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) family of companies addressing energy challenges head-on by building smarter, more resilient, and more dynamic power grids and advancing sustainable energy solutions.

For more information visit www.RIEnergy.com and stay connected on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [X](#).

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