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# UT Austin's district energy system named System of the Year by international association

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In June, The University of Texas at Austin brought home 2018 System of the Year honors from the International District Energy Association (IDEA) 109th Annual Conference and Trade Show in Vancouver, British Columbia. Created in 1992, the IDEA System of the Year Award (SOYA) is the highest honor IDEA can confer on a district energy system. The award recognizes “exemplary district energy systems that demonstrate a high level of performance, efficiency and reliability in providing energy services and which best exemplify the many features and benefits of the district energy industry.” Announcing the award, IDEA stated that, “The University of Texas at Austin has earned the distinction among its peers as the most efficient university utility in the U.S.”

Receiving the honor on behalf of the university, Juan Ontiveros, P.E., Associate Vice President for Utilities, Energy and Facilities Management, stated, “We are very pleased to be recognized with this award by IDEA and our industry peers. We are quite proud of the work we do as a team here at UT Austin and are happy to share with the industry the steps we have taken to improve overall system efficiency and reduce energy and water use.”

“Our investments in optimizing system efficiency and reliability have paid tremendous dividends in energy, water and emissions savings, enabling our campus to focus on its core mission of educating tomorrow’s leaders. Many of the innovations we have implemented have come from fellow IDEA member companies and are readily available for others to deploy right now,” Ontiveros added.

IDEA president and CEO Robert Thornton said, “IDEA applauds UT Austin not only for their exemplary success and achievements in energy efficiency and operational savings, but for their leadership in sharing best practices among their IDEA peers. UT Austin exemplifies the primary mission of IDEA since 1909 by informing, connecting and advancing the district energy industry.”

Thornton noted that while the UT Austin campus has nearly doubled in size from about nine million square feet to nearly 20 million today, the campus uses the same amount of input energy as 1976, “essentially providing carbon-free growth for a world-class institution.”

UT Austin’s combined heating and power system was commissioned in 1929, and has evolved over the years to self-generate 100 percent of all main campus electricity, heating, and cooling needs. At the same time, the energy system has been so successful at efficiency optimization that it has helped the campus lower its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to 1976 levels, while the campus has grown by over 40 percent since then. The system has operated with over 99.999 percent reliability over the last 35 years.

IDEA award submissions are judged on categories of system energy efficiency, reliability and availability, resiliency (ability to restore operations promptly due to weather or other events), environmental benefits and carbon footprint, sustainability, employee safety and training programs, customer relations, service improvements, communications and marketing, and involvement in the community and professional organizations. UT Austin achieved the highest score across all categories and was a unanimous selection of the review committee.

UT Austin has been an IDEA member since 2002. The association has over 2,300 members in 26 nations.



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### FAS Media Inquiries

Only spokespeople coordinating with FAS Communications may speak on behalf of the university in an official capacity. If contacted by the media always contact FAS Communications to coordinate a response to the reporter.

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