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NextEnergy Gets New CEO

Keith Cooley, most recently director of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Growth, sees unmatched opportunities for state's work force in alternative and renewable energy technology development

The NextEnergy Center board Monday named Keith W. Cooley as the second president and CEO of the state's renewable energy industry accelerator.

Monday, Gov. Jennifer Granholm will also issue an Executive Order adding a new energy department to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth. The Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth will align Michigan's energy resources, programs and policies to rapidly advance the new energy economy in Michigan.

NextEnergy was formed in 2002 and, over the past six years, has partnered with key leaders and organizations throughout the state to advance Michigan's leadership in promoting economic growth through alternative and renewable energy technologies.

Through a combination of federal projects, independent investment, state funding, foundations, and Michigan supply chain development, NextEnergy has been integral in the creation of hundreds of millions of dollars in investment in Michigan products and services in the alternative energy technology sector.

Cooley was appointed director of DLEG by Granholm in March 2007. Prior to DLEG, Cooley served as CEO of Focus: HOPE, a Detroit civil and human rights organization. It was during his tenure at DLEG that Cooley began to explore the potential in Michigan for sustainable job growth in alternative and renewable energy technology development.

"It is as clear as day to anyone paying attention that the future of our region, our state, our country and our world is inextricably tied to the development of safe, reliable energy generated from non-fossil fuel sources", states Cooley. "And the economic drivers behind this new, greener economy cannot be overstated. The race is on, jobs will follow, and NextEnergy is at the forefront to secure Michigan's position as a leader in the global alternative and renewable energy industry. I am thrilled to be joining this incredible mission and the outstanding team at NextEnergy."

Cooley began his professional career in 1968 as an experimental physicist with General Electric Corp. He joined General Motors Corp. in 1972 as a project engineer, rising to engineering director for Cadillac Motor Division in 1985 and director of strategic planning, for the GM Corporate Communications Staff in 1994. In 1997, Cooley founded Principia Inc., a consulting company dedicated to helping organizations manage crisis and critical change. He later joined Motorola Corp. as director of telematics international sales in 2001.

At Focus: HOPE, under his leadership from 2002 to 2006, the organization became ISO certified for quality, environment and manufacturing, and developed robust processes to educate underrepresented urban youth.

Cooley has served on the boards of trustees for the Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology (chair, research subcommittee) and for WIRED (Workforce Innovation for Regional Economic Development) West Michigan and on the board of directors for the University Prep Academy, the Michigan Environmental Council, and Presbyterian Village Ministries. He is also a life member of the National Black MBA Association and the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honorary Society.

Cooley received a bachelor of science degree in engineering physics and a master of science degree in nuclear engineering from the University of Michigan in 1967 and 1972, respectively. As a graduate student, he founded the Minority Engineering Programs Office, College of Engineering. In addition, he was a gymnast; the first African-American to compete in that sport at the school and was a member of UM's 1966 Big Ten Championship team. A resident of Troy, he is married and has four children.

Cooley's assumption of leadership is fully supported by NextEnergy's Board of Directors, which is made up of community and business leaders from organizations such as Detroit Renaissance, DTE Energy, the Michigan Economic Development Corp., the Detroit Economic Growth Corp., Michigan's public universities, the Michigan Environmental Council, and others.

"With Keith Cooley as NextEnergy's President and CEO we feel we have struck solid gold," says NextEnergy board chairman Chris Rizik. "His scientific background, his track record in successfully managing organizations, his tireless

passion to improve the lives of the Michigan workforce, and his sincere belief in the promise of alternative energy to recharge America's economy is a powerful combination. We couldn't be happier to have him."

Cooley will take office as President and CEO of NextEnergy early in November, 2008, leading the NextEnergy senior management team consisting of Chief Operating Officer David McLean, Chief Financial Officer Ken Fiema Vice President of Industry Services Dan Radomski, Program Development Director James Saber, and Communications and Outreach Director Mark Beyer.

More at www.nextenergy.org.

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