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## **South Texas Executive Honored With Nuclear Energy Industry's Top Leadership Award**

*WASHINGTON, D.C., May 19, 2009*—James J. (Joe) Sheppard, president and chief executive officer of the STP Nuclear Operating Co., was honored today with the industry's William S. Lee Award for Leadership at the Nuclear Energy Institute's annual conference here.



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Sheppard became STP chief executive in 2003 and for years has been the catalyst in the company's pioneering regulatory reform through the use of safety insights from probabilistic risk assessment. This approach, derived from thousands of reactor-years of combined operating experience, paved the way for a sea change in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's implementation of risk-informed regulation. Less prescriptive in nature than the regulatory regime it supplanted, the safety-focused process evaluates plant performance and safety based on the safety significance of plant equipment.

Under Sheppard's leadership, South Texas Project was recognized in 2004 for the innovative manner in which it repaired instrumentation at the bottom of a reactor vessel at the power station located near Bay City, Texas. The company designed its own tools and pioneered a repair method that has become an industry standard while performing outreach to the NRC and the local community in a way that strengthened trust and credibility in STP as a safe nuclear energy facility and good neighbor.

As a result of its commitment to excellence, STP twice has won the nuclear industry's highest honor for operational innovation, the B. Ralph Sylvia Best of the Best Award.

"Joe combines technical expertise and business acumen that has made South Texas Project one of the best operating plants in the country, leading all two-reactor power stations in the United States in electricity production for five consecutive years while achieving the lowest fuel cost," said Gary Gates, NEI board chairman and the president and chief executive officer of the Omaha Public Power District. "Joe also has been in the forefront in the licensing process for new nuclear plants. STP and partner company NRG Energy filed the first complete combined operating license application for a new plant in Texas in 2007."

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## **STP's Sheppard Honored With Industry Leadership Award**

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Sheppard's industry leadership has included serving on NEI's board of directors, Nuclear Strategic Issues Advisory Committee, New Nuclear Plant Oversight Committee and leading the Electric Power Resource Institute's fuel reliability program. He also served as a member of the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations' executive advisory committee and its predecessor advisory review group during his tenure as chief nuclear officer at STP.

"Joe's dedication and contributions to the nuclear industry are incalculable. He has been instrumental in formulating overall industry strategy and spearheading engineering and technical solutions while at the same time running a large corporation," said Marvin Fertel, NEI president and CEO.

The industry's top leadership award was renamed in Lee's honor following his death in 1996. Lee, one of the industry's most vocal safety advocates, was chairman emeritus of Duke Power Co. and was the industry's acknowledged leader. He was the first recipient of the industry's leadership award in 1995.

"Bill Lee was an incredible, visionary leader and was a stabilizing force in our industry," Sheppard said. "I am deeply humbled and honored to accept this award that carries his name. I wouldn't be standing here today without the support, hard work, and incredible talent of the dedicated men and women who work at the South Texas Project. This honor is as much about them as it is about me."

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*The Nuclear Energy Institute is the nuclear energy industry's policy organization. This news release and additional information about nuclear energy are available at [www@nei.org](http://www@nei.org).*