21st Century Energy Transition Symposium: New name, broader scope

The 21st Century Energy Transition Symposium will take place Sept. 28-29 in Colorado State University’s Lory Student Center Ballroom.

The sixth annual event, formerly known as the Natural Gas Symposium, will offer a wide range of science, industry leadership, best practices and policy implications across a broad spectrum of energy and sustainability issues. The symposium is co-hosted by the CSU Energy Institute and the School of Global Environmental Sustainability.

All events are free and open to the public, but registration is required. Sessions will also be live streamed, and archived recordings will be available on or around Oct. 15. Register for the live stream here.

Keynote speaker Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall
This year’s keynote speaker will be Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, deputy secretary of the Department of Energy. She will speak at 6 p.m. Sept. 28, immediately following a public reception at 5 p.m.

Sherwood-Randall has served in her role as second-in-command at the DOE since October 2014. She joined the Obama Administration on day one, serving from 2009-2013 as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council, and from 2013-14 as White House Coordinator for Defense Policy, Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Arms Control.

New name, broader mission
The symposium’s new name reflects its broadening mission: Bringing together the best minds in academia, industry and policymaking to offer innovative solutions for today’s energy challenges, within the natural gas industry and beyond.

Kicking off day one will be the C3E Women in Clean Energy Luncheon, featuring keynote remarks from Ellen Williams, director of ARPA-E (Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy) at the DOE. Williams’ remarks will be followed by a panel of women in energy fields, who will share their stories and discuss how to encourage young women into STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) pathways.

The lunch keynote speaker on day two will be Vice Admiral Dennis McGinn, assistant secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations and Environment).

Highlights of topics to be covered throughout the two-day event:
– Climate science 101 and what is causing climate change
– The Paris agreement and what’s next
– The EPA Clean Power Plan
– The electric grid and how it works
– Trends in energy sources and uses
– Energy transitions in the U.S.

Also featured this year will be the Electric Vehicle Charging Challenge, a new competition launched in partnership with the City of Fort Collins and the Rocky Mountain Innsosphere. Winners will be announced during a 4:30 p.m. session on Sept. 28.

And on Sept. 29 at 10:30 a.m., CSU scientists will give six-minute pitches on their research, covering various aspects of energy transition. Participants will include: Ken Carlson, professor in civil and environmental engineering, on water treatment and monitoring; Joe von Fischer, associate professor in biology, on CSU’s methane emissions programs; Jeni Cross, associate professor in sociology, on the built environment; Todd Bandhauer, assistant professor in mechanical engineering, on dry power plant cooling; Dan Zimmerle, senior researcher at the Energy Institute, on a new methane emissions test site at CSU; Kurt Barth, associate director of CSU’s Next Generation PV Center, on enabling widely available solar power; and Nasim Pica, postdoctoral researcher in civil and environmental engineering, on irrigation, plant physiology and biofuels production.