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Stephanie Smith appointed as incoming COG President and CEO

Becomes first female CEO in organization's history

TORONTO – Earlier today, CANDU Owners Group (COG) announced the appointment of Stephanie Smith to the role of president and CEO, following a transition period with COG's outgoing leader Fred Dermakar, later this summer. Dermakar announced his retirement from COG in February.

Smith is deputy SVP of Ontario Power Generation's (OPG) Darlington Nuclear Station, a role she assumed in 2019 after a secondment at the World Association of Nuclear Operators. She becomes the first female president and CEO in COG's history, following a 30-year career at OPG that was marked by firsts.

As OPG's first female maintenance manager, she was responsible for 800 maintenance staff and 200 contractors. In 2016, Smith continued to make history, becoming OPG's first female director of Operations and Maintenance, overseeing all maintenance activity at the plant, from fuel handling to safety systems.

Smith's career started at Darlington in 1990 as a graduate engineer-in-training. She spent eight years working in engineering, earning her PEng in 1994, before moving to the chemistry lab at Pickering Nuclear. In 2006, she became the first female licensed shift manager overseeing Pickering Units 5-8 (the units commissioned between 1983 and 1986).

"With her depth of experience and outstanding leadership qualities, the Board is confident Stephanie will lead COG into this exciting new chapter of its history," said Gary Newman, COG Board Chair and Bruce Power SVP, Engineering.

"With the COG team, Stephanie will support our member community in its efforts to achieve CANDU operational excellence and innovations that will sustain the nuclear industry and allow it to deliver a clean energy future."

Smith joins COG at a pivotal time following several years where the organization made significant strides in development of its people, business efficiency, communications and governance, as well as key strategic initiatives. These include enhanced engagement with COG's international members, the supplier community and other nuclear associations.

"COG is well-positioned to provide great value for its members as the industry faces the opportunities and challenges ahead in change and innovation," Newman said.

Smith is known for her commitment to providing mentorship and guidance, including to other women who have benefited from her support through initiatives such as "Lean In Circles" at Darlington and Pickering, and through her contributions to Women in Nuclear.



Her facilitative leadership style and strong record of ground-breaking achievement make her ideally-suited to lead COG in its vision to create excellence through collaboration, on behalf of its members and the industry.

Dermarkar, who joined COG in 2014, after a 30-plus year career with OPG, departs having advanced the COG collaboration model and strengthened the organization through enhanced program delivery, continuous improvement in services and improved business efficiency. In 2019, Dermarkar received the Ian McRae Award given to an individual for substantive contributions, other than scientific, to the advancement of nuclear energy in Canada. The same year, COG received the John S. Hewitt Team Award.

“On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank Fred for his visionary leadership and the accomplishments he and his team achieved during his tenure,” Newman said.

Smith’s appointment follows an extensive internal and external search that included many high-calibre candidates. She will join COG on Aug. 4, and will work alongside Dermarkar during a transition period, before taking over the role ahead of his departure, Sept. 30.

COG is a Canadian not-for-profit corporation funded voluntarily by CANDU operating utilities worldwide and Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, with additional participation by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Hydro Québec and Supplier Participants. COG’s vision is excellence through collaboration.

For more information contact:

Jacque Hoomweg

COG Communications

Jacquie.Hoomweg@CANDU.org