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**Boylston Municipal Light Department GM receives national award**

**San Diego, California, June 11, 2024** — Mark Barakian, General Manager of the Boylston Municipal Light Department, received the Larry Hobart Seven Hats Award during the American Public Power Association’s National Conference in San Diego, California. The award recognizes managers of small utilities serving fewer than 2,500 meters. These managers have a very small staff and must assume multiple roles. The seven hats they must wear are: planning and design, administration, public relations, field supervision, accounting, human resources, and community leadership.

Barakian began his career with Massachusetts’ Boylston Municipal Light Department in 1990 as a lineworker. He was subsequently promoted to foreman, and, ultimately, to General Manager. In this leadership role, Barakian has helped the community attract commercial spending by ensuring the utility’s infrastructure was prepared for increased demand. This planning has helped BMLD offer rates fifty percent lower than the state’s investor-owned utilities. As a lineworker-turned-GM, Barakian can often be seen working alongside the utility’s technicians. In addition to his service to the community’s light department, Barakian is part of the West Boylston Fire Department and helps plow roads for the Boylston Highway Department during storms.

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*The American Public Power Association is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. We represent public power before the federal government to protect the interests of the more than 49 million people that public power utilities serve, and the 96,000 people they employ. Our association advocates and advises on electricity policy, technology, trends, training, and operations. Our members strengthen their communities by providing superior service, engaging citizens, and instilling pride in community-owned power.*