

BATTERY WORKFORCE CHALLENGE

2/28 Van Delivery Media Event Bios

Micky Bly

[Micky Bly](#) is the senior vice president, and head of global propulsion systems - Stellantis N.V. In his role, he is responsible for core powertrain engineering, as well as electrification, which includes leading the company's expansion into hybrid and electric vehicles. Previously, Bly was head of powertrain engine engineering, FCA – North America. Before joining FCA, he spent five years at American Axle & Manufacturing Holdings Inc. where he held various jobs of increasing responsibility in Europe and North America, including his most recent position as global vice president of product management electrification. He also spent 23 years in engineering positions at General Motors Co., which included powertrain and vehicle electrification. He worked in the U.S., England and Germany. Bly holds a master's degree in engineering, science, and technology from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York (2003), and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia (1990). He also currently serves on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Detroit and Michigan Science Center. Bly was born in Augusta, Georgia.

Ajay Gnanasekaran

[Ajay Gnanasekaran](#) is the senior program director of the Battery Workforce Challenge in Argonne National Lab's Sustainable Transportation Education and Partnerships Department. Here he leads the comprehensive workforce development program aimed at building a domestic workforce to support in-demand jobs in battery manufacturing and engineering. He is a member of the Battery Workforce Challenge collegiate competition's executive and operational steering committees. Gnanasekaran previously served as the vice president of product and operations at Vinfast's — a Vietnamese EV manufacturer — Battery Research and Design Institute. Here he led a 57-person team supporting battery cell development, pilot production, and equipment manufacturing. One of his key projects at the company was to lead a team developing a super-fast charge prismatic battery. Gnanasekaran also previously served Panasonic Energy of North America as its director of strategy for its Project Management Office. Here he oversaw 18 program managers, and operations at PENA's Reno gigafactory, and led PENA's battery manufacturing expansion into DeSoto, Kan. At PENA, Gnanasekaran worked closely with senior leadership to develop the company's expansion and workforce strategy with government and community leaders, workforce organizations, and economic development groups to develop a workforce pathway to support their local manufacturing workforce needs. Gnanasekaran holds a bachelor's in aeronautical engineering from Anna University in Chennai, India, and a master's in business administration from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Fla. During his time at Embry Riddle, Gnanasekaran also competed in the EcoCAR 2 Advanced Vehicle Technology Competition, serving as the team's project manager. Gnanasekaran brings a wealth of knowledge about battery manufacturing to the position as well as a strong appreciation for the educational value of the Advanced Vehicle Technology Competitions (AVTC) program that started his professional career.

Kristen Wahl

[Kristen Wahl](#) is the Advanced Energy Workforce Director for Argonne's Advanced Energy Technologies directorate, where she works closely with Argonne senior leadership and staff as well as government, industry and community stakeholders, to plan and execute workforce development activities for the advanced energy and transportation sectors. Wahl also serves as the Department Director for Sustainable Transportation Education & Partnerships, where she manages a portfolio of advanced mobility research, education, and workforce development programs and serves as the program director of the U.S. Department of Energy's Advanced Vehicle Technology Competition Program, North America's premier training ground for future automotive leaders. The program has seeded more than 32K alumni into advanced energy and sustainable transportation careers over the last three decades. Most recently, Wahl launched the Battery Workforce Challenge, a new comprehensive battery workforce development program that fosters a North American talent pipeline across key battery manufacturing regions in North America, delivering training and education for high school graduates, vocational and transitional workers, engineers, scientists and technicians who can charge North America's battery industry forward. Other workforce development efforts include artificial intelligence, long duration energy storage, battery recycling and advanced manufacturing across clean energy sectors. Wahl also oversees a range of projects for the U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities program co-led by Argonne for DOE's Vehicle Technology Office, managing Clean Cities' flagship workforce development program, ACCELERATE, which places 60 interns at coalitions each semester, preparing them for future jobs in clean energy and transportation.

Clemson University Representative

[Jiangfeng \(Jeff\) Zhang](#), Associate Professor, Faculty lead of the Clemson & Greenville Tech Battery Workforce Challenge Team. Jeff is a tenured associate professor at the Department of Automotive Engineering. He has worked in applied mathematics, control systems, electric power engineering, and battery management for almost 30 years.

Clemson University Student Representative

[Saroj Paudel](#), is a PhD student in the Department of Automotive Engineering, Clemson University. Paudel is the Engineering Manager for the Clemson University & Greenville Technical College Battery Workforce Challenge team. He holds a bachelor's from Tribhuvan University (Nepal) and a master's from the University of Tokyo (Japan) in 2011 and 2014 respectively. Paudel previously worked at Mitsubishi Electric, focusing on high-voltage product design, and at the Central Research Institute of Electric Power Industry, studying communication systems in electrical utilities. Currently, he is working towards his PhD in the Department of Automotive Engineering at Clemson University. His research interests are microgrids, energy storage, optimization, etc.

Greenville Technical College Representative

[Maurice Grady](#), Academic Program Director with the School of Advanced Manufacturing & Transportation Technology, Greenville Technical College. Maurice Grady is the Academic Program Director and instructor for Greenville Technical College's Industrial Electricity and HVAC programs. With a 35-year career as an electrician spanning residential, commercial, and industrial sectors, Grady brings a wealth of real-world experience to the classroom. Passionate about education and workforce development, Grady enjoys teaching in the Industrial Electricity program, where he shares his industry expertise and hands-on knowledge to prepare students for successful careers. He is also honored to be part of the Battery Workforce Challenge, recognizing the rapid growth of the electric vehicle industry and the opportunity to contribute to advancements shaping the future. Through his leadership and instruction, Grady is committed to equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in evolving technical fields, and his efforts are helping to build the workforce for the future.

Greenville Technical College Student Representative

[Terrell Gamble](#), Industrial Electricity is a student in the School of Advanced Manufacturing & Transportation Technology, Greenville Technical College. Gamble is a dedicated student pursuing an Associate's Degree in Industrial Electricity at Greenville Technical College, with an expected graduation in 2025. Throughout their academic journey, they have developed a strong foundation in electrical systems, circuit analysis, and industrial wiring. Passionate about the electrical industry, Gamble is eager to contribute to innovative energy solutions and electrical infrastructure projects. They are actively seeking opportunities to apply their technical knowledge in a professional setting while continuing to expand their expertise in power systems and electrical installations.