



Energy Efficiency PROGRAM

Program Ally Training Empowers Bautista Electric Enterprises



Pictured (L-R): Kara Jones (Jarvis Electric), Gus Bautista (Bee Electric), Bryan Jarvis (Jarvis Electric), Carole Jackson (Diverse Power Solutions)

PILOT PROGRAM OFFERS EDUCATION AND MENTORING TO DEVELOP PROGRAM ALLIES

An entrepreneurial spirit. Years of experience. A passion for customer service. Gustavo “Gus” Bautista had everything he needed to launch a licensed electrical contracting business in 2014 with his wife Sarah. Still, the Urbana-based master electrician faced hurdles along the way.

“It’s a tough business, and there’s a lot of competition. We had been at it non-stop, with little progress to show for it,” says Bautista, who faced additional challenges as a minority business owner. “Some folks make assumptions that minority-owned businesses do not provide quality work or that they’re not stable or well equipped. I’ve been fighting against that the whole way. I change people’s perspectives with hard work and the quality product I produce.” 2021 brought a new opportunity for this promising business to reach its full potential, when Bautista partnered with the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program.

PROGRAM ALLY 101

Ameren Illinois partners with local contractors across its service territory to bring its award-winning Energy Efficiency Program to customers. Known as Program Allies, these contractors are specially trained on the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program and listed on the utility’s website.

“Our statewide network of Program Allies helps deliver energy savings to the customers and communities we serve,” says Jim Dillon, Senior Manager, Energy Efficiency Operations at Ameren Illinois. “We count on Program Allies to provide professional, high-quality work, while maximizing incentives for our customers’ energy-saving projects.” Because they are familiar with Ameren Illinois Programs and processes, Program Allies are able to streamline the customer experience from start to finish. For the contractor, Program Ally status can open doors and offer an added level of credibility with a new customer base. “I had heard a little about the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program, but at the time I was not confident and comfortable enough to do it,” says Bautista.

A Pilot Program introduced in 2021 helped change his mind. Ameren Illinois partnered with Diverse Power Solutions (DPS) to create the Program Ally Training Pilot to recruit new, diverse-owned businesses into the Program Ally network and to encourage existing Program Allies to become more active.

While Ameren Illinois offers an array of energy efficiency Initiatives and Offerings, the Pilot focuses on the Small Business Direct Install (SBDI) Initiative. The SBDI Initiative offers eligible small business, nonprofits, and public sector customers an increased level of incentives over standard business incentives, as well as a free, no-obligation Assessment.

Helping to lead the Pilot Program is Bryan Jarvis, owner of Jarvis Electric in Swansea, Illinois — a licensed electrical contractor and trusted Program Ally since 2014. Working with Carole Jackson of Diverse Power Solutions, Jarvis helps other diverse-owned businesses

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BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

As a new Program Ally, Bautista Electric Enterprises is proud to deliver real savings that can make all the difference to small businesses and nonprofits in their community — including a number of churches in the Champaign-Urbana area.

“The Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program is having a huge impact on communities,” says owner, Gus Bautista, recalling one recent encounter with a grateful customer. “I worked with a wonderful, 78-year-old woman who owned an auto body shop. Ameren Illinois incentives covered \$15,000 of the costs of her new lighting, and her monthly energy costs will go down. That means she can put more money into her business. It’s a win-win. She was so grateful that she gave me a hug for introducing her to the Program. That’s a feeling I can’t put into words. It’s very rewarding to help small businesses grow.”

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This Pilot Program is a game changer. 2021 has been incredible for us, and I’m very grateful for this opportunity to expand my business.
— Gus Bautista, Bautista Electric Enterprises
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READY TO BEGIN?

AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/Ally

1.866.800.0747

PILOT PROGRAM PAYS OFF

As a Program Ally, Bautista will be able to grow his business, boost his bottom line, and provide gainful employment to skilled workers — and one day hand off a thriving business to his daughters.

It's an opportunity he might have missed were it not for the DPS Program Ally training Pilot Program.

"Bryan and Carole are amazing people who took us under their wing and offered us incredible education and support. They have been instrumental in our growth and success," says Bautista. "This Pilot Program is a game changer. 2021 has been incredible for us, and I'm very grateful for this opportunity to expand my business."

Having himself overcome many challenges on the road to success, Jarvis is happy to help others follow in his footsteps.

"I love helping the underdog because that was me," says Jarvis. **"There are a lot of small companies that are just getting by. All they need is a chance, and that's what this Pilot Program is giving them."**

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pair their technical abilities with the know-how to optimize their revenue opportunity with the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program. This dedicated duo offers extensive on-site training and mentoring to help participants become experts at every step of the SBDI customer experience. And it all starts with a conversation.

LEARNING & LEADING

"Becoming a Program Ally is one more avenue to bring revenue into your business. We talk about the things holding these companies back from participating, or participating more, as a Program Ally. Then, we work to overcome those hurdles," says Jarvis. "As a Program Ally and diverse-owned contractor, I speak their language and can help them understand the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program better and how it fits with their business."

Each company in the small Pilot Program had a great foundation for success, but faced its own unique hurdles and hesitations. Some needed help navigating paperwork or Program requirements. Others lacked confidence in performing Assessments or making cold calls.

"We train them how to identify good replacements for existing light fixtures, as well as any special logistics or equipment the project calls for. We also show them faster, more efficient ways to get the job done," says Jarvis. "Not every electrician is a salesman. It's pretty fulfilling to use our experience to help them succeed."

The process has been enlightening, even for an experienced professional like Bautista.

"I've been an electrician for 20 years, and I thought I knew lighting. But then I got into the Pilot Program and saw so many options. I learned how to find the best fit to reduce energy use," he says.

During weekly visits to Urbana, Jarvis accompanied Bautista on cold calls and Assessments to offer on-the-job mentoring.

"This work is not easy, but I've been there every step of the way to help Gus feel comfortable with the Program," says Jarvis. "Gus has always been open about learning and willing to take things where they need to go. And that's why he has been really successful in this Pilot Program."

In fact, in just a few short months, Bautista landed the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program's largest-ever SBDI project, in terms of dollar and energy savings. This particular customer will receive new, high-efficiency lighting at no cost, more than \$135,000 in incentives from Ameren Illinois and expected annual energy savings of more than 850,000 kilowatt-hours.

"This is a huge milestone — particularly for a new Program Ally," says Dillon. "We applaud Bautista Electric Enterprises for the energy and enthusiasm they are bringing to the Program Ally network. Their efforts will lead to real energy savings that benefit local businesses and the environment."

BUILD YOUR BUSINESS WITH AMEREN ILLINOIS

When you become a registered Ameren Illinois Program Ally, you join an elite statewide network of contractors that are specially trained on the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program. In addition, Program Allies can earn cash bonuses for projects completed. Become a Program Ally and watch your business grow!

For more information on how to become a Program Ally — visit AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/Ally.



Gus Bautista (Bee Electric) updating exterior lighting



Energy Efficiency
PROGRAM