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Media Contact: Aaron Cook, TPRM at (214) 520-3430 ext. 302 or ACook@TPRM.com

TEPA SETS ETHICAL, COMPETENCE STANDARDS

DALLAS – July 12, 2010 – Although electricity prices have plummeted to nearly the lowest levels in several years, electricity deregulation has been blamed for energy market problems since Texas was opened to competition in 2002. Like the Wild West land rush, there were few rules and no clear sales and marketing guidelines.

The competitive market, electricity providers and the laws have changed dramatically since 2002. Today, with nearly 100 energy providers and many contract choices, consumers and business owners, who spend thousands each month on electricity, can be easily confused.

Recognizing these challenges for consumers, a group of Aggregators, Brokers and Consultants (ABCs) formed the Texas Electricity Professionals Association (TEPA) to help business owners and managers by identifying representatives in the industry who have been tested and certified for proficiency, and voluntarily subject themselves to the scrutiny of their peers.

In like manner with other professions, (e.g. accountants and medical professionals), where there is a certification procedure to ensure quality and adherence to a code of conduct, TEPA established a certification process for ABCs; this August marks the end of the first year of the program. With more than 50 now certified, consumers, commercial business owners and managers can access help for purchasing energy from a list of TEPA Certified Electricity Professionals on the TEPA website at www.tepatexas.org. [<http://www.tepatexas.org/tepa-certification/list-of-certified-individuals/>]

“We are working to ensure that we voluntarily police the market of aggregators, brokers and consultants,” said TEPA President James “JD” Dodson, and partner at Rapid Power. “We hope our requirements become industry standards that will ensure customers professional assistance in the electricity market.”

Consumers, business managers and owners who select a TEPA certified electricity professional have a guarantee they are working with an industry expert who understands the intricacies of the

Texas electricity market, and has demonstrated in depth knowledge of electricity deregulation rules and regulations.

“It only takes a handful of brokers to mess that up,” said Jeff Schiefelbein, vice president, First Choice Power, which is the fifth largest retail electricity provider in Texas. “There’s no barrier to stop anyone from entering the market. Having TEPA and certification definitely helps.”

Perhaps most significantly, TEPA’s code of conduct, grievance process and disciplinary procedures are a significant deterrent for any unethical behavior in the market. TEPA has set the bar for establishing guidelines, not only for ABCs, but also for energy providers.

“When consultants and brokers are behaving responsibly, it is strengthening the industry as a whole,” said Schiefelbein. “Reinforcing good behavior and rewarding people for doing the right thing from an ethics and knowledge standpoint benefits all suppliers.”

TEPA is a self-regulating body working to standardize and promote fair electricity purchasing processes. Aggregators, brokers, and consultants who are members of TEPA, pledge to maintain an acceptable level of market knowledge and follow a code of conduct to transact business responsibly in the deregulated electricity market.

For more information, see www.tepatexas.org or contact Saint Clair Newbern, IV, at (214) 699-4441.