

Collaboration, Coordination Key to Assuring Reliability during Rapid Grid Transformation

January 27, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Reliability Issues Steering Committee (RISC) held its biennial Reliability Leadership Summit on January 25. The summit was attended by industry experts, state and federal regulators, leaders from the U.S. and Canadian government as well as more than 250 virtual observers. This year’s day-long summit focused on reliability issues related to energy policy, security, the rapidly evolving resource mix and technology innovation as well as their impacts on the reliable operation of the bulk power system. Mark Lauby, NERC’s senior vice president and chief engineer, and Brian Slocum, RISC chair and senior vice president and chief operating officer at ITC Holdings Corp., served as hosts.

The summit opened with remarks from Willie Phillips, acting chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Acting Chair Phillips declared that reliability was job number one and shared his three key areas of focus: cyber and physical security; extreme weather; and grid resiliency during this period of rapidly changing resources. In particular, he noted the proliferation of inverter-based resources and the importance of reliably integrating these new energy resources. Phillips also stressed that affordability must be factored into the reliability equation.

The event featured four panels discussing matters relating to reliability, resilience, security operations and policy. There were several consistent themes throughout the panel discussions, including the need for:

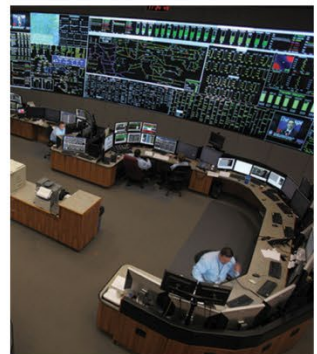
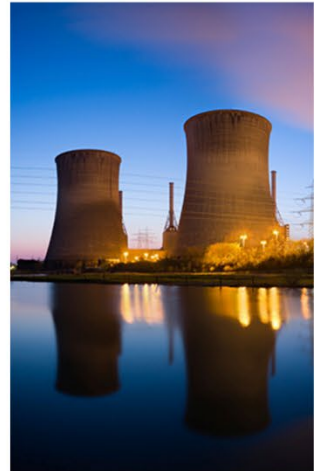
- Greater collaboration, coordination and sharing on two fronts:
 - Sharing best practices between industry, government and policymakers.
 - Closing the regulatory gap between gas and electric industries, and the harmonization of gas system operations with electric reliability and resilience.
- Better understanding of the impacts of generation resource transformation, including the pace of change, the amount of inverter-based resources connecting to the grid and extreme weather impacts.
- New and improved methods of measuring resiliency due to the rapidly changing risk profile, which is increasingly challenged by extreme weather.

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- Enhanced operational visibility, situational awareness of distributed energy resources and potential standards in this area.
- Greater agility in the NERC standards development and implementation process.
- Keen attention to the constantly evolving security threat environment, including a paradigm shift from prevention to a system of detection, investigation and response as well as a heightened focus on high-priority assets critical to reliability and resilience.

The panelists agreed that NERC is in a unique position to inform the discussion and emphasized NERC's important role in educating policymakers and stakeholders, highlighting reliability issues through its assessments and reports and convening industry, policymakers and stakeholders to discuss solutions at events like the Reliability Leadership Summit.

Jim Robb, NERC's president and CEO, closed the summit by encouraging the "ecosystem" of industry and government partners to get on the offensive, to raise the bar and to keep reliability, resilience and security on the table saying, "The goal of the electric system is to strike a balance between reliability and security, access and affordability, safety and the environment. Recent major events highlight the need to regain the balance across all three, and I believe we can make strong progress as long as we keep that balance in place."

Feedback and observations from the event will be shared in a RISC report that informs NERC's work plan on key priorities in the coming years. The report is expected to be published in August.

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Electricity is a key component of the fabric of modern society and NERC, as the Electric Reliability Organization, serves to strengthen that fabric. The vision for the ERO Enterprise, which is comprised of NERC and the six Regional Entities, is a highly reliable and secure North American bulk power system. Our mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid.