

Announcement

12th Annual GridSecCon Highlights Cross-Border Security Collaboration, Names Assante Award Recipients

October 19, 2023

QUÉBEC CITY – Cyber, physical and supply chain security were the areas of focus for the 12th annual grid security conference, GridSecCon, hosted by NERC, the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC) and the Northeast Power Coordinating Council (NPCC). During the conference, three individuals shared the 2023 E-ISAC Electricity Security Service Award in honor of Michael J. Assante.

More than 450 security experts representing a cross-section of industry and government partners from across North America attended the three-day conference, in Québec City, the first in person since 2019, which featured expert keynotes, breakouts and training sessions. Jim Robb, NERC president and chief executive officer (CEO), opened the conference acknowledging the dynamic nature of the threat landscape and the value of bringing industry experts together.

“Events like GridSecCon are important for industry, providing educational opportunities to build subject matter expertise,” Robb noted. “It brings experts together, not to just share what they know, but to open a dialogue about potential solutions and provide opportunities for partnerships on ways to move the needle on security.”

Charles Dickerson, president and CEO at NPCC and GridSecCon co-chair, delivered a keynote that emphasized the importance of cross-border coordination between Canada and the United States, noting the [20th anniversary](#) of the Northeast blackout that affected both the United States and Canada in August 2003.

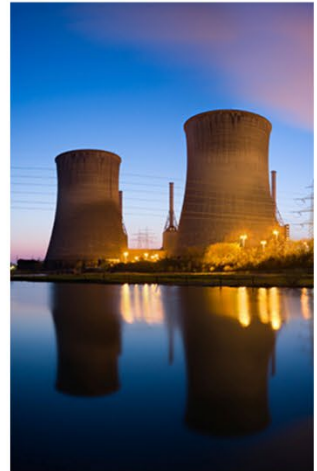
“Unfortunately, bad actors are like electricity. They do not respect borders and will attempt to access the point of least resistance,” Dickerson said. “Our continued cross-border relationships and collaborations are designed to and have been successful at minimizing the threat risks. These annual GridSecCon events help facilitate learnings that have proven very useful in our pursuit of enhanced security.”

At the close of the conference, Janet Sena, NERC senior vice president of External Affairs, announced three recipients of the 2023 E-ISAC Electricity Security Service Award in honor of Michael J. Assante:

CONTACT:
communications@nerc.net

✕ [Twitter @NERC Official](#)
[LinkedIn](#)

3353 Peachtree Road NE
Suite 600, North Tower
Atlanta, GA 30326
404-446-2560 | www.nerc.com



- **Jonathan Bransky**, director of Threat Intelligence, Dominion Energy
- **Steen Fjalstad**, director of Security, Midwest Reliability Organization
- **Steve McElwee**, chief information security officer, PJM Interconnection

The award – named after Michael Assante, who led the establishment and oversight of the E-ISAC in 1999 – recognizes individuals or teams that have made significant contributions to support the security of the North American electricity industry. The selection panel reviewed a strong slate of security professionals who exemplified Assante’s ability to inspire, innovate and care for the electricity community.

“This year’s award recipients have demonstrated a commitment to industry and to ensuring electricity security through different means such as innovation, community-wide collaboration, information sharing and analysis, education and training,” Sena said.

Throughout the event, experts from across industry and government – including Mario Tanguay, cyber security and chief information officer at Hydro-Québec; and Francis Bradley, president and CEO, Electricity Canada – provided insights into the security landscape facing our critical infrastructure. The opportunity to have more in-depth discussions was also provided through breakout sessions focused on topics such as current cyber and physical threats, violent extremists, and software supply chain security.

Participants also received a preview of the grid security exercise, GridEx VII, which will take place on November 14-15. Prior to the start of the conference, participants were able to attend training sessions that covered a range of topics, including cyber and physical resilience and human performance, physical security training and reliability, security and cloud technology.

Sena concluded the conference by thanking participants and event sponsors and urging participants to put the information learned and the relationships made during the conference into action.

“My hope is that each of us has gained new knowledge, discovered practical solutions, and forged meaningful connections throughout this three-day event. We should not underestimate the power of our coming together—the strength of our collaboration and cooperation puts us in the best position to overcome even the most daunting of challenges.”

###

Electricity is a key component of the fabric of modern society and NERC, as the Electric Reliability Organization, serves to strengthen that fabric. Our mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid. 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.