

# NERC News

July 2021

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## ERO Executive Spotlight – Jason Blake President and Chief Executive Officer, SERC

### Furthering Our Purpose of Reducing Risks to the Reliability and Security of the Grid

Welcome to the dog days of summer! It is hot here in Charlotte. If you are anything like me, these days seem to really underscore how dependent our communities across North America are on a reliable and secure electric grid.

The next time you wrap up your workday, try to take a little time to appreciate the importance of what each of you do across our industry on a daily basis. It really is impossible to not see how reliant our families and communities are on a reliable and secure grid. [Continued on page 2](#)



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## Furthering Our Purpose (cont'd)

Whether it is the powering of businesses or the ability to work remotely, the traffic and streetlights to ensure safe commutes, air conditioning to provide comfort and refrigeration to ensure food does not spoil or even our kids' ability to play video games and communicate with their friends — the grid is ever present. It is truly the backbone for modern society, the foundation of our economy and the platform for our technological advances. I hope each of you take great pride knowing that you are a part of this essential industry.

And what an exciting time to be a part of it. The grid, just like the world around us, continues to change. It feels that these times have afforded us such a unique opportunity to work together to help understand and mitigate so many significant and complex challenges to the reliability and security of the grid. These challenges range from the evolving nature of the generation resource mix, the changing demand-side characteristics of the load, and the increased frequency of severe weather events to the relentless and sophisticated cyber security threats launched by well-heeled organizations and nation-state actors.

Here at SERC, as well as across the ERO Enterprise, we believe that the essential nature of the grid coupled with these challenging times requires us to ensure that every level of our organization and the work that we perform is centered around, rooted in, and furthering our intended purpose of effectively and efficiently reducing risks to the reliability and security of the grid. While we are far from perfect and many growth opportunities remain, I take great pride in our team's commitment to challenge ourselves, our programs and our engagements by asking ourselves if each of these efforts is truly rooted in our stated purpose or, as some call it, "our why."

While this sounds obvious, the obvious is not always easy to achieve. For example, procedures and programs can afford comfort to our daily routines. It might be the mere mechanics of repetition or a false sense of security that walking through certain steps is the only way to ensure compliance with the law. This comfort can lead many of us — especially those who tend to regularly work within a

process or program — to not second guess its inefficiency, its potential duplicity or incompatibility with other programs, the confusion it may create or the fact that it doesn't really seem to serve any value.

So as we contemplate the importance of the grid and the many challenges before us, let us strive to take the extra step to frame our engagements around the purpose driving the effort. Whether it is developing or reevaluating a procedure or program, interacting with colleagues, attending a workshop or undergoing an audit, let us make sure that our efforts are focused always on our "why."

Most importantly, let's make sure that not only do we understand what we are intending to accomplish and why it is important to the reliability and security of the grid, but also that each of our team members understand this just as well. ■■■

## Headlines

### Lauby Speaks at "Power & Renewables: North America" Virtual Conference

Mark Lauby, NERC's senior vice president and chief engineer, participated in the closing roundtable discussion during Wood Mackenzie's "Power & Renewables: North America" virtual conference. The roundtable, titled "Critical Transmission Infrastructure Needs in Response to the Renewables Boom," which featured Lauby and Eric Luesebrink, senior vice president of development at Engie, took place on July 27.

### EPRI and NERC Collaborate to Enhance Electric Grid Resilience and Reliability as U.S. Transitions to Cleaner Energy

On July 22, the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and NERC announced a new agreement collaboratively to enable improved resilience and reliability of the North American electric grid. As the United States takes critical steps to reduce carbon emissions across the economy, the two organizations will leverage their collective knowledge to respond more efficiently and effectively to power sector challenges.

The agreement calls for the two organizations to meet regularly and coordinate on several fronts, including supporting effective deployment of industry resources to address emerging issues, jointly sponsoring workshops or meetings and identifying and collaborating on key projects and activities.

“EPRI’s and NERC’s respective experts are at the forefront of R&D to enhance electric grid resilience,” said Robb Chapman, EPRI’s senior vice president of energy delivery and customer solutions. “By strengthening collaboration, we can better accelerate energy system innovation and solve reliability challenges before they happen.”

“We are pleased to refresh our memorandum of understanding to continue our successful collaborations with EPRI,” said Mark Lauby, NERC’s senior vice president and chief engineer. “The transformation of the grid presents a number of challenges today and into the future. The results of our joint planning and subsequent research projects provide the science, tools and processes needed to effectively mitigate existing and emerging risks to the reliable operation of the North American bulk power system.” [Announcement](#)

## **Robb, NERC Staff Participate in 2021 IEEE Power & Energy Society General Meeting**

Jim Robb, NERC’s president and CEO, participated in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ (IEEE) virtual Power & Energy Society (PES) General Meeting that took place July 26–29. The meeting, “Managing Energy Business during a Pandemic,” brought together electric power and energy experts and stakeholders from across the globe to share the latest advancements in technology and ideas that will propel our future.

Robb participated on a panel titled “Setting Post-COVID Expectations” along with Department of Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm; NARUC First Vice President and Virginia Corporation Commission Chair Judith Jagdmann; and NASEO Executive Director David Terry.

Several members of NERC’s staff presented a number of peer-reviewed technical papers, as well as participated in the conference as panelists:

- **Svetlana Ekisheva**, Ph.D., Principal Data Science Advisor, Advanced System Analytics and Modeling
- **Howard Gugel**, Vice President, Engineering and Standards
- **Jessica Harris**, Senior Engineer, Power Systems Analysis
- **Joseph Januszewski**, Senior Cyber Security Analyst, E-ISAC
- **Mark Lauby**, Senior Vice President and Chief Engineer
- **Jack Norris**, Engineer II, Performance Analysis
- **Ryan Quint**, Ph.D., P.E., Senior Manager, BPS Security and Grid Transformation
- **Rachel Rieder**, Data Analyst, Performance Analysis

“Participation in the IEEE PES General Meeting provides a venue to discuss challenges to reliability, security and resilience of the bulk power system,” said Mark Lauby, NERC’s senior vice president and chief engineer. “NERC’s staff provides leadership on these issues and shares state-of-the-art findings and processes to address emergent and projected risks to the reliable operation of the Bulk Electric System.”

Conference attendees had exclusive access to more than 400 hours of conference material, including plenary, super and panel sessions, paper and poster sessions, a student poster competition and tutorials. NERC was proud to be Bronze sponsor of this event, furthering the PES mission to be the leading provider of scientific and engineering information on electric power and energy for the betterment of society.

## **ERO Enterprise Deploys Release 2 of Align across Industry**

On July 19, the ERO Enterprise announced the Release 2 launch of Align across industry as of July 19, 2021. Align is designed to process and track all compliance monitoring and enforcement activities with the goal of improving security and standardizing processes across the ERO Enterprise.

Release 2 included Technical Feasibility Exceptions (TFE), Periodic Data Submittals (PDS), Attestations and Self-Certifications functionalities in Align, as well as the use of

the ERO Secure Evidence Locker (SEL) to collect registered entity-provided evidence to support these activities. Release 2 built on Release 1, which included self-reporting/self-logging, enforcement processing and mitigation functionality in Align. Subsequent releases will introduce new functionalities to the platform throughout 2021 and 2022.

Please note that while Release 2 functionality is now available in Align, go-live dates vary by Region and functionality, as listed below:

- **MRO:** TFE functionality went live on July 19, 2021; PDS and Self-Certifications functionalities go live on October 1, 2021.
- **NPCC:** TFE functionality went live on July 19, 2021; PDS and Self-Certifications functionalities go live on October 1, 2021.
- **ReliabilityFirst:** TFE functionality went live on July 19, 2021; PDS and Self-Certifications functionalities go live on October 1, 2021.
- **SERC:** TFE functionality went live on July 19, 2021; PDS and Self-Certifications functionalities go live on October 1, 2021.
- **Texas RE:** TFE, PDS, and Self-Certifications functionalities went live on July 19, 2021.
- **WECC:** TFE functionality went live on July 19, 2021; PDS functionality went live on August 2, 2021; Self-Certifications functionality goes live on September 1, 2021.

[The NERC Training Site](#) contains all Align and ERO SEL training materials, including training videos and the Start, Stop, Continue Guide as well as Align and ERO SEL user guides.

The Align project team is working on Release 3, which will include core audit functionality and scheduling. The rollout schedule for Release 3 will be announced in Q4 2021. Please contact your regional change agents with any questions about Align or send a question to [askalign@nerc.net](mailto:askalign@nerc.net).

## FERC, NERC, Regional Entity Staff Make Recommendations for Grid Operating Assessments

Staff from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and NERC and its Regional Entities issued a report outlining recommendations for real-time assessments of grid operating conditions.

Real-time assessments evaluate system conditions using real-time data to measure existing and potential operating conditions to ensure continued reliable operation of the Bulk Electric System. The joint staff review focuses on strategies and techniques used by reliability coordinators and transmission operators to perform these assessments following a loss or degradation of data or tools used to maintain situational awareness. The review included on-site discussions with representatives of nine participating reliability coordinators and transmission operators.

The [report](#) concludes that system operators are prepared to manage limited impairments of their primary assessment tools or data through system redundancy and redundant data sources.

However, infrequent events involving significant real-time data loss or the failure of primary analysis tools lasting more than two hours require the development of alternative data sources, tools, and analyses work to mitigate the potential loss of visibility and control resulting from the impairment of their primary tools.

The report addresses seven technical areas related to real-time assessments, focusing on five primary issues and objectives:

- Maintaining situational awareness when tools are affected.
- Ensuring actions are known and consistent in timing and scope.
- Having feasible, accurate backup plans with related training programs.
- Establishing verification procedures to ensure that models are accurate and consistent.
- Maintaining awareness of changes/upgrades to their tools. ■■■

## Cancel Appears before the California State Assembly's Select Committee on Cybersecurity

Manny Cancel, senior vice president of NERC and chief executive officer of the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC), appeared before the California State Assembly's Select Committee on Cybersecurity at a hearing on State Coordination and Critical Infrastructure Protection: Local Government and Utilities Critical Infrastructure Control Systems. The hearing was held at 2:00 p.m. Eastern on July 8, 2021.

Cancel spoke on Panel 1: Threat Landscape for Local Governments and Utilities. This panel explored various aspects of the current threat landscape, such as the prevalence, characteristics and frequency of the threats that local governments and utilities face. In addition, the panel discussed potential mitigation strategies.

The hearing was organized into three panels:

- **Panel 1:** Threat Landscape for Local Governments and Utilities
- **Panel 2:** Local Government and Utilities Current Posture
- **Panel 3:** State Resources for Local Government and Utilities

A recording of the hearing is available via [webcast](#). ■■■

## Compliance

### Program Alignment Update

NERC added two self-identified alignment issues:

- One pertaining to CMEP practice guide considerations for ERO Enterprise CMEP staff on contingencies performed by Transmission Planners for use in TPL-001-4 and TPL-001-5.1 studies; and
- One pertaining to CMEP practice guide considerations for ERO Enterprise CMEP staff on practices around understanding entity risk and evaluating entity practices, relative to cold weather preparedness.

The ERO Enterprise Program Alignment Process is intended to enhance efforts to identify, prioritize and resolve alignment issues across the ERO Enterprise. Using this process, NERC captures identified issues from the various resources in a [centralized repository](#). The Consistency Reporting Tool uses a third-party application, EthicsPoint, which allows stakeholders to submit consistency issues—anonously, if desired.

### Reliability Standard Audit Worksheet Revision Posted

NERC posted a new revision of the PRC-024 Reliability Standard Audit Worksheet (RSAW) following an industry comment period from June 3–24. Industry comments were mostly supportive and prompted an edit to shorten the Note to Auditor added to Requirement 2.

- This new version provides more clarity about how the ERO Enterprise is currently monitoring PRC-024-2.
- The update focuses on PRC-024-2 R2.
- The evidence requested section be reworded to acknowledge that not all relays measure from the point of interconnection.
- The note to auditor clarifies that auditors are to understand how it is accounted for when relays measure voltage from somewhere other than the point of interconnection.

An RSAW is a guide provided by the ERO Enterprise that describes types of evidence-registered entities may use to demonstrate compliance with a Reliability Standard. RSAWs also include information regarding how the ERO Enterprise may assess that evidence. RSAWs do not require specific evidence to be provided, and they are not intended to require a single, exclusive approach to assessing compliance with a Reliability Standard.

### Nomination Period Open for Compliance and Certification Committee

The [Compliance and Certification Committee](#) (CCC) is requesting nominations to fill the vacant positions listed below. Successful candidates will serve a three-year term beginning January 1, 2022.

## Voting Positions:

- 1 – Investor-Owned Utility
- 1 – Cooperative Utility
- 1 – Federal/Provincial Utility/Federal Power Marketing Administration
- 1 – Merchant Electricity Generator
- 1 – Electricity Marketer
- 1 – ISO/RTO
- 2 – At-large

## Non-Voting Positions:

- 1 – U.S. Federal

In the capacity of a NERC Board of Trustees (Board)-appointed stakeholder committee serving and reporting directly to the NERC Board, the CCC engages with, supports and advises the NERC Board and NERC regarding all facets of the NERC Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Program, Organization Registration Program and Organization Certification Program.

The CCC has an open nomination process. Individuals or recognized industry groups may nominate candidates for consideration. A nominee that represents a NERC member may be nominated for a sector that matches the NERC member's sector under the NERC membership list or for an opening in the at-large membership. To check a NERC member's sector, please consult the [NERC membership list](#). Please submit all [nomination forms](#) to [CCCElections@nerc.net](mailto:CCCElections@nerc.net) by **August 14, 2021**.

The next 2021 CCC scheduled meetings are September 21–23, 2021. ■■■

## Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC)

### Register for GridSecCon 2021

GridSecCon 2021 [registration](#) is open! NERC and Texas RE are co-hosting the 10<sup>th</sup> annual GridSecCon virtually on October 19–20, with training opportunities available October 18.

At GridSecCon 2021, you can to participate in:

- World-class training sessions, including a four-hour sneak peek at SANS ICS 418 – ICS for Managers Course
- SANS and Dragos Industrial Control Systems Capture the Flag Challenge
- Cutting-edge discussions, breakout sessions and keynotes
- In-depth presentations on emerging cyber and physical threats
- Policy updates, lessons learned and best practices

We look forward to seeing you there! ■■■

## Reliability Risk Management

### Webinar Resources Posted

NERC posted the [slide presentation](#) and [streaming webinar](#) from the July 15, 2021 BPS-Connected Battery Energy Storage Systems and Hybrid Power Plants webinar. ■■■

## Standards

With the implementation of the [Align Project](#) in 2021, there will be changes to the [Reliability Standards web page](#) and associated reports, including the One-Stop Shop, U.S. Effective Date Status/Functional Applicability spreadsheet and VRF and VSL matrices. More details will be provided in the coming months.

### 2021 Registered Ballot Body Self-Select Attestation Process

[Appendix 3D Registered Ballot Body \(RBB\) Criteria](#) of the NERC Rules of Procedure states: “Each participant, when initially registering to join the Registered Ballot Body, and annually thereafter, shall self-select to belong to one of the Segments...”

Therefore, NERC Standards staff initiated the 2021 Annual RBB Self-Select Process on June 7. Each RBB voting member should log into [Standards Balloting and Commenting System \(SBS\)](#) and ensure the role listed is “Voter.” Then click this [link](#) to access the attestation page and complete the steps to confirm there have been no material changes in the last 12 months that affect the

entity's current Segment selection(s), thus the entity continues to meet the Segment qualifications (as outlined in the qualifications in *Appendix 3D: RBB Criteria* referenced above). Proxies are not required to attest. NERC must receive a response for all segments represented in the RBB by **8:00 p.m. Eastern, Monday, August 9, 2021**. Entities with segment(s) not attested for will be removed from the system.

Anyone removed (un-vetted) can re-apply at any time. For more information or assistance, please contact [Wendy Muller](#).

### **Nomination Period Extended for Project 2021-05 – Modifications to PRC-023 Drafting Team Members**

NERC is seeking additional nominations for Project 2021-05 – Modifications to PRC-023 drafting team members through 8 p.m. Eastern, Tuesday, **August 10, 2021**. The time commitment for this project is expected to be one meeting per quarter (on average two and a half full working days each meeting) with calls scheduled as needed to meet the agreed-upon timeline the review or drafting team sets forth. Team members may also have side projects, either individually or by subgroup, to present to the larger team for discussion and review. Lastly, an important component of the review and drafting team effort is outreach. Members of the team will be expected to conduct industry outreach during the development process to support a successful project outcome. NERC is seeking individuals who have subject matter expertise with Protection & Controls and are familiar with NERC Standard PRC-023.

Previous drafting or review team experience is beneficial, but not required. By submitting a nomination form, you are indicating your willingness and agreement to participate actively in face-to-face meetings and conference calls. Use the [electronic form](#) to submit a nomination and contact [Wendy Muller](#) regarding issues with the system. An unofficial Word version of the nomination form is posted on the [Standard Drafting Team Vacancies](#) page and the page. The Standards Committee is expected to appoint members to the drafting team in September 2021. Nominees will be notified shortly after they have been appointed. ■■■

## **Member News**

### **2021 ERC Membership Renewal Period Closing**

On July 7, 2021, NERC initiated the membership renewal process for 2021. Notices were sent by email to the primary and alternate contacts for each NERC member (Note: these contacts may be different than the contacts the entity has for NERC compliance purposes). Each NERC member must renew its membership through the [ERO Portal](#) before **August 6, 2021** to maintain its membership with NERC. The membership process may be completed by either the primary or alternate membership contact. Additional information regarding NERC Membership and the 2021 renewal process is available on the [NERC Members](#) page. For more information or assistance, please contact [NERC Membership](#). ■■■

## **Regional Entity Events**

### **[Midwest Reliability Organization \(MRO\)](#)**

- [Protective Relay Subgroup Q3 Meeting](#), August 17
- [MRO Annual Reliability Conference](#), August 24
- [MRO Reliability Advisory Council Q3 Meeting](#), August 25
- [Organizational Group Oversight Committee Meeting](#), September 29
- [MRO CMEP Advisory Council Q3 Meeting](#), September 29
- [MRO Board of Directors Meeting](#), September 30
- [Security Conference](#), October 6

### **[Northeast Power Coordinating Council, Inc. \(NPCC\)](#)**

- [NPCC Compliance and Reliability Messages](#), August 25

### **[ReliabilityFirst \(RF\)](#)**

- [Seventh Annual Protection System Workshop](#) [for technical personnel], August 11
- [Fourth Annual Human Performance Workshop](#), August 12
- [Technical Talk with RF](#), August 16
- [RF Board of Directors Q3 Meeting](#), August 19

- [SERC and RF Cold Weather Preparedness Webinar](#), August 24
- [Internal Controls Webinar](#) [focused on Culture], August 25

## [SERC Reliability Corporation](#)

- [SERC and RF Cold Weather Preparedness Webinar](#), August 24
- [System Operator Conference #3](#), September 14–16
- [Align 2 Training, Periodic Data Submissions](#), September 16
- [Risk Committee Meeting](#), September 22
- [SERC Board of Directors Meeting](#), September 23
- [Fall Technical Committee Meetings](#), September 27–29
- [Align 2 Training, Self-Certifications](#), September 30
- [Fall Reliability and Security Seminar](#), October 5–6

## [Texas RE](#)

- [Reliability 101 Webinar Series](#), August 3–13
- [Talk with Texas RE Assessment of Reliability Performance](#), August 26

## [WECC](#)

- [Grid Fundamentals Webinar](#), August 25
- [Internal Controls Practices Group](#), August 31
- [Annual Membership and Board of Directors Meeting](#), September 8–9 ■■■

## [Upcoming Events](#)

For a full accounting of NERC events, such as meetings and conference calls for standard drafting teams, other standing committees, subcommittees, task forces, and working groups, please refer to the [NERC calendar](#).

- **Project 2016-02 – Modifications to CIP Standards Webinar** – 1:00–3:00 p.m. Eastern, August 4, 2021 | [Register](#)
- **2021 Probabilistic Analysis Forum** – October 5–7, 2021 | Registration Details Coming Soon

- **NERC Board of Trustees and Board Committee Meetings** – August 11–12, 2021 | [Schedule of Events](#) | [Registration](#)
- **Standards Committee Conference Call** – 1:00–3:00 p.m. Eastern, August 18, 2021 | [Register](#)
- **GridSecCon 2021** – October 19–20, 2021 | [Register](#)
- **Winter Readiness Webinar** – September 2, 2021 | Registration Details Coming Soon
- [Distributed Energy Resource Modeling Capabilities in Simulation Tools](#) Webinar – 2:00–4:00 p.m. Eastern, October 28, 2021 | [Register](#) ■■■

## [Filings](#)

### [NERC Filings to FERC in July](#)

*July 9, 2021*

[Joint Petition for Approval of Amendments to the SERC Bylaws](#) | NERC and SERC submit to FERC a Joint Petition for Approval of Amendments to the SERC Reliability Corporation Bylaws.

### [NERC Canadian Filings to FERC in July](#)

*July 6, 2021*

[Notice of Filing of NERC of Proposed Reliability Standards Related to Establishing and Communicating System Operating Limits](#) | [Exhibits ABCDEGI](#) | [Exhibit H](#) ■■■

## [Careers at NERC](#)

### [Senior Paralegal – Risk Audit](#)

Location: Washington, D.C.

[Details](#)

### [Senior Manager, Watch Operations](#)

Location: Washington, D.C.

[Details](#)

### [BPS Cyber Security Specialist](#)

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#)

### [Bulk Power System Awareness Analyst](#)

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#)

## **Senior Engineer or Advisor – Performance Analysis**

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#)

## **Senior Data Analyst – Performance Analysis**

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#)

## **CIP Assurance Advisor**

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#) ■ ■ ■