

NERC News

March 2020

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ERO Executive Spotlight – Jim Robb

Leadership in Pandemic, Emergency Response

We have been working through an extraordinary set of issues over the past two months, and the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the most challenging leadership situations any of us at NERC or in the Regional Entities has dealt with because of its ubiquitous and non-discriminatory threat. I am very proud of how quickly the ERO Enterprise initiated our response plans and coordinated our actions to protect the safety and well-being of our workforces, while still working toward our mission of assuring the reliability and security of the North American bulk power system.



We also recognize the extraordinary level of stakeholder engagement in the work we conduct, which became clear when we started to inventory all of the meetings, large and small, that either needed to be postponed or converted to webinars, including our upcoming Board of Trustees meeting. Across the ERO Enterprise, we quickly moved our staffs into remote work postures and eliminated all travel to protect both staff and stakeholders.

We have also undertaken a number of initiatives to assist industry through this challenging time. On February 5, the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC) issued an all-points bulletin related to the coronavirus through the Critical Broadcast Program. The bulletin highlighted the risks of a pandemic, addressed potential supply chain issues that would result from a manufacturing slowdown in Asia, alerted entities to the possibility of workforce constraints and suggested entities review their supply chain risk and business continuity plans for possible activation. [Continued on page 2](#)

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Emergency Response (cont'd)

We also took strong action to ensure continuity of operations at the E-ISAC ([Operations Summary](#)) in response to the outbreak. In addition, the E-ISAC encouraged industry to continue sharing voluntary information and be vigilant about security posture as phishing and malware attempts are heightened during this time.

On March 10, NERC issued a public [level 2 alert](#) on contingency planning as related to COVID-19 and asked registered entities to report the status of their emergency pandemic plans. The vast majority of registered entities indicated in their responses that they either have a written pandemic response plan or are in the process of developing one. NERC filed the confidential report regarding these responses to FERC on March 26. NERC also is working on a more comprehensive assessment of potential reliability risks and considerations due to the unusual operating conditions presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to be completed in April.

On March 18, NERC and FERC announced [a decision to use appropriate regulatory discretion](#) to advise all registered entities that they will consider the impact of the coronavirus outbreak and resultant workforce and supply chain constraints in complying with Reliability Standards. This initiative is to ensure that operators of the bulk power system can focus their potentially limited resources on keeping their people safe and the lights on during this unprecedented public health emergency.

NERC continues to coordinate with industry's Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC); the Department of Energy; the Department of Homeland Security; the Centers for Disease, Control and Prevention; and the Department of Health and Human Services for situational awareness and best practices on the pandemic. The ESCC has developed a [number of resources](#) for industry and stakeholders, including a resource guide and a frequently asked questions document.

These and our other ongoing efforts during this unprecedented time enable the ERO Enterprise to fulfill its unique and vital mission of assuring the reliability and security of the North American bulk power system. Times like these lead us to focus and discriminate between “the big” and “the small,” and I know we will emerge on the other side of this crisis stronger. We all must remain vigilant and focused on the many tasks ahead of us in the coming weeks, months and afterward. Doing so will continue to help strengthen the fabric of the North American bulk power system, which is indispensable for modern society. ■■■

Headlines

GridEx V Report Recommends Emergency Response Plan Reviews, Enhanced Cross-Sector Coordination

Utilities and Reliability Coordinators should review their emergency response plans to account for the complex collaboration with all levels of government in North America that would be required should a grid security event occur, NERC recommended in its GridEx V after-action report. This report focuses on lessons learned and recommendations highlighted throughout the two-day exercise. NERC held the grid security exercise, which had 7,000 participants from across North America — including industry and U.S. and Canadian government partners — in November 2019.

The [GridEx V Lessons Learned Report](#) focuses on participant observations and recommendations from the cyber and physical security exercise's distributed play and complementary executive tabletop. The recommendations target actions for the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC), electricity industry and cross-sector and government partners in North America to improve future GridEx events and enhance the security posture.

“Each GridEx is an important milestone in the ongoing cyber and physical security training of industry members and government partners,” said Manny Cancel, NERC senior vice president and E-ISAC chief executive officer.

“This report notes the success of GridEx V and starts the planning process in earnest for GridEx VI as an enhancement to its predecessor.”

GridEx V achieved six of its seven objectives, the report finds. The objectives achieved were exercise incident response plans; expand local and regional response; engage critical interdependencies; improve communication; engage senior leadership; and gather lessons learned. Based on participant feedback, the report lists the “increase supply chain participation” objective as partially being achieved and having significant room for improvement in GridEx VI.

The report’s recommendations include:

- Incorporating natural gas providers and pipeline operators into restoration planning and drills
- Enhancing coordination with communications providers to support restoration and recovery
- Building consensus with the U.S. Department of Energy on the design, issuance and liability protections for grid security emergency orders issued under Section 215A of the Federal Power Act
- Continuing to strengthen the operational industry and government coordination between the United States and Canada

The report’s observations include:

- The flexible scenario structure enabled exercise planners to customize their GridEx experiences and maximize learning to improve their organizations’ incident response preparations and capabilities.
- Early planning allowed planners to benefit from the scenario’s flexibility, but planners whose organizations joined later struggled to prepare adequately for the exercise.
- While many utilities used GridEx to strengthen their relationships with Reliability Coordinators, law enforcement and government agencies, others lacked the resources needed to coordinate responses to the challenges in the scenario.

- The GridEx distributed play and executive tabletop should occur on different dates so that leadership teams can achieve maximum training value for their organizations.

Quint Receives ESIG Excellence Award

The [Energy Systems Integration Group \(ESIG\)](#) announced that it awarded Ryan Quint, NERC’s senior manager of Advanced System Analytics and Modeling, with an ESIG Excellence Award. Quint received the award for outstanding industry leadership and contributions to dynamic models for distributed energy resources (DER), IEEE P2800 standard development, IEEE 1547-2018 implementation and grid reliability with the changing generation mix.

“The ESIG is doing very important technical work on the integration of variable energy resources on to the power grid in a manner that enhances reliability,” said Jim Robb, NERC’s president and chief executive officer. “We are very proud of Ryan, this recognition and of all the NERC staff who have been working with ESIG on these issues, which will only grow in importance as we add more and more wind, solar and eventually large-scale batteries onto the grid.”

These awards are presented to energy professionals from around the world for their contributions and accomplishments toward the planning and operation of energy systems across multiple pathways and geographical scales in ways that are reliable, economic and sustainable.

“Ryan’s work on inverter-based resource designs amplify their application in the bulk power system,” added Mark Lauby, NERC’s senior vice president and chief engineer. “We want to thank ESIG for recognizing Ryan with their Excellence Award.” ■■■

Compliance

Reliability Standard Audit Worksheet Posted

One new Reliability Standard Audit Worksheet (RSAW) is available on the [RSAW page](#) of NERC’s website under the heading “Current RSAWs for Use.” RSAWs are guides provided by the ERO Enterprise that describe types of evidence that registered entities may use to

demonstrate compliance with a Reliability Standard. The ERO Enterprise drafts these worksheets, which include information regarding how the ERO Enterprise may assess evidence, during the development of their corresponding NERC Reliability Standards, allowing for enhanced transparency around compliance expectations. [CIP-003-8 – Cyber Security – Security Management Controls](#) became effective on April 1, 2020.

Compliance Guidance Updates

A key factor in the success of compliance monitoring and enforcement of mandatory standards rests on a common understanding among industry and ERO Enterprise CMEP staff of how they can achieve and demonstrate compliance. For many standards, this is straightforward. For others, a variety of approaches may achieve the same objective. Industry develops Implementation Guidance, for industry, and the guidance requires ERO Enterprise endorsement. This guidance provides examples for implementing a standard.

NERC posted two new ERO Enterprise-endorsed Implementation Guidance documents titled [TOP-010-1\(i\) R3](#) and [IRO-018-1\(i\) R2 - Real-time Assessment Quality of Analysis \(OC\)](#) and [CIP-012-1 Communications between Control Centers \(2016-02 SDT\)](#) to the [Compliance Guidance page](#).

NERC also updated the [ERO Enterprise Non-Endorsed Implementation Guidance tracking spreadsheet](#) to include the following:

- CIP-005-6, R2.4 and R2.5, Vendor Remote Access (NATF)
- CIP-008-6 Incident Reporting and Response Planning (2018-02 SDT)
- CIP-010-2, R4, Transient Cyber Assets (NATF)
- CIP-012-1, R1 – Communications Between Control Centers (2016-02 SDT)
- TOP-001-4 and IRO-002-5 - Data Exchange Infrastructure and Testing Requirements (OC)

Newly Effective NERC and Regional Reliability Standards

On April 1, 2020, [CIP-003-8 – Cyber Security – Security Management Controls](#) became effective. The purpose of CIP-003-8 is to specify consistent and sustainable

security management controls that establish responsibility and accountability to protect Bulk Electric System (BES) Cyber Systems against compromise that could lead to misoperation or instability in the BES.

Also on April 1, 2020, [PRC-006-NPCC-2 – Automatic Underfrequency Load Shedding](#) became effective. The NPCC Automatic Underfrequency Load Shedding (UFLS) regional Reliability Standard establishes more stringent and specific NPCC UFLS program requirements than the NERC continent-wide PRC-006 standard. The program is designed such that declining frequency is arrested and recovered in accordance with established NPCC performance requirements stipulated in this document.



Reliability Risk Management

Reliability Guideline Posted

The NERC System Planning Impacts from Distributed Energy Resources Working Group (SPIDERWG) developed the [Bulk Power System Reliability Perspectives on the Adoption of IEEE 1547-2018 Reliability Guideline](#) to provide high-level guidance and bulk power system (BPS) reliability perspectives that should be considered during the adoption and implementation of IEEE 1547-2018. Specifically, the guideline focuses on issues pertaining to distributed energy resources the SPIDERWG identified as potentially having an impact to the BPS. The guidance is intended for state regulatory staffs, Distribution Providers, Balancing Authorities, Reliability Coordinators and other entities navigating adoption of IEEE 1547-2018 and its requirements. The NERC Planning Committee approved the guideline in March 2020.

Standards

With the implementation of the [Align Project](#) in 2020, 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.

Webinar Resources Posted

NERC posted the [slide presentation](#) and [recording](#) from the February 27, 2020 Project 2019-06 – Cold Weather webinar.

Survey Open for Standards Efficiency Review Phase 2 Operational Data Exchange Simplification Standard Authorization Request

The Standards Efficiency Review (SER) Phase 2 Team seeks industry input on the [Operational Data Exchange Simplification Standard Authorization Request](#). Please coordinate feedback into a single response for each organization or entity and complete the [survey](#) by 8:00 p.m. Eastern, Monday, April 27, 2020. See the [SER project page](#) for more information.

Nomination Period Open for Project 2020-01 Standard Drafting Team

Nominations are being sought for Project 2020-01 — Modifications to MOD-032-1 SAR drafting team members through 8 p.m. Eastern, Friday, April 24, 2020. The time commitment for this project is expected to be one face-to-face meeting per quarter (on average three, full working days each meeting) with conference calls scheduled as needed to meet the agreed upon timeline the team sets forth. Team members may also have side projects, either individually or by sub-group, to present for discussion and review. Lastly, an important component of the drafting team effort is outreach. Members of the team will be expected to conduct industry outreach during the development process to support a successful ballot. Previous drafting team experience is beneficial but not required. See the [project page](#) and nomination form for additional information.

Use the [electronic form](#) to submit a nomination. By submitting a nomination form, you are indicating your willingness and agreement to participate actively in face-to-face meetings and conference calls. Contact [Linda Jenkins](#) regarding issues using the electronic form. An unofficial Word version of the nomination form is posted on the [Standard Drafting Team Vacancies](#) page and the [project page](#).

The Standards Committee is expected to appoint members to the SAR drafting team in May 2020.

Nominees will be notified shortly after they have been appointed. ■■■

Regional Entity Events

Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO)

- [MRO Board Hosted Finance and Audit Committee 2021 Business Plan and Budget Review](#), April 17
- [CIP Conference](#), May 13
- [MRO Protective Relay Subgroup Meeting](#), May 19

SERC Reliability Corporation

- [Q2 Open Forum Webinar](#), May 11

Texas RE

- [Spring Standards and Compliance Workshop](#), April 8
- [Talk with Texas RE: CORES & the ERO Portal](#), April 23
- [Talk with Texas RE: Align, Are We There Yet?](#), May 7
- [Talk with Texas RE: The Midas Touch](#), May 14
- [Talk with Texas RE: PRC-027](#), May 21
- [Board](#), [AG&F](#), and [MRC](#) meetings, May 27 ■■■

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](#).

- [Member Representatives Committee Pre-Meeting Conference Call and Informational Webinar](#) – 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Eastern, April 15 | [Register](#)
- [Fast Frequency Response Concepts and Bulk Power System Reliability Needs White Paper Informational Webinar](#) – 1:00–2:30 p.m. Eastern, April 16 | [Register](#)
- [2020 Periodic Review Standing Review Team – Standards Grading Public Meeting](#) – April 21–22, [Register](#)

- **Board of Trustees Committees, Member Representatives Committee, and Board of Trustees Meetings** – May 13–14 | [Meeting Registration](#) | [Schedule of Events](#)
- **Electric Power Human Performance Improvement Symposium** – September 29–October 1, Denver | [Register](#) ■■■

Filings

NERC Filings to FERC in March

March 2, 2020

[Motion to Intervene and Comment on CIP-014 Complaint](#) | NERC submits a motion to intervene and comments in FERC Docket No. EL20-21-000, addressing a complaint about CIP-014-2 – Physical Security.

March 4, 2020

[Letter Requesting an Extension of Time to Respond to Data Request](#) | NERC and WECC submit a letter requesting an extension of time to respond to the Data Request issued in Docket No. RM19-20-000 on February 18, 2020.

March 11, 2020

[Petition for Approval of BAL-001-TRE-2](#) | NERC and Texas RE submit a joint petition for the approval of proposed regional Reliability Standard BAL-001-TRE-2.

March 17, 2020

[Supplement to Petition for Approval of BAL-001-TRE-2](#) | NERC submits a supplement to Exhibit D (Development History) of its March 11, 2020 joint petition with Texas RE for the approval of proposed regional Reliability Standard BAL-001-TRE-2.

March 19, 2020

[CIP Standards Projects Informational Filing](#) | NERC submits to FERC an informational compliance filing as directed by FERC in its February 20, 2020 Order. This filing contains a status update on two standards development projects relating to CIP Reliability Standards.

March 20, 2020

[Petition of NERC for Approval of Proposed Reliability Standard PRC-024-3](#) | NERC submits a petition for the approval of proposed Reliability Standard PRC-024-3 – Frequency and Voltage Protection Settings for Generating Resources. Proposed Reliability Standard PRC-024-3 improves upon currently effective Reliability Standard PRC-024-2 by clarifying the voltage and frequency protection settings requirements so that generating resources continue to support grid stability during defined system voltage and frequency excursions.

March 30, 2020

[2020 NERC Standards Report, Status and Timetable for Addressing Regulatory Directives](#) | NERC submits its 2020 NERC Standards

Report, Status and Timetable for Addressing Regulatory Directives. The annual report is in accordance with Section 321.6 of the NERC Rules of Procedure.

NERC Canadian filings to FERC in March

March 27, 2020

[Notice of NERC for Filing of Proposed Reliability Standard PRC-024-3 | Exhibits](#) ■■■

Careers at NERC

E-ISAC Engagement and Outreach Coordinator

Location: Washington, DC

[Details](#)

Senior CIP Technical Advisor

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#)

Senior Auditor Internal Audit and Corporate Risk Management

Location: Atlanta

[Details](#) ■■■