

NERC News

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Executive Management Spotlight – Stan Hoptroff

Information Technology Highlights

The NERC Information Technology team kicked off 2019 with substantial momentum on a suite of initiatives that focus heavily on compliance monitoring and registration. These efforts are known as the Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Program (CMEP) Technology Project and the Entity Registration – Centralized Organization Registration ERO System (CORES) Project. Both initiatives implement new features, functionality and processes that will directly and meaningfully impact NERC's ability to ensure the reliability of the bulk power system. With these improvements comes a tantamount need to ensure the security and confidence in the applications that NERC provides, as well as stewardship of the data stored in those applications. To that end, NERC IT has been hard at work planning for the implementation of a solution to support the enhanced features and functionality with multi-factor authentication (MFA).



MFA is a security feature that provides access to a system using two or more forms of authentication. For NERC applications, this will be accomplished by sending a personal identification number (PIN) to a mobile device or email address, adding another layer of authentication beyond the traditional username/login approach. It may sound like something sophisticated enough to be discussed at an obscure technology roundtable, but it is highly likely that we have all experienced this technology in our daily interactions with online banking, access to online healthcare data and services or even online shopping. [Continued on page 2](#)

Headlines

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Highlights (cont'd)

While the primary impetus for the implementation of MFA is the CMEP Technology Project, it will be an ongoing security standard for all ERO applications as we move forward. The technology team is in the early stages of planning for the implementation of MFA for applications accessed via the XRM platform, as well as the ERO Portal. Authentication to applications like User Management and Registration (UMR), Misoperations Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS), The Event Analysis Management System (TEAMS), NERC Membership, Entity Registration - Coordinated Functional Registration (CFRs), CMEP and Entity Registration – CORES are currently in scope with other NERC and ERO applications coming online in late 2019 and into 2020. While there will be no functional change to any of the applications, NERC IT will work closely with application owners to mitigate the user impact through a change management plan aimed at communicating the new user experience.

Stay tuned for more details from NERC IT as we move forward with this evolution and bring this critical technology to bear over the coming months. *Stan Hoptruff is vice president and chief technology officer, and director of information technology.* ■ ■ ■

Headlines

NERC, Water Sector Launch Security Information Sharing Effort to Promote Cross-Sector Collaboration

NERC's Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC) and the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center (WaterISAC) launched a new security partnership aimed at enhancing cross-sector coordination and taking advantage of the interdependencies of the electricity and water industries.

Under the partnership, staff from WaterISAC will join the E-ISAC in Washington, D.C., to improve coordination on potential security risks related to the supply of electricity to water and wastewater treatment plants, and the

supply of water to electric utilities for cooling power plant turbines and for office operations.

“Water is one of the ‘lifeline’ critical infrastructures that depends on and helps enable a secure, reliable supply of electricity,” said Bill Lawrence, NERC vice president and chief security officer. “Partnering with WaterISAC will help strengthen E-ISAC collaboration across industry sectors in a way that better serves all critical infrastructures in North America.”

The partnership between the E-ISAC and WaterISAC is predicated on developing a robust information exchange on security risks.

Through a variety of tools, both the E-ISAC and WaterISAC monitor and analyze potential physical and cyber security threats to their respective industries and use their respective secure portals to alert and advise members on mitigating real threats.

The goals of the E-ISAC and WaterISAC under the partnership include:

- Improve security collaboration on common threat information and incident response.
- Provide joint analysis of security concerns and events.
- Advance shared processes for information sharing and situational awareness.
- Improve information sharing among all ISACs.

“The water and electricity sectors are critical to the well-being of consumers and businesses,” said Michael Arceneaux, managing director of WaterISAC. “Our joint collaboration recognizes this responsibility as well as the interdependencies between our sectors, and it aims to help our respective members enhance their security and preparedness.”

The E-ISAC and WaterISAC have agreed to use existing policies and procedures for safeguarding sensitive information under the partnership.

Statement on the Passing of FERC Commissioner Kevin McIntyre

“We are filled with great sadness upon hearing of the passing of FERC Commissioner Kevin McIntyre. Kevin worked diligently during his tenure at FERC to help assure the reliability and security of the grid. His enthusiasm, professionalism and skill will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with Kevin’s wife and children and with his FERC family during this difficult time” Jim Robb, president and CEO. [FERC Statement](#)



Compliance

Updates to Compliance Guidance Documents

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 compliance can be achieved and demonstrated. For many standards, this is straightforward. For others, a variety of approaches may achieve the same objective. Implementation Guidance is developed by industry, for industry and requires ERO-Enterprise endorsement. This guidance provides examples for implementing a standard.

One new ERO Enterprise-Endorsed Implementation Guidance document has been posted on the [Compliance Guidance page](#). The new guidance document addresses [PRC-024-2, R2 Generator Frequency and Voltage Protective Relay Settings](#). This guidance was submitted by the System Protection and Control Subcommittee of the NERC Planning Committee.

The [ERO Enterprise Non-Endorsed Implementation Guidance tracking spreadsheet](#) has been updated to include CIP-013-1 Implementation Guidance (NATF). The ERO Enterprise declined to endorse this document as it only partially addresses R1.2, which may lead to entity confusion.

One new CMEP Practice Guide has been posted. The [ERO Enterprise CMEP Practice Guide: Information to be Considered by CMEP Staff Regarding Inverter-Based Resources](#) outlines information related to Bulk Electric System (BES) inverter-based resources that should be

considered by CMEP staff in understanding how the registered entities have mitigated reliability risk, including risks that may not be addressed in specific requirements.

Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Program Annual Report Available

The [Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Annual Report](#), which is currently available as Agenda Item 4 in the Compliance Committee agenda package, highlights key ERO Enterprise Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Program (CMEP) activities that occurred in 2018, provides information and statistics regarding those activities and identifies the ERO Enterprise’s 2019 CMEP priorities.

In 2018, CMEP activities throughout the ERO Enterprise reflected continuing implementation of a risk-based approach that has enabled the ERO Enterprise to focus resources on risks to the reliability of the BPS, risks specific to registered entities and risks pertaining to serious noncompliance. The ERO Enterprise continued to work on aligning programs across the ERO Enterprise to create greater consistency in its approach to CMEP activities.

In 2019, the ERO Enterprise plans to continue its focus on effective program alignment and compliance monitoring. Specific priorities for 2019 include completing and delivering the new Centralized Organization Registration ERO System (CORES) tool, continuing alignment work with the CMEP Technology Project, successfully completing all activities for the transition of both FRCC and Peak Reliability, developing a plan to enhance the Compliance Guidance program and integrating internal control reviews in all scheduled ERO Enterprise Compliance Audits and Spot Checks. ■■■

Personnel Certification and Continuing Education

SOCCEd Enhancements and Staffing Update

It has been one year since the launch of the new platform for SOCCEd. There have been many improvements and many opportunities for improvement. Overall, the advantages of transitioning to

the new platform have outweighed the familiar hindrances of the old platform. As for the opportunities for improvement, NERC received a list of 34 features to consider as part of the enhancement process. There were 10 Candidate/System Operators items, 14 provider/CE program items and 10 NERC staff items.

The following enhancements were deployed during Q4 of 2018:

- Username/Password Retrieval: All users are able to retrieve their username/password by entering the email address in the SOCCED account.
- Lock Renew Button: To prevent multiple certificate renewal purchases.
- Duplicate Candidate/System Operator Account Detection
- Duplicate CEH Upload Prevention
- Elimination of segment deletions
- Provider ability to sort and export transcript reports.

New user guides for SOCCED are available in the SOCCED Help Center available [here](#). Also posted in the SOCCED Help Center is the Renew as Level 3 CE Provider guide; along with the checklists associated with the renewal process.

Enhancements that will be addressed during the first quarter of 2019 are the ability to display Rollover hours; conversion of data upload format from csv to XML; as well as, software to software interface such as API. Along with these features, we will work with the vendor to improve the user interface experience for all users.

As users become more familiar with the new platform, some users may have additional suggestions for new features. All requests must be sent via email to SOCCEdsupport@nerc.net. The items will be added to the list and reviewed for consideration.

NERC has also experienced a change in resources on a staffing level. We are now fully staffed for the system operator certification and continuing education programs. Felix Ingram is the System Operator Certification and Continuing Education Programs Coordinator. Felix brings over 35 years of experience to

this role. In addition, Valenché Cartledge is the Personnel Certification programs administrator. Cartledge brings a wealth of customer service experience to the SOCCED Support Help Desk.

NERC System Operator Certification Program Fees

The Personnel Certification Governance Committee (PCGC) has responsibility for setting fees and conducting annual reviews of the NERC System Operator Certification Program income and expenses to ensure the program is adequately funded. The program is reviewed on a three-year budget cycle and adjustments to fees will normally be adjusted on that three-year cycle.

Based on projected income and expenses for 2019–2021, program fees increased on January 1, 2019. The System Operator Certification examination fee is \$650. The fee to **renew** any System Operator Certification credential is \$400. Please email SOCCEdsupport@nerc.net or call (404) 446-9759 with any questions. ■■■

Reliability Risk Management

Disturbance Report Posted

On April 20, 2018 (Angeles Forest disturbance) and May 11, 2018 (Palmdale Roost disturbance), bulk power system disturbances involved the loss of solar photovoltaic (PV) facilities in response to normally cleared transmission line faults. These events were analyzed by the ERO in coordination with affected entities including the Western Electricity Coordinating Council, California Independent System Operator, Southern California Edison, affected Generator Owners and Generator Operators and inverter manufacturers.

The [April and May 2018 Fault Induced Solar Photovoltaic Resource Interruption Disturbances Report](#) provides analyses of these disturbances and key findings and recommendations for industry.

Register for Annual Human Performance Conference

The eighth annual Human Performance conference — “Improving Human Performance on the Grid” — is

planned for March 26–28, 2019. This year’s conference will be a collaboration between NERC, the North American Transmission Forum (NATF) and the Department of Energy (DOE). The conference focuses on human performance good industry practices and brings together sector specific subject matter experts and stakeholders in an idea sharing, cooperative forum focused on improving human performance on the bulk power system. In addition to the two-day conference, training workshops are offered for participants to choose from on the third day, covering cause analysis and multiple human performance topics. The workshop topics include, but are not limited to, an overview of human performance, a course on establishing an organizational “Just Culture,” a course on understanding extent of condition from event findings, innovative ways to train human performance as well as multiple other courses and topics.

This year’s keynote address will be given by Joseph Pfeifer, the first chief at the World Trade Center attack on 9/11. Joe retired from the FDNY as an assistant chief and the founding director of FDNY’s *Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness*. During his career, he has commanded some of the largest disasters in New York City’s history and played a major command role during Hurricane Sandy and helped manage NYC’s Ebola Response. Other speakers and presenters include industry leaders, academia, government, vendors, manufacturers and leaders from other industries in the field of human performance, using human performance to enhance and improve human behavior.

For a glimpse at what you can expect from the conference, please check out the [promo video](#). [Conference](#) and [hotel registration](#) are also available under [Upcoming Events](#). ■■■

Standards

Webinar Resources Posted

On September 25, 2018, FERC issued an [order approving BAL-002-3 – Disturbance Control Standard – Contingency Reserve for Recovery from a Balancing Contingency Event](#). BAL-002-3 will become effective on April 1, 2019.

NERC posted the [streaming webinar](#) and [slide presentation](#) for the BAL-002-3 Requirement Training webinar. ■■■

Regional Entity Events

Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO)

- **MRO SAC Webinar Neighborhood Keeper**
February 15, [Register](#)
- **PRS Web Meeting**
February 20, [Register](#)
- **2019 CIP Workshop**
February 27, [Register](#)
- **MRO Finance and Audit Committee 1Q Meeting**
February 28, [Register](#)

ReliabilityFirst (RF)

- **2019 Spring Reliability and CIP Workshop**
May 1-3, Baltimore, MD
- **2019 Protection System Workshop**
August 13-14, Independence, OH
- **2019 Human Performance Workshop**
August 14-15, Independence, OH
- **2019 Fall Reliability and CIP Workshop**
October 1-3, Cleveland, OH

Upcoming Events

- **Standards Efficiency Review Phase Two Industry Webinar** – 1:00–2:30 p.m. Eastern, February 22, | [Register](#)
- **2019 Reliability Leadership Summit** – 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Eastern, March 14, Washington, D.C. | [Register](#)
- **Eighth Annual Human Performance Conference** – March 26–28, Atlanta | [Register for Conference and Workshops](#) | [Register for Hotel](#) | [Promo Video](#) ■■■

Filings

NERC Filings to FERC

No filings for January 2019

NERC Filings in Canada

No filings for January 2019 ■■■

Careers at NERC

Cyber Analyst – Network Analyst

Location: Washington, D.C.

[Details](#)

E-ISAC Watch Officer – Open Source Intelligence

Location: Washington, D.C.

[Details](#)

Legal Assistant

Location: Washington, D.C.

[Details](#) ■■■