

Thought Leaders Speak Out 2023

ENGAGING CUSTOMERS WITH TECHNOLOGY

Key Takeaways: Technology Solutions for Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation

A Conversation with San Diego Gas & Electric and Anterix
(November 2023)

The Institute for Electric Innovation's *Thought Leaders Speak Out 2023: Engaging Customers with Technology* series brings together electric company executives with customer responsibilities to share lessons learned and the results of successful customer engagement strategies.

This dialogue focused on leveraging technology to advance comprehensive wildfire prevention, preparedness, and response strategies and featured a discussion between Brian D'Agostino of San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and Ryan Gerbrandt of Anterix. Adam Cooper of IEI provided welcome remarks, and Dave Hutchens of Fortis, Inc. moderated the discussion. Eric Holdsworth, Executive Director of the Institute for the Energy Transition provided closing remarks. Key takeaways are summarized and highlighted below.

[Click Here for the Agenda and Speaker Bios](#)

[Watch Fortis' Opening Remarks Here](#)

Leveraging advanced grid sensing and detection technology to advance wildfire mitigation.

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SDG&E lays out the three key areas for wildfire mitigation strategy the company implemented in response to the increase in large-scale fires across the western United States - situational awareness and forecasting, public outreach and education, and technology and infrastructure hardening.

 [Video Clip Here](#)

Anterix describes the importance of having reliable wireless communication and network systems to allow real-time, frictionless exchange of data to support the use of SDG&E's falling conductor protection systems (FCPS) and other innovative grid applications.

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SDG&E and Anterix discuss SDG&E's process for prioritizing FCPS as a wildfire prevention solution. An internal study discovered one of the significant causes of wildfires is falling conductors. SDG&E leveraged existing capabilities and Anterix's communication network to de-energize falling conductors before they hit the ground within 1.3 seconds to proactively mitigate ignition sources.

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SDG&E led the FCPS implementation process with the private LTE communications network, which is a key enabler for the technology solution. SDG&E currently deploys FCPS in ten circuits, which have been performing the same as how it did in the laboratory environment.

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Anterix explains that a private LTE communications network delivers more control over the quality of service and priority of data traffic to ensure reliable, predictable, and dependable communications for FCPS applications.

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Anterix describes why wireless broadband technology is a foundational technology for the modern electric company. Wireless broadband offers robust capabilities to support multiple applications and future innovation to enhance grid reliability, resiliency, and security.

Data-informed decision-making to manage grid assets and public safety risk more accurately.

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SDG&E describes how, in a resource-constrained environment, taking a risk-averse and risk-informed approach to wildfire prevention and management guided its investments in FCPS. SDG&E implemented FCPS on some of its high-risk distribution lines in the highest fire-threat areas to mitigate wildfire while maximizing the value of the investment.

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SDG&E elaborates on the importance of data governance for wildfire mitigation efforts. AI and other technologies help SDG&E process data to further enhance situational awareness and forecasting wildfire risks, assess the impact of Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS), and enable targeted outreach and education to the most vulnerable population, such as those in the Medical Baseline Program.

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SDG&E explains how FCPS does not have to be a standalone solution, and layering multiple wildfire mitigation solutions offers additional risk reduction. SDG&E installed covered conductors coupled with FCPS. In areas with the most extreme mountain winds, SDG&E opted for undergrounding.