



**2024 Region 9 Technology Workshop Agenda**  
**September 4-6, 2024 – Event Dates**  
**September 5 – Exhibit Date**  
**Historic Davenport Hotel**  
**Spokane, WA**

**Preliminary Agenda**

**Wednesday, September 4th**

5:00 – 8:00 pm      **Networking Reception at the [Steam Plant Restaurant & Brew Pub](#) –  
Sponsored by GE Vernova**

**Thursday, September 5th**

7:00 – 8:00 am      **Registration & Breakfast**

8:00 – 8:15 am      **Welcome Remarks**

**Speaker:**              **Shawna Kiesbuy, Senior Manager, Network Engineering, Avista Utilities  
& UTC Region 9 Chair**  
**Rusty Williams, President & CEO, UTC**  
**Gary Vondrasek, JEA, UTC Board Chair**

8:15 – 9:15 am      **Lessons Learned with BPA and 30 years of Fiber in an Electric Power  
Transmission Utility**

**Speaker:**              **Chris Witthaus, PE, Communications & Grid Modeling, TPM - Bonneville  
Power Administration**

Over the last three decades, BPA has deployed over 3500 route-miles of fiber cable along its transmission rights of way in Washington, Oregon, Northern Idaho, and Western Montana that includes dispersion-shifted and single-mode glass in both OPGW and ADSS cables. Having operated and maintained its fiber system for over 28 years and partnered with over 20 utilities, municipalities, and commercial organizations, BPA has learned a lot about the ups and downs of fiber in an electric power transmission utility and would like to share these learnings with you.

9:15 – 10:15 am      **Anterix Session – Premier Sponsor**

10:15 – 10:45 am      **Networking Breakout & Hot Topic Tables**

Use this time to reach out, check in and catch up with your peers. We will also have three tables dedicated to specific discussion subjects:

Table 1: Drop Repeater Presentation – Scott Grimmett, PE, Avista Utilities.

Table 2: Revenue Opportunities - Dark Fiber, Conduit, Edge Buildings, etc.

Table 3: The Fusion of Network & Security – How are you Managing?



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10:45 – 11:45 am      **UTC President & CEO Address**

**Speaker:**                      **Rusty Williams, President & CEO, UTC**

11:45 – 2:00 pm      **Networking Lunch with Exhibitors**

2:00 – 2:30 pm      **Region 9 Member Meeting: Core Members Only**

2:30 – 3:30 pm      **pLTE is not a One Size Fits All. Let's Talk About It**

**Panelists:**                      **Karl Knoll, PE, Principal Communications Engineer, Portland General Electric**  
**Wesley Robb, Account Manager, Network Innovations**  
**Thomas Schwartz, Application Engineering Leader - GE Vernova**

Private LTE is all the rage right now within the utility space. However, as more and more utilities do their due diligence and manage the pressures from all stakeholders, they are learning that there is no single silver bullet that solves for all. Hear how Portland General Electric is in the process of designing a solution that meets the needs of all of their stakeholders.

3:30 – 4:30 pm      **RF Engineering Training Refresher with ADCOMM**

**Speaker:**                      **Joe Blaschka, Jr. PE, Founder of ADCOMM Engineering**

Until the late 1900s, there were few computers in widespread use. Then in the late last century, microprocessors started to be used in almost everything including things such as toasters, coffee pots, cars, and almost anything you could think of. Now in the 21st century, computer chips are everywhere. This has created a broadband cacophony of noise from the High Frequency bands through about 500 MHz. This is often the result of not a single device but of the hundreds of thousands of devices that exist in almost every square mile where there are people living. Mr. Blaschka has been measuring broadband RF noise for approximately 20 years. The noise levels in almost all inhabited places has reached levels where it is a significant design issue for land mobile radio users in the VHF and UHF frequency bands. Recent measurements made at 220 MHz will also be presented. Measurement techniques will also be discussed.

4:30 – 6:30 pm      **Networking Reception with Exhibitors**



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**Friday, September 6th**

7:00 – 8:00 am      **Registration & Breakfast**

8:00 – 9:15 am      **GCPUD & Avista Utilities Panel: Why We’re Choosing to Leverage the SEL ICON Now and for Our Future**

**Panelists:**              **Casey Hutchinson, Sr. IP Transport Engineer, Avista Utilities**  
**Paul Robertson, Sr. Engineering Manager, SEL Laboratories**  
**Kendall Zaugg, Network Engineer, GCPUD**

Avista and GCPUD, like many utilities, operate networks with legacy TDM products such as SONET, DACs, and Channel Banks. These aging systems are either already at the end of their life cycle or will be soon. As part of our evaluation process, we’ve explored various options for replacing this legacy equipment. In this presentation, we’ll delve into the reasons behind our companies’ decision to adopt the SEL ICON. Additionally, we’ll examine the results of lab testing and evaluate the performance of this multiplexer. Lastly, we’ll discuss the differences in our planned deployments between GCPUD and Avista.

9:15 – 10:15 am      **Network Performance Situational Awareness Training with Idaho Power**

**Speaker:**              **Shaun Skidmore PE, Communications Principal Engineer, Idaho Power**

Idaho Power Company (IPC) is, like everyone, implementing new technologies to improve grid reliability and decrease costs. In this session we will dive into current efforts to extend IPC’s owned satellite system to reclosers, encrypted cellular MPLS service delivery with “one SIM to rule them all”, and trunked radio data harvesting for coverage mapping and mobile radio diagnosis.

10:15 – 10:30 am      **Wrap-Up and Adjournment**