

Preliminary Meeting Agenda

Monday, February 3

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Welcome Reception at Top Golf located on the lobby level of the Silver Legacy

Tuesday, February 4

7:00 AM

Registration & Breakfast

8:00 – 8:15 AM

Welcome Remarks

Speakers:

UTC National Officers and Regional Chairs
Anthony Romero, Tri-State G&T, Region 8 Chair
Shawna Kiesbuy, Avista, Region 9 Chair
Khai Tran, SMUD, Region 10 Chair
Gary Vondrasek, JEA, UTC Board Chair
Rusty Williams, UTC President & CEO

8:15 – 9:15 AM

Volt Typhoon: Understanding and Mitigating ‘Living off the Land’ Attacks

In recent months numerous critical infrastructure operators have had their IT systems compromised by the foreign-sponsored ransomware group, Volt Typhoon. Volt Typhoon poses a significant risk to critical infrastructure, particularly targeting Active Directory (AD) systems. Volt Typhoon exploits known, or zero-day vulnerabilities found in public-facing network appliances such as VPNs, firewalls, and routers to initially breach the IT network.

The usage of Living-off-the-land Techniques allows threat actors to blend into an environment as a trusted user, meaning that traditional network security controls often fail to identify their presence. The need for an adopted security mindset is more prevalent than ever before. Utilities need to do more to protect their data and update their security strategies to battle against sophisticated threats effectively.

In this session, Certes CTO Simon Pamplin will be evaluating increasing prevalent TTPs utilized by threat actors, how AI can provide further arm adversaries to create havoc, and most importantly, mitigation steps that can be taken to mitigate the risk of a data breach even when a bad actor is inside your network using legitimate user credentials.

A Use Case will also be discussed that demonstrates how sensitive applications such as Active Directory can be secured to prevent TTPs such as Privilege Escalation, Lateral Movement and Credential Theft.

Utilities Technology Forum – Agenda Continued

9:15 – 10:15 AM

PLTE: funding and governance model and jurisdiction (Developing business and financial strategies for transitioning from existing comm systems to PLTE/5G)

Transitioning from one communications technology to another is never easy. It involves a lot of strategy, planning, engineering, and design to be able to move from existing communications systems to a new communications system like private LTE/5G. The first steps of an initiative of this magnitude are to develop the business and financial strategies that show the reasons and benefits of taking on such technological transitions. Knowing how to approach developing these strategies and work with the various stakeholders is key to being successful. Stakeholders include those who are responsible for making the decisions on transitioning from existing communications systems to the proposed new communication system like private LTE/5G. Stakeholders who are responsible for the planning, architecture, engineering, and operations of existing grid communications systems and the new grid communication system. And stakeholders from engineers to managers, directors, vice presidents, CTOs, CFOs, COOs, and CEOs. Developing the right business and financial strategies for all stakeholders requires working with each and developing the right set of information for each group: information that is necessary for them to make their decisions.

10:15 – 10:45 AM

Networking Break

10:45 – 11:45 AM

UTC President & CEO Address

Speaker:

Rusty Williams, President & CEO, UTC

Join UTC President and CEO Rusty Williams as he discusses the latest events across the UTC association. He plans to discuss the development of the latest UTC Strategic Plan, the latest advocacy issues, and many other relevant industry topics.

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Networking Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 PM

Leveraging Low Earth Orbit Satellite Networks to Strengthen Utility Communications

Utilities are facing mounting pressure to support growing bandwidth demands, improve resiliency, and maintain real-time communications across increasingly complex systems. Recent hurricanes exposed critical vulnerabilities in traditional communication infrastructures, further underscoring the need for more robust and adaptive networks.

This presentation will delve into the system weaknesses revealed by this year's hurricane season and examine how utilities can leverage Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite networks such as Starlink to mitigate future risks. Utilities currently using Starlink will share strategies for utilizing Starlink to maintain connectivity when terrestrial infrastructure is compromised.

Join us to discover how LEO satellite networks can enhance resiliency, ensure uninterrupted service, and redefine the future of utility communications in the face of increasingly unpredictable challenges.

Utilities Technology Forum – Agenda Continued

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Advocacy Update

Speaker:

Brett Kilbourne, SVP of Policy & General Counsel - UTC

UTC continues to advocate at the FCC and Congress, as well as the states to promote the telecommunications and information technology interests of utilities. This session will provide an update on the latest developments in wireless, broadband, infrastructure and security policies. On the wireless front, there are emerging threats in terms of potential radiofrequency interference and there are new opportunities to access spectrum. Meanwhile, broadband funding presents opportunities for utilities and challenges from additional demands for access to utility pole, ducts, conduit and rights-of-way. Finally, additional security requirements are under consideration, including cyber incident reporting for critical infrastructure. Don't miss this important presentation from UTC, where you can ask your questions and provide your ideas on these emerging advocacy issues.

3:00 – 3:30 PM

Networking Break

3:30 – 4:30 PM

Evolving AMI 2.0 with 5G Redcap

As the utility world evolves to 5G for its ability to reduce latency and access to higher bands like mmWave technology, the industry needs a lower-cost chipset. NR-Light, also known as RedCap (Reduced Capacity), is set to debut next year with chipsets that will enable a wide range of devices, from traffic cameras to parking meters. RedCap is not just a solution but a key player in this evolution, expected to integrate billions of new devices into global 5G networks and expand 5G applications across industries.

RedCap was incorporated into the Release 17 standard as NR-Light in 2022, with chipsets in 2024, promising a shift from LTE to more efficient 5G networks and expanding IoT applications. For utility customers transitioning their Field Area Networks to 5G, Redcap can be leveraged to address the growing need for low-cost, low-complexity wireless modems to connect these devices and support a variety of applications on a single 5G network.

This talk will discuss how RedCap devices can be leveraged for utility use cases including utility metering (AMI 2.0), Distribution Automation etc., among other general deployment topics. One such use case with SCE will explore how RedCap plays into their AMI 2.0 metering network strategy.

Utility Speaker

4:30 – 5:00 PM

State of the Union Utility Presentations

Speakers:

Anthony Romero, Tri-State G&T, Region 8 Chair

Shawna Kiesbuy, Avista, Region 9 Chair

Khai Tran, SMUD, Region 10 Chair

The State of the Union Presentation is an opportunity to give an update on staff, projects, and plans taking place at each utility. The presentations are generally more specific to the telecom and IT areas, but interesting and major projects in other departments will often be discussed as well. The

Utilities Technology Forum – Agenda Continued

presentations are a good way to promote discussion between utilities about ongoing projects, lessons learned, etc.

5:00 – 7:00 PM **Exhibit Hall Grand Opening Reception**

Please visit the Exhibit Hall hosted by our vendors. This is an outstanding opportunity to see the latest technology in our industry, plus network with peers and vendor partners.

Wednesday, February 5

7:00 AM **Registration & Breakfast**

8:00 – 9:00 AM **Packet Transition Workshop I**

- **Demonstration of Idaho Power’s custom in-house built packet network alarming, synchronization, and troubleshooting tools**

The presentation covered Idaho Power’s in-house developed tools for visualizing and analyzing packet network synchronization status and synchronization issues. Those tools are both tabular and graphical and give the network operator the tools to identify synchronization problems and where in the network those problems are coming from. In the case of no synchronization issues, the tools allow the operator to have confidence that there are not any issues, rather than flying blindly and hoping nothing is an issue.

- **Timing Testing**

Testing for timing accuracy has been historically convoluted and requires specialized test sets. Understanding the different aspects of time becomes critical to operating and keeping the tests relevant to the timing application under test. This presentation covers topics like timing designs, timing quality, explanations of standards, and different benchmarks for timing testing. The end of the presentation covers two PTP testing examples and a SyncE testing example.

9:00 – 10:00 AM **GCPUD & Avista Utilities Panel: Why We’re Choosing to Leverage the SEL ICON Now and for Our Future**

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.

10:00 – 10:30 AM **Networking Break**

10:30 – 11:30 AM **MPLS: Packet Network Transition**

Utilities Technology Forum – Agenda Continued

The packet transition process is critical to the success of updating critical infrastructure before legacy systems are no longer sustainable for repair and operational needs. This presentation will discuss challenges from different utilities that are at different points along the packet transition process, what others are facing, and what others have learned from lessons along the journey

11:30 – 1:30 PM Networking Lunch with Exhibitors & Exclusive Exhibit Time

Please visit the Exhibit Hall hosted by our vendors. This is an outstanding opportunity to see the latest technology in our industry, plus network with peers and vendor partners.

1:30 – 2:15 PM Individual Regional Meetings

- Region 8 meets in Silver Room
- Region 9 meets in Gold Room
- Region 10 meets in General Session Room

2:15 – 3:00 PM Combined Regional Meeting in General Session Room

3:00 – 4:00 PM PLTE: Technical Session

This session offers crucial insights for PLTE deployments. It covers PLTE-specific features, the "Reuse 1" concept, and adaptive modulation techniques. The presentation explores the intricate relationship between interference and traffic, addressing considerations for both fixed and mobile use cases. It concludes with strategies for planning based on anticipated applications, providing attendees with a comprehensive understanding of key LTE deployment factors.

5:00 – 7:30 PM Networking Reception at National Bowling Museum

Thursday, February 6

8:00 AM Breakfast

9:00 – 10:00 AM Comarch – Platinum Sponsor

10:00 – 10:30 AM Networking Break

10:30 – 11:30 AM OPGW Grounding Techniques for Safe Fiber Splicing

OPGW Grounding Techniques for Safe Fiber Splicing, outlines critical safety protocols and procedures for preparing Optical Ground Wire (OPGW) splicing on high-voltage transmission lines. OPGW serves a dual function as both a ground wire for fault current protection and a medium for telecommunications via embedded optical fibers. To maintain system integrity and ensure the safety of personnel, grounding techniques are essential when accessing and splicing OPGW fibers.

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM Prize Drawings & Wrap-Up