

S&C Electric insights on grid resiliency and reliability

BY ROD WALTON | 3.9.2020



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S&C Electric has a unique, long-term view on the switching and protection sides of the power grid, having designed and manufactured products for 109 years. Its experts have a pretty good understanding of customer expectations surrounding grid reliability.

The Chicago-based company was at DISTRIBUTECH International in San Antonio recently, unveiling its new "Reliability Experience" at the feeder, lateral and grid edge locations. Andrew Jones, senior vice president of global sales for S&C, answered a few questions from Clarion Energy Content Director Rod Walton.

1. Tell us about the new S&C reliability experience that was unveiled at DistribuTECH?

"S&C Electric Company's 2020 Augmented Reality Reliability Experience was designed to reinforce the importance of improved grid reliability at feeder, lateral, and grid edge locations. The demo projected attendees into three scenarios utilities commonly face, at various locations on the grid, to show the value of innovative grid solutions. Reliability improvements at any location on the grid will benefit both a utility and end customers, but a comprehensive approach, looking at all three locations, provides the best combination of increased reliability scores, lowered O&M costs, and improved customer satisfaction."

2. Give us a quick history lesson on S&C, and what's changed the most about the company during that time?

"S&C was founded in Chicago in 1911, and we have a history of over 100 years of innovation. Starting with the liquid power fuse all the way to our most recent product launch, the VacuFuse™ Self-Resetting Interrupter, S&C has always championed innovation. Throughout our history we have introduced unique technology that minimizes the impact of, and can even prevent, power outages. Over the last 100 years, lots has changed. We moved to a bigger manufacturing site in the city of Chicago, we developed new products, and we hired new people, but at the core, S&C remains the same: committed to improving the performance of the grid and providing utilities and other power customers with safe and reliable grid solutions."

3. What are the biggest T&D and smart-grid trends you see coming for 2020?

"In 2020, the biggest trend we will see continue to grow is a push for improved reliability. But, this



trend of reliability is supported by a variety of other trends: No. 1, we will see utilities place an increased focus on their distributions systems. These utilities will be looking at reliability solutions that help mitigate outages in the last mile of line.

"No. 2, we will also see utilities place an increased focus on their customer's experience. Much of the work being done in the reliability space is to provide a better power experience for power users, regardless of where they are on the grid. Solutions to lessen momentary outages falls in this category as well.

"In 2020 we will also see more utilities taking steps to harden their grid, one of which will be the undergrounding of power lines. This solution is very effective for areas with severe weather concerns and will help restore power to service areas quicker following a disaster.

4. Regulations seem to be slackening under this US presidential administration, but they could go the other direction if a new leader is elected. How do utilities and their suppliers deal with this volatility in government expectations?

"The challenge in the US is the multiple regulators that are at the state level. National policy does have some impact, but the biggest impact on regulation does come from the state level. The major challenge the industry is facing is that there are multiple regulators throughout the US are trying to cover the needs of Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) and Customer Owned Utilities such as Co-ops and Municipals. This diversity of regulations makes it difficult for utilities and their suppliers because there is no real certainty. There is also a shift throughout the country towards Performance Based Regulation (PBR)."