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The distribution grid is entering a new operational era. At the end of 2025, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory reported that approximately 8,200 projects were actively seeking U.S. grid interconnection, representing more than 1,300 GW of generation and nearly 750 GW of storage. As distributed resources, electrification and flexible loads place new demands on existing infrastructure, utilities must move beyond traditional planning approaches and operate the grid with greater intelligence, visibility, coordination and control.



The **Grid Intelligence & Flexibility Forum** examines how utilities and their partners are translating these capabilities into practical distribution-system operations. This focused, executive networking and educational program will explore DERMS deployment, virtual power plant integration, flexible interconnection, advanced forecasting and analytics, ADMS–DERMS coordination, grid-capacity optimization and the use of distributed flexibility to improve reliability, affordability and resilience.

Join us in San Diego to connect with the utility leaders, technology providers, and other market stakeholders shaping the next generation of distribution operations. Whether your organization is advancing DER integration, VPP deployment, flexible interconnection, grid intelligence or distribution resilience, the Forum provides an in-depth setting to share implementation lessons, explore emerging strategies, build partnerships and help define the operational future of the grid.

Key Themes:

- DERMS as the Operational Backbone of the Grid Edge
- Virtual Power Plants and Aggregated Flexibility
- Flexible Interconnection and Hosting Capacity
- Distribution Resilience and Grid-Aware Operations
- Forecasting, Visibility, and Real-Time Decision Support
- Utility Business Models and Regulatory Evolution

Organized by: **SGO** Smart Grid Observer

Preliminary Agenda

Note: Subject to change. If interested in speaking, please contact us at speak@grid-flex-forum.com

Tuesday, January 26, 2027

9:00–9:30 am

Opening Address: From Grid Modernization to Grid Intelligence

A strategic look at how utilities can move beyond conventional grid modernization toward a more adaptive, data-driven and flexible distribution system

- Responding to electrification, DER growth and changing load patterns
- Making flexibility a core distribution-system capability
- Connecting grid investments with operational priorities
- Defining the intelligent distribution utility of the future

9:30–10:30 am

Session 1: The New Distribution Operating Model

Examines how utilities are adapting their planning and operational models as customers, aggregators and distributed resources become active grid participants.

- Managing increasingly dynamic and multidirectional power flows
- Redefining utility, aggregator and customer responsibilities
- Integrating flexibility into routine distribution operations
- Aligning organizational structures with emerging grid capabilities

10:30–11:00 am

Morning Coffee and Networking Break

11:00 am–12:15 pm

Session 2: DERMS in Practice—Moving from Visibility to Active Orchestration

How DERMS is progressing from monitoring and situational awareness toward real-time coordination, control and optimization of distributed resources

- Integrating DERMS with ADMS, SCADA, OMS and planning platforms
- Coordinating front-of-the-meter and behind-the-meter resources
- Prioritizing operational DERMS use cases and deployment phases
- Measuring the value and performance of DER orchestration

12:15–1:15 pm

Networking Lunch

1:15–2:30 pm

Session 3: Flexible Interconnection—Connecting More Resources Without Waiting for Traditional Upgrades

Explores interconnection approaches that use operating limits, active management and grid intelligence to accommodate DER growth more quickly and affordably.

- Applying dynamic and flexible operating envelopes
- Establishing curtailment rules, controls and customer agreements
- Using real-time grid conditions to manage interconnection capacity
- Balancing faster interconnection with reliability and customer certainty

2:30–3:00 pm

Afternoon Coffee and Networking Break

3:00–4:15 pm

Session 4: Distribution Planning for a High-DER, High-Load-Growth Future

4:15–4:30 pm

Coffee Break

4:30–5:15 pm

Session 5: Unlocking Grid Capacity Through Distributed Flexibility

Examines how utilities can use flexible resources to relieve constraints, improve asset utilization and defer selected distribution-system investments

- Identifying locations and time periods where flexibility has value
- Comparing flexible resources with conventional grid upgrades
- Procuring and dispatching flexibility for local system needs
- Measuring performance and incorporating flexibility into planning

5:15–6:45 pm

Reception

Wednesday, January 27, 2027

9:00–9:30 am

Opening Address: From Flexibility Pilots to Utility-Scale Operations

A look at what utilities, regulators and technology providers must accomplish to make distributed flexibility dependable, repeatable and scalable

- Moving from demonstrations to durable operating programs
- Establishing repeatable technical and commercial frameworks
- Overcoming organizational, regulatory and data barriers
- Building confidence in flexible resources as grid assets

9:30–10:30 am

Session 6: VPPs as Distribution-System Resources

How virtual power plants can support local distribution needs in addition to providing wholesale-market and system-level services

- Coordinating VPP dispatch with distribution constraints
- Improving utility visibility into aggregated resource portfolios
- Managing conflicts among customer, market and grid objectives
- Developing utility-aggregator operating protocols

10:30–11:00 am

Morning Coffee and Networking Break

11:00 am–12:15 pm

Session 7: Data, Analytics and AI for Real-Time Distribution Intelligence

Turning expanding volumes of grid and customer data into better forecasts, faster decisions and more effective operational control.

- Combining AMI, sensor, DER and network-model data
- Improving load, generation and flexibility forecasting
- Applying AI to anomaly detection and operational decision support
- Maintaining data quality, governance, privacy and cybersecurity

12:15–1:15 pm

Networking Lunch

1:15–2:30 pm

Session 8: Operating Across the ADMS–DERMS–Grid Edge Continuum

This technical panel addresses the integration architecture required to coordinate control-room systems, distributed platforms, field devices and customer resources.

- Defining the respective roles of ADMS, DERMS and edge controls
- Establishing reliable data and command flows across platforms
- Managing latency, communications failures and system boundaries
- Avoiding fragmented applications and overlapping functionality

2:30–3:00 pm

Afternoon Coffee and Networking Break

3:00–4:00 pm

Session 9: Building the Resilient, Flexible Distribution Utility

Key perspectives on how grid intelligence and flexibility can become standard elements of distribution planning and operations

- Integrating resilience, affordability and decarbonization objectives
- Prioritizing investments across software, communications and infrastructure
- Developing the workforce and organizational capabilities required
- Establishing a practical roadmap for the next three to five years

Speaking Opportunities

Industry professionals who are interested in sharing real-world experience, implementation lessons, case studies, emerging strategies and forward-looking insights are encouraged to submit a speaking proposal.

To submit a proposal, please send the following information by **Friday, September 125, 2026** to speak@grid-flex-forum.com:

- Presentation title
- Panel session in which you wish the presentation to be situated
- Abstract (150-200 words)
- Speaker bio and photo
- 4-5 Key Takeaway bullets
- Speaker contact information (email address)

Presentations must be non-commercial in nature. Proposals for 60-75 minute panel sessions, in lieu of one of the sessions listed above, are also welcome.

Proposals for 30-minute, stand-alone presentations may also be submitted.

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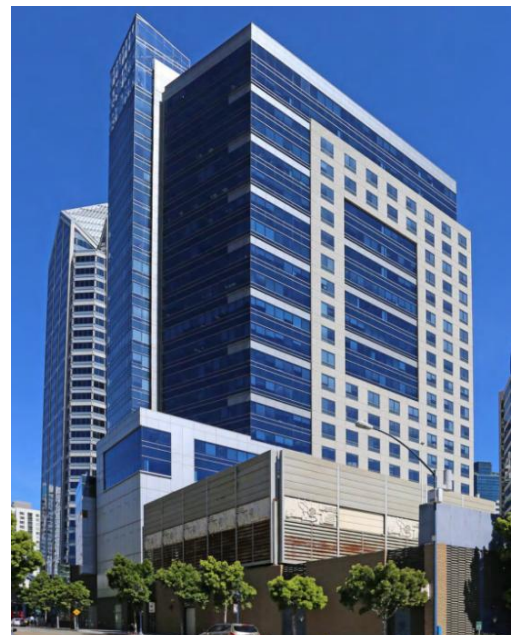
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Event Venue

IQ Smart Executive Conference Center

655 West Broadway, San Diego

Located in downtown San Diego, the IQ Smart Executive Conference Center is in the heart of the city's magnificent marina and business district, just steps away from marvelous restaurants, hotels and retail shopping.



About the Organizer



The *Smart Grid Observer* is an online information resource serving the global smart energy industry. SGO delivers the latest news and information on a daily basis concerning key technology developments, deployment updates, standards work, business issues, and market trends worldwide. SGO produces several conferences each year on topics such as microgrids, grid modernization, data centers, EV charging, V2G, cybersecurity, distributed energy resources, and more.

For a list of upcoming and recently concluded SGO conferences, visit <https://smartgridobserver.com/events>

Sample Feedback on Related SGO Forums:

"Great new topics and new information from presentations. Well done!"

- *Steffen Ziegler, Director - Signal Analysis and AI, IMCORP*

"The information exchanged here was incredibly useful"

- *Melanie Moore, Union of Concerned Scientists*

"Exceeded expectations - valuable return on time and resources invested. Provided in-depth information on grid mod / renewable energy adoption, implementations, equipment, metrics, lessons learned, market trends, etc. Well represented in terms of utilities, consultants, renewable energy companies, etc. Good ability to meet and learn from others. I came to learn, and most others did as well."

- *Nancy Casey, Vew2040*

"Great forum, great group and list of attendees and presenters"

- *Hitesh Tanwani, GE Renewable Energy*



Previous Attendees of Recent SGO Forums on Grid Modernization Include:

ABB	Environmental Defense Fund	NRG Energy
Accenture Strategy	ESTA International	NRG Evgo
AECOM AES Corporation	Eversource Energy	Oncor Electric Delivery
Alliant Energy	EV Connect	Open Access Technology International
Ameren	Evoke Systems	OpenADR Alliance
American Renewable Energy	G&W Electric	Pacific Northwest National Lab
Argonne National Laboratory	Gehrs Consulting	PJM Interconnection
Avangrid	GenCell	POSCO Research Institute
BC Hydro	Graycor	POWER Engineers
Black & Veatch	Greenlots	PowerRunner
Boice Dunham Group	Grid Deployment Office, U.S. Department of Energy	QualityLogic
Bourntec Solutions	Grid Strategies LLC	Quidnet Energy
BoxPower	GrowthFuel	Renewance
CB&I	Hammond Group, Inc.	Ryn Hamilton Consulting
CEIVA Energy	Hendrix Aerial Cable Systems	S&C Electric Company
Central Hudson Gas & Electric	Hitachi ABB	Sargent & Lundy LLC
Chicago Booth School of Business	ICF International	Scale Energy Solutions
Cisco	ICE Energy	Schneider Electric
ClimateWire/Environment & Energy Publishing, LLC.	Illinois Commerce Commission	Schweitzer Engineering Labs
Commonwealth Edison	Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)	Sense
Con Edison	INTECH	SMUD
CPS Energy	IPERC	Southern California Edison
Customized Energy Solutions	Joule Assets	Southern Company
DataCapable	Kisensum	Sterling Energy Assets
DataInsights	Korea Polytechnic University	Sunrun
DCPSC	Landis+Gyr	Swift Current Advisors
Deloitte Consulting	Leidos Engineering	Tennessee Valley Authority
Department of Energy and Environment, District of Columbia	LEM USA Inc.	The Blackstone Group, Inc.
DePaul University	Lockheed Martin Energy	The Brattle Group
DNV	Market Strategies International	Union of Concerned Scientists
E9 Insight	Michaels Energy	U.S. Commercial Service - Chicago
Eaton	Microgrid Institute	U.S. Department of Energy
Edison Electric Institute	Mitsubishi Electric	University of Illinois – Chicago
Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)	Modern Grid Solutions	University of Minnesota
Elevate Energy	Midwest Energy News	Utilidata
Elmar	Midwest Energy Research Consortium	UtiliWorks Consulting
eluminocity US Inc.	National Grid	Wartsila
Enbala Power Networks	Natural Resources Defense Council	WeaveGrid
Enchanted Rock	NEMA	WECC
EnergyHub	Nexant	West Monroe Partners
EnergySavvy	NextEnergy	WindyCitySDR
Energyworx	New York State Smart Grid Consortium	WIPRO
EnerNex	Nord Strategy Group	Wood Mackenzie
Enphase Energy	Northern Power	Woolpert Inc.
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\$5,500

- Top-level logo recognition as Gold-Level Sponsor Speaking
- Speaking slot on panel session or stand-alone
- Tabletop exhibit in networking break area
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- Top logo positioning in Official Program Guide, event website, and email communications
- Corporate description on event website
- Logo in on-site banners and signage
- Dedicated floor-standing banner (provided by sponsor)
- Company information or flyer distributed to all attendees at check-in
- Attendee List

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- 20% off additional registrations
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- Corporate description on event website
- Logo positioning in on-site banners and signage
- Dedicated floor-standing banner (provided by sponsor)
- Attendee List

Bronze Level Sponsor

\$2,500

- Logo recognition as Bronze-Level Sponsor
- 1 complimentary conference pass
- 15% off additional registrations
- Logo positioning in Official Program Guide and event website
- Corporate description on event website
- Logo recognition in on-site banners and signage
- Attendee List

To arrange your participation, contact us at sponsor@grid-flex-forum.com

Registration

Includes access to all sessions on January 26-27, as well as copy of presentation PDFs, attendee list, access to tabletop exhibits, networking lunches, coffee breaks and drink reception.

Early Bird Standard

\$795.00

Equipment and software vendors, consultants, and services providers.

Available until December 18 -- \$995.00 thereafter

Early Bird Utilities and Energy Providers

\$695.00

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Early Bird Non-Profit, Academic and Government

\$595.00

For academic, government and non-profit organizations, an .edu, .gov or .org

email address is required. Available until December 18 -- \$795.00 thereafter

To register securely online, visit: <https://grid-flex-forum.com/register>