

Current Challenges in the Electric Utility Industry

Tuesday, October 28, 2025
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
E-Hall 136

Reception to follow
3:00 pm – 3:20 pm
E-Hall 136



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ABSTRACT: The electric utility industry has a history of slow and steady evolution. The pace of change over the last 5 years has skyrocketed, and system operators are challenged to manage the rapidly changing grid in a way that continues to meet the public's expectation of always available utility power. This presentation will speak to these changes, the challenges they present, and how grid operators continue to run the bulk electric system with a high level of reliability every day.

BIOGRAPHY: Rick received his Bachelor of Science (summa cum laude) in Electrical Engineering from Michigan Technological University (Houghton, MI) in 1991, with a degree emphasis in Power and Machinery. He worked for Cooper Power Systems from 1991-2002 in distribution transformer design and received a patent in 2000 as part of a team developing a synthetically reinforced insulation paper. Rick started at We Energies in 2002 in Electric System Operations as an operations engineer and then a real-time system operator. He is currently Manager, System Reliability where he oversees Local Balancing Authority operations, which encompasses all of WEC Energy Group electric service areas in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan for 1.7 million electric customers and 9,500 MW of peak demand. Rick is a member of IEEE, a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Wisconsin, and a NERC Certified System Operator – Reliability.