



SCHWEITZER ENGINEERING LABORATORIES, INC.

2350 NE Hopkins Court • Pullman, WA 99163-5603 USA
Phone: +1.509.332.1890 • Fax: +1.509.332.7990
www.selinc.com • info@selinc.com

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For more information, contact:

Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Inc. (SEL)

Phone: +1.509.332.1890

Fax: +1.509.332.7990

Email: info@selinc.com

SEL President Edmund O. Schweitzer Discusses Smart Grid Challenges in NRTC Keynote Discussion

PULLMAN, WA — February 19, 2009 — Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Inc. (SEL) President and CEO Dr. Edmund O. Schweitzer participated in the keynote discussion, "Putting the Smart Grid Into Action," at the National Rural Telecommunications Council (NRTC) Annual Meeting in New Orleans on February 15. Schweitzer's comments focused on electric power industry advances made in the area of smart technology. Topics ranged from the introduction of digital protective relays to local processing facilitated by synchrophasors. He also highlighted challenges that the industry faces as well as his vision for the future of smart technology.

The panel focused on practical, relevant smart grid technologies that are ready today for implementation at rural electric cooperatives. In addition to Schweitzer, discussion participants included Jason Makansi, author of *Lights Out: The Electricity Crisis, the Global Economy, and What It Means to You*, and Joel Cannon, cofounder of Cannon Technologies. Bob Phillips, president and CEO of NRTC, facilitated the discussion.

When identifying the critical factors necessary for making the grid smart, Schweitzer addressed the need to upgrade from electromechanical to digital protective relays. "There are a lot of electromechanical relays still in use that need to be replaced, especially since old electromechanical relays do not work with renewable energy sources like solar and wind. Digital relays are also 'greener.' I really think this technology is the way to go."

Schweitzer spoke about the challenge of moving power both ways on a line. Much of today's electric power grid, he indicated, was neither designed nor constructed for the two-way flow of power necessary for additions such as plug-in electric vehicles. These challenges will need to be addressed when moving forward with smart solutions.

SEL designs, manufactures, and services complete solutions for the protection, control, automation, and metering of electric power systems worldwide. The company employs 1,800 people in more than 70 locations around the world and sells products in 126 countries. SEL offers unmatched local technical support, a worldwide, ten-year product warranty, and a commitment to making electric power safer, more reliable, and more economical.

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