Join Cooperatives in the Holiday Weight Maintenance Challenge

Central Alabama Electric Cooperative issues a challenge: if your co-op can collectively maintain or lose body weight over the holidays, you might just become the Challenge Champions and lay claim to the Victory trophy for 2016!

For the past couple of years, Central Alabama EC (CAEC) has been spearheading a cooperative challenge aimed at helping us all have a healthier holiday season. Putting on a little “holiday heft” does not have to be inevitable, and it’s a lot easier to avoid gaining weight than it is to lose it! Get your entire co-op involved in the competition and you might just get to put the Victory trophy in your lobby for the next 12 months — that is, if you can win it away from Taylor EC in Texas, winners two years in a row. If you’re interested in competing, download the details and then contact Mark Lehmkuhl at CAEC to get started (see download for contact info).

SEDC & Futura Systems Win “Best Smart Grid Solution” Award

The Smart Grid Summits represent a quality, hands-on experience where high level executives interact with industry leading vendors, analysts and federal agencies.

SEDC and Futura’s CatalystIQ analytics platform was recognized with the “Best Smart Grid Solution” award for presenting the most exciting and innovative product or solution at the Rural Smart Grid Summit, held November 1 - 3, 2015, in California.

The Smart Grid Summit offers attendees a unique opportunity for sampling best in class solutions, tools and products for utilities. Over the course of two days, attendees participate in multiple “boardroom” sessions presented by well-known companies such as GE, Sensus, Cooper Power Systems, AT&T, Landis+Gyr, SEDC, Futura Systems, and others. After sampling all the solutions offered, the attendees vote on three awards: Best Overall Vendor Presentation; Best Smart Grid Solution; and Vendor to Watch.

After the SEDC/Futura team demonstrated CatalystIQ’s powerful analytic capabilities to 120 executives from over 60 utilities, attendees selected CatalystIQ as the “Best Smart Grid Solution” and then further honored SEDC and Futura with runner-up status for the “Best Overall Vendor Presentation.”

CEO RB Sloan points out the collaboration between the SEDC and Futura teams as key to the success of the IQ platform. “This is an enterprise award in every way. Our teams have worked together to create an enterprise solution that really does help utilities share information and communicate better,” he states, “and that leads to more informed decisions at every level.”

This is the second time the CatalystIQ solution has been honored by attendees at a Smart Grid Summit. In June, attendees at the Municipal Smart Grid Summit voted Futura Systems the “Top Vendor to Watch” for the utility-wide web GIS solutions CatalystIQ and FieldPro.

For more information on our IQ analytics platform, contact businessdevelopment@sedata.com.
Update: Member Enrichment Meetings and Regional User Group Meetings

This fall, for the third consecutive year, we hosted our Member Enrichment Meetings in conjunction with the NRECA Region Meetings. These enrichment meetings are an opportunity for us to share with you SEDC’s current happenings, where we’re going in the next year, and – more broadly – our development plans going forward. At this year’s events, we discussed SEDC’s financial stability, our growth in new customers, expanded Territory Manager focus, and our exciting development strategy for the future.

This year’s TVA Regional User Group meeting in October saw our largest attendance yet, with over 140 attendees taking part in two days of sessions focused on new functionality and TVA-related software updates. The Midwest User Group (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and Ohio) also met in October and also built an agenda around new features, such as UPN Automation and CFC Form 7 integration, among other topics. The Southwest User Group (Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Arizona) met last week in Texas, where they hosted over 100 attendees to discuss everything from automation to bank reconciliation and ACA requirements, as well as an engineering session hosted by Futura Systems.

Regional User Group meetings are excellent supplements to our Annual User Conference, and allow regional “neighbors” to structure the meeting agenda around specific topics and interests, such as deploying prepaid metering or, in the case of TVA utilities, structuring rates properly. If you’re interested in organizing a Regional User Group in your area in 2016, contact your Territory Manager.

PCI Compliance: What Should You Be Doing?

3 Key Steps Toward Compliance


These aren’t just buzzwords; they’ve become part and parcel of doing business, and they cannot be ignored. The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) have been put in place to help you protect your consumers’ critical information and to help you improve your network cybersecurity. In a nutshell, PCI DSS involves maintaining a secure network, implementing internal controls, and performing regular testing. To achieve this, you need to:

• Complete a Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ). The SAQ will help you evaluate your actual compliance levels.
• Schedule a Penetration Test. This is a safe, controlled attempt to breach your data conducted by a firm that specializes in network security and assists with PCI compliance.
• Complete Quarterly Scans from an Approved Scanning Vendor (ASV). These scans use automated tools to check your system for vulnerabilities.

Who Can You Turn to for Help?

We know you can’t do this on your own, so over the past several months we’ve been introducing you to three good companies that can provide the tools and resources you need. McGriff, Seibels & Williams, Inc. offers comprehensive cyber liability insurance coverage. Elavon offers an extensive...
PCI Resources: What Companies Can Help You Maintain Compliance with the PCI DSS?

McGriff, Seibels & Williams, Inc.
Matt Little
Senior Vice President
mlittle@mcgriff.com
404-847-1647

Sunera
Dan Williams
Security Sales Engineer
dwilliams@sunera.com
330-354-4413

Elavon
sysnet@sedata.com

PCI program through their PCI Compliance Manager tool. Sunera provides self-assessment questionnaire assistance, penetration testing, gap analysis, and PCI compliance roadmaps that may be integrated with other compliance efforts to reduce the cost of compliance as a whole.

In particular, SEDC and Elavon have partnered to provide PCI Compliance Manager, an online tool that helps you report and maintain compliance with the PCI DSS by offering:

• Tools: The online portal takes you step-by-step through the PCI compliance process including assistance with the PCI Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) and vulnerability scanning (if applicable).

• Education: Access to valuable tips and information that make it easy to understand how you can safeguard your business.

• Support: Access to Elavon’s PCI professionals when you need it. We have answers to your PCI questions through online help, email and phone.

• Financial Protection: Elavon’s PCI program provides up to $100,000.00 of data breach protection per Customer ID number if you are enrolled in Elavon’s program and have certified your PCI compliance.

For more information about PCI Compliance Manager, contact sysnet@sedata.com.

Budget Planning? Here Are Some Items, Events and Training Opportunities You May Need to Include

If you’re currently using Remote Payment Terminals, any workstations with the Windows Vista operating system, or our legacy cash register system, plan ahead for required upgrades in 2016.

If your utility is still using UPN’s “original” cash register system, it’s time to upgrade to our Advanced Cash Register. We first announced the beginning of the end of life cycle for that cash register system back in August, 2010. With our next UPN general release, we will no longer offer what we’ve come to affectionately call “the old cash register.” If you are still using that system, please contact Jeff Smith (jeffs@sedata.com) in our hardware sales team for a quotation for licensing and hardware for the Advanced Cash Register system.

Microsoft has set the absolute end of life and extended support for the Windows Vista operating system at April 11, 2017. Mainstream support for Vista ended in 2012. If your utility is still using workstations with Windows Vista, your machines are likely not going to be compatible with the UPN software moving forward. The last service pack updates for Vista were released in 2009, and the operating system is rapidly being left behind by newer software applications and browsers – leaving you with workstations that will soon be unable to run UPN. Plan to upgrade those workstations as quickly as possible.

Our Remote Payment Terminals have traditionally used the Vista operating system, but we are currently testing the Windows 10 operating system and will be requiring upgrades to all RPS terminals in early 2016.

• For those utilities currently using the Dell OptiPlex 7010 and 9020 models, Technical Services will be offering a field upgrade option as soon as the testing is complete. Field upgrade packages will offer the convenience of “plug and play” OS installation directly from a USB thumb drive. The field upgrade fee for each terminal is $500.00.

Thanksgiving Holiday Support Hours

SEDC’s offices will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 26 and 27, to observe the Thanksgiving holiday. We will offer Accounting, Billing, and Technical (Systems and Networking) on-call support on Saturday, November 28, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Eastern.

Our normal office hours will resume Monday, November 30, at 8:00 AM Eastern.

Continued next page...
Older Dell OptiPlex models 755/780/790 are not compatible with Windows 10 and will need to be replaced with compatible hardware. For a quotation, please contact our hardware sales team.

Get a jump on your User Conference planning as well — we’re offering new pre-conference training options!

UC2016 will be held June 19 – 23, 2016, at the Renaissance Atlanta Waverly Hotel here in Atlanta, Georgia.

- The registration fee to attend the full conference is $800.00.
- The registration fee to attend two consecutive days is $400.00.
- The registration fee to attend one single day is $250.00.

We will be offering pre-conference workshops on Sunday, June 19. These workshops are available to registered conference attendees only. Each workshop is limited to 30 attendees.

- ReportIQ Hands-On Training: Leverage Your Data for Maximum Benefit. 4 hours. $300.00
- Medallion Silver level courses will be offered. 2 hours per course. $100.00 per course.

Our group rate with the hotel is $149.00 per room, plus taxes and fees. Online reservations are now open through the hotel’s dedicated UC2016 booking page.

Medallion Certification Training Courses

We’ve officially launched our Medallion Certification training program, which is designed to help your new and seasoned employees continually expand their skills, while ensuring that retirements and attrition don’t drain your utility of the practical day-to-day knowledge that’s crucial to running your business.

There are four Medallion levels:

- The Bronze level provides an introduction to UPN, SEDC, and the world of utilities.
- The Silver level delivers a general understanding of each topic and a basic set of skills.
- The Gold level offers advanced courses to refine knowledge and develop a level of expertise in a chosen career path.
- The Platinum level ensures continued growth in that career path on an ongoing basis.

For the remainder of 2015 we’ll be offering Bronze and Silver level courses. We’ll also offer select Medallion courses in conjunction with UC2016.

For more information, contact your Territory Manager, see our Medallion FAQ, or download the Medallion Course Registration Quick Guide.