Pacific Gas and Electric Company®

External Communications Department
77 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
415/973-5930

NEWS
12.06

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 30, 2012

CONTACT: PG&E External Communications - (415) 973-5930

PG&E AND PICARRO DEMONSTRATE SUPER-SENSITIVE GAS LEAK DETECTOR

PG&E Tests New High-Tech, Car-Mounted Gas Detection Technology as Pipeline Safety Enhancement Measure

SANTA CLARA, Calif. – Testing ways that new technology can make natural gas pipelines safer, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and Picarro today demonstrated a car-mounted gas leak detection device that is much more sensitive than traditional instruments.

"The Picarro device is a powerful tool we are studying, and we are excited to be the first natural gas operator in the world to use it," said Nick Stavropoulos, PG&E's executive vice president of gas operations. "The fact that Picarro is known around the world for producing new generation gas analyzers and yet it is based right here in our service area— employing people who live and work alongside PG&E employees—makes this an exciting relationship."

Congressman Michael M. Honda, 15th Congressional District attended today's demonstration in Santa Clara.

"I am excited about Santa Clara based Picarro's new partnership with PG&E," said Honda. "Picarro's innovative technology will allow the detection of natural gas leaks more quickly and more frequently. This simple to use approach enables the detection of gas leaks by driving a vehicle equipped with the technology down the street. It employs world leading methane sensitivity to differentiate between gas leaks and methane from other sources to eliminate false negatives, coupled with smart software to eliminate false positives. This game changing approach, invented and built right here in Silicon Valley, will enable the identification and repair of gas leaks to help prevent any future disaster, which will protect the health and safety of my constituents."

The analyzer, made by Santa Clara-based Picarro, is designed to pick up trace amounts of natural gas in the atmosphere in real time. It is more sensitive than traditional gas detection devices, while at the same time able to scan an area much more quickly.

MORE

"We're excited to collaborate with PG&E and serve as the measurement and analytics platform for a new natural gas safety solution," said Mike Woelk, CEO of Picarro. "The mobility, durability and accuracy of Picarro Surveyor™, combined with our cloud based analytics will help improve leak detection for natural gas utilities around the country, significantly increasing customer safety and reducing monitoring and maintenance costs. As the first utility in the world to adopt this type of solution, PG&E should be applauded for taking such an innovative and proactive step to providing its millions of California customers with a better, safer customer experience."

Traditional leak detection devices locate hydrocarbons, which could range from a natural gas leak to decaying vegetation. Picarro's analyzers are sensitive to natural gas leaks using new technology that blocks all other gases.

PG&E sees the analyzer as an enhancement to its portfolio of solutions for detecting gas leaks along its vast network of transmission and distribution pipelines. The utility has initially ordered two devices and mounted them on electric vehicles to study the technology's capabilities. The car-mounted technology will move slowly through neighborhoods and alert nearby crews if it detects a gas leak.

"Because much of this leak survey work will be done at slower speeds, we wanted an environmentally friendly vehicle, with good gas mileage and less exhaust," said Stavropoulos.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of PG&E Corporation (NYSE:PCG), is one of the largest combined natural gas and electric utilities in the United States. Based in San Francisco, with 20,000 employees, the company delivers some of the nation's cleanest energy to 15 million people in Northern and Central California. For more information, visit http://www.pge.com/about/newsroom/.

For B-roll of the car mounted leak detection technology in action, please click on the following link:

https://download.yousendit.com/M3BsZFh1cTJOQnptcXRVag

- 30 -