



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

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

PG&E'S USE OF PICARRO TECHNOLOGY ENHANCES NATURAL GAS SYSTEM SAFETY THROUGHOUT PG&E SERVICE AREA

New Technology from Santa Clara-Based Company Helps Improve Ability to Detect Gas Leaks

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – As the first utility to use an innovative, super-sensitive, vehicle-mounted technology for detecting potential gas leaks, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) today announced two recent successes while using Picarro Surveyor™ systems in Northern California to detect potential gas leaks that would have previously been difficult to locate.

In Santa Clara, Calif., PG&E crews had spent months searching for a very small leak on a distribution feeder pipe off the Lawrence Expressway. Picarro Surveyor was brought in and identified the location of the previously undetectable leak. Additional PG&E crews were mobilized to the site and quickly repaired the leak—improving public safety while allowing crews to continue monitoring other parts of PG&E's gas system.

A potential gas leak in Northern California's East Bay recently required PG&E crews to spend a significant amount of time attempting to detect a source. After conducting walking surveys, lengthy permitting processes and seven separate investigative digs, a Picarro Surveyor system was deployed to assess the possibility of a leak. Readings from the system indicated that it was not a gas leak, but a natural breakdown of petrochemicals unrelated to PG&E's system.

“Picarro Surveyor allows us to not only locate hard-to-find leaks with greater accuracy that we didn't have before, but it also has the ability to distinguish between natural gas in PG&E's system and naturally occurring methane,” said Steve Redding, director of gas maintenance and construction for PG&E. “By deploying this technology in our service area, we are better equipped to manage our pipeline network and enhance the safety of our customers and employees. We have felt all along this technology would be a breakthrough in our goal to be the safest utility in the U.S., and now that we are using the instrument in the field, it is exciting to see how it enhances our gas operations.”

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PG&E expanded its partnership with Picarro, Inc. in October 2012 to purchase and deploy six Picarro Surveyors to enhance the safety and reliability of its natural gas system throughout its service area. In the future, Picarro Surveyor will be deployed into more communities in its service area, enhancing safety and helping avoid unnecessary digs and disruptions to customers.

Mounted on a PG&E vehicle, Picarro Surveyor measures and maps methane plumes in the air as the vehicle drives through neighborhoods—a dramatic improvement over the hand-held, less sensitive instruments used in walking surveys. The easy-to-use solution, which includes a high-precision gas analyzer and an online user-interface that provides real-time data on an iPad or other web-enabled device, alerts users and repair teams immediately upon leak detection. Picarro’s patented gas analysis technology is approximately 1,000-times more sensitive than traditional leak detection equipment, capable of detecting leaks down to one part per billion in ambient air while reducing false positives from naturally occurring methane.

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/> and www.pgecurrents.com.