

From: Doll, Laura
Sent: 3/3/2014 10:37:52 AM
To: Magee, Charles H. (charles.magee@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: RE: Notes from 2/28/14 Meeting at PG&E - Picarro Gas Optimization Pilot in Sacramento

Thanks Chuck – am checking a couple things and will get back to you today.

From: Magee, Charles H. [mailto:charles.magee@cpuc.ca.gov]
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 10:35 AM
To: Doll, Laura
Subject: Notes from 2/28/14 Meeting at PG&E - Picarro Gas Optimization Pilot in Sacramento

Hi Laura,

When you have time, please take a look at this. I want to make sure I have my facts straight. It was quite a bit of information to absorb in a short time.

Thanks,

Chuck

Attendees:

Laura Doll - PG&E Director of Regulatory Relations

Redacted

Steve Redding - PG&E Director of Leak Management and Process Improvement

Ditas Katague - Chief of Staff for Commissioner Sandoval

Summary:

Ditas Katague and I attended a presentation by Redacted and Steve Redding to update us on

the Picarro Gas Optimization Pilot Project in Sacramento. This is the second of 3 planned pilots to optimize the use of the Picarro Technology to identify gas leaks. The first was in Oakland, the second is in Sacramento and the third will be in Sacramento. PG&E and Picarro Inc. are making progress to make the Picarro leak surveys even more accurate. Finding large numbers of leaks in relatively small areas (square grids of approximately 2500 services) allows PG&E to repair the leaks using team methods to repair them more quickly and drive down costs. PG&E's pilot programs are attracting representatives of utilities all over the U.S. and Australia. Here are some of key developments:

- PG&E has 6 vehicles equipped with Picarro tech. PG&E leases each Picarro unit for \$200K per year. Leasing is better than buying because this is a changing technology, so PG&E can get updates and new equipment regularly.
- PG&E has given Picarro valuable input to change their algorithms enabling Picarro to reduce the search area in which the leak is likely to be found. This reduces the amount of time field crews on foot have to spend to actually locate the leaks.
- Picarro has been used to find very hard-to-locate leaks in the PG&E system. They have been chasing some of the leaks for years (people report smelling gas but the leak cannot be found) before finding them with Picarro.
- PG&E and Picarro have determined that 2 runs of the Picarro vehicle through the same area instead of 3 runs is optimal. It was found that the 3rd run did not contribute much to accuracy and actually increased the number of "ghost leaks" (leaks that could not be found and possibly do not exist).
- The leak identification pilot project in Sacramento is being performed by dividing the service territory into Grids of approx. 2500 services in each.
- The ability to identify large numbers of leaks simultaneously in a Grid has led to improvements in the way that leaks are now being fixed (in the pilot project). When the results of Picarro inspections for a Grid come in, first leak survey crews are sent out to pinpoint the leaks and grade them. Then, a team of engineers, gas service representatives and repair crews review the information and decide what to do. In some cases, if enough leaks are found, the team may decide to replace Mains and/or Services instead of repairing them. Next, Gas Service Representatives contact the city and homeowners to notify them to expect repair crews in their neighborhood. Then teams of repair crews go into the neighborhood to perform all of the leak repairs and replacements as soon as possible. All Grade 1, 2, 2+ and above ground 3's are repaired or piping replaced. (Laura, not sure about the Grade 3's. I'm sure Steve said they repair the above ground Grade 3's, but what about the below ground Grade 3's? If they don't fix them, do they just monitor them periodically using the foot leak survey method?)
- Team-Hours (2-person teams) to repair leaks has dropped dramatically from 28 hours to 10 hours.
- Morale in the team is high because they feel more productive and are working on leading edge technology. Gas crews in PG&E are volunteering to work on the pilot projects.
- PG&E is moving away from paper records and going digital all the way from the Picarro maps to the Work Orders. It will also cut down on errors because of less manual mark-ups, drawings and human transfers of information.
- PG&E is now replacing older gas service lines instead of repairing them (Laura, not sure

how PG&E makes the decision to repair or replace. Is it by age, material, or ?)

- In an attempt to reduce Dig-Ins, when PG&E installs new gas lines they now bury 6" wide caution tape (says, "Caution – Gas Line") above the line to warn people who are digging that they are approaching a gas line.

- Over the past 2 years, PG&E has found and repaired over 220,000 leaks. Before that the number of leaks repaired over a 2 year period was 20,000 to 30,000 (Laura, how much of the increase was due to Picarro? I don't think Steve said).