



2025 Spring Operations Conference

April 10-11, 2025

Saratoga Hilton - Saratoga Springs, NY

Track Format:

Pipeline Safety & Compliance

Gas Operations: Innovation & Leading Practices

Workforce Management

 Register Now



2025 Spring Operations Conference

Please Visit Our Exhibiting Companies

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CPI Controls

Eastcom Associates, Inc.

Heath Consultants Incorporated

Industrial Training Services, Inc.

Kerotest Manufacturing Corp.

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2025 Spring Operations Conference

Saratoga Hilton – Saratoga Springs, NY
Program at-a-Glance

Day 1: April 10, 2025

Registration & Continental Breakfast: 9:00 – 10:00am

General Session: 10:00 – 11:00am in City Center Meeting Room 1

- Welcome, José Costa, NGA President & CEO
- Exhibitor Presentations
- **Keynote: *A Utility Fireside Chat with Hans Bell, President of UGI Utilities***

Breakout Sessions

Tracks	Pipeline Safety & Compliance <i>Saratoga Ballroom 1</i>	Gas Operations: Innovation & Leading Practices <i>Saratoga Ballroom 2</i>	Workforce Management <i>Saratoga Ballroom 3</i>
Session 1 <i>11:05 - 11:15</i>	Track Chair Welcome	Track Chair Welcome	Track Chair Welcome
Session 2 <i>11:15 - 12:15</i>	Tech Chat - Fuel Gas Alarms with Bob Wilson & Marc Huestis	Floene's Hydrogen Blending Pilot Project	Reducing Workforce Injuries through Innovation: The Use of Press Fittings
Lunch: 12:15 – 1:30 – City Center Meeting Room 2			
Session 3 <i>1:30 – 2:15</i>	Unitil: Gas Transmission Advanced Leak Detection	Advancements in Robotic Repair Technology for 12-inch Gas Mains	AI Unpacked: A Practical Introduction to Artificial Intelligence for Utilities
Session 4 <i>2:15 – 3:15</i>	The Key to GPSC: A Soup to Nuts Compliance App	Estimating Emissions from Pipeline Damage	Intent Based Leadership
Break: 3:15 – 3:30 – In Exhibit Hall			
Session 5 <i>3:30 – 4:30</i>	Mobile Based & Aerial Leak Detection Solutions for Gas T&D Infrastructure	Innovations in Carbon Reduction	GTI Energy: Pipeline Safety Management System (PSMS) Training Modules

Please Join us for our Evening Reception

Location: Hotel Exhibit Hall 4:30-6:00PM

Thank you to our reception sponsors: Precision Pipeline Solution & ISCO Industries

Day 2: April 11, 2025

Registration and Continental Breakfast - 7:30 – 8:30am

General Session: 8:30 – 9:30am in City Center Meeting Room 2

Keynote: *Susan Forrester, Vice President Advocacy & Outreach, American Gas Association on Federal Energy Policy: Reviewing the Early Actions of the New Administration & What's to Come*

Breakout Sessions

Tracks	Pipeline Safety & Compliance <i>Saratoga Ballroom 1</i>	Gas Operations: Innovation & Leading Practices <i>Saratoga Ballroom 2</i>	Workforce Management <i>Saratoga Ballroom 3</i>
Session 1 <i>9:40 – 10:30</i>	Emerging Climate Threats to Utility Infrastructure	Development of Non-Destructive Evaluations of PE Pipe Joints Using X-Ray, Phased Array Ultrasonic & Terahertz Testing Solutions	Four Steps to Elevate Your Field Operations Performance & Culture
Break: 10:30 – 10:45			
Session 2 <i>10:45 – 11:40</i>	Panel Discussion: Critical Asset Management for LNG Facilities	Divert: RNG Project Development, Operations, & Standards	Management of Change
Session 3 <i>11:40 – 12:00</i>	Session Wrap-up	Session Wrap-up	Session Wrap-up

2025 Spring Operations Conference

Track A – Pipeline Safety & Compliance - Saratoga Ballroom 1

Day 1 – April 10, 2025

9:00 – 10:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast

General Session <i>10:00 - 11:00</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Welcome, José Costa, NGA President and CEO ➤ Exhibitor Presentations ➤ Keynote: Fireside Chat with Hans Bell, President of UGI Utilities
Session 1 <i>11:05 - 11:15</i>	Track Chair Welcome – Francis McBrien, Con Edison
Session 2 <i>11:15 - 12:15</i>	Tech Chat - Fuel Gas Alarms with Bob Wilson & Marc Huestis <i>Marc Huestis, Huestis Consulting & Bob Wilson, Northeast Gas Association</i> It's well past time to move beyond our nose as the primary line of defense against a natural gas leak and leverage proven natural gas alarm technology that complies with UL 1484 as an additional layer of protection to keep our homes, communities, and loved ones safe, just like smoke and carbon monoxide detectors have been doing for decades.

Lunch: 12:15 – 1:30 – City Center 1

Session 3 <i>1:30 – 2:15</i>	Gas Transmission Advanced Leak Detection Estimating <i>Tim Patterson, Unitil</i> Unitil will discuss its implementation of Advanced Leak Detection and Emissions Quantification utilizing the Picarro system for its transmission system, Granite State Gas. This discussion will review successes, lessons learned, and future steps for both Picarro and Unitil in improving leak detection, emissions quantification and analysis, and reporting for transmission systems.
Session 4 <i>2:15 – 3:15</i>	The Key to GPSC: A Soup to Nuts Compliance App <i>Jennifer Saner - Manager Business Compliance; Catherine Martinez - Lead Project Manager; Mary Agresti - Senior Analyst, Business Compliance; Johnathan Rizzi - Senior Analyst; Jordan Bossone – Senior Analyst – National Grid</i> This session will showcase an app we built and designed for National Grid Employees, relating to Gas Pipeline Safety & Compliance. We strive to continuously improve the knowledge of GPSC in our workforce, and this mobile app is designed to do that by seamlessly integrating critical compliance processes and information with employees and their day-to-day functions, especially those out in the field, through its ease of access, simplicity, and functionality. Accompanied with a live demo, this presentation aims to share our reasoning and road that led to the app's development, what is in the app and its importance, the technology that went into its construction, how it is being used across the company, and the app's life cycle.

Break: 3:15 – 3:30

Session 5 <i>3:30 – 4:30</i>	Mobile Based and Aerial Leak Detection Solutions for Gas T&D Infrastructure <i>Paul Wehnert, VP of Operations for Heath Consultants</i> Heath will provide a presentation on mobile based and Aerial Leak Detection Solutions for Gas T&D Infrastructure.
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Day 2 – April 11, 2025

7:30 – 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast

General Session <i>8:30 - 9:30</i>	Keynote Address: Susan Forrester, Vice President Advocacy & Outreach, American Gas Association on Federal Energy Policy: Reviewing the Early Actions of the New Administration & What's to Come
Session 1 <i>9:40 – 10:30</i>	Emerging Climate Threats to Utility Infrastructure <i>Josh White, Eversource and Geoff Greene, O&R</i> Utility operators are constantly adapting to extreme weather risks. Presenters will share efforts in prioritizing, preparing, mitigating, responding, and recovering from disruptions related to natural hazards. This session will explore the likelihood and consequences of various natural hazards on gas infrastructure and discuss strategies to enhance system resilience and reliability. Presenters will take a deep dive into specific emerging threats of earthquakes and wildfires and share leading practices in preparing and responding to these threats.

Break: 10:30 – 10:45

Session 2 <i>10:45 – 11:40</i>	Panel Discussion: Critical Asset Management for LNG Facilities <i>Jim Blackburn, Eversource; Chris Copson, National Grid; & Thomas Kennedy, Avangrid</i> Panel will discuss each of their LNG facilities by locations and discuss their policies and procedures when dealing with a seismic event or other natural disasters.
Session 3 <i>11:40 – 12:00</i>	Session Wrap-up

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Track B – Gas Operations: Innovation & Leading Practices- Saratoga Ballroom 2

Day 1 – April 10, 2025

9:00 – 10:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast

General Session 10:00 - 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Welcome, José Costa, NGA President and CEO ➤ Exhibitor Presentations ➤ Fireside Chat with Hans Bell, President of UGI Utilities
Session 1 11:05 - 11:15	Track Chair Welcome - Donald Cordone, National Grid
Session 2 11:15 - 12:15	Floene’s Hydrogen Blending Pilot Project <i>José Catela Pequeno, Floene</i> The presentation describes the issues that had to be tackled and solutions found, to develop a pilot project of hydrogen blending into the natural gas network. Safety and Service were the prime concerns that guided the whole project. Themes such as blend control, choice of hydrogen pipeline materials, safety of grid operations and of blend utilization and fair billing of the energy supplied to final users will be discussed.

Lunch: 12:15 – 1:30 – City Center 1

Session 3 1:30 – 2:15	Advancements in Robotic Repair Technology for 12-inch Gas Mains <i>Steve Dombrowski, ULC Technology</i> In this session, attendees will learn about the latest iteration of CISBOT for 12"-14" cast iron gas mains. From inside the live main, the robots travel hundreds of feet to seal all the leak prone joints to support leak response and prevent new leaks from forming. What to Expect: Summary of CISBOT work performed; Insights into the development and deployment of the 12" CISBOT; Entry methods, job site setup, and breakdown processes; CISBOT past projects and applications; Combining reactive work with proactive repair for O&M cost avoidance; and Benefits for leak response, cost savings, and public impact
Session 4 2:15 – 3:15	Estimating Emissions from Pipeline Damage <i>Saadat Khan, National Grid</i> The presentation addresses the challenges associated with measuring methane emissions resulting from damages to gas infrastructure within the utility industry. It compares the outcomes of various emission measurement equations against empirical data, highlighting discrepancies and areas for improvement. The presentation also offers guidelines aimed at enhancing measurement accuracy, which is crucial for maintaining industry credibility and effectively addressing environmental concerns.

Break: 3:15 – 3:30

Session 5 3:30 – 4:30	Innovations in Carbon Capture <i>Jerry Ryan, New Jersey Natural Gas</i> This session will focus on an overview of new technologies that advance decarbonization. These behind the meter solutions can be used as part of a strategy to advance low carbon gas solutions.
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Day 2 – April 11, 2025

7:30 – 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast

General Session 8:30 - 9:30	Keynote Address: Susan Forrester, Vice President Advocacy & Outreach, American Gas Association on Federal Energy Policy: Reviewing the Early Actions of the New Administration & What’s to Come
Session 1 9:40 – 10:30	Development of Non-Destructive Evaluations of PE Pipe Joints Using X-Ray, Phased Array Ultrasonic and Terahertz (Electromagnetic) Testing Solutions <i>Paul Pirro, Principal Engineer & Program Manager, NGA-NYSEARCH</i> In the past, the way to prove that a PE pipe joint was defective after being installed in the field involved destructive testing by excavating, cutting out, and dissecting. Advancements in radiographic technology has made it possible to perform non-destructive evaluations (NDE) using 3 separate types of technology that have the capability of producing internal images and data to prove whether PE pipe joints are viable or contain a flaw. Learn about each NYSEARCH NDE project involved fabrication of sample PE pipe joints with embedded defects for early trials, development, testing and verification of NDE tools and techniques. X-Ray and PAUT technology NDE solutions are currently developing AI machine learning to identify pass/fail conditions.

Break: 10:30 – 10:45

Session 2 10:45 – 11:40	RNG Development, Operations, and Standards – Divert, Inc. <i>Tony Rymar/Director of Interconnections</i> The different steps for development of RNG projects throughout the country and the variation of utility company regulations and operational requirements for interconnecting into a pipeline distribution system. A description of the industry standards and drivers behind the industry’s growth.
Session 3 11:40 – 12:00	Session Wrap-up

2025 Spring Operations Conference

Track C – Workforce Management - Saratoga Ballroom 3

Day 1 – April 10, 2025	
9:00 – 10:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast	
General Session <i>10:00 - 11:00</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Welcome, José Costa, NGA President and CEO ➤ Exhibitor Presentations ➤ Fireside Chat with Hans Bell, President of UGI Utilities
Session 1 <i>11:05 - 11:15</i>	Track Chair Welcome – Joseph Kinney, RG&E
Session 2 <i>11:15 - 12:15</i>	<p>Reducing Workforce Injuries through Innovation: The Use of Press Fittings <i>Jason Allison, Viega LLC; Richard Caliendo, Viega LLC; and Andrew Cabral, Eversource Gas</i></p> <p>Innovative press fittings are transforming installation safety and efficiency. Join this session to learn how press fittings reduce strain, improve job site safety, and enhance overall operational performance.</p>
Lunch: 12:15 – 1:30 – City Center 1	
Session 3 <i>1:30 – 2:15</i>	<p>AI Unpacked: A Practical Introduction to Artificial Intelligence for Utilities <i>Alnoor Ebrahim, Vice President Southern Cross</i></p> <p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a powerful tool for innovation in the gas utility sector, yet misconceptions abound. This presentation will cover the fundamentals of AI, starting with its definition and the core disciplines driving its development. You'll gain an understanding of key concepts like Machine Learning, including supervised and unsupervised learning, and how these techniques enable AI systems to make predictions and decisions. The session will cover real-world use cases that can be implemented by industry professionals, discuss best practices in prompt engineering, outline key security considerations, and provide insights into the future of AI in the gas sector.</p>
Session 4 <i>2:15 – 3:15</i>	<p>Intent Based Leadership: Driving Operational Ownership, Unlock Decision Making in Your Organizations <i>Jim Cross Vice President, National Grid and Peter Russian, Intent Based Leadership International</i></p> <p>Intent-based leadership (IBL) is about giving control and decision-making power to the people who have the information. The three enabling pillars are control, competence, and clarity. If people have the competencies needed and the understanding of the goals, they should then also have the decision-making power. Come join National Grid and IBL International and explore the journey National Grid is on taking the traditional leader-follower model and transforming to a culture of leader-leaders and true operational ownership.</p>
Break: 3:15 – 3:30	
Session 5 <i>3:30 – 4:30</i>	<p>GTI Energy: Pipeline Safety Management System (PSMS) Training Modules <i>Joan Turba Senior Program Manager, Education & Training, GTI Energy</i></p> <p>On March 25, 2025, PHMSA published an Advisory Bulletin that advocates for the voluntary adoption of PSMS by all regulated pipeline owners & operators. This session will provide an overview of the NGA-PSMS Collaborative Training Program, a core skills training program for all levels of organizations wishing to increase their understanding and commitment to PSMS. You will learn how to access the self-paced, 16-module training program through NGA's PSMS Resource Center, options to customize the program for your organizational needs, and future plans for the continuous improvement of this NGA-PSMS Collaborative training program.</p>
Day 2 – April 11, 2025	
7:30 – 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast	
General Session <i>8:30 - 9:30</i>	Keynote Address: Susan Forrester, Vice President Advocacy & Outreach, American Gas Association on Federal Energy Policy: Reviewing the Early Actions of the New Administration & What's to Come
Session 1 <i>9:40 – 10:30</i>	<p>Four Steps to Elevate Your Field Operations Performance & Culture <i>Dan Lorenz, P.E. is the Founder and President of Joe Knows Energy</i></p> <p>Learn what really drives field performance and culture. Utilizing 10 years of experience and 3 case studies, Dan will share a comprehensive solution to this huge challenge!</p>
Break: 10:30 – 10:45	
Session 2 <i>10:45 – 11:40</i>	<p>Maturity of National Grid's Management of Change & Action item Processes <i>Enita Okodiko – National Grid, Manager, Gas Asset Compliance & Assurance</i></p> <p>This presentation focuses on the maturity of the Management of Change (MOC) and Action Item Management processes within National Grid's Gas Business, specifically within their Process/PSMS. The presentation will cover the assessment journey, identification of process gaps, discussions on improvement strategies, the current state of MOC and Action Item processes, and the enhanced safety culture, as well as outline the next steps.</p>
Session 3 <i>11:40 – 12:00</i>	Session Wrap-up