



# **2026 Spring Operations Conference**

**April 21-22, 2026**

**Saratoga Hilton - Saratoga Springs, NY**

## **Track Format:**

**Pipeline Safety & Compliance**

**Gas Operations: Innovation & Leading Practices**

**Workforce Development**

** Register Now**



# 2026 Spring Operations Conference

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# 2026 Spring Operations Conference

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

## Day 1: April 21, 2026

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

**General Session: 10:00 – 11:00am in City Center Meeting Room 2**

- Welcome, José Costa, NGA President & CEO
- Exhibitor Presentations
- **Keynote: Scott Rupff, President Iroquois Pipeline Operating Company on the State of the Natural Gas Industry**

### Breakout Sessions

Tracks	Pipeline Safety & Compliance <i>Saratoga Ballroom 1</i>	Gas Operations: Innovation & Leading Practices <i>Saratoga Ballroom 2</i>	Workforce Development <i>Saratoga Ballroom 3</i>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>11:05 - 11:15</i>	Track Chair Welcome	Track Chair Welcome	Track Chair Welcome
<b>Session 2</b> <i>11:15 - 12:15</i>	Pipeline Safety Regulatory Update: Regional Regulator & Industry Perspectives Panel	Field Ethane Identification and Implications for Pipeline Operators	Attracting the Next Generation of Field Force

**Lunch: 12:15 – 1:30 – City Center Meeting Room 1**

<b>Session 3</b> <i>1:30 – 2:15</i>	Operators Perspectives on Regulatory Regional Impacts	RNG Interconnect Guide Update	Regional and Sector-Based Workforce Collaborations
<b>Session 4</b> <i>2:15 – 3:15</i>	NGA First Responder Safety Awareness Training Program	RNG Installation & Leading Practices	Addressing Workforce Challenges through Instrumentation

**Networking Break: 3:15 – 3:30 – In Exhibit Hall**

<b>Session 5</b> <i>3:30 – 4:30</i>	4-Year Pipeline Safety Effectiveness Study Results	Hurricane Preparedness	Train the Trainer
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## Please Join us for our Evening Reception

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

*Thank you to our reception sponsors: Energy Worldnet, Inc, Landis + Gyr, & Precision Pipeline Solutions, LLC*

## Day 2: April 22, 2026

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

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

**Keynote: Reliable Energy: Matthew Agen, Chief Regulatory Counsel at American Gas Association on The Critical Role for Electric-Gas Coordination**

### Breakout Sessions

Tracks	Pipeline Safety & Compliance <i>Saratoga Ballroom 1</i>	Gas Operations: Innovation & Leading Practices <i>Saratoga Ballroom 2</i>	Workforce Development <i>Saratoga Ballroom 3</i>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>9:40 – 10:40</i>	Digital vs Traditional Radiography- An Overview of NDE Methods and Why Consider Digital Radiography	NYSEARCH: Enhanced Leak Detection & Integrity Assessment for Submerged Pipelines	Crew Leadership Training Program

**Networking Break: 10:40 – 10:55**

<b>Session 2</b> <i>10:55 – 11:55</i>	Gas Quality Standards Whitepaper Overview	Right Worker, Right Task: Using ITS to Verify Qualification Status in the Field	Cross Commodity Hazard Awareness Training
<i>11:55 – 12:00</i>	Session Wrap-up	Session Wrap-up	Session Wrap-up

# 2026 Spring Operations Conference

## Track A – Pipeline Safety & Compliance - Saratoga Ballroom 1

### Day 1 – April 21, 2026

9:00 – 10:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast

<b>General Session</b> <i>10:00 - 11:00</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Welcome, José Costa, NGA President and CEO</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Exhibitor Presentations</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Keynote: Scott Rupff, President Iroquois Pipeline on the State of the Natural Gas Industry</b></li> </ul>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>11:05 - 11:15</i>	<b>Track Chair Welcome – Perry Sheth, PE</b>
<b>Session 2</b> <i>11:15 - 12:15</i>	<p><b>Pipeline Safety Regulatory Update – Regional Regulator &amp; Industry Perspectives Panel</b>  <i>Karl Baker, Connecticut PURA Gas Pipeline Safety Unit; Kevin Speicher, EWN, (Former Chief of Gas Safety, New York State Depart of Public Safety); &amp; Chris McLaren, Executive Consultant, RCP, (former PHMSA Regulator); Moderator: Mark Hereth, Blacksmith Group/P-PIC</i></p> <p>This session focuses on the dynamic state of pipeline safety regulatory change our industry is facing, particularly within the northeast region. Come learn from both State Regulatory Program Managers and former state and federal regulatory industry professionals on their views of the past, present &amp; future of pipeline safety regulations including perspectives on how voluntary information sharing and learning from our past can help support “true learning” and avoiding repeating incidents of the past.</p>
<b>Lunch: 12:15 – 1:30 – City Center Meeting Room 1</b>	
<b>Session 3</b> <i>1:30 – 2:15</i>	<p><b>Pipeline Safety Regulatory Update: The Operator Perspective on Managing Regulatory Change</b>  <i>Lauren Toczylowski, Con Edison; Nathan Cole, Eversource; Kathy Silver, Unifit; &amp; David Bonner, Exelon</i></p> <p>PHMSA’s regulatory focus has shifted under the new administration, incorporating a keen focus on extracting the greatest degree of pipeline safety value, influenced by incorporating a risk-based approach. Operators are trusted to work responsibly, while being encouraged to implement pipeline safety management system principles into day-to-day operations. Additionally, operators are encouraged to learn from past incidents to help reduce operational risk and avoid unintended consequences. This panel focuses on how operators are transitioning their regulatory mindset while balancing regional requirements, which may in some cases, go beyond federal minimum requirements.</p>
<b>Session 4</b> <i>2:15 – 3:15</i>	<p><b>NGA First Responder Safety Awareness Training Program</b>  <i>Casey Harrington, Culver &amp; Dave Grande, NGA</i></p> <p>Learn about NGA’s First Responder Safety Awareness Training Program. This is a web-based program that covers basics safety and basic properties of natural gas, leak/fire response, carbon monoxide hazards, incident management, &amp; LNG considerations. It is designed for firefighters, EMS, law enforcement, utility personnel, and others responding to gas leaks, fires, &amp; CO incidents. It is available via NGA’s website.</p>
<b>Break: 3:15 – 3:30</b>	
<b>Session 5</b> <i>3:30 – 4:30</i>	<p><b>4-Year Pipeline Safety Effectiveness Study Results</b>  <i>Michael Vigeant, Great Blue Research</i></p> <p>Come learn about the results of NGA’s Pipeline Public Awareness Program Evaluation Study. The goal of the study was to assess the effectiveness of NGA’s current pipeline safety program and identify areas for improvement. The study surveyed stakeholders in the following groups: general affected public, emergency management services, excavators, and public officials.</p>

### Day 2 – April 22, 2026

7:30 – 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast

<b>General Session</b> <i>8:30 - 9:30</i>	<b>Keynote: Matthew Agen, AGA on The Critical Role for Electric-Gas Coordination</b>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>9:40 – 10:40</i>	<p><b>Digital vs Traditional Radiography: An Overview of NDE Methods and Why to Consider Digital Radiography</b>  <i>Perry Sheth, PE</i></p> <p>Radiography is a foundational nondestructive evaluation (NDE) method used to inspect materials, components, and welded joints by capturing internal structures using penetrating radiation. Over the last several decades, the industry has witnessed a major shift from traditional conventional film radiography (CFR) to digital radiography (DR). This presentation provides a technical comparison of both modalities, discussing operational principles, image quality metrics, workflow impacts, safety considerations, and industrial applications.</p>
<b>Break: 10:40 – 10:55</b>	
<b>Session 2</b> <i>10:55 – 11:55</i>	<p><b>Gas Quality Standards Whitepaper Overview</b>  <i>Dan Settle, National Grid</i></p> <p>Learn about NGA’s Technical White Paper intended to support a “good science, common sense” approach to revising the Gas Standards code requirements in NYS in 16 NYCRR Part 229. The White Paper is the result of a 6-month effort to bring together a technical basis for an existing code that was outdated and difficult to comply with in its current form. The White Paper provides both a historical perspective of the evolution of gas quality tariff requirements, including consideration of the 1995 Gas Quality Task Force Grid Integration Project and the more contemporary work of the NGC+ in 2005 resulting in the FERC Gas Quality Interim Guidelines.</p>
<i>11:55 – 12:00</i>	<b>Session Wrap-up</b>

# 2026 Spring Operations Conference

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

### Day 1 – April 21, 2026

9:00 – 10:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast

<b>General Session</b> <i>10:00 - 11:00</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Welcome, José Costa, NGA President and CEO</li> <li>➤ Exhibitor Presentations</li> <li>➤ <b>Keynote: Scott Rupff, President Iroquois Pipeline on the State of the Natural Gas Industry</b></li> </ul>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>11:05 - 11:15</i>	<b>Track Chair Welcome - Patrick Walsh, Orange &amp; Rockland</b>
<b>Session 2</b> <i>11:15 - 12:15</i>	<b>Field Ethane Identification and Implications for Pipeline Operators</b> <i>Ben Hippler, Bascom Turner</i> This presentation will provide an overview of the field elution technique (how they compare to other ethane detection methods) and share success stories from US operators who utilize this procedure to save time and money for their field technicians.

**Lunch: 12:15 – 1:30 – City Center Meeting Room 1**

<b>Session 3</b> <i>1:30 – 2:15</i>	<b>RNG Interconnect Guide Update</b> <i>Dan Settle, National Grid ; Brendon Kearns and Tom Murray, VGS</i> NGA issued the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Revision of the Emerging Fuels Interconnect Guideline in February 2026. Originally developed for exclusive use in NYS, the Guide filled an industry gap in practical technical information necessary to ensure safe, reliable interconnects and quickly became an industry-wide reference tool throughout North America which is utilized in both jurisdictional and federal regulatory negotiations. The latest version incorporates technical and gas quality considerations for <i>virtual pipeline interconnects</i> and was developed in collaboration with the SGA Natural Gas Association (SGA).
<b>Session 4</b> <i>2:15 – 3:15</i>	<b>Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) Installation &amp; Leading Practices</b> <i>Chris Barros, Morgan McGregor, Ed Overholt, Campos &amp; Mark Murray, Liberty Utilities</i> As demand for sustainable energy solutions grows and evolves, RNG has emerged as a consistent, crucial piece in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating value from biogas captured and treated out of organic waste streams. Once biogas is converted to RNG, the gas stream must be tested, metered, heated, pressure regulated, appropriately odorized, and remotely monitored and controlled prior to injection into a natural gas distribution system. Campos EPC has delivered several RNG interconnection skids in upstate NY for Liberty Utilities and other major utility partners to perform these functions and will share practical insights as to the design, fabrication, and installation of these interconnection skids including overcoming challenges and leveraging best practices.

**Break: 3:15 – 3:30**

<b>Session 5</b> <i>3:30 – 4:30</i>	<b>Hurricane Preparedness</b> <i>Patty Connors, Chesapeake Utilities</i> This presentation highlights a simulation-based training program that integrates Process Safety Management System (PSMS) principles through modular, exercise-driven learning. It outlines the organization's transition to the National Incident Management System and Incident Command System, emphasizing the evolution of its safety culture, standardized training requirements, and improved emergency response coordination.
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### Day 2 – April 22, 2026

7:30 – 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast

<b>General Session</b> <i>8:30 - 9:30</i>	<b>Keynote: Matthew Agen, AGA on The Critical Role for Electric-Gas Coordination</b>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>9:40 – 10:40</i>	<b>NYSEARCH: Enhanced Leak Detection &amp; Integrity Assessment for Submerged Pipelines</b> <i>Andrew Bitar, NYSEARCH</i> A new approach to submerged pipeline inspection, using drone technology to support leak detection and pipeline integrity evaluation.

**Break: 10:40 – 10:55**

<b>Session 2</b> <i>10:55 – 11:55</i>	<b>Right Worker, Right Task: Using ITS to Verify Qualification Status in the Field</b> <i>Sara Miller, ITS</i> In this session, we will explore how qualification status information is surfaced across multiple touchpoints within the system. We'll review how supervisors, inspectors, and other key roles can quickly verify qualification status through Roles and Job information displayed on an eWallet card scan, and how Jobs can be used to identify subsets of tasks a user is qualified to perform before completing their full role. We'll also examine how administrators can access this same information through the Jobs and Task Profile Report, and how it all comes together within ITS Live. This session will include a live demo of the ITS platform.
<i>11:55 – 12:00</i>	<b>Session Wrap-up</b>

# 2026 Spring Operations Conference

## Track C – Workforce Development - Saratoga Ballroom 3

<b>Day 1 – April 21, 2026</b>	
<b>9:00 – 10:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast</b>	
<b>General Session</b> <i>10:00 - 11:00</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Welcome, José Costa, NGA President and CEO</li> <li>➤ Exhibitor Presentations</li> <li>➤ <b>Keynote: Scott Rupff, President Iroquois Pipeline on the State of the Natural Gas Industry</b></li> </ul>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>11:05 - 11:15</i>	<b>Track Chair Welcome – Glenn Meyers, Northeast Gas Association</b>
<b>Session 2</b> <i>11:15 - 12:15</i>	<p><b>Attracting the Next Generation of Field Force</b> <i>Mark Payne, DDS</i></p> <p>Recruiting the next generation – we will discuss the industry, and how to effectively recruit. It’s more than just showing up at the career fair. I hope to share a unique perspective on what has been effective and what has not and why. Key takeaways: Recruitment strategies that you can implement, lessons learned and pitfalls to avoid.</p>
<b>Lunch: 12:15 – 1:30 – City Center Meeting Room 1</b>	
<b>Session 3</b> <i>1:30 – 2:15</i>	<p><b>Regional and Sector Based Workforce Collaborations</b> <i>Amber Rangel, National Grid</i></p> <p>This session will discuss regional and sector-based workforce development collaborations and opportunities with the new Northeast Energy Workforce Consortium (NEWC). NEWC is the 21st energy industry workforce consortium in the U.S., supported by the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD), consisting of energy companies in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut working collectively as a sector to raise awareness of workforce opportunities in the industry and address critical workforce needs. Founding priorities of the consortium include Construction Project Management, Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Career Cluster, and Power Systems Engineering. Consortium founding members include leading energy companies and public utilities: Avangrid, Con Edison, Eversource, National Grid, NYPA (New York Power Authority), and is continually growing.</p>
<b>Session 4</b> <i>2:15 – 3:15</i>	<p><b>Addressing Workforce Challenges through Instrumentation</b> <i>Ben Hippler, Bascom Turner</i></p> <p>In today’s Oil and Gas industry, the most valuable commodity is not what is in the pipe—it is skilled, trained manpower. As the workforce continues to shrink and demand rises, companies are under increasing pressure to do more with less. In this challenging work environment, it is more important than ever to equip field workers with advanced, lightweight, easy-to-use technologies that empower existing personnel to perform their jobs safely and efficiently. This presentation will highlight questions operating companies may consider when evaluating technology options and the value of a ‘one-tool’ solution when deploying equipment.</p>
<b>Break: 3:15 – 3:30</b>	
<b>Session 5</b> <i>3:30 – 4:30</i>	<p><b>Train the Trainer</b> <i>John Mead, National Grid</i></p> <p>The Technical Training Instructor Excellence Program is a structured development initiative designed to elevate the skills, confidence, and impact of technical trainers. It focuses on strengthening instructional design capabilities, advancing facilitation techniques, and deepening subject-matter expertise. Through targeted coaching, peer collaboration, and performance feedback, instructors learn to deliver engaging, learner-centered experiences that drive stronger knowledge retention and on-the-job application.</p>
<b>Day 2 – April 22, 2026</b>	
<b>7:30 – 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast</b>	
<b>General Session</b> <i>8:30 - 9:30</i>	<b>Keynote: Matthew Agen, AGA on The Critical Role for Electric-Gas Coordination</b>
<b>Session 1</b> <i>9:40 – 10:40</i>	<p><b>Crew Leadership Training Program</b> <i>Deepak Vishnu, National Grid</i></p> <p>The crew leadership training program’s primary objective is to develop key leadership skills for gas field operations leaders. It is designed for people who transition from a crew member position to a crew leader role. The formalized training reinforces the key relationships between crew members and designed to improve safety awareness, reducing injuries, gas incidents and delivering great service to our customers.</p>
<b>Break: 10:40 – 10:55</b>	
<b>Session 2</b> <i>10:55 – 11:55</i>	<p><b>Cross Commodity Hazard Awareness Training</b> <i>Walter Munro, AEGIS</i></p> <p>First responders supporting storm or major emergency operations are increasingly exposed to hazards outside their primary discipline, for example, electric technicians addressing natural gas odor calls or gas technicians responding to downed wires. This workshop will introduce the key risks associated with working across commodities and highlight critical considerations for safely performing make-safe actions in unfamiliar environments.</p>
<i>11:55 – 12:00</i>	<b>Session Wrap-up</b>

# 2026 Spring Operations Conference

## General Information

**April 21-22, 2026**

### Who Should Attend?

NGA's 2026 Spring Operations Conference is open to natural gas distribution and transmission company operations personnel with interests in customer service, methane emissions reduction, or damage prevention.

### Conference Contacts:

If you have questions regarding the conference, including exhibits, please contact [NGAevents@northeastgas.org](mailto:NGAevents@northeastgas.org).

### Registration:

Online registration is available on NGA's website. ([www.northeastgas.org](http://www.northeastgas.org))

Member Rate: \$495

Non-Member Rate: \$795

### Cancellation Policy:

Due to contractual obligations, cancellations received 15 business days prior to the program will receive a full refund. Cancellations received 6 to 14 business days prior to the event will receive a refund, less a \$100 administrative fee. No shows and last minute cancellations, 5 business days prior to the event or less, will be responsible for the full registration fee. Substitutions from your organization for the same event are always welcome.

### How to Register via NGA's Website:

Online registration is available on NGA's website: [www.northeastgas.org](http://www.northeastgas.org), then click "Member Login" in the top left corner.

### Online Registration (for those already entered in NGA's on-line system)

If you already have a username and password for the NGA site, you can register online right now. To log in go to NGA's website, [www.northeastgas.org](http://www.northeastgas.org). After you login, click on the top tab for "Events." Once on the events page, look for the "2026 Spring Operations Conference." Click on the "2026 Spring Operations Conference" and continue registering from there.

### Online Registration (for those not entered in NGA's on-line system)

If you are not yet registered with NGA for online access and would like to do so, you can complete the "Individual Database Profile Form" found on NGA's member log in screen. NGA will contact you once you are entered into our database with a username and password for future access.

### Hotel Accommodations at The Saratoga Hilton

534 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

### Download NGA's Event App Today!

App Store URL: (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/northeast-gas/id1072271568?mt=8>)

Play Store URL: (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.avodigy.nga>)

Web App URL: (<http://nga.eventpedia.us>)



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