



MEDIA RELEASE
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Unison Networks Gains International Recognition for Leading Smart Grid Rollout

One of New Zealand's most progressive electricity line companies, Unison Networks, is gaining international recognition for leading the industry in rolling out new smart grid technologies.

These new smart grid applications are designed to provide Unison's customers with enhanced electrical delivery reliability by reducing the number and duration of outages.

United States smart grid developer DC Systems commended Unison's move and applauded the New Zealand company's vision and willingness to research, test, and implement the technology and information systems that are helping make smart grids a reality today.

Unison Group, which is based in Hawke's Bay on the east coast of the North Island, recently announced it would roll out a smart grid across its three network regions in Hawke's Bay, Taupo, and Rotorua.

The move will see Unison's customers among the first in New Zealand to gain the benefits of a smart grid, including greater network quality and performance at a lower cost.

Douglass Campbell, President of California-based DC Systems, said Unison is taking a leading role among network organizations around the world with its new smart grid programs to increase service reliability to customers and improve the robustness of the network.

"Unison has been very forward thinking, and created a smart grid model well in advance of most other utilities worldwide," Mr. Campbell said.

Unison has implemented the first stage of its state-of-the-art self-healing network, working with the world's largest smart meter service provider, Landis+Gyr.

Combining auto-sectionalizing and restoration (ASR), advanced distribution automation, and the Gridstream Radio communication network builds an intelligent and robust foundation for advanced smart grid applications, Mr. Campbell said.

Ken Sutherland, Unison Group Chief Executive, said the company was setting the foundations for a smart grid. The investment is part of Unison's long-term strategic direction from simply being an electricity distribution business through traditional network infrastructure, to managing a smart grid set to deliver greater value, choice, and reliability to the customer, he explained.

Jaun Park, Unison General Manager, Network and Operations, said Unison's self-healing solution integrates a wireless mesh radio network, distributed intelligence, and automated switches to enhance network reliability.

"If we have a fault, this intelligence will isolate the faulted area automatically and reroute power and restore supply to as many businesses and customers' homes as quickly as possible. It's an example of a powerful smart grid application that benefits both Unison and our customers. It enhances the customer's experience by providing improved network reliability, and also provides benefits to the network by reducing costs associated with fault finding and fault repair time," said Mr. Park.

The substation is now becoming a central location and heart of the smart grid, with advanced intelligence that links several network areas and provides ASR functionality to quickly isolate faults and restore power.

Already Unison has seen rewards, said Mr. Park. Earlier this year, smart technology came into its own on Unison's network, after a fault on a low-voltage cable between a substation transformer and breaker could have caused a major outage. Through the operation of ultra-fast protection, the fault was contained to the cable, the broken cable was replaced, and the system was returned to normal operation—saving the transformer from critical damage. Without ultra-fast protection, Unison could have faced a \$1 million replacement cost and been forced to wait several months to procure and install a new transformer.

With the successful completion of its first stage, Unison is now looking at a wider deployment of this technology and is also exploring adding further "smart" capabilities through additional network equipment monitoring devices.

(Note: Unison uses the DC Systems **RTASR™** Auto-Sectionalizing and Restoration solution, which automatically restores power after an outage to as many homes and businesses as possible—without operator intervention. One of many smart grid solutions from DC Systems, **RTASR** software monitors distribution feeders for outages, and controls SCADA switches to isolate faults and reroute power.)

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