



2022 IEEE PES T&D Conference and Exposition: Reconnecting in the **Big Easy**

**Pre-show Interview with Wayne Bishop Jr.
Vice President of Meetings & Conferences
for IEEE PES**



Wayne Bishop

I became the VP of Meetings & Conferences, a volunteer position for IEEE PES, back in 2019, and I was in it for about a year and a few months when COVID hit. And boy, did it hit. We had to quickly pivot all our meetings. Keep in mind, I oversee all our meetings worldwide for IEEE PES. We had to pivot from in person to virtual meetings and it was a tremendous undertaking. But we ended up reaching more members that way, digitally. For example, for our annual Power Africa conference we doubled the number of countries that attended the event, so we actually reached more members. But we can't wait to be back face to face. We just miss the camaraderie, not even necessarily the meetings themselves, but the coffee breaks, the meetings that occur outside of the main meetings and main conferences. So, I just can't wait to get back face to face.

Alan Ross

It's my pleasure to talk to a dear friend, Wayne Bishop, the Vice President of Meetings & Conferences for IEEE PES, about the IEEE PES T&D Conference and Expo coming up in April 25th through the 28th in New Orleans. But before we go there, I want to talk about how after you took over the role as Vice President of Meetings and Conferences, this thing called COVID hit. How has that impacted what you all have been able to do?

Alan Ross

Having been to the last five IEEE PES T&D Conferences and Expos, the one thing I've missed is what happens on the Expo floor.

That's not a buying floor; people don't go there to buy. They go to learn. And it is a great opportunity for the people that show up and support the Expo to be able to explain new things. Technology is changing so much and rapidly, and you can deliver technical knowledge. But when you discuss technical knowledge, it kind of creates a camaraderie that you just have to experience. We get to meet with old friends, talk about new things, and connect with new people. I know that the host of this conference is Entergy, and they have put on a really good technical program to present. Talk a little bit about that.

**Alan Ross**

When we were set to do this in 2020, you had an innovation platform, and we were going to have a media platform. You had a lot of things that you were doing, including the "pay for one and get ten" to come from the utility industry, to try to get more practitioners. Are those initiatives still in place?

Wayne Bishop

As mentioned, this year's T&D Conference and Expo will be in New Orleans, and the host is Entergy, a great utility that got behind this with their team. The chair of the Conference and Expo is Michelle Bourg. Michelle is Vice President of Asset Management at Entergy, and she has assembled a great team. Heading up the technical program is Chang Wang, another very active IEEE PES member from Entergy. He has put together a great program that will consist of a great opening session with four super sessions throughout the week, panels, papers - literally hundreds of presentations. And as we mentioned earlier, there are so many changes happening right now in the utility industry and the power industry: everything from integrating DER onto the grid, through dealing with electrification of the transportation system, to our assets getting older and what we need to do with these assets and how we should be maintaining them with all of the trends that are happening. Our industry has had more changes in the last 10 years than the last 100 years. Many of these changes and how the utilities are dealing with the changes will be addressed at T&D.

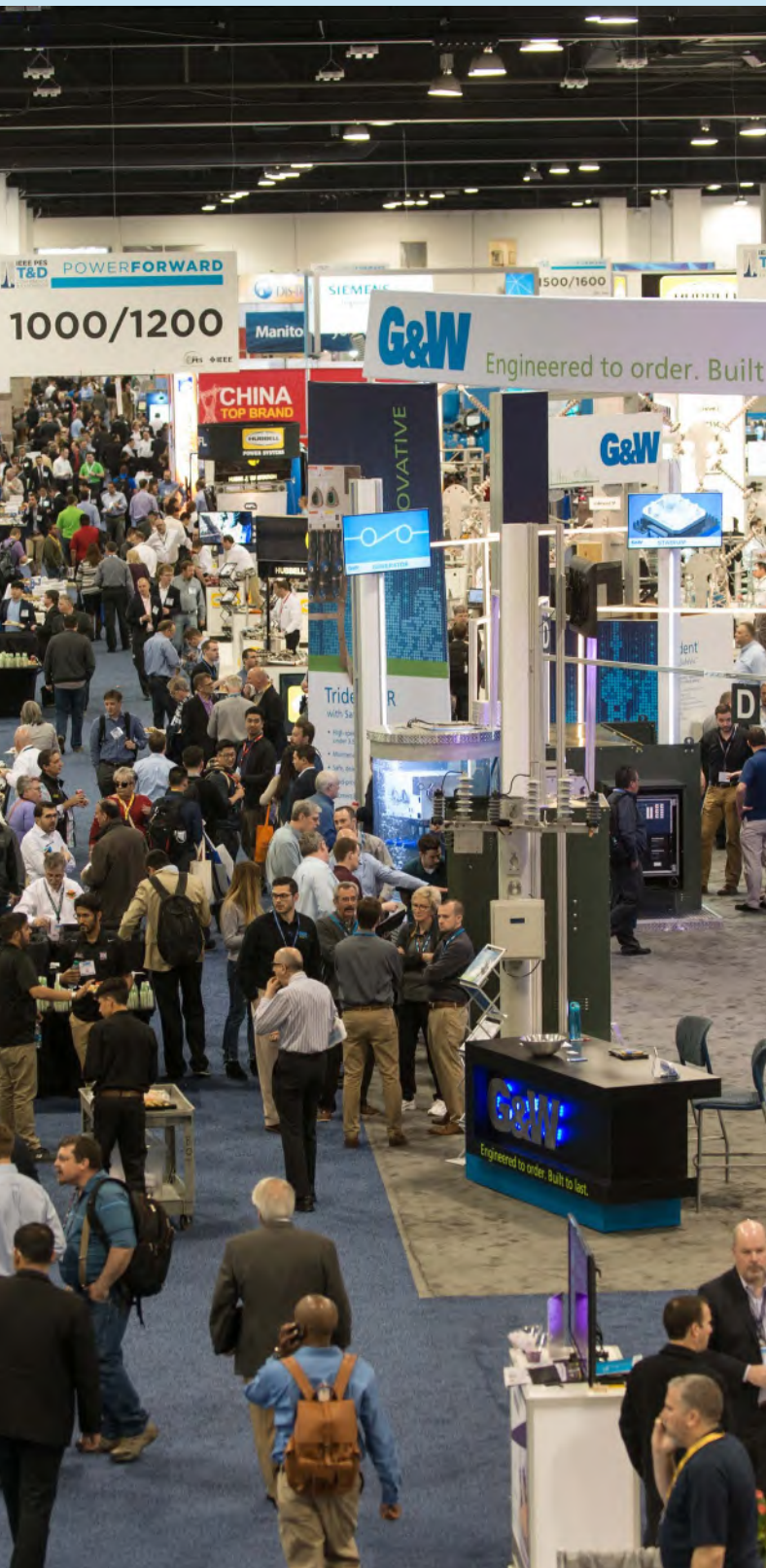
Regarding the Expo floor, I can't help but mention that we have over 550+ exhibitors covering every aspect of transmission and distribution, along with more big trends. We have made a lot of changes to T&D as well, new changes, new initiatives.

**Wayne Bishop**

We are proud of what we are launching for this T&D. We tried to launch it in 2020, but of course, T&D was cancelled. So this year we will launch officially our utility bundled pricing package and how that works.

Alan Ross

It sounds like you're a marketer.

**Alan Ross**

As a member of the IEEE Smart Grid program, we are envious of smart cities getting their own Pavilion. It has re-energized as well to focus on the 2023 Grid Edge Conference in San Diego. I'm sure you'll talk a little about that, and the Innovative Smart Grid Technologies (ISGT) for this year.

Wayne Bishop

I'm part marketing so that's the marketing coming out. As you said, we really want the practitioners there. We want the utility engineers to come, and we want the price to be attractive. **We are offering utilities to send ten people from the utility for only \$1,000. In other words, \$100 a person, grand total of \$1,000.** When we launched this back at the last T&D in 2020, we had over 100 different utilities take advantage of that, and you can send more than ten if you want to. If you send 20 engineers, it's \$2,000 still \$100 per person. That's the first big initiative to bring more people on the show floor.

The second initiative is the **Innovation Stage**. As you mentioned, we will have two of these innovation stages set up on the Expo floor. Our Technical Committee has chosen, I believe, 15 different companies who will make presentations on these innovation stages. The presentations will be on the new technologies and what's new, with big data, incorporating DERs onto the grid, and more.

The third initiative is the **IEEE Smart Cities Pavilion**. There is a lot of talk these days about smart cities, smart buildings and electrification of the transportation system, which are some exciting things happening in our industry. The IEEE Smart Cities Pavilion will address these changes.

**Wayne Bishop**

You'll be happy to hear, we were supposed to have our annual ISGT (Innovative Smart Grid Technologies) conference in February in Washington D.C., and of course, we had to cancel that because of COVID. What we decided is to co-locate ISGT in New Orleans in the Convention Centre at the same time as T&D. We are going to do our best not to have conflicting programs, but T&D attendees will be able to sit in on ISGT presentations, and vice versa. ISGT attendees will also be able to attend T&D, and they have some wonderful speakers lined up, including people from FERC, NERC, and utility executives as well, talking about a lot of the trends that relate to smart grid and some of the big trends that are happening in our industry.

Alan Ross

How are you handling Covid rules? Since you are letting the city, is the city requiring you to live by their compliance issues?

Wayne Bishop

Exactly, Alan, we want to reconnect safely, and we want everyone to know that IEEE PES T&D will take your safety as the first priority, and our number one priority. We will not only comply with all the mandates of the city of New Orleans, but we'll do whatever else we need to do.

We are going to have the hand sanitizer stations set up everywhere around the Convention Center. If they mandate masks, which they probably will, we'll have those on in the Convention Center. There will be several events that will be partially outdoors, like the opening session, or the opening reception that will be on Monday evening, the 25th, at the Mardi Gras Pavilion.

But they are ready for us and they are excited about T&D. [Registration is now open. The housing block is open](#) and there are good discounts available. I'm extremely excited to be back in person and I can't wait to see all my colleagues ready to reconnect with everybody.

**Alan Ross**

For people in the utility industry, there's an excitement afoot with the change that is taking place. AV charging is going to change the grid. DER is changing the grid. An inverter-based system is completely different. Solid state technology is changing the grid. This is probably the most exciting time since we created the grid. There's a lot happening around the world.

At APC Media, we are going to visit the showroom floor and we are going to learn about new technologies and share the value that IEEE brings. The 2023 Grid Edge Conference and Expo is also going to build the new foundation for IEEE PES, and people should be excited to come and learn, come and share, or come and just network with each other.

Wayne, any last thing that you want to share?

Alan Ross

Wayne, thank you for the work that you do for IEEE. All of the volunteers give so much, but soon you are hooked because the giving that takes place allows others to take knowledge and understanding. IEEE is much more than a standards organization. Absolutely.

Alan Ross

Wayne, it has been good to talk to you. See you in April in New Orleans.

**Wayne Bishop**

The only other thing to mention is that T&D event is not a U.S. centric or North American centric show and event. It's very much international. In normal times, we would get over 90 different countries to attend and be represented. I think we'll easily have 60 or 70 different countries represented this time. You can go to the show floor, talk with the subject matter experts at the exhibitor's booth and discuss new concepts or products with them. You can now go to the innovation stages as a new initiative, or you can visit our IEEE Smart Cities Pavilion. This is definitely not your same old T&D. It is something for everyone. And now with ISGT being co-located, it's even better. I am looking forward to seeing all our colleagues there in April.

Wayne Bishop

It really is. It's a big family of over 40,000 members strong.

Wayne Bishop

Thank you, Alan.