



Fourth Quarter Letter to Members

December 7, 2020



Thomas (Tom) Kent
*NPPD President and Chief
Executive Officer, Board Chair*



Sara Patrick
MRO President and CEO

From the MRO Board Chair

Dear Members and Stakeholders:

The Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) Board of Directors held its Annual Member and Board of Directors meeting—the final meeting of the year—virtually on December 3, 2020. At this meeting, we welcomed guest speakers Jim Robb, President and CEO of NERC; Manny Cancel, NERC Senior Vice President and CEO of the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center; and Joel Max, the lead Intelligence Analyst and energy sector control systems lead for the FBI's Cyber Division. It was a privilege to also welcome newly elected board member Charles Marshall of ITC Holdings Corporation representing the Transmission System Operator sector.

Given the timing of this meeting, I focused my remarks on gratitude. Gratitude isn't just a beautiful sentiment, it is one of the most powerful and positive emotions we can have...and, we can equip ourselves with it to overcome any struggle, any setback, any division. Gratitude can be used to fuel our well-being by lifting us out of constricting emotions toward more higher feelings of love and joy. It is there we find deep-seeded appreciation for others and everything around us.

Now is the perfect time to reflect on this very idea. As the holidays near, I find solace and peace in friends and family. I find strength and hope as I turn my focus to the blessings I receive every day from them. I am so grateful I can share in the season among those I love, and the pandemic has only heightened that feeling.

Humans are social beings. We've all had to learn different ways to interact during COVID-19, and though I look forward to a future where we can return to more face-to-face interactions, how wonderful it is we have technology to keep us connected, and how profound the patience we all have exhibited with each other as we've adapted to this new, virtual environment.

Distractions and hectic holiday or work schedules can deter from the necessity to take a step back and ensure a little “family” or “me” time. Balance nowadays is more important than ever, and I am very fortunate to be part of such a great organization that values family as much as hard work.

Sometimes, the most gratifying thing we can do is take the time to reach out to others and be a light in the darkness. We in our industry have. We are in our communities, guiding our youth. Finding answers to local problems. Extending a hand to others. We are your friends. Your neighbors. Your extended family.

The electric utility industry provides a unique outlet for us to do these things, whether helping those in need by donating to charities or collaborating with communities and local businesses through technological, environmental, recreational, or foundational projects and stewardship. In the early days of our industry, this neighbor-helping-neighbor philosophy was rooted in bringing the benefits of electrification and the improved quality of life that comes with it, and it can be seen every day as utilities help each other through mutual aid efforts to restore power to customers impacted by major storms.

As a utility CEO and chair of the MRO Board, I am most thankful for the customers we all serve. We do not exist without them; they are our reason for being. They may come in various sizes and types, with a variety of different goals, expectations and needs, but at the end of the day, they are the folks for whom we work relentlessly to ensure the reliable and affordable delivery of electricity. We do this to ensure they can enjoy their favorite holiday in the comfort of a nice, warm living room. We do it to guarantee they can call or virtually meet with loved ones during these family-filled times. We do it to keep their holiday dinner evenly roasting, and their pie perfectly baking.

To me, the holiday season is the perfect time to gather with family and friends to give thanks and celebrate the spirit of the season sustained by reliable, sustainable, and affordable electricity – a gift given by countless people working throughout the generations within our industry.

So, how can we finish this trying year with gratitude in mind? We could struggle under the seemingly persistent weight of the world. Or, we can choose to calm our bodies and minds, finding fulfillment in the everyday simplicities that are present if we only dare to look.

Also at the meeting, I was reelected as board chair for 2021 and Brad Cox from Tenaska Power Services will serve a second term as board vice chair. I am honored to serve in this role with such knowledgeable and respected colleagues, and look forward to leading the board with Brad as vice chair in the year ahead.

I wish you all a happy, healthy and safe holiday season with family and friends.

From the President and CEO

As an avid reader, or self-professed “bookworm geek,” the months of January and December are like bookends for me. January sets in motion a fresh and renewed sense of optimism for the challenges that lie ahead, while December is a time for reflection on what we’ve accomplished and what remains to be done. At the risk of repeating myself, 2020 has been anything BUT typical...presenting some of the most significant challenges we’ve faced as an organization, as an Enterprise, and as an industry. For the first time in my tenure at MRO, we faced a crisis that until now has only been planned for on paper, putting to test our emergency preparedness and business

continuity plans. The responses across the ERO Enterprise and industry were swift and effective, and as I reflect on the challenges we faced this year and what was accomplished in spite of these challenges, I am humbled and incredibly proud to be a part of the ERO Enterprise and the industry.

When I stepped into the role of chief executive officer at MRO, I introduced what I see as the four keys to sustainable success for MRO: **Connection**, **Curiosity**, **Commitment**, and **Competency**. Since 2018, I have provided the attributes of each of these and how they relate not only to MRO's success, but to the collective success of all of those charged with protecting the reliability and security of the North American bulk power system.

Connection between the important work we do and our mission and values motivates and inspires people. It moves us to give our best efforts, align our behavior with goals and strategic priorities, and more fully communicate so that leadership has the best information to make optimal decisions, and they contribute to conversations on innovation and creativity.

Curiosity is at the root of high-performing teams—there is less conflict when we are curious because we are interested in another's perspective, and we share information more readily and listen more carefully to our peers. Because we are curious, we question the status quo and fully consider alternatives, and curiosity leads us to think more deeply and rationally about problems and come up with innovative and creative solutions.

Competency takes intelligence, experience, and expertise and produces a successful outcome – for us, a reliable and secure bulk power system. Competence is the foundation of all of our initiatives – whether it's building trust, identifying risk and a language to better articulate risk and residual risk, or simply becoming more effective and efficient.

Finally, commitment denotes an employee's enthusiasm for the company and the work they do. Employees who exhibit a strong sense of commitment are personally invested in their work. They take the initiative to do what needs to be done to accomplish results and add value. They understand that success is a group effort, and that it requires everyone contributing his/her own strengths as well as seeking and giving support to address one's own or a teammate's weakness.

What we accomplished in 2020 truly demonstrates a commitment to our vision, and is a reflection of the smart, talented and extraordinary people that I am privileged to work with—both at MRO and across the entire ERO ecosystem. In the face of significant challenge, we remain resilient; credit which is owed to many—our staff, board members, industry stakeholder partners, and colleagues across the ERO Enterprise. Thank you for your continued support!

However it is that you celebrate the holiday season, on behalf of everyone here at MRO, I wish you and your loved ones happiness, laughter, peace and good health. I look forward to beginning a new chapter and all we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

Our future is bright!

Actions Taken at the Meeting

In addition to discussing important policy and operational matters, the board took the following actions:

- Recognized outgoing board member Paul Roehr for his service on the board.

- As part of MRO's Volunteer Recognition Program, provided awards to retiring organizational group members Ding Lin (Manitoba Hydro) and Wayne Guttormson (SaskPower).
- Awarded Dallas Rowley (Oklahoma Gas and Electric) and Joe DePoorter (Madison Gas and Electric) with MRO's first ever HERO Award, recognizing their significant contributions to MRO and the ERO Enterprise.
- Approved revised policies and procedures, board committee charters, and MRO's Independent Director Profile.
- Approved the following future meeting dates:
 - April 15, 2021 10:00 a.m. Central (Business Plan and Budget Review Web Meeting)
 - April 6-7, 2022
 - June 22-23, 2022
 - September 21-22, 2022
 - November 30-December 1, 2022

At the Annual Board Meeting that immediately followed the Annual Member and Board Meeting, the board elected its chair and vice chair and made 2021 committee appointments. The board also said goodbye to outgoing board member Paul Roehr, from American Transmission Company. Paul served on the board since January 2019, and the board certainly benefited from his experience and active participation.

The presentations provided at the meeting, along with the draft meeting minutes will be available soon on [MRO's website](#).

