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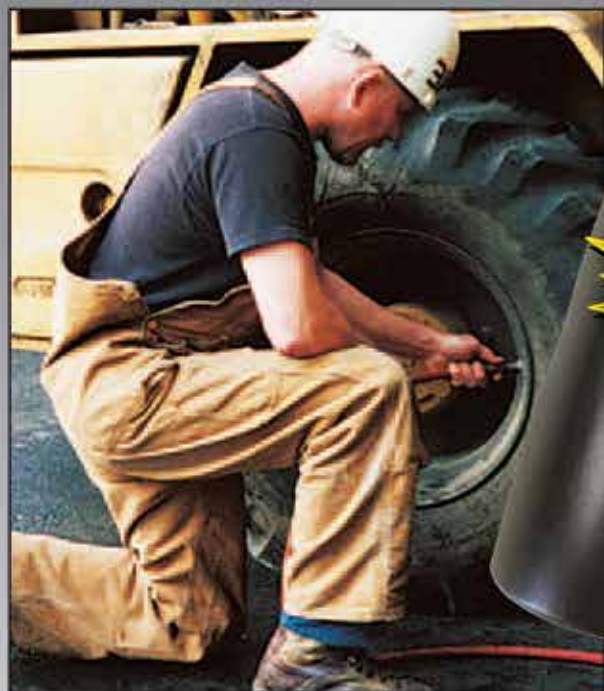
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"The new 25x10-12 PROWLER tire is a game-changer for customers who rely on their UTVs in commercial settings," said Steve Jensen, VP After-market at OTR. "Whether it's a college campus, golf course, resort, or industrial park, this tire offers the durability and comfort operators need — on both grass and pavement."

The full line of PROWLER tires, including the new 25x10-12, is available through OTR's broad dealer network and online at otr2b.com.

OTR Engineered Solutions is a market-leading global enterprise specializing in off-the-road tire, wheel, and track solutions for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and aftermarkets. Known for being an innovator in multiple off-the-road applications, OTR differentiates itself by providing value-added services such as warehousing, tire mounting, and sequencing, among other things. The firm has long established strategic partnerships with OEMs covering Construction, Lawn & Garden, Powersports, Agriculture, Forestry, Mining, Material Handling, and Specialty Vehicle markets. OTR's infrastructure comprises 30+ facilities and warehouse locations throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Asia, serving customers globally.

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My name is Craig Shellman. I invented the next best thing since sliced bread for the balloon lighting industry.

I have been a heavy equipment mechanic for 38 years ending up working for a large road and bridge builder for the last 19 years. Over the course of life, I have had to do plenty of nighttime break downs and have always used a flashlight or whatever to get the job done. It sucked.

In June of 2018 I was on an asphalt paving crew working nights. It was my first experience on the night shift, every night, all night. I needed a bright, lightweight, easy to deploy, strong light, to put up with the rigors of construction lighting. Ever since then, I took it upon myself to come up with a strong design, and bright, but glare free for those who must work in these dangerous low light situations.

I tried different ideas from a basic bird cage with light bulbs to reflective apparatuses. Then in December 2018 it hit me. It was like the flux capacitor thing, it really was.

I envisioned the concept of what have here for a locking slide of my light. I locked myself in my garage for 8 days and developed my latch design with a Dremel tool and pieces of tubing. That is when I knew I had a solid design and knew I had to take it to the next level.

In January of 2019, I approached a machine shop in town to transform my parts to Computer Aided Design (CAD), manufactured parts. Between the help of my machine shop and my new Senior Design Engineer, we were able to knock it out of the ballpark.

Throughout 2019 I ended up purchasing various pieces of equipment to prototype/build the Quasar 360. After another 16 months of prototyping, testing, and redesigning, I know I have produced the best portable balloon light on the planet!

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Underground Safety

1. Follow excavation standards

One of the best ways to ensure utility construction safety is following excavation standards. Official standards designed by organizations like OSHA and the U.S. Department of Labor are required in the workplace for a reason — they work. You can use these standards as a roadmap to ensure minimum safety measures are in place.

For example, OSHA standard 1926.651 outlines all the requirements for the excavation process. This standard includes the basic step-by-step process for a safe excavation as well as some best practices. You can always contact OSHA for more information or guidance on a specific standard.

One helpful feature in OSHA standards is the soil classification index — an appendix of the 1926 set of standards. Soil classification is vital for understanding your job site and preparing for any geological risks that might be present. Additionally, the type of soil you're working with can impact the ground-penetrating detection techniques you need to use to locate any existing buried infrastructure accurately.

2. Always verify the estimated location

Tracking down the estimated location of underground utilities can be frustrating and time con-

suming, but it's critical for ensuring safety. If you simply start digging with an approximate location in mind, you risk accidentally breaking a pipe or powerline, causing injury or damage.

Always complete the standard process for verifying the exact location of the underground utilities your team is excavating or working on. This usually requires contacting the original installer, identifying the estimated location and confirming it using detection equipment. Try to time location verification with clear, dry weather since soil dampness can interfere with ground-penetrating radar accuracy.

When in doubt, use the standard 811 hotline to contact Call Before You Dig services. Remember to leave plenty of time to verify the dig location since getting the right personnel and equipment on-site can take a day or two.

3. Prioritize safe trenching practices

Trenches are necessary for underground utility work, but they can be a serious hazard without the proper precautions. Observing the necessary trenching best practices is essential for ensuring underground utility construction safety.

For example, shielding and shoring are vital to

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verifying trenches are stable enough for your team to work in. Shaving may still be necessary even if you have shielding equipment like trench boxes in place. Take concerns about soil stability seriously, even if you must install more supports.

Make sure your team is highly aware of their surroundings at all times, as well. Seemingly simple oversights can lead to severe accidents, such as entering a wet trench or moving a suspended load over a canal with workers inside. Remind workers to keep all their equipment at least two feet away from the edge of the trench to prevent items from accidentally falling in.

4. *Ensure safety equipment is easily available*

Every industry pro knows the importance of safety equipment. However, you may have team members who aren't experienced yet or cannot afford good safety gear. Likewise, an experienced employee could easily have an accident that leads to a piece of their gear breaking.

It's always a good idea to keep some safety equip-

ment on hand in case anyone needs it in situations like this. Make sure your team knows you have safety equipment available, as well. This will reduce a worker's anxiety about asking to borrow a hard hat or gloves.

Readily available safety gear also makes it more difficult for workers to pass off PPE non-compliance. Remind your team that failing to wear all of their protective equipment can be life threatening. For example, studies show 70% of falling accidents involved a worker lacking PPE.

Encourage your team to invest in their own safety equipment. However, it's always best to have backup gear available so you can always put safety first.

5. *Pay attention to weather*

Weather is one of the most important factors in underground utility construction safety before and during on-site operations. Rain, snow, sleet, frost and high humidity all impact site safety and soil conditions. You need to pay close attention

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to weather patterns to make sure everyone can work safely.

For example, if you conduct trench shoring while the soil is frozen, the holes may become unstable and cave in when the ground thaws. On the other hand, if you dig, shield and shave a trench while the dirt is excessively dry, you may need more moisture to maintain stability.

Sudden changes in weather pose a particular hazard. For instance, heavy rain overnight can completely flood a trench or make the soil too damp to dig safely. If wet weather transitions to freezing temperatures, you can end up with icy canals. Both scenarios are too hazardous to approve on-site operations for the day.

Delays may be frustrating, but project leaders must pay attention to weather conditions. It's not worth risking your team's safety to try working through a bit of rain.

6. Use technology to monitor safety

There's been a lot of innovation in the under-

ground utilities and construction industry in recent years. One of the exciting developments to come out of that innovation is IoT safety monitoring equipment. IoT devices can be extremely helpful, particularly at large job sites where visual monitoring is challenging.

There are a wide variety of IoT tools available that you can use to automate safety monitoring. For example, the mining industry is using IoT air quality sensors to detect hazardous fumes and pollutants in tunnels. Similarly, you can use IoT sensors to monitor soil conditions so you can remotely check your job site before calling in workers for the day.

Ensuring underground utility construction safety

Underground utility construction safety is all about awareness, preparation and wise decision making. Implementing the safety measures outlined here can help you ensure your team is always safe on the job. Top priorities in underground utility safety include trench stability, weather, soil conditions, PPE, effective safety monitoring and accurate location estimating. •

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Thinking "Outside the Box" Could Play a Crucial Role in the Future of Substation Automation

The future of power system substations may be redefined by the application of virtualization. At least that is what an increasing number of utilities are envisioning as they explore the opportunity for increased virtualization in substation design. In this future, there would be a significant reduction in the hardware used in substations. Instead, tasks will be carried out on cloud servers, marking a noticeable shift from the current reliance on extensive racks of hardware.

The appeal for utilities is the significant cost reduction for substation design and engineering, reduced usage of copper wiring, and the ability to easily replicate substation designs for future expansions.

"Consider that today's substation can have 200 or more independent [hardware] boxes each performing a dedicated task," says Jeremy Anderson, Senior Vice President of Product Development at NovaTech Automation, a leading U.S. provider of automation and engineering solutions for power utilities headquartered in Quakertown, PA. "That's a tremendous amount of wire to pull, hardware to maintain, and it continues to become more and more congested. In a virtual digital substation, two or three servers run everything."

With a vision for an intelligent grid of the future that is adaptive and resilient requiring less hardware and leveraging more virtualization, the utilities industry has formed the Virtual Protection and Control Alliance (vPAC) to explore how to do this. The focus is to accelerate the creation of a standards-based, open, interoperable and secure architecture to host protection, automation, and control solutions for power system substations. NovaTech is one of its over 20 member organizations.

"From our standpoint, we wanted to help define the future of substation automation," says Anderson. With this in mind, NovaTech has spent the past year creating a virtual version of its Orion Substation Automation Platform to run on any server. The system is hosted on a host machine known as a hypervisor and servers powered by Intel CPUs.

The company's flagship product, the Orion is a commu-

nication and automation processor that can connect to nearly any substation device in its native protocol, perform advanced math and logic, and securely present the source or calculated data to any number of clients in their own protocol.

The Orion can be integrated with any equipment, including competitors, and is often connected to microprocessor-based relays, meters, event recorders, IEDs and RTUs. It is then connected to an existing enterprise network or SCADA system.

An emerging substation model

According to Anderson, there is a coordinated push by some large investor owned utilities in the United States and globally to move to what is being called the "digital substation." Still, not all utilities are ready to pull the plug on the traditional substation design quite yet.

"Most utilities aren't moving in this direction at this point," explains Anderson. "But they are certainly investigating it thoroughly with the plan to move in this direction in the coming years."

Cost savings is a leading driver of utilities' interest in virtualization.

"It is a lot less expensive to build multiple substations once a virtual design is established because you're not pulling tons of copper wire everywhere," says Anderson. "When it is based on the ethernet, you can build a substation that is somewhat cookie-cutter in design and easily replicatable. This represents a significant cost saving in substation design and engineering.

The cost outlay for hardware is also reduced. "Consider that two or three servers that cost \$10,000 each can potentially replace up to 200 hardware devices that average \$10,000 per device. The savings are significant even if you factor in licensing fees for virtual machines," says Anderson.

Recent supply chain challenges are also increasing the appeal of hardware agnostic solutions.

"The pandemic certainly tested the supply chains in our sector," says Anderson. "There were massive issues

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around the world trying to buy hardware, especially custom-built devices. With virtualization, if a server ever fails, it is easier to find a replacement and the utility is not limited to proprietary hardware."

Designing the virtual system
In creating the virtual Orion, NovaTech wanted to ensure the system functioned identically to its current hardware-based system.

"The biggest challenge was taking a system that was developed over many years as embedded software for purpose-built hardware and make it run on any server," says Anderson.

He adds that in some ways it was easier than initially

thought. "The virtual Orion looks and operates the same as every unit we have sold," says Anderson. "It just happens to run on hardware that we didn't build."

Anderson adds that NovaTech was intent on ensuring the customer experience was unaltered.

"Our customers know the Orion, how to program it, and how to interact with it. So one of our major goals was to ensure that whatever we do in this virtual environment, the Orion would operate identically from the customer's perspective."

The virtual Orion system is currently in beta test at a utility in Arizona with the full release planned in February. The company plans to debut it at the DISTRIBUTECH conference in Orlando, an annual event for showcasing cutting edge technologies in power transmission and distribution.

Looking ahead

"We are still in the early days of the deployment of the virtual digital substations," says Anderson. "There are some early adopters, but I anticipate that we are at least five years away from broad-based market adoption."

However there is an opportunity to solve a more immediate issue in substation environments. As more IoT devices are installed in utility distribution systems, a single virtual Orion on a server could be used to collect and manage data from thousands of sources. When all these devices must be hardwired, it can take several racks of Orions to collect all the data.

A similar scenario could drive the use of the Orion beyond the substation environment and into any enterprise where thousands of devices are collecting data.

With cloud computing and virtualization changing the contours of many industries, momentum continues to build behind virtualizing more of the work of a substation. The blueprint for tomorrow's power system substation has yet to be fully written, but it is only a matter of time that we will see more virtual environments emerge through the collective expertise of industry stakeholders.

For more information on the vPAC Alliance, visit www.vpacalliance.com. More information on Orion substation automation solutions can be found at the NovaTech Automation website, www.novatechautomation.com/solutions/substation-automation, or by contacting (484) 812-6000.

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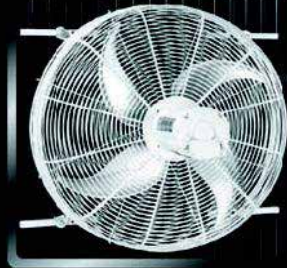
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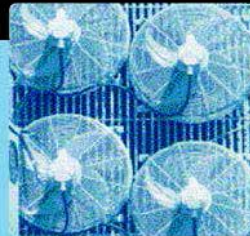
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