

Aclara Introduces Revolutionary, Standards-Based, Wide-Area Network for Utilities at Autovation 2009

CLEVELAND – September 14, 2009 – Aclara, a leader in Intelligent Infrastructure™ solutions for utilities and part of the Utility Solutions Group of ESCO Technologies Inc. (NYSE:ESE), introduced a revolutionary, mesh-based wide-area network (WAN) for utilities today at Autovation 2009. The Aclara Smart Communications Network is a high-bandwidth, standards-based, broadband solution that will bring together existing utility assets and applications into a single network.

The network is designed for use by gas, water, or electric utilities and employs TCP/IP communications protocols as well as IEEE 802.11 standards for wireless communications. It is a game-changing solution that allows utilities to replace multiple, low-to-medium bandwidth systems that now communicate data to utilities. The solution provides an ideal interface to utility and IT resources and back-office applications for SCADA control and monitoring systems, advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), home-area networks, and mobile-workforce applications.

The Aclara Smart Communications Network can be configured to communicate in mesh, point-to-point, or point-to-multipoint modes over 900 MHz or 2.4/5.8 GHz frequencies. The 900-MHz range handles most network tasks, while the 2.4 GHz/5.8 GHz range provides additional bandwidth and higher data rates for transmitting large amounts of data. The network also conforms to authentication and encryption criteria that meet developing industry security standards.

The Aclara Smart Communications Network is a true standards-based, wireless solution that will encourage utilities to take a top-down approach to managing data communications.

“The use of widely accepted standards provides simple, secure, and reliable interoperability to a wide range of systems within electric, gas and water utilities.” said Mark Thompson, Vice President of Strategic Communication Networks for Aclara. “The initial implementations of the Aclara Smart Communications Network will include AMI backhaul, but the solid foundation provided by IEEE 802.11 makes the network an efficient way to link other applications, including SCADA, to the utility.”

The Aclara Smart Communications Networks is a cost-effective and robust solution for utilities that need a solid communications foundation on which to build an Intelligent Infrastructure.

“We know that utilities today are looking for a better understanding of what is happening within their systems. Smart devices that provide process data are just one-half of the equation,” said Gary Moore, President of Aclara RF Systems Inc., “The other half is a network that can cost-effectively and efficiently transmit data from smart devices to the utility, and vice-versa. The Aclara Smart Communications Network is such a network.”

Aclara has announced a strategic alliance with wireless infrastructure mesh supplier Firetide Inc. to develop the Aclara Smart Communications Network, which utilizes Firetide’s MIMO radio technology as well as its network management software. Firetide solutions are now used by many municipalities and enterprises to create strong data networks that stream voice and data, as well as video from security cameras. The technology supports data rates of 1Mb/s to 300 Mb/s, making it ideally suited to handle utility distribution applications.

“Advances in utility and smart grid applications require an equal upgrade to the communications infrastructure that connects smart devices, provides security and supports real-time communications for critical needs,” said Bo Larsson, CEO of Firetide. “As a core component of the new solution, Firetide’s infrastructure mesh provides key performance and architectural advantages, which, combined with Aclara’s expertise in the market, make Aclara Smart Communications Network an ideal spring-board into “smart” communications for utilities.”

Aclara is a member of the Wi-Fi Alliance, a global, non-profit organization with the goal of driving the adoption of a single, worldwide-accepted standard for high-speed, wireless, local-area networking based on IEEE 802.11 specifications.

For media inquiries:

Nancy E. Talley
Marketing Communications Manager
440-528-7287
ntalley@aclara.com

About Aclara

The Aclara brand represents the industry’s leading Intelligent Infrastructure™ technologies for providing device networking, data-value management, and customer communications to water, gas, and electric utilities globally. Over 500 utilities in nine countries rely on proven Aclara solutions to connect with their customers. Aclara is part of the Utility Solutions Group of ESCO Technologies Inc. (NYSE: ESE), St. Louis. www.Aclara.com.