



John Craychee, president of Kiene Diesel Accessories Inc., gives a presentation during the 2016 Windrock Users' Group Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

TOWN-TO-TOWN TRAINING

ON THE ROAD WITH WINDROCK

BY BRENT HAIGHT

In June, Windrock hosted its 19th annual Users' Group Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, USA, marking the first time the event has been held west of the Mississippi River. The three-day event included educational classes designed to provide product and application information to help users increase their knowledge of Windrock's portfolio of condition-based and performance-based monitoring solutions for compressors and engines across multiple applications.

Gas Compression Magazine was invited to attend the customer-only event, so we loaded up our gear and drove north from Houston to sit in.

The concept of a users' group conference is not new. Many companies provide opportunities for customers to gather under one roof to hear about new products and services being offered by the host company, as well as discuss any problems and concerns these customers might have experienced with their products in the field. It's an important tool that allows face-to-face dialogue with a company's most valuable asset – its customers.

Where Windrock differentiates itself from other users' group conferences we've attended is the amount of unfiltered dialogue and discussion between attendees and engineers.

"This is not a sales event," said Ed Flanagan, General Manager at Windrock. "We want customers to learn from each other, and more importantly, we want to learn from them. We engineer and manufacture the equipment, but they are the ones who use it on a daily basis. They are bringing real-world experience and expertise. We want them to tell us how we can make our product better."

The conference itinerary includes technical presentations, case studies, roundtable discussions, and networking events. A first for the annual conference, Windrock added a diesel breakout session led by Ed Kelleher, Global Business Development Manager. The session discussed how products and services translate to diesel engines across multiple applications.

Attendee interaction is constant. Questions are raised mid-presentation, sometimes sparking debate over differences in the data being presented compared to another attendee's results in a similar application. User-presented case studies (there were six this year) allow application-specific presentations from the customer's point of view.

"There is ongoing dialogue," said Flanagan. "During presentations... after presentations. The products are the same, but the conditions each user encounters are different. This is a great opportunity for folks to compare notes."


A highlight of each Windrock Users' Group Conference is the annual Brainteaser Quiz. The quiz is designed to test an analyst's knowledge of machinery analysis. Attendees are given the test when they arrive and have two days to complete it. Wednesday's answer session has become an anticipated event that encourages questions and open discussion, and ultimately, awards one attendee the top honor – a trophy and "Super Analyst" bragging rights for one year. This year's winner was Kenneth Gill from Oxy Permian Ltd.

Windrock's open-discourse formula has proven to be a success. In a year that has seen longstanding industry events fold and highly regarded technical conferences experience a significant drop in attendance, the 19th installment of its users'

group conference was attended by 91 participants from seven different countries—its largest turnout to date.

“We started out with about five users our first year,” said Flanagan. “It’s grown ever since. The turnout we get from our customers validates the need for targeted training and open dialogue between our end users.”

In addition to its annual users’ conference, Windrock conducts year-round analyst training courses designed to meet the needs of mechanics, operators, and engineers at every level, from basic instruction for beginners to advanced training for seasoned analysts. Classes are offered at the customer’s site or Windrock’s training center in Knoxville, Tennessee, USA, and in Fort Collins, Colorado, USA, on the energy campus of Colorado State University. The company also conducts training classes in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, and offers free, single-day Regional Analyst Forums each fall throughout the United States and abroad.

Windrock, a Dover company, specializes in the development, manufacture, and distribution of online monitoring systems and portable analyzers, software, sensors, and technical services for reciprocating engines, compressors, and rotating machinery. 

AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

COLUMBIA PIPELINE GROUP WINS 2016 WINDROCK SUMMIT AWARD




On behalf of Columbia Pipeline Group, Troy Todd, Troy Harlow, and Chuck Paxton accepted the 2016 Windrock Summit Award, which recognizes excellence in using technology and pledging commitment to optimize condition and performance monitoring.

Columbia Pipeline Group was awarded the 2016 Summit Award during Windrock’s annual Users’ Group Conference in June. The Windrock Summit Award recognizes the company that best utilizes technology for condition and performance monitoring of reciprocating machinery along with personnel/management commitment to optimize those assets.

“This award highlights the accomplishments of the reliability and maintenance program and the role the analyst group plays in the overall success of the company,” said Ed Flanagan, General Manager for Windrock.

Troy Todd, Troy Harlow, and Chuck Paxton accepted the award on behalf of Columbia Pipeline Group.

“Columbia Pipeline Group analyzes more than 600 units,” said Harlow. “We have 11 analysts from the Gulf of Mexico to New York. We encompass much of the Eastern Seaboard. Our analysts utilize portable equipment for routine analysis. We utilize enterprise analytics for remote, continuous monitoring, and condition reporting.” 



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