

'New normal' after Sandy gives New York chance to accelerate

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New York State is well on its way to demonstrating smart grid technology research and implementation leadership, New York State Smart Grid Consortium Executive Director David Manning told us yesterday. He spoke to us as his organization publicized a white paper telling the press that outages caused by Hurricane Sandy make investing in the smart grid more urgent than ever.

When Manning became the consortium's executive director in early 2011, he told us he wanted New York to "lead in both the research and implementation of smart grid technology" (SGT, 2011-Feb-17). Two years later, the Empire state is doing just that, Manning told us yesterday, adding that with "IBM, GE — we've got major technology providers in our backyard."

That does not mean the work is done.

"Are we there yet? No... but the opportunity we're afforded now because of [Hurricane Sandy], this sense that there is a 'new normal' ... gives a much better opportunity to accelerate." — New York State Smart Grid Consortium Executive Director David Manning, in an interview with Smart Grid Today.

"Our findings both reflect and support Gov Cuomo's priorities for ... a coordinated effort to modernize the state's aging infrastructure," Robert Catell, the consortium's chairman, said in prepared remarks. New York Gov Andrew Cuomo, R, recently called on utilities to develop a plan for power delivery in the event of another Sandy-like storm (SGT, Jan-14).

The consortium is a public-private partnership founded in 2008.

The group's multi-stakeholder model includes tech firms, utilities and academics — and it appealed to Cuomo's staff, which has been very attentive to the consortium's deliberations, Manning said.

Utilities have been "fully engaged in the discussions" he added.

The next big activity for the consortium will be the Advanced Energy conference in April, where Manning's group hopes to instill fresh urgency for modernizing the grid, he said.