

## **N297. U/MRUG: Utility/Manufacturers Robotics Users Group**

U/MRUG is a dues-free group that includes participants from various utilities, the Department of Energy, EPRI, vendors, universities, and manufacturers that meets twice a year to share information and discuss opportunities for using remote technologies and robotics in various activities. Many of the utility participants operate nuclear power reactors. A significant portion of the program offers ideas and applications that have a real potential for radiation dose savings.

Public Service Electric & Gas originated U/MRUG and chaired the meetings since its inception in 1985. Starting in 1993, Commonwealth Edison Co. began chairing the meetings. The last meeting was hosted at Commonwealth Edison's Byron Nuclear Station, on April 14-15, 1994. Well over 700 personnel attended the event at Byron, including about 450 ComEd employees and about 254 U/MRUG members. Over twenty U.S. and foreign utilities were represented, including Electricite de France, Ontario Hydro, and Britain's Nuclear Electric. About 40 vendors displayed robotic and remote equipment designed for nuclear power plant applications.

The technical topics that are discussed during the U/MRUG meetings are generally speaking quite "hands-on". For example, during the last meeting some of the topics discussed included pipe-crawling robots that can hydrolase, a robotic device that inspects reactor coolant pump components, a camera system that aligns reactor internal components during reassembly, and a remote laser measurement system. Attendants openly discuss problems and learn of potential solutions from vendors and other utilities. The next meeting will be hosted by Tennessee Vally Authority's (TVA) Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Station on November 17-18, 1994. As part of the program, roundtable discussions on remote technology applications and projects will be held. The idea for the roundtable is to explore possibilities for remote technology development and implementation in the utility industry. Also, TVA will make a limited amount of complimentary floor space available for information and equipment display purposes. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Marriott Hotel in Huntsville, Alabama, which is adjacent to the Space and Rocket Center. For more information, please call Leona Bares at (412) 765-3064.

*For more, "U/MRUG: Utility / Manufacturers Robotics Users Group," by P. Hamby. For further information, please call Peter Hamby at (708) /663-3863.*