



# INSTALLATION ENERGY & WATER FORUM

January 29, 2026 // Arlington, VA

# POST EVENT SUMMARY

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# Executive Summary

More than 300 defense, utility, industry, and community leaders convened in Arlington for the 2026 ADC Installation Energy & Water Forum — the only national event dedicated exclusively to installation energy and water resilience.

Across six sessions and live audience polling, one message was consistent: the future of energy and water resilience goes far beyond the fenceline and will depend on the success of relationships forged among installations, communities, and utility partners.

## Participants emphasized that:

- Installations must be treated as operational platforms that require reliable power and water just like weapons systems.
- Early, sustained partnerships with utilities and communities are essential.
- Aging infrastructure and growing demand from AI, advanced manufacturing, and data centers are accelerating risk.
- Transparency and clearly articulating requirements will be crucial for the military to foster meaningful relationships with utility partners.
- Traditional funding alone will not close the gap. Alternative financing, privatization, and public-private partnerships are critical.
- Water resilience is emerging as equally urgent as energy resilience.
- Cybersecurity threats to utilities represent a growing national security risk.

Event polling reinforced these priorities. Attendees overwhelmingly called for stronger partnerships, faster infrastructure deployment, expanded use of authorities and private capital, and better alignment between infrastructure investments and mission requirements

The forum confirmed that installation resilience is a shared responsibility and that progress will depend on coordinated action across the military, utilities, industry, and host communities.



# Introduction

Energy and water are the backbone of installation readiness, powering operations, supporting families, and enabling the mission every day.

As AI, autonomy, advanced manufacturing, and digital systems reshape defense operations, installations are facing unprecedented demand for reliable electricity, water supply, and secure infrastructure. At the same time, aging systems, rising costs, and cyber threats are increasing risk.

Unlike many mission functions, these challenges cannot be solved by the military alone. They require partnership.

The ADC Installation Energy & Water Forum returned in 2026 to bring together senior leaders from the military, utilities, communities, and industry to answer a central question: How do we modernize and strengthen the shared infrastructure that installations depend on so they remain resilient, adaptable, and mission-ready?

The one-day program featured more than 20 speakers and live audience polling to capture priorities and concerns across the defense energy and water ecosystem.

## Event Polling Results

Live polling throughout the day reinforced the urgency and direction discussed in sessions.

### Top Concerns

- 62% are concerned about electricity disruptions
- 62% say more attention is needed beyond energy (including water and other infrastructure)
- 57% want to partner to increase resilience
- 35% want better understanding of installation infrastructure needs

### Water Resilience Priorities

- 70% say water resource capacity must be considered early
- 56% support leveraging IGSA's and performance contracts
- 52% support expanding utility privatization

### Partnership Priorities

- 80% want better alignment of infrastructure investments with mission requirements
- 67% want stronger partnerships with utilities and cooperatives
- Deployment and Financing Priorities
- 65% prioritize improving resilience of utilities supporting critical missions
- 45-48% support public-private partnerships and private financing

### Grid Expansion Priorities

- 56% prioritize financing grid upgrades that enhance mission readiness
- 48% support using federal government land for energy infrastructure
- 44% support funding transmission expansion

# Top Event Takeaways

Across sessions and polling, several themes consistently emerged:

- **Installations are operational platforms.** Energy and water resilience is more than facilities management. It is integral to facilities management.
- **Partnerships are the foundation.** Utilities, communities, and industry must be engaged early and continuously.
- **Speed matters.** Defense communities must understand their own growth requirements irrespective of hyperscalers to be first in line for unlocking grid capacity to meet principal needs.
- **Financing must evolve.** Privatization, performance contracts, and private capital are essential tools for efficiently and proactively securing energy investments for mission assurance
- **Water is rising in priority.** Supply, cost, and contamination risks are increasing and require equal urgency as energy resilience.
- **The grid is regional.** Solutions must extend beyond installation boundaries.
- **Cybersecurity is inseparable from resilience.** Utility systems are national security infrastructure and identifying threats before they become a problem is imperative to resilience.



## Session Summaries

# Installation Energy & Water Resilience: Leadership Priorities, Policy, and the Path Ahead

This opening leadership discussion reframed installation energy and water from a facilities issue to an operational requirement. Senior military leaders outlined how growing mission demands — including AI compute loads, advanced manufacturing, and cybersecurity risks — are reshaping infrastructure priorities. The panel emphasized that resilience must be planned proactively and built through external partnerships, not solved solely inside the fence line.

### Speakers

- **Michael Wu**, CEO, Converge Strategies (Moderator)
- **Brandon Cockrell**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Energy
- **Nancy Balkus**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Infrastructure, Energy and Environment
- **Rebecca Isacowitz**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy Resilience and Optimization
- **Wally Ludwig**, Principal Director, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy

### Key Takeaways

- **Installations are operational platforms.** Leaders repeatedly stressed that installations function like weapons systems; without assured energy and water, mission capability stops. Infrastructure investments should be prioritized with the same urgency as operational assets.
- **Resilience must be planned regionally.** Most installation power and water originate off base. Strengthening resilience requires coordination with utilities, regulators, and communities, not just internal upgrades.
- **Demand growth is accelerating.** Emerging requirements such as AI data centers and advanced communications are increasing load faster than legacy systems can accommodate. Installations must plan now for future capacity rather than react to shortages later.
- **Affordability and flexibility matter.** Installations compete with commercial users for grid capacity. Understanding demand profiles and advocating early helps ensure military requirements are met.
- **Messaging needs to evolve.** Leaders noted that the concept of installation resilience is not new but that framing installations as critical infrastructure customers and strategic partners is key to gaining support and investment.

### Selected Quotes

*“Two things are really clear to me. We have to create flexibility and be first in line for the capacity we need. If we’re not, we can’t support national security.”*

*“We cannot do our mission without the defense community, the industrial base, and utility partners.”*

*“We don’t want to compete with utilities. We want to collaborate.”*

# Unlocking the Mission Marketplace – Military Perspectives on Emerging Challenges & Opportunities

This session explored how installations can leverage non-excess land, commercial partnerships, and alternative financing to accelerate infrastructure delivery. Leaders discussed balancing innovation with modernization of aging systems while aligning projects with mission benefits.

## Speakers

- **Stacey Shepard**, President, Shepard Global Strategies; ADC Board Member (Moderator)
- **Robert Moriarty**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations
- **Dave Dentino**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Housing and Partnerships
- **Rebecca Isacowitz**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy Resilience and Optimization

## Key Takeaways

- **Alternative financing is essential.** Traditional appropriations alone cannot keep pace with infrastructure needs. Partnerships with industry can accelerate delivery and reduce cost.
- **Land is rarely the constraint.** The limiting factor is utilities capacity, permitting, and supporting infrastructure. Planning must address those barriers early.
- **Data centers and advanced manufacturing create both risk and opportunity.** These facilities require large energy and water loads but can also bring shared infrastructure upgrades that benefit installations and communities.
- **Modernize while innovating.** Leaders cautioned against chasing new technologies while neglecting degraded legacy systems. Both must advance together.
- **Reduce bureaucratic friction.** Streamlining processes and challenging outdated constraints can shorten timelines and lower costs.

## Selected Quote

*“We need to break a few molds and find ways to do things faster at a lower price point.”*

# Unlocking the Mission Marketplace – The Need for Enhanced Collaboration with Utilities

Industry and utility leaders discussed how early coordination improves reliability, lowers risk, and speeds deployment of new capabilities. Cybersecurity emerged as a growing shared concern.

## Speakers

- **Lucian Niemeyer**, CEO, Building Cyber Security (Moderator)
- **Monica DeAngelo**, Director of Federal Partnerships, Southern Company
- **Sachin Patel**, Vice President, Government Services Strategy and Operations, Comcast NBCUniversal
- **Geoff Gasperini**, General Manager, Federal Energy Solutions, Dominion Energy
- **Emily Stewart**, Director of Business Development, ASUS
- **Richard Houghton**, Director of Federal Business Relations, City Light & Power

## Key Takeaways

- **Early engagement reduces risk.** Bringing utilities into planning at the outset avoids costly redesigns and delays.
- **Utilities are force multipliers.** Private-sector expertise and financing can accelerate infrastructure delivery.
- **Cyber threats are increasing.** Utilities are now direct targets, making grid security inseparable from national security.
- **Communities have influence.** Coordinated regional voices help justify investment and regulatory support.
- **Shared planning improves outcomes.** Transparent communication around needs and constraints builds trust.

## Selected Quote

*“We’re in a national power crisis — not just demand, but unprecedented cyber threat against our grid.”*

# Water We Waiting For? Addressing Water Resilience for Mission Assurance

This panel focused on water as an increasingly urgent mission risk. Speakers highlighted aging infrastructure, contamination challenges, and rising costs, while pointing to successful partnerships and privatization models.

## Speakers

- **Abigail Eifert**, Senior Associate, Converge Strategies (Moderator)
- **Sean Wheatley**, President, American Water
- **Amy Borman**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health
- **Christine Ploschke**, N4 Director (Facilities and Environmental), Navy Installations Command
- **Shelly Schmidt**, Architect and Energy Analyst, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Infrastructure, Energy and Environment
- **Chris Connor**, Senior Vice President, ASUS

## Key Takeaways

- **Water resilience directly affects mission capability.** Shortages, contamination, or system failures disrupt operations immediately.
- **Water demand is rising.** Data centers, new technologies, and population growth are increasing stress on supply.
- **Privatization and performance contracts deliver results.** Case examples showed improved reliability and lower costs through partnerships.
- **Water must be planned early.** Infrastructure siting decisions should consider water availability from the outset.
- **Community is key.** Water is a regional resource with regional impacts. Partnerships with communities will be integral to addressing supply constraints, infrastructure concerns, and contamination.

## Selected Quotes

*“Water is viewed as a right. Energy is viewed as a commodity. But both are mission critical.”*

*“The common thread in our success has been working closely with community stakeholders.”*

# Advancing the Strategic Role of Utility Privatization – Updates and Opportunities

This session provided updates on utility privatization programs and emphasized long-term partnership structures and targeted investment planning.

## Speakers

- **John Conger**, President and CEO, Conger Strategies (Moderator)
- **Ali Bakhshi**, Utilities Privatization Program and Contract Management, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Energy and Sustainability)
- **Dave Capozzoli**, Utility Management Program Director, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command
- **Erik Potter**, Utilities Privatization Branch, Air Force Civil Engineer Center
- **Michael Zapata**, Division Chief for Energy Program Execution, Air Force Office of Energy Assurance

## Key Takeaways

- **Privatization is a long-term partnership.** Contracts often span decades and require shared commitment.
- **Prioritize highest-risk systems first.** Data-driven tools help target limited funding.
- **Maximize existing contracts.** Leveraging established relationships can accelerate improvements.
- **Preparation improves outcomes.** Feasibility studies and exercises clarify requirements and reduce delays.

## Selected Quote

*“We should leverage industry expertise to get things faster, bigger, and stronger.”*

# Powering the Fight: Expanding and Fortifying the Grid to Achieve Energy Dominance

The closing session addressed policy authorities, funding strategies, and regional coordination to strengthen grid reliability and capacity.

## Speakers

- **Will Rogers**, Principal, Converge Strategies (Moderator)
- **Susan Call**, Director, Installation Energy Optimization, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy Resilience and Optimization
- **Alex Young**, Edison Electric Institute
- **Leslie Abrahams**, Center for Strategic and International Studies
- **Kristin Thomasgard**, Chief of Staff, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Environmental Management and Restoration); Program Director, REPI Program
- **Adrian McNamara**, Cybersecurity Program Manager, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

## Key Takeaways

- **Most power comes from outside the fence.** Regional coordination is essential.
- **The cyber threat is increasing.** Agreeing on a framework of cybersecurity requirements is the first step in implementing cyber resilience.
- **Institutionalize information sharing.** Cross-sector collaboration must be routine, not ad hoc.
- **Local voices matter.** Tailored solutions outperform one-size-fits-all approaches.
- **Energy policy is defense policy.** Grid modernization is directly tied to mission assurance.

## Selected Quotes

*“95% of our power comes from outside the fence line.”*

*“Respect your local expertise. We can’t arrive at the table with a one-size-fits-all approach. If we’re clear about what we can or cannot do, partners will stay engaged. That’s how you build trust.”*



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