

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Burns & McDonnell Named Program Manager by SDG&E for New Wireless Broadband
Telecommunications Network***Utility is One of First in the Nation to Launch Private LTE*

SAN DIEGO, California — [San Diego Gas & Electric \(SDG&E\)](#) has selected [Burns & McDonnell](#) to program manage the implementation of its new private long-term evolution (PLTE) wireless broadband network. While many utilities around the U.S. are embarking on the implementation of LTE as their network technology, SDG&E and its OT network engineering team is one of the first large utilities in North America to launch construction of a new [utility-operated LTE network](#). When complete, the network will enable several advanced safety and protection technologies as well as secure connectivity for SDG&E electric and gas systems serving a population center of more than 3.6 million people in the San Diego metropolitan area. Burns & McDonnell has worked on more than 400 projects for SDG&E, providing design, engineering, construction, consulting and environmental services.

“While LTE is a well-known and widely use technology in the consumer space, this network is being designed and implemented to meet the requirements of a mission critical network,” says Omar Zevallos, who as manager of network technologies for SDG&E was the initial proponent for the LTE network and is responsible for the full implementation and ownership of the new technology. “This is a cutting-edge project for SDG&E that will provide the connectivity we need to support present and future utility applications. A key driver for our PLTE system is to provide wireless communications to enable our Falling Conductor Protection (FCP) system. This system relies on low latency communications to detect a powerline that has failed and de-energize it before it comes in contact with the ground. PLTE meets our technical and operational requirements to serve this critical system. We also see this system helping us more effectively serve the growing renewable power and energy storage systems connected to our grid, as well as meeting growing demands for electric vehicle charging and other new loads.”

Burns & McDonnell will be responsible for overall management of a complex multiyear program that will include engineering for multiple telecommunications sites, procurement of materials and equipment, construction of towers and control facilities, and supervision of contractors who will install thousands of wireless devices needed for the communications network.

The network will utilize a multispectrum approach. The initial implementation is targeted to leverage the Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) spectrum priority access licenses (PALs) that SDG&E acquired in 2020 in a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) auction. SDG&E was one of 11 utilities

awarded 10-year renewable licenses by the FCC following an auction process conducted from July through August of 2020.

Utilities across North America are exploring options for building more robust and secure communications networks with PLTE to address growing communication needs — especially those associated with the distribution system. Spectrum within the CBRS band has emerged as one of the mid-band options available for utilities.

In addition to opening up the CBRS spectrum, the FCC has taken a number of actions to make more efficient use of spectrum, allowing utilities and other industries needing wireless broadband connectivity the opportunity to build their own private telecommunications networks.

“Electric utilities meet every definition of critical infrastructure because of their importance to national security and a healthy economy,” says [Bruce Albright](#), 5G solutions manager for Burns & McDonnell. “SDG&E is now building a [foundational communications network](#) that will give it the greatest control over its assets and broad reaching connectivity that positions the utility for future load growth and changing customer demands.”

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About Burns & McDonnell

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