



History of the Eastern Gas Compression Roundtable

During the early 1970's, it was common for members of the burgeoning gas industry to discuss the need for an education program that addressed operating and maintenance questions on engine/compressor systems. In the spirit of community, representatives from key companies that were operating natural gas compressors, along with product manufacturers, industry suppliers and delegates from West Virginia University came together to formulate a plan. With a mutual interest in promoting safety, innovation and education, a meeting was held on April 20, 1972 at the Lakeview Country Club in Morgantown, WV to develop an education solution. The group agreed that the formation of a Gas Compression Roundtable for the Eastern United States would address the needs of the local industry and provide a valuable resource for companies and their employees.

As a matter of procedure, the group became the General Committee for the formation of such an organization and adopted the name Eastern Gas Compression Roundtable. The General Committee concluded that the area to be serviced by the Roundtable would include principally that portion of the United States East of the Mississippi River and eastern Canada. The General Committee also voted that the Eastern Gas Compression Roundtable be hosted and held at West Virginia University.

The purpose of the Roundtable is to provide opportunities for persons in the gas compression and related industries to add to their knowledge of the operation and maintenance of compression units and related equipment. This conference has also been enhanced to offer learning opportunities for personnel in the areas of Engineering, Gas Control, Automation & Controls, Management and Environmental Health & Safety.

The first Roundtable was held May 16-18, 1973 on the Evansdale Campus of West Virginia University in cooperation with the College of Mineral Energy Resources. The "roundtable" discussion format was utilized with group discussions on eleven selected topics of interest. A member of the industry served as discussion leader in each session with manufacturing and/or service organization representatives serving as resource leaders. Attendance of 341 people representing more than 100 companies was recorded that first year.

Prior to the age of computers and online registration, the hundreds of applications to attend the dozens of training sessions presented a daunting task to coordinate. Tickets for each class were printed and inserted into envelopes that were tacked to an easel board. Volunteers then took one application at a time and pulled class tickets from those envelopes, taking great care not to over or under fill any class. Those who were involved at the time recollect that a suitable quantity of pitchers of beer were required to insure an attention to detail during the ticket pull. This yearly event became fun for all, cementing vendor/gas industry relationships that have lasted decades.

With this solid base to grow on, the Roundtable continued to expand over the years and began to include lectures and hands-on workshops as well as roundtable discussions to address the needs of the attendees. As participation continued to grow, it became increasingly more difficult to accommodate everyone on the campus of WVU and the decision was made in 1999 to move the EGCR to Robert Morris University in Moon Township, PA.

The popularity and reputation on the Roundtable continued to grow over the years and refinements were continually made to the track programs and classes offered to address both entry-level and experienced station operators for the purpose of offering more specific training.

The tremendous growth opportunities brought on by the Marcellus and Utica Shale discoveries continue to feed the growth of the EGCR and the Board of Directors approved a move to the David Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh in 2015. From its humble beginnings in 1972 with a few hundred attendees and several roundtable discussions, the 2015 Roundtable offered 97 unique class sessions in 12 specific tracks, as well as in-depth OEM training in 5 areas of interest and the Entry Level Compressor Station Operator Training Course.

The Eastern Gas Compression Roundtable offers a once-a-year opportunity to obtain some of the best training in the industry and an opportunity to network with others in the industry.

We look forward to having you join us!

The Early Pioneers:

- Edward Schwartz, *Consolidated Gas Supply Corp.*
- Don Boundurant, *West Virginia University*
- Lewis Wetzel, *Peoples Natural Gas Company*
- Rodney S. Applegate, *Consolidated Gas Supply Corp.*
- Arthur J. Kerr, Jr., *Kerr Engineered Sales Co.*
- Glenn Poole, *Equitable Gas Company*
- John Sloan, *Sloan Brothers, Inc.*
- William A. Miller, *Ingersoll Rand Company*
- Richard A. Boulden, *R. Boulden Company*