

Q&A

with Corissa Zimmer of
Bridger Photonics.

Distribution utility companies are on an accelerated path to decarbonize and are expected to lead the industry to US net-zero goals by 2035*. A combination of renewable energy initiatives and new tech-based approaches to reduce methane emissions is needed to reach this ambitious target.

We spoke with Corissa Zimmer, Accounts Manager at Bridger Photonics, to learn what's ahead for the distribution sector, how she sets up her customers for success and helps them reach their goals.

*<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/energy-and-resources/articles/power-and-utilities-industry-outlook.html>

Setting Up Distribution Utilities for Success



Q: What are the biggest challenges your distribution customers face today?

ZIMMER: Most of my gas distribution clients are answering the call of their customers and stakeholders to increase delivery of cleaner fuels, like natural gas, while also reducing methane leaks to keep workers and communities safe. Most have established sustainability programs to reduce greenhouse gases and seek new methods and processes to achieve climate commitments. My customers want to increase the frequency and precision with which service areas are scanned so ground crews can be deployed to the exact places where repairs are needed.

Q: What role does technology have in overcoming these challenges?

ZIMMER: Standard practice has been using ground crews to walk with handheld devices or drive distribution service areas hunting for gas leaks. Unfortunately, this can be inefficient since these crews cannot realistically cover sizeable areas quickly and can be slowed down by such things like traffic, mountainous or hilly terrain, and other on-site safety hazards. With aerial laser technology, not only can more territory be covered in less time, but leaks can be found faster, prioritized based on quantity or size of the emission, and ground crews can be deployed exactly where they are needed. Data collected through these aerial scans can be used to help inventory utility equipment, improve effectiveness of repair and maintenance activities, and continually improve data-driven business decisions.

Q: How do you set up your distribution customers for success?

ZIMMER: Every customer is different, but in my experience, it is important to involve the operations groups and all stakeholders early in the relationship to ensure that processes, procedures, roles, and expectations are clearly defined. Close collaboration helps when defining, prioritizing, and scheduling infrastructure to scan, preparing IT and operations to integrate data outputs from the scans, and for close coordination of flight planning. This level of synchronization ensures our customers are in the best position to achieve their safety and emissions control objectives.

Q: What type of information do you provide Gas Mapping LiDAR customers?

ZIMMER: During the planning phase, we work with the customer to define the types of data various functional groups require and in what timeframe. The data collected from our aerial scans is delivered based on customer preference. Formats range from ArcGIS, PDF, or Excel spreadsheets, whatever works best for our customer's IT and operating systems. Reports typically include plume imagery, aerial digital photography, leak source, and rate quantification, measurements swath, and equipment identification, everything customers need to prioritize repairs and deploy ground crews with the right skillsets and equipment.

Q: What sets Bridger apart from other companies?

ZIMMER: It is difficult to argue with our state-of-the-art aerial laser technology, but our proprietary data processing and analytics techniques are truly unique. This is a tribute to our technology, our heritage of invention, innovation, and precision, and to the extraordinary people who make up Bridger Photonics.

Corissa Zimmer, Accounts Manager for Bridger Photonics, works with clients to manage logistics for Gas Mapping LiDAR™ surveys. Prior to joining Bridger, she worked for more than 6 years as an environmental professional in upstream and midstream oil operations, specializing in air quality compliance for North Dakota, Montana, Texas, New Mexico, and Tribal lands. In her free time, Corissa likes to camp across Montana with her fiancé and their dogs, Rudy, and Luna.

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