Written by Gary Mintchell Friday, 14 September 2012 12:25



You'll probably read this column around the time of *ISA Automation Week*, in Orlando, FL, Sept. 24-27. This annual conference is a gathering of automation, controls and instrumentation engineers, managers and technicians in the process industries.

Among the highlights of this year's program is a demonstration of data interoperability from the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) functions on through, ultimately, the Operations and Maintenance functions. The Open O&M group (www.mimosa.org) has been working toward this event for several years.

The demonstration involves the design, construction (virtual), operation and maintenance of a debutanizer. Three major design suppliers—*Aveva, Bentley and Intergraph*—are all on board with the project, which will be designed by the EPC WorleyParsons.

Note that this demo is being run the same way a "real" industrial project would run. If all of the project work comes to fruition, the benefit to end-users will be improved maintenance response. Owner/operators will be able to get up-to-date P&IDs with truly digital links to actual equipment specifications. Thus, should a pump or motor go down in the middle of the night, a technician would be able to call up the information on a computer and drill right down to the model and spare-parts list to obtain a replacement or have a repair done more quickly than has typically been possible.

Last month was also a busy one for automation in the U.S.

National Instruments' annual developer and user conference, *NI Week*, drew 3400 people to the Austin, TX, heat, Aug. 6-9. I had several conversations with product managers and application engineering managers during that event. Improving the speed, accuracy and visualization of condition monitoring was a major point they all wanted to get across to me. Incorporating digital technologies such as condition monitoring, advanced networking and visualization— *especiall*

y on new mobile platforms like iPads

—will improve maintenance effectiveness and responsiveness. Leveraging these types of

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advancements (i.e., moving from preventive to predictive or model-based maintenance) is sure to make your life easier.

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