

Software glitch surfaces in Y2K+1 rollover

By Don Nord

Date rollover worries returned as the "Y2K+1" bug hit the Sierra Nevada Region's Siemens meter-reading software. As the clock rolled over to 0000 hours January 1, 2001, the system failed to record data from meters across the region.

The on-duty system operator noted the failure and contacted the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition engineering staff. The SCADA staff identified the fail-

ure as a date rollover issue and contacted the manufacturer.

According to SN Operations Manager **Fred LeBlanc**, "The Siemens meter reading system provides critical data for our load man-

agement software package. System operators implemented manual measures to ensure full compliance with contract provisions."

The software had been certified by Siemens to be Y2K compliant and had also been tested by Western personnel. Last year, it rolled over to 2000 with no problem.

SN also uses another meter reading system, called MV-90, but the version they

have is not capable of half-hour readings. SCADA Manager **Darren Buck** noted that SN has some unique contracts, unlike those in other regions, that require half-hour readings. The readings allow the Real-Time-Desk to closely correlate the prescheduled forecasts with the actual power system data.

Siemens' recommended fix was to upgrade to the newer, compliant version. They were unaware that the current version had Y2K+1 problems. Their support for that older version ended Dec. 31—coincidentally—the instant the failure occurred.

Six other utilities using this software had similar failures. Ironically, SN planned to discontinue use of the Siemens system in 2001, moving instead to a newer MV-90 system that meets its half-hour needs. However, now the region is forced to upgrade.

By supplementing manual readings with the hourly MV-90 data, SN avoided impacting its customers. "It works," Buck said of the workaround. "It's just not the most efficient way of doing business." Normal operations were restored after about three days.

(Note: Nord is a project manager on the BMX staff at CSO.) ✍

