

Questar Adopts New System To Track Environmental Compliance

By **Scott Bassett**, Senior Environmental Coordinator, **Questar Gas Company**, Salt Lake City, UT

Questar Pipeline Company, a subsidiary of the \$6.8 billion Questar Corp., is an interstate natural gas pipeline company operating primarily in Utah, Wyoming and Colorado. Questar Pipeline Company's eight Title V Air Quality Permits and more than 20 minor source permits are regulated and enforced by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and EPA-delegated State air programs. Tracking the permits and all the corresponding requirements such as stack testing, numerous semi-annual reports and annual compliance certifications can be very challenging.

While some air compliance regulations have been in place for more than 30 years, Title V of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments placed significant new documentation burdens on facilities such as those of Questar Pipeline and their respective environmental managers. It was no longer enough to simply track responses to emissions deviations. With Title V, facilities are required to report deviations, record corrective actions and actively certify compliance on a regular basis. These demands can significantly increase the cost, complexity and potential for error within air compliance programs.

Due to the complexity of Title V and an ever-watchful eye on improving efficiency, Questar Pipeline made the decision to move its compliance management system from checklists and spreadsheets to an electronic, Internet-based, environmental management information system (EMIS).

It wasn't too difficult to adopt a new, more-integrated compliance system since a simple missed report or stack test can result in significant financial penalties under the Clean Air Act — not to mention the perception of being a poor steward of the environment. In an effort to avoid such adverse effects and improve efficiency, Questar Pipeline selected the Enviance EMIS after comparing several market alternatives.

Management System

Enviance is based on a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model for managing permit (or other) facility requirements. SaaS is a model of software delivery where the software company delivers an application directly to the desktop of the user over the Internet. SaaS pro-

viders quickly and inexpensively connect to legacy information systems, and reduce the cost of maintenance with upgrades that are seamlessly delivered virtually overnight without additional cost. IDC, a leading research analyst organization estimates that by 2010, more than half of all new software purchases will be made through SaaS providers.

The Enviance system is the market's only compliance management solution fully utilizing the SaaS model — purchased on a subscription basis and scaled to meet the client's existing needs and budget. Depending on the growth of the operation, it can easily be expanded or modified by the user to incorporate new equipment and requirements, or entire new facilities.

The system allows facilities to centrally manage and automate in real-time all aspects of compliance (air, water, waste, health and safety) from a Web browser, significantly improving facility operations by eliminating paper trails. All facets of data collection, management, storage, and security are handled by Enviance off-site.

Questar Pipeline currently uses the system to track air quality compliance tasks for all its permitted equipment and facilities. The calendar within the system sends advance reminders via email to ensure that requirements are met, reports are generated, and other compliance deadlines are addressed. For example, a Title V Permit renewal application is due at least six months before expiration and it may take an additional six months or more to prepare the application. Reminders for this task are sent out as far in advance as necessary and tailored to meet specific project or compliance milestones.

Other uses include stack testing and reporting, gas sampling and analysis, and simply ensuring that contracts to execute required work are in place in a timely manner. The system also serves as a central repository for



Questar personnel working on a reciprocating transmission and storage compressor.

viders eliminate the need to install additional hardware or software on the user's side and simplify version upgrades.

One of the key differences of SaaS — compared to the more familiar Application Service Provider (ASP) approach — is that, traditionally, the ASP is simply hosting the third-party application on behalf of one client. This setup does not provide the speed, flexibility, or power of SaaS applications. Also, because ASP-hosted software is generally no different than a product that is deployed at the customer's site, it suffers the same maintenance and overbuilding problems that plague software when installed at the customer's location.

SaaS applications, in comparison, are built for maximum flexibility since they support many companies and users with the same common software code base. This flexibility enables Questar Pipeline to increase the type and intensity of use as its needs grow,

Questar facility located near the world's largest open pit mine southwest of Salt Lake City.





Men and equipment working at Questar Pipeline's interconnect with Northwest Pipeline in northeastern Utah.

Questar Pipeline's:

- Stack parameters.
- Emissions test data.
- Engine/unit parameters.
- Operating hours.
- Engine-overhaul information.
- UTM coordinates/GIS data.
- Compliance critical document storage.

Conclusion

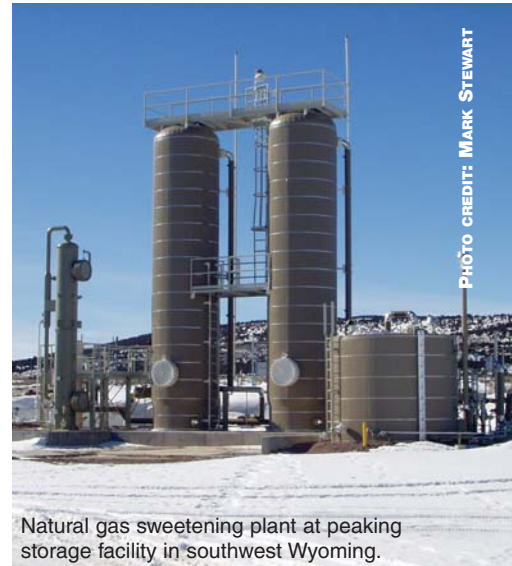
Questar Pipeline recognized that using checklists, spreadsheets, and paper calendars to manage compliance was inherently inefficient and had the potential to create problems. To manage that risk, Questar Pipeline turned to an information management system to support its compliance management efforts. Nearly three years after implementation, the system is enabling Questar Pipeline to:

- Track compliance tasks to completion by user, facility, or other parameters.
- Produce myriad reports utilizing built-in ad hoc reporting tools.
- Easily modify facilities, equipment, or tasks within the system as requirements change.

- Effectively manage hundreds of compliance-related tasks and requirements.
- Spend less time managing information, data, and documents and more time on working to improve environmental performance.

As stated by the company's air quality compliance coordinator, "By making sure that all the right information is in there, I feel confident that Questar Pipeline's routine compliance requirements are being met."

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Natural gas sweetening plant at peaking storage facility in southwest Wyoming.