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FOUR QUESTIONS

Determining Standards Compliance

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Andre Ristaino, managing director of the Automation Standards Compliance Institute (ASCI), in Research Triangle Park, N.C., provided Independent Program Assessments and Independent Validation and Verification support for information technology modernization projects at the U.S. Air Force Logistics Command while employed at Deloitte & Touche. He led manufacturing information systems integration projects and provided consulting services for manufacturing operations improvement. Ristaino's manufacturing industry experience includes pulp and paper, textiles, steel fabrication, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals. Ristaino holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a Master of Science in Technology Management.

Automation World: Why has the Instrumentation, Systems and Automation Society (ISA) initiated a compliance institute?

Andre Ristaino: The concept of a compliance program has been forwarded by several groups over a period of several years, each with a different subject area to be addressed by the proposed compliance program. Over time, it became clear that ISA was best positioned to launch and manage a compliance program for the automation controls community.

AW: What is the mission of the Institute?

Ristaino: The Automation Standards Compliance Institute (ASCI) is an ISA-owned, non-profit organizational entity that will assess automation-related standards compliance. The Institute's charter includes a wide range of standards compliance assessments including, software or hardware products, implementation methods, solutions, companies and individuals.

A feasibility study, market study and a legal assessment had all been performed, and results indicated that ISA was in a strong position to launch this initiative. Two-thirds of respondents to the market survey believed that a standards conformity program is needed to provide a useful link between ISA standards and the products, services, processes and systems that use them.

AW: How is the Institute governed?

Ristaino: A Board of Directors governs the organization and includes senior ISA officers, ISA staff, and directors not necessarily associated with ISA who are appointed for their business experience with standards conformity programs. I was hired as the Managing Director in February 2007 and work with Chip Lee, director of education and membership services at ISA, to develop and implement the business and operational aspects of the Institute specific to compliance assessment programs based



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on market opportunity and the needs of the industry. Initial compliance initiatives are directed at the areas of control systems security, safety and industrial wireless communications. Other programs in their formative stages include compliance to ISA88 and ISA95 standards.

AW: How are you supported and what can readers do to participate?

Ristaino: We are receiving support from companies of all sizes, including asset owners, suppliers, integrators, consultants and government. Typically, the larger organizations are able to offer funding and leadership, while the smaller entities provide subject matter expertise and volunteer time for conferences and other Institute activities. We receive support for ISA committee work from the U.S. Government through the National Labs such as INL (Idaho National Laboratory) and ORNL (Oak Ridge National Laboratory). We recently signed an agreement with the INL to distribute a control systems cyber security self-assessment tool called CS2SAT that was funded by the DHS.

Our greatest needs for the near future are public awareness for the ASCI and its programs, expanded participation from members in the automation controls community and lots of energy to keep it growing. The best way to help the ASCI programs is to go to the ASCI Web site at www.isa.org/asci, learn about the program benefits, join the ISASecure program and encourage other companies to join. □



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