

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Burns & McDonnell Partners with Innovative Products to Navigate COVID-19 On-Site Restrictions and Beyond***Wearable Technology Enables Access and Efficiency Improvements to Critical Infrastructure Projects*

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — As the pandemic challenges the construction, operation, and maintenance of critical infrastructure, Burns & McDonnell developed a wearable assisted reality (AR) platform in partnership with RealWear hardware and Manitoba Hydro International's VisualSpection software. Burns & McDonnell has been implementing the VisualSpection + RealWear products since 2017 but is now an official reseller of the solutions, also providing training, support, and value-added services for the products.

Using RealWear's hard hat-mounted technology, the VisualSpection software platform allows project teams to communicate through live video conference calls from the field to remote team members, collect data, inspect components, manage asset inventories and run tests remotely all hands-free using voice commands.

"Hands-free, voice-activated wearable technology in a single solution from Burns & McDonnell can keep projects moving where site access is limited due to travel restrictions and health and safety orders," says John Olander, chief operating officer and president of the Transmission & Distribution Group, Burns & McDonnell. "Its benefits are huge amid today's crisis, reducing the number of personnel needed in the field and allowing remote stakeholders to review critical details of each project phase."

Since March, use of the technology through Burns & McDonnell has grown by more than 1,000%. There are more than 1,000 users through Burns & McDonnell, including clients such as [FirstEnergy](#), an electric utility headquartered in Akron, Ohio.

During the pandemic, a FirstEnergy construction project group conducted a virtual site walk-down with an employee in Pennsylvania as a location guide. One person hosted a live video conference call with the hard hat-mounted camera, while another took still photos, and others participated online from Akron, Ohio; Chicago; and Kansas City, Missouri. Both the video conference call and organized photos were available for later reference for the FirstEnergy and Burns & McDonnell project teams.

Questions that came up could be answered on the spot.

“Those viewing remotely are just as much a part of the walk-down as those who are at the substation,” says Ron Ferre, director, Transmission Project Management, FirstEnergy. “Looking beyond the current situation, this capability offers significant, long-term operational efficiency and cost advantages.”

A Burns & McDonnell engineering team first piloted the VisualSpection software in 2017. That project led to multiple successful pilot programs within Burns & McDonnell that tested multiple use cases based on client projects. In 2019, [Burns & McDonnell](#) became the exclusive architecture and engineering firm providing VisualSpection throughout the U.S. and Canada.

“For years, these technologies have offered advantages in design accuracy, safety and efficiency as they create multiple benefits — both individually and collectively — through each project phase,” Olander says. “It means a lot to use innovative problem solving to now provide a platform to help solve critical challenges in the critical infrastructure industries.”

###

About Burns & McDonnell

Burns & McDonnell is a family of companies bringing together an unmatched team of 7,600 engineers, construction professionals, architects, planners, technologists and scientists to design and build our critical infrastructure. With an integrated construction and design mindset, we offer full-service capabilities with more than 55 offices, globally. Founded in 1898, Burns & McDonnell is a 100% employee-owned company and proud to be on *Fortune*’s 2020 list of 100 Best Companies to Work For. Learn how we are [on call through it all](#).