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Spartan Engineer working to save lives among utility line workers

A 1984 MSU Engineering graduate is working to curb accidents at one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States – utility line worker.

Nitin S. Kulkarni (MS Metallurgy & Materials ‘84) is president of Honeywell Smart Energy. He and his team have collaborated with Honeywell Aerospace to develop an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) service that could help lower the 2.5 annual fatalities among every 100,000 utility workers from high-voltage power lines.

Honeywell’s new UAV inspection service allows utility companies to use UAVs, more commonly called drones, to perform routine inspections of substations, transmission towers and power lines.

“It is a safer, more efficient and more cost-effective method than walking inspections that utilize ladders or cherry pickers, and provides much more detailed and actionable data output than helicopter inspections,” he explained.

With more than 20 years of industrial experience, Kulkarni leads high-end technology deployment for Honeywell's Smart Energy business, from advanced metering hardware to software solutions, to help utilities around the world modernize the management of their energy grids.
Kulkarni works at Honeywell offices in Atlanta, GA. He joined the company in 2006 as vice president and general manager for Honeywell Transportation Systems’ Asia Pacific operation. Prior to being named president of Smart Energy at Honeywell in 2016, he served as Honeywell Transportation Systems’ vice president and general manager for North America, Japan, and Korea.

He said one of his goals is to change the way the world uses energy.

“In developing countries, energy theft is a big concern. Utilities in India and Mexico are turning to smart technologies to reduce electrical losses and address energy efficiency challenges. By helping with smart grid management, utilities can reduce operating expenses and provide better billing accuracy and faster outage recovery,” he added.

Kulkarni is not the only Spartan Engineer in an executive leadership role at Honeywell. Darius Adamczyk became president and chief executive officer in April 2017. He has dual degrees from 1988 in electrical engineering and computer engineering.

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