



Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association

2017

YEAR IN REVIEW

Index

3-5	Timeline
6-9	Government Relations
9-10	Engineering and Policy Analysis
10-12	Safety and Training
13-14	Meetings and Workshops
15	Communications & Member Relations

All photos by MMUA, except:

Page 3, Legislative Conference reception, courtesy of MRES

Page 7, top, courtesy of the office of Congressman Collin Peterson



A scene from the 'Hurtman Rescue' event at the 2017 Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo.

Why MMUA Exists

The Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association is a nonprofit corporation representing the interests of the state's 100+ municipal electric and natural gas utilities. MMUA was formed in 1931 and provides a wide variety of services to its members.

MMUA's Vision

To be a nationally recognized leader in advocacy, bringing value to municipal utilities, and enhancing their position in the industry.

MMUA's Mission

To unify, support, and serve as a common voice for municipal utilities.

MMUA's Values

People: Practice respect, demonstrate leadership, encourage growth through education and training.

Safety: Be safety-driven at all times and work to instill a safety culture in all operations.

Advocacy: Be an articulate and powerful voice on the issues.

Teamwork: Working together we can accomplish what would be impossible alone.

Communication: Listen carefully, and speak respectfully and truthfully.

Creativity: Find new solutions to meet new challenges.

Dedication: Do whatever it takes to help our members get the job done.

Integrity: Be honest, trustworthy, reliable, and fiscally responsible.

Environment: Support the efficient use of resources and sustainable energy.

Timeline



January

January 5 — The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission issues an order to form a Distributed Generation (DG) work group. The group, which includes MMUA, is tasked with transitioning Minnesota's interconnection process.

Tom Ewert, former public works director for the city of Janesville, joins MMUA as Regional Safety Coordinator.

MMUA holds a series of six National Electrical Safety Workshops—beginning Jan. 11 and ending Jan. 31—in New Ulm, Marshall, Rochester, Alexandria, Grand Rapids and Plymouth.



SMMPA CEO Dave Geschwind, Sen. Dan Hall and MMUA's Bill Black, from left to right, at the Legislative Conference reception.

Jan 31 & Feb. 1 — MMUA holds its annual Legislative Conference.

February

February 8 & 9 — The MMUA Leadership Academy holds its first class, at the MMUA office. Twenty-five students embark on the two-year program.

Janet Aultman joins MMUA as a Regional Safety Coordinator



Instructor Scott Meinecke led a session at the Transformer School.

Feb. 14 to Feb. 17 — The Meter School Pre-Conference and Meter School are held at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall.



Christina Pierson of CMPAS (left) and MMUA Board Member Carole Laumer of Willmar participated in the APPA Legislative Rally. Here they are pictured at the MMUA reception.

Feb. 27 to March 1 — Under the MMUA banner, Minnesota public power representatives attend APPA Legislative Rally in Washington, D.C. The main message? Preserve tax-exempt financing.

March

March 8 – MMUA named to MPUC DG workgroup.

March 8 – MMUA, LMC file comments to FCC in regards to 'small cell' deployment

March 16 – MMUA files comments to MPUC DG work group.

April

April 3 — EPA announces, in the Federal Register, that it is withdrawing its proposed Clean Power Plan rule.

April 7 — MMUA participates in first meeting of MPUC's DG workgroup.

April 10 – MMUA joins Hometown Connections marketing affiliate network, the utility services subsidiary of the APPA.



April 10 & 11 — PCB Management and Recordkeeping workshop held at Ziegler facility in Shakopee. Attendees come from municipals, cooperatives, IOUs and a federal power marketing administration.

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MMUA's Shane St. Clair (center foreground) addressed the assembled municipal lineworkers Sept. 9 in Rochester, minutes before the men left to repair damage in Florida caused by Hurricane Irma.

April 11 to 13 — The Substation School follows the PCB workshop, held at Ziegler with a field trip to a Shakopee Public Utilities substation.

April 18 to 20 — MMUA Generation School held at Glencoe.

April 27 – Winners announced in 21st annual MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award contest.

May

May 5 & 6 — APPA Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo held in San Antonio. Four Minnesota teams and several apprentices compete. Minnesotans serve as judges and participate in other ways.

May 16 to 19 — MMUA holds its annual Underground School. Linemen from municipals and cooperatives in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota attend.

Mike Taylor joins MMUA as Job Training and Safety and Apprenticeship Instructor

May 22 – MMUA expresses written concern over creation of an MPUC DG subcommittee, which is proposed to expedite customer complaints or other filings.

DG

Acronym of the year: Distributed Generation. Brought to the fore by solar systems interconnecting with electric distribution systems.



Christian Fenstermacher, Greg Drent, Kent Sanders of Shakopee Public Utilities and Kevin Favero of Leidos at the Substation School.

June

June 20 – MMUA's Mike Willetts, director of safety and training, receives APPA Harold Kramer-John Preston Personal Service Award at the national conference. The award recognizes individuals for service to APPA.



MMUA's Mike Willetts was honored for service to APPA.

August

August 21 to 23 — Annual Summer Conference. John Crooks of Shakopee assumes the president's gavel from Sleepy Eye's Bob Elston. Greg French of the Virginia Department of Public Utilities is elected president-elect. Vernell Roberts of Detroit Lakes elected by the board as MMUA secretary-



Sleepy Eye's Bob Elston (left), handed the MMUA President's gavel to John Crooks of Shakopee, at our 86th Annual Conference.

treasurer. Mark Nibaur of Austin and Carol Lau-mer of Willmar elected to board. The full range of MMUA awards is given.

September

September 10 – Hurricane Irma hits Florida and knocks out power to 6.7 million customers. Over the course of a week and a half, Minnesota municipal electric crews travel halfway across the continent and take

part in one of the largest power restoration efforts in U.S. history. MMUA coordinates and participates in the effort of the 44 Minnesota linemen.



MMUA-organized crews responded to the call for mutual aid in the wake of Hurricane Irma.

September 18 – MMUA files comments with MPUC on a docket involving fees charges to qualifying facilities by cooperative electric associations.

October

October 16 – Kandiyohi city council votes to approve sale of municipal electric system to Kandiyohi Power Cooperative.

October 17 to 20 – MMUA Training Center in Marshall a busy place, as it is the site of the Cross Training and Overhead schools and the first Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo. Joining the participants and onlookers were 44 people from MnWest Community & Technical College.

November

Eleven more municipal lineworkers recognized as graduates of the Northwest Lineman College Lineworker Certification Program. Many of the apprentices regularly are instructed by and train with MMUA's Mike Taylor.

November 21 – the first in a series of Distributed Generation workshops is held, this one in Owatonna. The workshops are designed to give members the tools necessary to protect local ratemaking authority.

December

December 6 – Winthrop City Administrator Jenny Hazelton appointed to the MMUA Board, taking the place of the retiring Winthrop EDA Director Mark Erickson.

December 6 to 8 — MMUA holds annual Technical and Operations Conference in St. Cloud.

December 8 – Minnesota Department of Commerce recommends MPUC deny re-quested service territory transfer, for a parcel developed as Red Lake Band New Casino, from North Star Cooperative to city of Warroad. The utilities had reached agreement on the transfer in 2013.

December 13 to 15 — Rave reviews for Transformer School, held at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall.

December 14 – The second in a series of MMUA DG workshops held, this one in Grand Rapids.



Two schools and a rodeo occurred at the Training Center, Oct. 17-20.

Government Relations

State Legislative Activities

The 2017 Legislative Session convened on January 3 and adjourned May 24. A short Special Session was called to complete business which adjourned May 26.

MMUA achieved one particularly important success in energy this year. Working with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, MMUA helped make important changes to state law governing cooperative and municipal utilities and their customers who install solar and wind systems. Dubbed the “Local Democracy” bill by MREA, the changes treat cooperatives more like municipals by allowing them to adopt local rules implementing state laws governing distributed generation (DG).

The more significant portion of the law change for municipal utilities placed DG dispute resolution authority in the local governing bodies of those municipal and cooperative utilities that adopt local rules. That authority sat previously with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC).

The legislature also approved a CIP exemption for small municipals and cooperatives.



MMUA's Bill Black (left), explained a point during the MMUA Distributed Generation workshop in Owatonna.

It was also a big year in telecom. MMUA participated in long and contentious negotiations during the legislative session regarding local regulatory authority over placement of small cell communication facilities in city rights-of-way. MMUA fought alongside the League of Minnesota Cities and cable providers against Verizon, AT&T and others for continued municipal flexibility.

In the end, substantial improvements to the telecom industry's original proposal were secured for

all cities. MMUA secured a very significant exemption from the new requirements so that for new and existing structures owned, operated, maintained or served by municipal electric utilities, the new restrictions do not apply.

Regulatory Activities

This year, the MPUC continued proceedings on two regulatory issues affecting municipal utilities. MMUA participated in the commission's ongoing work group sessions to significantly change the processes governing DG interconnection to utility systems. That work enters the second of two phases in 2018 wherein staff from MMUA, other municipal and non-municipal utilities and a variety of other stakeholders will revise technical interconnection standards to conform with evolving industry standards.

The MPUC also completed an important docket in December 2017, giving its final yet conditional approval to the method used by most cooperatives to calculate fees to pay for fixed costs that DG customers were avoiding under net metering. The method must be altered to use data directly from a utility's cost-of-service study. Some data that the co-ops were using was from their annual RUS Form 7 filings. Many municipal utilities awaited the result of those proceedings before deciding whether to establish similar fees.

Stakeholder Collaborations

In September, MMUA joined with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association to begin a joint consumer-owned utilities conversation about the future of the state's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP).

Led by the associations' directors, municipal and cooperative utility representatives met jointly and separately to discuss their perspectives and collaborated to develop a shared set of general principals to guide Government Relations staff from both camps as CIP's future will inevitably be debated

1

Number of MMUA offices in St. Paul. Located in the Capitol Ridge Hotel (formerly the Kelly Inn). Address is 161 St. Anthony Ave., Suite 800, St. Paul, MN 55103. Let us know if you are going to be in town, and come on over for a visit!

around the Capitol in 2018. Legislation is not intended for 2018. The goal of the initiative is to educate legislators and stakeholders about what is important to consumer-owned utilities as the current CIP program shows a need for overhauling, given its declining efficacy for many utilities, changes in technologies and standards, and the rise of beneficial electrification that reduces carbon emissions. Staff regularly attended meetings of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Energy Policy Committee. MMUA was the first to voice opposition to proposed language in the Chamber's 2018 energy policy position statement that would encourage discussions about injecting competition into the retail energy market. Other utilities followed suit, and the language was ultimately removed.

Government relations staff works throughout the year with lobbyists from Minnesota's investor-owned utilities and cooperatives. Those efforts picked up unusual momentum at the end of the year when the utility group coordinated joint meetings with key legislators to repel growing lobbying efforts by groups aimed at allowing unregulated third-parties to sell electricity to large utility customers. Those efforts carried into the new year.

Member Outreach and Conferences

MMUA's Government Relations team attended annual meetings for MMPA, and SMMPA this year as well as MRES's one-day Legal Seminar.

In a major effort to bring utility members into compliance with the state's laws regarding distributed generation, MMUA organized and hosted a four-hour training session in two locations in late 2017 and two more locations in January 2018 with Government Relations staff playing a big role. MMUA staff attended the Midwest Energy Consumer's conference in Denver, and participated in APPA's annual Legal Seminar in New Orleans. MMUA staff also attended the Midwest States Public Power Association's annual meeting held this time at Kansas Municipal Utilities.

Member Resources

The Government Relations Department again published its Legislative Report, recapping the legislative proposals that were discussed and passed in the 2017 Legislative Session.



Congressman Collin Peterson (at left, facing camera) held court during a visit of the Minnesota delegation during the APPA Legislative Rally.

As part of the distributed generation training seminars, staff produced extensive materials for member utilities to use as templates for the own policies, rules and annual tariff filings, making them available on mmua.org.

A timeline list of utility mandatory reports to both state and federal agencies was also developed and posted on mmua.org to assist members in meeting their ongoing regulatory compliance requirements.

Political Fund

MMUA members contributed generously to the Municipal Utilities Action Fund (MUAF) in 2017, making it possible for Government Relations staff to attend several fundraisers and make contributions to state caucuses and key legislators.



Bill Black talked with Blue Earth's Tim Stoner (right) during the Lemond Solar Center dedication, July 17.

Federal Government Relations

Everyone knows the axiom: Elections have consequences. But just 12 months ago no one could know that would be the understatement of the year in 2017, when the presidential elections turned Washington, D.C. upside down. Candidate Donald Trump pledged to change the culture of Washington, and as president he did just that. Everyone in the Capital City was caught off guard, including the Republican Party, which managed to keep its margins in both the House and Senate, the latter only barely. No one, however, could predict it would take a full year to achieve the party's first major legislative victory.

It's called a "unified government," where one party controls the White House and both chambers on Capitol Hill. This was the first time a unified government held control of Washington in a decade—and things were supposed to be easy. They were anything but: partisan divides between Republicans and Democrats grew exponentially, and bitterness and rancor pervaded the air.

The new Congress got off to a rocky start, setting the stage for a long and tortuous first session. You could see it in legislation, where nothing moved forward. And you could see it in the nominations process, where even the most senior positions of a new government stayed vacant for months. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency had difficulty filling many senior posts. While Scott Pruitt became the new administrator in February 2017, he remained the only confirmed official at EPA until late in the year.

While the cabinet and a few other high visibility jobs were being filled, the appointments disaster probably hit FERC the hardest. FERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, is an independent regulatory agency that oversees the electric and gas industries. It is supposed to have five commissioners, but vacancies by the end of the Obama era suddenly left FERC with just one commissioner. It took months—from February until September—for the Senate to fill enough vacancies for FERC to meet again, and another few months to be fully functioning with all five commissioners.

There were growing pains on Capitol Hill. The new president had his top priorities and Congressional Republicans had theirs. The White House list was ambitious: repeal the Affordable Care Act; pass a

MMUA Washington Representative Michael Nolan, visited at the Minnesota Congressional reception with Marshall's Brad Roos.



major tax reform bill; pass an infrastructure bill; pass a budget; and build a wall—not just any wall, the Wall. But of that list, only the GOP tax bill saw its way through Congress in 2017.

The energy and environmental agenda for the new administration was also ambitious—repeal the Obama Clean Power Plan; repeal Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS); repeal restrictions on public lands; build the Keystone pipeline; and increase domestic energy supplies. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said his agency was going "Back to Basics," and he called his state outreach program "cooperative federalism." But there was a key difference with this agenda—it wasn't legislative at all, meaning it did not require Congress or legislation. It could all get done through administrative practices, including Executive Orders and presidential proclamations.

EPA got busy and by the end of the year the agency had acted on over 60 Obama environmental rules and regulations. Most were outright repealed or overturned; other rollbacks were more gradual; and still others were in limbo, caught up in courts or judicial review. There was the repeal of the Clean Power Plan, still not finished, and the repeal of WOTUS, still going through an EPA process. There was a decision to build Keystone, a rollback of coal ash regulations, a rollback of national park lands, and the withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement. Other overturned rules included a decision on the Dakota Access pipeline; the freeze on coal leasing on public lands; and anti-dumping rules for coal companies. All these were done by administrative fiat, without Congress. Finally, by year's end, Scott Pruitt came to Congress with his new legislative list: remove lead in drinking water; clean up abandoned mines; and revamp Superfund sites.

The electric utility industry, specifically public power, appreciated much of the new administration's agenda, especially on the environmental front, but had their own legislative priorities. This was made clear at the annual APPA Legislative Rally

in the spring. MMUA's agenda, closely aligned with APPA, included: tax reform; distributed generation; PMAs and the federal power program; environmental regulations; and pole attachments.

Distributed generation, power produced at the point of consumption, including technologies such as rooftop solar and combined heat and power, was gaining attention on Capitol Hill. MMUA leaders know that local decisions are best, and urged the Minnesota Congressional delegation to resist proposals that seek to federalize utility decision-making when it comes to customer rates and charges. Another priority was protecting the interests of PMA customers when it came to the federal hydro-power program, something critical to many MMUA members. Various White House proposals from current and previous administrations were problematic—selling PMA power at market rates, increasing costs on interest paid on PMA investments, and selling PMA transmission assets. MMUA urged the delegation to oppose all such proposals.

But the top focus was on tax reform, specifically public power's interest in maintaining and preserving the traditional financing tools used by local governments, including the ability to issue municipal bonds. This issue has been critical to state and local entities since the development of the federal tax code over a hundred years ago, and the MMUA message was clear: urge the delegation to reject all federal legislative proposals that would limit or eliminate the tax exempt status for muni bonds. The threats were real—Congressional Republicans

were moving quickly on a major comprehensive tax reform package, and anything and everything could be included.

It turned out that those Rally messages were spot on—tax reform soon became the top priority for Republican leadership in both chambers. They were pulling out all the stops, including moving the legislation under arcane reconciliation budget rules, which allows a simple majority vote and limits debate. This was key to the Senate process, since the GOP held a slim margin of only two votes. GOP leaders left nothing to chance, since major tax reform hadn't occurred since 1986.

Originally introduced as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the tax bill ended up preserving public power's tax exempt status, a major victory for APPA and municipal utilities. But there was a catch: another provision in the bill stripped away public power's ability to refinance their municipal bonds, called advance refunding. Tax exempt groups across the board were affected. For now, public power won the war, but lost a battle. The bill was signed into law. It was a grand victory for President Trump and Congressional Republicans, but major battles over immigration, infrastructure, and the budget were left for 2018. The second session of the 115th would see a new Minnesota senator—Al Franken was out, forced to resign, and Tina Smith was in, appointed to fill out the term until the end of the year.

Engineering and Policy Analysis

On the heels of the 2016 election and a U.S. Supreme Court ruling, 2017 was a challenge for MMUA, APPA and utilities to understand the environmental policy coming out of the EPA and the Trump administration. Minnesota's plan, early in the year, was to move forward with its own regulatory structures and continue to develop environmental regulations over which it had authority. But potential new rules and Presidential memorandums on environmental policies, and the administration limiting participation in the Paris Climate accord, pushed rule development off until a better understanding of EPA direction was received. Much of the year was spent analyzing a huge myriad of discussion items, possible rule notices and industry proposals.

With the Clean Power Plan and the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) Rule in a state of flux, along with other Obama-era regulations languishing in the courts, the focus at MMUA shifted to task accomplishment at the state level.

One of the first issues came out of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC), which delved into the Small Generator Interconnection Process. After a few months of discussion, the MPUC opened a docket into revising the Interconnection Procedures, which were last updated in 2005. The docket became a monthly stakeholder process. By the end of 2017, it had been determined that new procedures would be based on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Small Generator

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Interconnection Procedure and Small Generator Interconnection Application. No formal document had been released by the end of the year while MPUC staff developed the procedures in house.

Some of the early issues that disappeared as the year advanced included working with a group of stakeholders to guide funds from the VW Settlement to MMUA member utilities, attempting to find a consensus with stakeholders on how to develop a robust Residential PACE program, and discussions with the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (DER) on leveraging the state Conservation and Research Development (CARD) program to benefit smaller utilities.

MMUA also assisted the DER with two grants from the Department of Energy: the Minnesota Solar Pathways project designed to smoothly incorporate solar development in the state; and how to conduct a study to incorporate Electric Utility Infrastructure Improvements (EUI) into the state's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP). The DER also convened another multi-year stakeholder process into studying the potential savings available for

further deployment of CIP that MMUA and others requested.

At the federal level, MMUA assisted the Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, in guidance and development of a white paper on small-utility cyber security. This coincided with a year-long effort by MMUA and APPA to highlight the importance of cyber security, and awareness that the issue was being monitored by regulatory agencies and Congress.

Electric transmission and the issues associated with Transmission Dependent Utilities (TDUs) in federal dockets also became a higher priority, while FERC grappled early on with the lack of a quorum, hobbling its ability to issue rulings, followed by the need to clear the dockets once new commissioners were appointed.

MMUA also kept up its presence with APPA, APGA, the Midwest Governors Association (MGA), TAPS, MMGA, MCMU, the Community Storage Initiative, the Department of Energy Grid Modernization Initiative, along with our members and projects.

Safety and Training

Along with its normal activities, MMUA responded to one of the largest mutual aid endeavors in modern history, and planned and held the first Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo.

With Hurricane Irma swirling toward Florida, the American Public Power Association called for mutual aid. The hurricane hit Florida Sept. 10 and knocked out power to 6.7 million electricity customers. MMUA-organized crews were already saddled up and on the way—Forty-four men, with a variety of equipment, left Rochester for Florida on Sept. 9.

The crews were called ahead of time because southeastern crews were already helping with Hurricane Harvey restoration in Texas, while other utilities in the im-



MMUA training (including this scene from the Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo) helps develop an effective mutual aid response.

mediate area kept their crews at home in anticipation of substantial damage.

The Minnesota crews helped restore power in Kissimmee, and later, Lake Worth. With their work done, the men embarked on their long trip home and arrived back in Minnesota on Sept. 21.

MMUA also continued to identify a number of electric utilities that did not have a Mutual Aid Agreement on file. The Agreement is necessary for eligibility of FEMA assistance and must be in place prior to a qualifying event. Today, 92 percent of our membership has an Agreement on file. MMUA will continue to work toward achieving 100 percent participation.



MMUA's Cody Raveling addressed a group of students at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. Raveling, Training Center Coordinator/ Job Training and Safety Instructor, completed his first full year with MMUA in 2017.

Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo

The first Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo was held Oct. 17 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. The event featured good participation, excellent field quality and superb member support.

The event was originally scheduled for Sept. 12, but was rescheduled as utilities shifted gears to respond to the call for mutual aid due to hurricane damage in Florida. Several of the rodeo participants were freshly back from their Florida work.

All classes of lineworker—from first-year apprentice to advanced lineworker—were eligible to participate. Events included the same individual events for both journeyman and apprentice lineworkers.

MMUA plans to hold the Minnesota Rodeo again in 2018. The Rodeo would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors and members. Thank you!



JT&S Instructor Mike Taylor (right) with a group of apprentices at the MMUA Training Center.

Job Training and Safety program

Ninety utilities participate in the JT&S program and 11 also participated in MMUA's Apprentice Lineworker Training program (also known as On-Site-On-Demand).

Mike Taylor joined MMUA in 2017 as MMUA's primary Job Training and Safety (JTS) and Apprenticeship instructor. Taylor came with 36 years of experience in the electric utility industry, most recently as Grand Marais electrical superintendent.

90

Minnesota municipal electric utilities, out of 125, participating in the MMUA Job Training and Safety Program.

Training Center

Cody Raveling completed his first full year as Training Center Coordinator/JTS Instructor. A journeyman lineman since 2011, Raveling brought years of work and Rodeo competition experience to MMUA.

Six schools were held at the Training Center over the year, including the Overhead and Underground Schools, Meter School, Transformer School, Rodeo Team Training Clinic, and the Cross Training School, while the Substation School was held in Shakopee and Generation School was held in Glencoe.

Schools were popular and typically well attended. Evaluations of the instruction were overwhelmingly positive. Students and MMUA members were supportive of the programs. In total, more than 300 people participated in these experiential learning



MMUA schools provide a variety of hands-on experience to students. This particular scene is from the Underground School, held at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall.

opportunities. While most participants hailed from Minnesota, attendees also came from Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Gas Circuit Rider

MMUA Natural Gas Circuit Rider Troy Dahlin works with nearly all of Minnesota's municipal natural gas utilities. Dahlin addressed a variety of needs, including on-site training, pre-inspections and assisting with annual Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety inspections, technical operator training and tracking regulatory changes.

Early in 2017 MMUA wrapped up a survey of program participants. Nearly 60 percent of users responded and provided feedback on the program. Top-ranked services offered include assistance with Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MnOPS) Inspection, Operator Qualification Training and Pre-Inspection Preparation.

In addition, respondents ranked the manuals in terms of importance. Top-ranked manuals were: Operations and Maintenance, Operator Qualification Plan and Gas Distribution Integrity Management Plan.

Safety Management program

This program is MMUA's largest in terms of budget and staff, with 11 employees dedicated to this work full-time in 2017 and others splitting time between regional safety coordinator and electrical job training and safety duties.

LMCIT Regional Safety Group Program

The Regional Safety Group program, under contract to the League of Minnesota Cities, provides a comprehensive safety program for all city departments.

With a safety group, neighboring cities come together as partners in OSHA compliance. LMCIT helps coordinate the safety groups.

Mike Sewell served as Regional Safety Group (RSG) Program Leader. At the end of 2017, there were 28 RSGs comprised of 166 cities throughout the state, covering 2,080 employees trained annually.

LMCIT/MMUA generation projects

MMUA has partnered with the LMCIT to put in place customized guidelines designed for safe operation of local electrical generating plants. An up-to-date written preventive maintenance schedule, including a comprehensive inventory of critical equipment, qualifies a utility for a 10 percent rate reduction on its property coverage rates.

MMUA's Bob Sewell conducted thorough audits of MMUA member power plants, in the company of a utility staff person. Audits included a review of equipment, procedures and records. The audit also provided an opportunity for member utility staff to discuss a variety of generation-related issues with MMUA's staff expert. More than 50 member utilities participated in this program.



MMUA partners with the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust to develop guidelines for the safe operation of local electric generating plants.

Meetings and Workshops

For much of MMUA’s history, association activities revolved around members meeting together, and that remains a large part of how we continue to serve the members today.

MMUA conducted three major membership meetings in 2017, along with numerous schools and workshops.

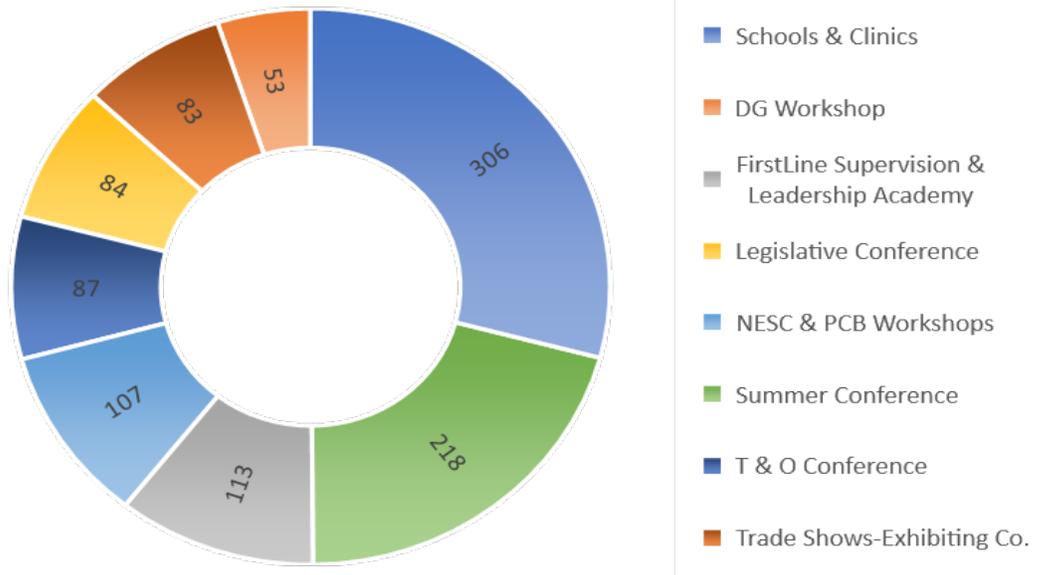
Staff and members were also heavily involved in American Public Power Association events.

Under the MMUA banner, approximately 55 people traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the APPA Legislative Rally, held February 27-March 1. Meetings with senators and congressional staff highlighted the meeting.

Other meetings, schools and workshops included:

- MMUA’s Legislative Conference was held January 31-February 1 in St. Paul. Over 80 people attended. The meeting focused on legislative visits, and attendees re-connected the evening of Jan. 31 at a reception.

2017 MMUA Event Participation



MMUA held its 86th Annual Conference Aug. 21-23 at Madden’s Resort in Brainerd, Attendees to our largest meeting included numerous associate members. John Crooks, Utilities Manager of Shakopee Public Utilities assumed the president’s duties at the meeting, taking over from Bob Elston of City of Sleepy Eye. In a new development, a policymaker’s track was held as concurrent programming.

- The Technical and Operations (T&O) Conference, was held Dec. 6-8 in St. Cloud. Approximately 200 municipal utility personnel, vendors and MMUA staff attended the event, which featured a variety



Steve Moses (holding plaque) was among those receiving awards at the MMUA Annual Conference.

86

Annual conferences held by MMUA, since its founding in 1931. We are proud to carry on the tradition of Minnesota Public Power!

of technical talks along with sessions on leadership and a sharply-focused safety message.

Technical training

- National Electrical Safety Code Workshops were held in January in New Ulm, Marshall, Rochester, Alexandria, Grand Rapids and the MMUA office in Plymouth.

- Basic Metering Pre-Conference was held Feb. 14-15 and the Meter School Feb. 15-17 at the Training Center. Forty-four students attended the Pre-Conference and 60 the Meter School. Thirty-four Minnesota municipal utilities participated, along with one from South Dakota and 10 electric cooperatives. The class included an evening product show.

- Rodeo Team Training Clinic was held March 7-8 at the Training Center. This event was well-attended, as individuals and crews readied for the APPA Lineworkers Rodeo, which was just under two months away at the time.

- PCB Workshop held April 10-11, hosted by Ziegler Power Systems in Shakopee.

- Substation School was held April 11-13, hosted by Ziegler Power Systems in Shakopee. Thirty-two participants came from 18 municipal utilities (including one from Wisconsin), and five participants registered through the Minnesota Rural Electric Association.

- Generation School was held April 18-20 in Glencoe.

- Underground School was held May 16-19 at the Training Center. Attending were nearly 70 participants from 32 municipal utilities in Minnesota, three in South Dakota and three Minnesota cooperatives. Many thanks for the Regular and Associ-

ate Members that provided equipment, materials, served as instructors, etc.

- Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo – October 17

- Overhead School was held October 17-20 at the Training Center. A total of 55 electric lineworkers from nearly 30 municipals and one cooperative participated. Most hailed from Minnesota, with some coming from South Dakota and as far away as Maryland. MMUA thanks all the utilities and companies that sent students, instructors and equipment. This school was originally scheduled for September, but was moved to October because of Hurricane Irma mutual aid efforts. The school was held in conjunction with Cross Training School.

- Cross Training School was held Oct. 17-20 at the Training Center. Though not our largest in terms of attendance, it provided good training for the non-lineworkers that typically attend.

- Utility Rules, Rates and Contracts for Customer Solar and Wind workshops were held: Nov. 21 at Owatonna Public Utilities (42 people); Dec. 14 at Grand Rapids Area Library (18 people). Additional sessions held in January 2018, in Detroit Lakes and Marshall.

- Basic Single-Phase Transformer Connections & Theory pre-conference was held Dec. 12-13, at the Training Center. The Transformer School, dealing primarily with Three-Phase Connections, started the afternoon of the 13th and ran through the morning of Dec. 15. Thirty-four people attended, including 25 from Minnesota municipal utilities. Other attendees came from municipals in Maryland and South Dakota, a Minnesota cooperative, a Michigan investor-owned utility and one Associate Member.

- Sprinkled throughout the year were six sessions of FirstLine Supervision. Sessions were held either at the MMUA office in Plymouth or Central Lakes College in Brainerd. This popular program had 89 actively enrolled students in 2017 and 29 graduates.

- Leadership Academy – our first group of 25 started in February and met four times during 2017.



Contestants in the Lineworkers Rodeo competed on a section of the linefield.

Communications and Member Relations

MMUA continued its move into digital media in 2017, launching a Facebook page just in time to reflect and report on activities related to the Hurricane Irma mutual aid effort. To say this page was popular would be an understatement! The response showed some of the very best social media has to offer.

Several MMUA staffers also regularly took to Twitter as a communications tool. The Flickr app also provided an outlet for photographs of various events and facilities.

Staff and vendors also continued to improve the website as a communications and e-commerce tool. MMUA Annual Sponsorships showed staying power, as 18 Associate Members signed on as Annual Sponsors in 2017. Another handful of Associates also advertised in the *Resource* newsletter, continuing a strong run of advertiser support for MMUA's flagship publication.

MMUA began producing publications in 1933 and has produced a monthly newsletter continuously since 1968. In 2017, staff produced 11 editions of the monthly tabloid *Resource* newsletter (combining July and August). The 300th consecutive newsletter put together by Steve Downer as editor came in May.

MMUA staff also produced position statement booklets for the APPA Washington Rally and the MMUA Winter Legislative Conference. Registration brochures were also produced for MMUA's training programs, schools and meetings, including a meetings/training calendar. The MMUA brochure and a general brochure on municipal utilities were

updated, as were various maps and presentations. Some of this updating of general information included statistical updates.

MMUA's communications vehicles must necessarily reflect its membership, along with people who make the utilities run and the times we live in. To keep a pulse on the membership and gain an understanding of the issues affecting MMUA's membership, Downer made 66 visits to member cities/utilities in 2017. MMUA appreciates everybody who took the time to talk, and especially those who drove us around in their trucks!

MMUA staff also played a number of other roles, including:

Presentations before local policymakers, customer and community groups on a variety of topics relating to municipal utilities and their operation, including the benefits of a city owning and operating a municipal electric or natural gas utility.

Over the course of the year, MMUA researched and answered numerous questions in regards to operation of municipal utilities. On eight of these occasions, the answer was gained through posting an online survey on the MMUA website.

MMUA staff also continued to administer the MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award (its 21st year) and the MMUA Drug and Alcohol Testing Consortium.

Staff monitors low-income issues while chairing the Salvation Army HeatShare Advisory Board.



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