MMUA joins chorus of comments on EPA’s ‘Clean Power Plan’

The issue of the authority of a branch of the federal government to decree sweeping change has come to the fore, and the electric utility industry is no stranger to the phenomenon.

On June 18, 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Proposed Rule in the Federal Register that will have a tremendous impact on the electric utility industry, including MMUA’s members. The proposed rule, which is intended to address climate change concerns, would establish emission guidelines for existing electric generating units. The EPA cites section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act as its authority to issue this transformative regulation, known as the ‘Clean Power Plan.’

As of early December, the EPA had received some 1,600 comments on the issue. MMUA’s voice was part of the (often discordant) chorus. In its comments, MMUA said it prefers congressional action to address climate change but in the absence of legislation expressed a willingness to work with EPA to improve the Proposed Rule. MMUA offered practical examples intended to help make the final regulation more workable for the states, for EPA, and for public power utilities.

While expressing a willingness to work with EPA, MMUA said the Proposed Rule is deeply flawed in many respects.

The Proposed Rule, said MMUA: • violates the Clean Air Act’s clear division of responsibility for regulatory decision making between the federal government and the states; • violates the Clean Air Act’s preservation of state sovereignty and local control of public power utilities; • reads into the Clean Air Act the type of enormous and transformative expansion of EPA regulatory authority that the U.S. Supreme Court, in the UARG v. EPA case, found to be lacking without “clear congressional authorization.”

MMUA endorsed the legal and technical commentary, questions, and critiques offered by the Utility Air Regulatory Group (UARG) on the Proposed Rule as well as those submitted by American Public Power Association (APPA).

Like them, MMUA asserts that the Proposed Rule is inconsistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act because it would violate the Act’s clear division of responsibility for regulatory decision making between the federal government and the states, eliminating the broad discretion Congress granted to the states when it enacted section 111(d) of the Act. Instead, the Proposed Rule seeks to assign all of that discretion to the Agency itself.

Similarly, the Proposed Rule shows little regard for the division of federal, state and local authority with respect to the governance and regulation of the electricity industry. EPA, although it has no clear authority to address any of these governance and regulatory matters concerning the electric utility industry, would assume total autonomy in this area.

In the Proposal, the Agency has asserted new-found authority to become the primary regulator of electric power within the United States, and its action would effectively nationalize electric power utilities for over a century.

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Varied program, strong attendance mark 2014 MMUA Technical and Operations Conference

The annual MMUA Technical and Operations Conference was held Dec. 9-11 at the St. Cloud Holiday Inn and Suites. Approximately 190 regular, associate and affiliate members, plus speakers, attended the conference.

The meeting featured a variety of speakers, who addressed topics ranging from management to technical issues. The gathering also provided ample time for attendees to visit informally and to renew old friendships, forge new ones and exchange information in a relaxed atmosphere.

A utility needs numerous attributes to function effectively, and one of them is the support of its governing board. Bringing an in-depth understanding of ‘Working Effectively with Your Utility’s Governing Board’ was John Miner of Collaborative Learning. Miner, a staple of recent MMUA meetings who was brought back by popular demand, provided the initial program, which encompassed the bulk of Tuesday afternoon.

Voting members then entered the spotlight for rapid-fire presentations in the New Product Showcase event, which was a prelude to the evening’s Trade Show and Reception.

Wednesday morning focused on Cross-functional Collaborations, presented by Steve Zahner of Skillpath, who is a nationally recognized management consultant, business owner and motivational speaker. Don Harbeck of Northwest Lineman College and College’s Mike Willettes presented Apprentice Lineworker Recognitions prior to lunch.

Zahner picked up his presentation after lunch in the Manager’s Track, and Willettes later updated attendees on the OSHA 1910.269 standard. George Gmach of Gmach Compensating Consulting, along with Dan Boyce of East Grand Forks Water & Light and Troy Adams of Elk River Municipal Utilities, offered advice on ‘Living With Pay Equity in a Competitive Environment.’

The Crew Leader/Foreman Track featured technical topics, as well as Leadership for Crew Leaders, presented by Chris Trembley of MMUA. Technical topics included SPC Planning by MMUA’s Joe Schmidt, LED Technology and Roadway Applications by Jeff Libbesmeier of Primus Marketing. The track concluded with one utility’s experience in ‘Choosing the Right AMI System’ by Michael Sharp of Eaton’s Cooper Power and Dale Narlock of Thief River Falls Engineering.

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Attention - MMUA Associate Members!

MMUA’s new website is undergoing beta testing and the association is making a number of changes in anticipation of this technological upgrade. As part of these changes, MMUA is offering associate members an opportunity to become an annual MMUA sponsor.

The annual cost for an associate member to become an annual MMUA sponsor is $1,500. The total value of the sponsorship benefit is $1,860, considerably more than the sponsorship fee. This does not include the intangible benefit of increased visibility with MMUA members. MMUA believes the sponsorship package represents a solid value for the involved associate member.

More information, including MMUA sponsor sign-up forms, have been emailed to all associate members and are available on the MMUA website, www.mmua.org.

As the relevant MMUA member and municipal utility data will be available on the new MMUA website, publication of the MMUA Directory will cease. MMUA is confident the new website will fill associate member needs, in a handy, mobile format.

Associate members may also participate in MMUA meeting, trade show and advertising opportunities on an ‘a la carte’ basis, just as they always have. For meeting information, contact Rita Kelly at rkelly@mmua.org or advertising, contact Steve Downer at sdowner@mmua.org.

MMUA expects the new website to debut early in 2015.
Study: electric system can handle 40 percent renewable energy

by Steve Downer

With Minnesota’s legislative session beginning Jan. 6, look for a push to increase Minnesota’s Renewable Energy Standard from 25 percent of retail sales by the year 2025 to 40 percent by 2030.

According to the Minnesota Renewable Energy Integration and Transmission Study released Nov. 6 by the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC), Minnesota’s electric system can accommodate 40 percent renewable energy for Minnesota and 15 percent renewable energy for MISO North/Central. Analysis results indicate that the system can be successfully operated for all hours of the year with no unmanaged load, no reserve violations and minimal curtailment of renewable energy. This assumes sufficient transmission mitigations to accommodate the additional wind and solar resource. The 40 percent scenario included the recent transmission additions of CapX2020 Group I lines and the MISO multi-value project portfolio. It also included transmission mitigations to accommodate the increased wind and solar generation. These mitigations included transmission line upgrades, transformer additions/replacements, and changes to substation terminal equipment, with a total estimated cost, according to the report, of $737 million.

Other factors also need to be taken into consideration. MMEA Director of Engineering and Policy Analysis Bob Jagusch said overall costs of the 40 percent scenario are estimated at $2.5 billion. In addition, the flip-side of the 40 percent renewable standard is that it “is operationally achievable with most coal plants operated as baseload must-run units, similar to existing operating practice.”

A final scenario added 17,245 megawatts of new wind/solar to increase the Minnesota renewable energy penetration to 50 percent and MISO renewable energy penetration to 25 percent. A total of nine new transmission lines and 30 transmission upgrades were added at a total cost estimate of an additional $2.6 billion. Along with the upgrades, the 50 percent renewable energy level is also operationally achievable with most coal plants operated as baseload must-run units, noted the study. “It is also achievable if all coal plants are economically committed per MISO market signals, but additional analysis would be required to better understand implications, tradeoffs, and mitigations related to increased cycling duty.”

The study noted that most coal plants were originally designed to operate continuously with only a few start/stop cycles a year. Increased cycling duty could increase wear and tear with corresponding increases in maintenance requirements. The study did not examine the economic or wear-and-tear impacts of increased coal unit cycling. Other issues addressed included curtailment of wind and solar energy, operational issues, system stability, voltage support and dynamic reactive reserves, and weak system issues. Additional analysis would need to be done for adding renewables at levels significantly higher than 40 percent.

In releasing the report, the DOC congratulated those that participated in the “comprehensive and ground-breaking study. The results indicate that Minnesota’s renewable energy standard is clearly on track and that the capacity for adding additional wind and solar up to 40 percent by 2030 can be reliably accommodated by the electric power system.”

Future EPA regulations, such as the recently proposed Clean Power Plan (111d), were not modeled or considered.

Winthrop joins New Century Cities

The city of Winthrop joined 31 other cities Oct. 20 in launching Next Century Cities, a bipartisan, city-to-city initiative dedicated to ensuring the availability of next-generation broadband internet for all communities. The cities and their elected leaders joined together to recognize the importance of leveraging gigabit-level internet to attract new businesses and create jobs, improve health care and education, and connect residents to new opportunities.

The launch convened mayors and other leaders from the cities—including Santa Monica, Boston, Chattanooga, Raleigh, and San Antonio—for a discussion about what’s worked in their cities and how to support next-generation networks nationwide.
Resources may focus its attention on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to expedite the export of crude oil from the U.S. structure. Senator Murkowski noted that one area the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources now control the Department of Energy (DOE) without modification or de- lay. Legislation to move forward with the Keystone Pipeline is also anticipated to be a focus. As the Obama administration has pushed forward a strategy to use regulations to address global warming without action from Congress, soon to be Senate Ma- jority Leader McConnell (R-Ky.) has indicated that he would work to rein in the Environmental Protection Agency as it finalizes a proposal to regulate pollution from coal-fired power plants. It is unclear to what extent com- prehensive tax reform will be a focus in the next Congress, but this will be an issue APGA will continue to follow closely as issues related to tax-exempt financing are discussed. In the Senate, 60 votes are needed to invoke cloture and end debate, so that will be a magic number to reach in moving legislation forward.

No official agenda for the 114th Congress has been announ- ced but the agenda is expected to remain similar to that of the 113th Congress. Expect the House to continue to focus on reigniting the administration’s various rulemakings on energy production and the environ- ment. With the Senate flipping, the House’s legislative priorities have a much better chance of becoming law. Some of the proposals that has returned for a lame duck session in which one of the primary tasks will be to pass legislation that continues funding for the federal government beyond a temporary measure that expires on Decem- ber 11. In addition, lawmakers may also move to pass legisla- tion that extends several expiring tax credits. APGA is working to include two expiring natural gas vehicle credits in any tax extender legislation.

One other item that may come up during the lame duck session of interest to public natural gas systems is the Shaheen-Portman Independence and Security Act. Section 433 bans the use of fossil fuels in federal buildings after December 2030. This means any new or renovated federal building would not be able to use natural gas.

Senator energy committee may focus its attention on several gas issues

With winter right around the corner and coal stockpiles substantially below normal levels, leaders of the American Public Power Association and other groups urged federal regulators to immediately address ongoing railroad coal delivery challenges and stave off potential reliability problems.

Sue Kelly, president and CEO of APCA; Thomas Kuhn, president of Edison Electric Institute; Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of National Rural Electric Cooperative Association; Charles Gray, executive director of National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners; and Bette Whalen, president of the Western Coal Traffic League, sent a letter to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission commissioners on Oct. 31. “We write to call your attention to, and to seek your help in addressing, a problem that we believe poses a serious challenge to the overall reliability of the interstate power grid in the portions of the country that depend heavily on Western coal for electric power. In situations such as these, it is electric customers who ultimately have to bear the cost of BNSF’s failure to perform. The rail service problem has persisted, in varying degrees of severity, for more than a year. With winter fast approaching, Minnesota utilities cannot tolerate watching fuel stockpiles fall to under one week—as they did last winter,” the governor and lawmakers told LaFleur.

Dayton and the lawmakers said that BNSF’s service failures are driving up electricity costs and threatening electric system reliability. “We request that the FERC act to protect utility consumers in Minnesota and the other impacted states from the adverse consequences of BNSF’s service failures. As an immediate first step, the FERC could convene a meeting to hear from utility and railroad representatives to discuss railroad coal-delivery matters and their impact on electric markets and reliability,” they wrote.

The Energy Information Administration on Nov. 6 released its newest consequences of BNSF’s service failures. As an immediate first step, the FERC could convene a meeting to hear from utility and railroad representatives to discuss railroad coal-delivery matters and their impact on electric markets and reliability,” they wrote.

The Energy Information Administration on Nov. 6 released its newest report on the federal coal service recovery plan for the board’s review. A group of Democratic Minnesota elected officials, including Gov. Mark Dayton, Sens. Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar, and Rep. Rick Nolan—in a letter to FERC Chairman LaFleur—expressed strong concerns about BNSF’s failure to provide adequate rail service to electric utilities in Minnesota.

Utilities in Minnesota are restricting the operation of coal-fired plants to conserve existing coal stockpiles. One utility recently shut down four power plant units in direct response to reduced coal deliveries and had to buy replacement power. “In situations such as these, it is electric customers who ultimately have to bear the cost of BNSF’s failure to deliver coal,” the leaders said.

In situations such as these, it is electric customers who ultimately have to bear the cost of BNSF’s failure to deliver coal.

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The EPA proposal penalizes states that have reduced CO2 emissions

One of the ironies of the EPA’s proposed rule to combat climate change, issued under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act, is that it penalizes states that have taken steps to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. This includes Minnesota.

Under the bizarre logic of EPA’s methodology, said MMUA, states are assumed to achieve more carbon reductions in CO2 emissions from the electric utility industry during the 15-year period from 2005 to 2020.

Minnesota, however, reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 20 percent from 2005 by 2012, which is the base year in the Proposed Rule. Minnesota’s energy policy will provide additional greenhouse gas reductions from 2012 to 2020 to the level of 20 percent at a minimum. None of these reductions will count toward achieving Minnesota’s assigned goal of a 41 percent decrease in CO2 emissions.

The proposed rule requires states to achieve their entire assigned reduction during the 10-year period from 2020 to 2030. This construct not only flies in the face of reality in early adopter states such as Minnesota, it also ignores the incremental pace of change that occurs in the highly regulated and capital-intensive electric utility industry.

EPA’s assumption that all emission reductions will occur between 2020 and 2030 severely penalizes early adopter states such as Minnesota. Logic would dictate that states with sizeable amounts of renewable energy generation online in 2012 would have a lesser obligation during the 2020-2030 period, said MMUA, since they are already achieving substantial reductions in CO2 emissions. At a minimum, states that are doing a good job at reducing CO2 today should be on an equal footing with those that are not. But under the perverse logic of the EPA methodology, states that are making serious efforts to reduce CO2 emissions prior to 2020 have to make greater reductions between 2020 and 2030 than those that are doing little or nothing today.

The proposed rule is governed by demand and dispatch in the energy sector. In the state of Minnesota due to natural gas pipeline capacity issues, those who have invested in more intermittent renewable resources need to reflect in their resource planning policy that there is an optimal investment in intermittent renewable capacity.

MMUA argued that early adopter states must be allowed to choose a phase-in period that encompasses its ongoing greenhouse gas reduction efforts.

Early adopter states should not be penalized for moving ahead with greenhouse gas reductions before a federal mandate. Minnesota achieved a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2005-2012. The only fair way to design the program is to use 2005 as the base year and allow all reductions achieved from that year forward to count toward achieving the goal.
AUSTIN, Minn.— At a special board meeting held Oct. 30, Austin Utilities (AU) Board of Commissioners voted to approve proceeding with the construction of a new central facility, with a not to exceed cost of $18,677,000. This facility is scoped to be a full service operational facility with all utility operations and customer service functions located at their Energy Park site, 23 acres in Austin’s industrial park just south of Todd Park.

Plans are contingent on city council approving a special bond issuance to finance the project. Debt issuance and bonding will be reviewed with the city council in the next few months. The effect of the bond issuance will be an average increase to residential customers of $8.18 per month. Business customers can expect to see increases in the range of one to three percent.

The decision is the result of several years of planning beginning in 2009 with the purchase of the Energy Park site.

In 2012 staff presented the initial concept of a central facility to the board. Following this, a conceptual design was presented in June 2013, a schematic design in August 2014 and final costs were presented at the special board meeting.

The new building will be a community role model in energy efficiency. The effect will be an average increase to residential customers of $8.18 per month. About 85 percent of Austin Utilities current customers are residential. Business customers can expect to see increases in the range of one to three percent. Austin Utilities is a municipal utility serving approximately 12,300 electric customers, 10,300 natural gas customers, and 9,000 water customers. Their mission is to offer utility products and services in a safe, reliable and responsible manner in order to enhance the quality of life in the community.

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Grand Rapids testing water, electric automated metering infrastructure

Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission is testing use of the internet to collect water and electric meter readings. If the test goes well, Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) for all GRPUC electric and water customers will go live in 2015.

“This new way to gather electric and water usage information is yet another step in over a century’s worth of GRPUC innovation that has kept power and water services accessible and affordable to area businesses and residents,” said GRPUC General Manager Anthony Ward. “It helps the utility prepare for the next stage of utility management and energy conservation innovations that are currently in the pipeline.”

The Wi-Fi-based system collects electric and water meter readings automatically, monitors household and business voltages and reduces outage time.

The test of the selected equipment and system—Cooper Power Systems running their Yukon software—is being conducted after a thorough, independent analysis of three different systems and site visits to Rapids Falls, Wisconsin and Rustin, Louisiana by a GRPUC task force. The task force consisted of two GRPUC commissioners, its electrical engineer, customer service representative, instrumentation and control technician and water department manager.

The program being tested and eventually implemented uses external equipment only and communicates securely with GRPUC at its central office. The data that’s gathered will be stored on a secure GRPUC server and residents will have the ability to check their own information for usage and cost management.

Residents and business managers will have the option to buy a Zigbee chip to allow them to read their own information off their meters in their homes and businesses.

One of the new system’s benefits is its ability to pinpoint outage sources by scanning the whole meter system. GRPUC personnel, either in the office or in nearby service trucks, can see where meters are indicating no service and trucks and crews can be deployed immediately to work on restoring utility services.

“The timing is right for this,” said Ward. “We know advancements in electronic data for electric and water management is advancing at a rapid pace. Here at GRPUC, we lost a meter reader and the other meter reader will be trained to operate the new system. The funding for both the test and the implementation, if tests indicate, will be funded through a loan we can pay for through our existing budget. We need to replace the existing load management system soon; it’s coming up on 28 years of age. The new AMI system allows us to do this with little additional investment.”

The pilot test is being conducted using 50 electric meters and five water meters with a mix of residential and commercial customers in a north central section of the city. If the test goes well, GRPUC will likely install the electric meters throughout its service area starting this winter.

The water meters will follow in 2015-2016.

The project, when implemented, will cost $2.2 million. It is being financed with a loan through the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association with funding from the Midwest Consortium of Municipal Utilities program. The terms of the loan and GRPUC’s current positive financial standing allow financing of the project to cost less than the expense incurred, to issue bonds. Calculations indicate that the cost of the AMI System is projected to be paid back in less than five years through operational savings and gains in efficiencies.

When the test is completed and potential problems resolved, GRPUC will announce the deployment of electric and water meters to all customers. Information on the introduction of the new system to customer neighborhoods will be provided prior to its arrival.

Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission has been providing public utility service to residents and businesses of Grand Rapids for over a century. GRPUC serves nearly 8,000 customers in the greater Grand Rapids area, and the cities of LaPrairie and Cohasset. GRPUC is an independent commission of the City of Grand Rapids, with five appointed commissioners that oversee full operation and management control under Minn. Statute Section 412.321.
Attendees got something to remember to start Thursday morning, with ‘Lee’s Story— Triumph Over Tragedy.’ Lee Shelby was employed by a utility company in Tennessee as a power lineman, and was known as a hard worker and good at his job. On a fateful Monday morning in 1991, he made a decision that impacted his life and the lives of those around him forever. He came in contact with an energized overhead conductor, carrying approximately 12,000 volts. In the blink of an eye his life changed forever.

Shelby moved the audience through his personal story, with an emphasis on taking responsibility for one’s own personal safety and the safety of those around you.

Following a break, MMUA’s Willets updated attendees on the APPA Lineworker Rodeo, which MMUA will host in 2016.

An update on additional MMUA issues, by Executive Director Jack Kegel and Director of Engineering and Policy Analysis Bob Jagusch, closed the meeting.

MMUA thanks all those who attended the meeting, as well as the cities/utilities and companies that sent them. We also extend a special thank you to our speakers and those associate members who sponsored breaks and receptions. These included:


Refreshment breaks were sponsored by: Power System Engineering, Northwest Lineman College (2) and MPower Innovations.

T&O continued from front page
Twelve more join graduate ranks of Firstline Supervision leadership program

Another group of municipal employees recently completed the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association Firstline Supervision/Leadership course, through Central Lakes College. Nearly 300 municipal employees have completed the leadership series which is offered at CLC’s Brain- erd campus and MMUA headquarters in Plymouth. 

Recent graduates include: Craig Novotny, Tom Sokup, and Ken Zweber of New Prague; Jeff Folkens of New Ulm, Ryan Deering and Bill Rosenau of Owatona- na, T. J. Beechold of Saint James, Erik Volk of Elk River, Tim Dick and Tom Kuchinka of Lake City, Brian Schock of Wells and Stacy Stien of Willmar.

The Firstline Supervision utility management program was developed in 1988 and has graduates in MMUA member cities all over Minnesota. The program is a cooperative effort between MMUA and the Central Lakes College (CLC) Business and Industry Center, designed to provide the leadership skills needed in challenging times. The 68-hour course is offered in four three-day sessions over two years.

Participants work with and learn from other experienced facilitators and instructors, internationally recognized Achieve Global leadership materials and specially created units with a utility focus. Public works directors, finance and office managers, customer service personnel, utility superintendents, crew supervisors, parks directors, and other municipal employees from municipal power and water/wastewater departments have benefited from this highly interactive program that emphasizes core leadership skills, performance management, communication, and handling challenging situations.

Past graduates from the cities/utilities of the recent graduates include: Michael Price, Mike Thiry, Pete Nielson, Lloyd Lorenzen, David Berg, Mark Fuchs, Wade Lovelette and Glenn Sundeen of Elk River; Richard Olson and Dan Busho of Owatonna; Dick Thynes, Bill Hawkins, Brian Peters, Dennis Negaes, Odell Iverson and Steve Wearda of Willmar; Paul Macho, Brian Bettin, Dan O’Connor, George Brown, Kris Manderfeld, Del Senst, Steve Sokup, Jeff Beilke, and Dennis Braulick of New Ulm; Matt Rynda, New Prague.

A Cass County jury in October ruled that Crow Wing Power was negligent in its response to a farm family’s concerns about stray voltage on its property. The jury awarded the farmers $4.8 million in economic loss damages and $1.5 million in nuisance damages, the largest amount ever awarded in a stray voltage case in state history.

The utility did upgrade service to the property. Crow Wing called for wiring guideline standards and testing regulations.

The Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) for the electric utility industry. The Utility Air Regulatory Group (UARG), which the American Public Power Association (APPA) is a member of, the National Mining Association, and 21 states appealed the April 15, 2014, decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit upholding the EPA’s MATS.

The challengers contend that “EPA should have considered cost when deter- mining the economic benefits of the rule. The challengers ruled that Crow Wing Power called for the studies, rose less than three percent over that same time span. The study also argued that economic benefits, such as job growth, were illusory.

Minnesota electric genera- tors have joined the chorus of complaints against rail shipping delays.Echoing earlier cries by farmers, grain shippers and others, the utilities point out that delays in coal shipments threaten to increase electric prices this winter. The criticism so far has largely centered on the BNSF Railway. Xcel Energy this fall said its coal stockpile at Sherco was at 57 percent. EOG Tail power said its coal stockpile at Big Stone was 20 percent below normal. Minnesota Power said spotty rail service has been an issue over the last year, with supplies at its Cohasset plant dwindling to less than half the desired level at times, forcing a shutdown of the plant to con- serve coal for the winter.

Shortly after the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission asked for a review of alternative routes for a proposed Sandpiper crude oil pipeline, Gov. Dayton and business leaders gathered Oct. 14 in Duluth, ostensibly to discuss rail safety, but the discussion quickly turned to the hardships arising from rail lines clogged with oil being trans- ported from the Bakken oil field. It was reported that 70 percent of oil leaving the Bakken is cross- ing Minnesota by rail.

Enbridge Energy wants to build the $2.6 billion pipeline through Minnesota to carry North Dakota crude to a Super- pior, Wis., oil terminal that supplies Midwest refineries. The company’s preferred route crosses the Mississippi River headwaters. The project, which would displace about 2,000 rail cars per day, will be delayed until 2017 due to the study, said Enbridge.
Proposed sale of IPL properties faces additional scrutiny

A number of electric utility service area boundary adjustments have been filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in recent months, and the commission has ordered the necessary changes to the state’s digital service territory map. Municipal utilities involved in the filings include Granite Falls, Delano and Buffalo.

Granite Falls annexed 11 acres into the city, which was in Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power Association’s service territory. The area was annexed so the city could build a city-owned nursing home in the area.

The existing Granite Falls Municipal Hospital and Manor is owned by the city. The current Manor building is over 50 years old. To better serve the community, the city decided to acquire the 11 acres to construct and operate a replacement nursing home facility. The city will serve as the owner and developer of the new facility, which is adjacent to an existing independent senior housing facility and townhouse apartment project.

The city had been providing construction service to the area and is the customer. The municipality agreed to pay the cooperative one cent ($0.01) times each kilowatt hour of electric energy sold at retail to the nursing home. These payments are not to exceed $2,500. Payment starts on the transfer date and ends after 10 years. In the event the city does not own and operate the nursing home, then it agreed to pay the cooperative 25 mills per kWh sold.

Delano Water, Light and Power Commission and the City of Buf- falo both submitted agreements reached with Wright Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association. The Delano agreement covers the annexation of several properties, each less than 60 acres, and all on the south or southwest edge of the city.

The municipal will pay the cooperative the original cost of facilities, less depreciation, for all on the south or southwest edge of the city.

The Delano agreement covers the annexation of several properties, each less than 60 acres, and all on the south or southwest edge of the city. The municipal will pay the cooperative the original cost of facilities, less depreciation, for all on the south or southwest edge of the city.

For three areas that begin receiving service from the Cooperative on the transfer date, the payment period of 10 years begins on the date the municipal first provides retail service to a point of service within each area with annual electric sales of 7,500 kilowatt hours or greater. The commencement of the 10-year period for each of these areas will carry a specific commencement date.

Delano also agreed to a demand to pay up to $4,000 for cooperative accounts which become overdue after the transfer date. The cooperative agreed to promptly forward to the municipal any payments received for these accounts. The Delano pact includes an exception agreement, allowing the cooperative to continue to serve one customer until such time it makes sense for the municipal utility to take over service.

The Buffalo agreement encompasses one half-developed residential subdivision on the southeast edge of the city. The area includes 94 residential and miscellaneous services and 93 bare lots.

Buffalo agreed to pay the original cost of facilities, less depreciation and reasonable integration expenditures (not to exceed $7,500).

Buffalo also agreed to pay 28 mills per kWh sold in the area for a period of 10 years, starting on the transfer date. The city agreed to pay up to $5,000 for overdue accounts, with the cooperative forwarding payments received after the transfer date.

In a Sept. 26 letter informing the MPUC of the agreement, the parties noted that they had agreed to cooperate fully in notifying customers as to the transfer.

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Public hearings scheduled

The PUC has decided to hold public information hearings in all three sites, including: 2 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 15 at the Storden Civic Center; 2 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 21 at the Stewartville Civic Center; and 7 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 21 at the Albert Lea High School Auditorium.

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HELP WANTED

Line person
The City of St. James has an opening in the Electric Depart-
ment for a line person. Applicant should have at a minimum one
year of lineman school at a technical
school or 3 years of experience
with an electrical depart-
ment. Class A-CDL or ability to
obtain a Class A- CDL within six
months of date of hire. Anticipat-
ed start date of April 6, 2015. Five
miles response time, pay range
$22.53 to $25.01. Job description
and application form is available
at City Hall 124 Armstrong Blvd
S. St. James, MN 56081. Applications
close on January 16, 2015
at 4:00 pm. EEOC, AA www.ci.stjames.mn.us

Utilities Superintendent
The City of Adrian’s Public Utility
Department has an immediate
opening for a Utility Superinten-
dent. This is a highly responsible,
technical and administrative job in
directing municipal Public Works
and Utility Departments. Work
is performed with considerable
independence and judgment and is
reviewed by the Public Utili-
ties Commission and Adrian City
Council. Work involves planning,
organizing, directing and coordi-
nating construction and mainte-
nance of utility service lines and
maintenance work of city streets
as well as operation of municipi-
pal utilities including electric-
ity production and distribution,
water treatment and distribution
and wastewater collection and
treatment. Qualifications include
a combination substantially
equivalent to extensive progres-
sively responsible experience in
the construction, maintenance and
repair of public utility systems,
especially electrical production
and distribution; including, or
supplemented by, experience in
supervision and management.
Civil or Electrical Engineering
degree or training helpful, or
Minnesota Master Electricians
License. Employment applica-
tion & position details can be
picked up at Adrian City Hall,
209 Maine Avenue, Suite 106 or
from our website at www.adrian.
govoffice2.com Applications ac-
cepted until 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday
December 23.

Director of Public Works
City of Saint Peter, MN. MINI-
IMUM QUALIFICATIONS:
Bachelor’s degree in engineering,
pubic administration or related
fields or fifteen years’ experi-
ence as public works manager
or director; three plus years’ experi-
ce managing five (5) or more
employees; three plus years’ experi-
ence managing projects and
budgets; valid driver’s license;
Heart Association Certification
as Basic Rescuer. $79,750 to
Energy Services Representative  
Austin Utilities is seeking a full-time Energy Services Representative. The Energy Services Department is a multi-faceted department with responsibility for development and implementation of energy efficiency and demand management programs, marketing related to demand side management efforts, customer relationship management, market research and analytics, and related non-demand side management program functions. The department’s core responsibility is to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate Austin Utilities’ electric and gas energy efficiency and demand management programs and related customer engagement.

Austin Utilities is an electric, water, and natural gas municipal utility located in Southern Minnesota. Minimum requirements include a Bachelor’s degree in Business (communications, management, economics, marketing or engineering), Minimum of three (3) years related experience and/or training, or equivalent combination of education and experience, Certified Business Energy Professional (CBEP) from the Association of Energy Engineers, or ability to attain certification within 2 years after hiring; Certified Energy Manager (CEM) is preferred and Valid Minnesota driver’s license.

Application and resume should be sent to Austin Utilities, 400 4th St. SE, PO Box 96, Wells, MN 56097, (507) 553-3671. Applications and more information are available by calling 507-437-0820, at www.austinutilities.com or by e-mailing kimордин@austinutilities.com. Position open until filled. EOE

Wastewater Superintendent  
The City of Pierre, SD is accepting applications for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent position. Under direct supervision of the Operations Manager, the Superintendent is responsible for directing & supervising the operation, maintenance & repair of the wastewater treatment facilities and lift stations. Individual should have a minimum of four years’ experience in a wastewater treatment facility and lift stations. Individual should have a minimum of four years’ experience in a wastewater treatment facility and lift stations. Individual should have a minimum of four years’ experience in a wastewater treatment facility and lift stations. Individual should have a minimum of four years’ experience in a wastewater treatment facility and lift stations. Individual should have a minimum of four years’ experience in a wastewater treatment facility and lift stations. Individual should have a minimum of four years’ experience in a wastewater treatment facility and lift stations.

For prompt scheduling, pick-up, and repair, call 763.323.4236.