

The RESOURCE

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MMUA
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MMUA convenes inaugural session of Leadership Academy

The inaugural session of the MMUA Leadership Academy was held Feb. 8-9 at the MMUA headquarters in Plymouth. The first day featured a networking dinner and focused discussion.

The Academy is a locally-based and affordable, high-level executive leadership development course, focused on meeting the needs of Minnesota's municipal utilities. The curriculum was developed and tailored to MMUA-member needs, based on focus group feedback.

Primary instructor of the Academy is Kent Myers, Managing Partner of VISION Companies. Myers has over 25 years of experience providing strategic visioning, operational effectiveness, and technology alignment consulting services to global companies. He has a decade of experience in working with Minnesota municipal utilities on leadership and culture development and strategic visioning. In addition to his



Front row, from far left: Jeff Larson of Marshall, Jenny Hazelton of Winthrop, Lisa Fischer of MRES, Kent Myers, Marcy Douglas of MRES, MMUA Executive Director Jack Kegel, Ken Zweber of New Prague, Scott Grabe of Henning and Nate Zimmerman of Janesville. Second row: Kyle Skov of Owatonna, Brian Jacobson of Thief River Falls, Raoul Blackman of St. Peter, Del Vancura of Anoka, Theresa Slominski of Elk River,

Scott Magnuson, Brainerd. Back row: Melissa Meixner of Rochester, Paul Twite of Delano, Joe Hedrick of Thief River Falls, Jerel Nelsen of Staples, Kevin Lee of Marshall, Paul Hoeschen of Sauk Centre, Darin Grosz of Elbow Lake, Crystal Johnson of Granite Falls and Mark Boone of Rochester. Not pictured: Jerry Mausebach of Blooming Prairie and MMUA's Mike Willetts.

extensive consulting practice, Myers is an adjunct professor at the Harvard Business School.

The two-year program will be broken into four, two-day sessions per year. Each session is

an important building block in developing the skills, awareness, and perspective of a true leader. Sessions are designed to be taken in order. Class size is limited to 25 students.

Some sessions will feature additional instructors and guest speakers who have been through their own journey of ad-

Leadership: see next page please

MMUA Legislative Conference strengthens bonds

MMUA held a successful Legislative Conference Jan. 31-Feb. 1 in St. Paul. Conference headquarters was the Embassy Suites, but much of the actual work occurred in legislative offices and the state Capitol.

The meeting began mid-morning on Tuesday the 31st, with a discussion of issues and MMUA positions (which had been developed in conjunction with the MMUA Government Relations Committee). Dave Osmek, chair of the Senate Energy and Utility Finance and Policy Committee, visited the group and spoke over lunch.

The afternoon was taken up with legislative visits. A number of people also attended committee hearings, including one of Sen. Osmek's committee, which heard several bills of interest.

A reception for legislators and their staff was held that evening. Approximately 40 senators, representatives and staff members attended, many to spend time with their constituents. The roster of attendees included a number of legislative leaders, including Speaker of the House Kurt Daudt, Chair of the House Job Growth and Energy Affordability Committee Rep. Pat Garofalo, and Dan



Rep. Nels Pierson, Christina Pierson of CMPAS, Steve Nyhus of RPU, Speaker of the House Kurt Daudt and Toby Saxon on Chaska visited at the reception. The Piersons are brother and sister.



Al Crowser of Alexandria, Rep. Mary Franson, and Mike Brethorst of Melrose, from left to right, visited during the MMUA Legislative Reception.

Conference: See back page please

Small utility cybersecurity guide released

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has released a Guide to Cybersecurity, Resilience, and Reliability for Small and Under-Resourced Utilities.

The Guide looks at cybersecurity at small utilities (defined as having less than 100 employees or 50,000 meters) and offers a process that utilities may want to consider to better address their approach to the issue.

The Guide notes that much cyber security guidance for utilities falls short, due to size and complexity. However, the report identifies a handful of guides that were developed with smaller utilities in mind.

The report is non-technical and 33 pages, including appendices. It is available through a Google search or the 'Breaking News' section of the MMUA website.

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'Polar vortex' powers regulatory approval of natural gas extension project costs to two cities

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Jan. 19 approved natural gas extension project costs—to the far-flung cities of Balaton and Esko—through a rider and a New Area Surcharge (NAS), and approved regulatory assets for recovery of remaining costs.

The push to expand natural gas service throughout the state—even when not economic—stems from the 'polar vortex' conditions of the 2013-2014 winter. Due to propane supply issues at that time, Gov. Mark Dayton is-

sued an emergency executive order—to develop natural gas projects (whether economical or un-economical) to serve unserved or inadequately served areas.

Previously, the MPUC determined that service line extensions, to be allowed, must be economical at tariffed rates. For extensions longer than the line allowance, the customer was required to pay a Contribution in Aid of Construction (CIAC). For uneconomical natural gas projects that would require subsidization from existing customers,

the MPUC approved NAS tariffs. This tariff required customers in the new area to be responsible for the costs of providing service.

In addition, a 2015 law allows public utilities to petition the MPUC outside of a general rate case for a Natural Gas Extension Project (NGEP) Rider. The Rider allows a utility to collect a portion of its natural gas extension project's revenue deficiency from all of the utility's customers (including transport customers).

In both the Esko and Balaton cases, project costs will be recovered through both the NAS and NGEP tariffs. The cost of natural gas service will be significantly lower, for all customer classes, than other heating fuels. The NAS and

NGEP cost recovery tariffs are to be in place from 25-30 years.

Esko is an unincorporated area, with a population of nearly 1,900, between Cloquet and Duluth; Balaton is a city of 635, 18 miles south of Marshall on Hwy. 14.

Electric co-op to serve gas?

Lake Region Electric Cooperative and Greater Minnesota Gas representatives Dec. 26 met with the Deer Creek City Council, in regards to a natural gas project. The electric co-op is conducting a feasibility study to see if it is economically feasible to bring natural gas to a large portion of East Otter Tail County. The pipeline would begin north of Deer Creek and end in Parkers Prairie.

Deer Creek is a city of 324, 10 miles southwest of Wadena.

According to press reports, the gas line would start at an existing town border station east of Deer Creek. The line would travel south to Parkers Prairie, which is also without natural gas service. A number of large turkey farms, according to reports, are along the way.

Public hearings have been held by both communities in December, with representatives of both the cooperative and natural gas company in attendance.

The Greater Minnesota Gas representative at the meeting talked about company projects to bring gas to other area communities.

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Leadership: First class of new Academy held Feb. 8-9

continued from front page

versity and triumph and have expertise in that session's leadership topic.

As an example, assigned

reading prior to the first session was a book on leadership—*Five Dysfunctions of a Team*—by Patrick Lencioni. Points made in the book were discussed and students will go through an assessment before the second course session, to help the instructor and the students understand their styles, strengths, and potential deficiencies in key competencies. Students have various other tasks to work on between sessions and are expected to journal.

The Academy is designed to instill the key skills, awareness, and perspective that 21st Century municipal utility leaders need.

The first year sessions in-

clude: Building Great Teams; Political Intelligence and Conflict – Navigating the Minefields; Communications – Presence of A Leader; Building the Toolbox of Leadership.

Year Two Sessions: Character – Mind of a Leader and Human Resource Strategies; Behaviors of a Leader – Organization and Administration; Financial Leadership and Stewardship; Seeing the Big Picture – Strategic Planning.

For more information, call MMUA Executive Director Jack Kegel at 763-551-1230.



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APPA reaches out to key players leading up to its annual Legislative Rally

by Paul Ciampoli

The American Public Power Association (APPA) is working hard to ensure that public power's voice is heard in the early days of the Trump administration, and is also keeping a close eye on action farther up Pennsylvania Avenue on Capitol Hill.

The Association has made it a priority to proactively reach out to key players in the Trump administration so that they understand the priorities of the public power community.

One way that we can accomplish this, with the help of our members, is through the Association's annual legislative rally in Washington, D.C., Feb. 27 through March 1. Key federal policy issues will be discussed including maintaining tax-exempt financing and grid security (Additional information about the rally is available on the Association's website).

Rally attendees will have the opportunity to meet with their congressional delegations on Capitol Hill and attend policy briefings on spe-

Washington Report



cific issues hosted by the Association.

Maintaining access to tax-exempt municipal bond financing remains of paramount importance to public power.

In remarks at a Jan. 31 event in Washington, D.C., Sue Kelly, president and CEO of the Association, said that tax reform is a big agenda item in Congress this year and also a big concern for the Association because the primary financing tool that public power utilities use to construct new infrastructure is tax-exempt financing.

She added that she was very pleased to see that when president-elect Trump met with the U.S. Conference of Mayors during the transition, "He told them that he supported tax-exempt financing. I was very relieved to hear that, as we all were, and we hope that that indeed turns out to be the case," Kelly said.

The key tax writing committees in Congress are the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

The first month of the new Congress saw lawmakers approve legislation of importance to the Association and its members.

In January, the House passed the Commodity End-User Relief Act of 2017, sending the measure to the Senate. The bill, H.R. 238, is largely the same as the Commodity End-User Relief Act of 2015, although some changes

were made to it during debate on the bill shortly before its passage.

The Association supported the underlying bill, but did not take a position on amendments offered during the debate.

In a Jan. 10 letter to House Agriculture Committee Chairman Michael Conaway, R-Texas, and Committee Ranking Democrat Collin Peterson, D-Minn., Sue Kelly said the bill would "ensure that public power utilities can continue to make full use of financial tools necessary to keep elec-

tric power prices stable and affordable to our customers."

Meanwhile, in January the House also passed H.R. 587, which would ensure that where rate changes take effect because the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is deadlocked, parties still would have recourse to seek a review (and an appeal of that review) of the rate changes.

The legislation, introduced by Rep. Joseph Kennedy, D-Mass., is supported by the Association and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Will trend of Canadian hydropower to U.S. continue?

You can often look at an electric generating project and peg its age by what needs it was designed to meet and the political sensitivities (if any) at the time it was built.

Today, for example, there are several proposed U.S.-Canada transmission projects currently gaining regulatory approvals. Generally, it appears carbon-free (relatively, anyway) hydropower will be flowing from Canada

to the U.S. This also means, presumably, that dollars will be flowing from the U.S. to Canada.

APPA's *Public Power Daily* reported in January that "a proposed 1,000-megawatt, bi-directional, high-voltage direct current underwater transmission line that would provide a link between the markets of the Ontario Independent Electricity System Operator and the PJM Interconnection has received

a presidential permit from the Department of Energy." Power flows on the line may be bi-directional, according to a project website.

There are three other projects of a similar nature that will clearly be carrying power from Canada into the U.S.

In December, the DOE issued a presidential permit for the New England Clean Power Link, a 1,000-megawatt electric transmission line that will connect New England with eastern Canada, and carry Canadian hydropower into the U.S.

A solicitation process has been launched for energy to be bundled with transmission capacity on Emera Inc.'s proposed Atlantic Link submarine electricity transmission project that will deliver renewable energy (said to be wind and hydro, but the line starts at Muskrat Falls) from Canada into the ISO-New England market.

Minnesotans are familiar with the Great Northern Transmission Line proposed by Minnesota Power. The 500 kV line will carry hydropower from Manitoba Hydro to a substation near Grand Rapids. The project received its U.S. Department of Energy — Presidential Permit on Nov. 15, 2016. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission has issued a certificate of need and route permit. Several other regulatory hurdles remain.

It will be interesting to see if this trend—of high-voltage lines carrying Canadian hydropower to the U.S.—continues under a Trump administration, or if resource development in America becomes ascendant.

Editor's note: This article, by Steve Downer, first appeared in the News/Blogs section of the MMUA website. Thanks to APPA for much background info.

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Area power providers reach tentative settlement with EPA over regional haze

SIoux FALLS, S.D. – A tentative settlement was announced Jan. 10 in a lawsuit brought by the Missouri Basin Power Project (MBPP) and the State of Wyoming against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concerning emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) from MBPP's Laramie River Station in Wheatland, Wyo.

MBPP is owned by six regional consumer-owned electric utilities including the

Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (WMMMPA), which is represented in the project by Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), headquartered in Sioux Falls, S.D. The lawsuit was initiated after the EPA approved the majority of Wyoming's Regional Haze Plan, but rejected the portion related to limiting NO_x which contributes to regional haze. The state had approved the NO_x emissions limits achieved by the use

of over-fire air and low-NO_x burners, which had been installed at the Laramie River Station, and the addition of Selective Non-Catalytic Reduction (SNCR) on all three units. EPA said SNCRs were not sufficient and that Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) would be required on all three of the plant's units.

According to EPA modeling, the increased reduction in regional haze gained by using SCR, rather than SNCR, technology is only a fraction of one deciview—indistinguishable to the human eye.

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead joined MBPP in challeng-

ing that decision. Gov. Mead signed the proposed settlement Dec. 22 and it was sent to the EPA.

Among its provisions, the settlement agreement calls for the installation of SCR equipment on Unit 1 of the plant by May 2019 and SNCR equipment on Units 2 and 3 by December 2018. The WMMMPA/MRES share of the cost of the installed equipment will be approximately \$65 million, instead of nearly \$125 million in the original EPA order.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Bismarck, N.D., the project manager for MBPP

and the operator of the coal-fired Laramie River Station, negotiated the proposed settlement on behalf of MBPP. Other MBPP participants are Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, Denver; Lincoln Electric System, Lincoln, Neb.; Heartland Consumers Power District, Madison, S.D.; and Wyoming Municipal Power Agency.

The settlement means that the 330 Laramie River Station employees will continue their work. More than 200 jobs will be created during the plant upgrade.



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MMPA bolsters renewable portfolio with 78 MW of windpower

Minneapolis, MN – The Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA) has expanded its portfolio of renewable resources to include power from the Black Oak Getty Wind Farm. Power output from the 78-megawatt (MW) wind farm, located in Stearns County.

In addition to the power generation provided by the Black Oak Getty Wind Farm, the Agency's renewable energy portfolio includes 44 MW of wind energy from the Oak Glen Wind Farm, 8 MW of bioenergy from Hometown BioEnergy, and renewable energy purchases from other utilities.

"We are proud to add this new renewable source to our power supply portfolio," said MMPA Chairman, John

Crooks. "Renewable energy is a key component of our power supply and is important to our members' customers."

MMPA holds a diversified portfolio of owned and purchased generation containing both conventional and renewable resources. This approach allows the Agency to maintain flexibility in the rapidly-changing electric utility industry and positions the Agency well for the future.

MMPA signed a long-term contract with Sempra U.S. Gas & Power for the output of the Black Oak Getty Wind Farm. The wind farm, comprised of 39 wind turbines, entered commercial operation in December 2016.

MMPA provides wholesale electricity to its member communities who in turn deliver

and sell that electricity to the residential and business customers in their communities.

The Agency is comprised of municipal utilities in Anoka, Arlington, Brownston, Buffalo, Chaska, East Grand Forks, Elk River, Le Sueur, North St. Paul, Olivia, Shakopee and Winthrop.

Aultman joins MMUA as Safety Coordinator

Janet Aultman has joined MMUA as a regional safety coordinator.

Aultman has a strong safety and compliance background and was most recently a regional safety manager for an insurance services company. She performed OSHA, FMC-SA/DOT and EPA compliance audits, trained employees in a variety of subjects and handled a number of other duties including accident investigation.

Aultman was an environmental and safety consultant for Potlatch in Bemidji.



Aultman

She also has experience as a safety consultant at nuclear power plants for Xcel Energy, where she managed on-site industrial safety and health programs to ensure compliance with federal and state OSHA standards and regulations.

Aultman was also a senior safety consultant for the Minnesota OSHA Consultation Division and a senior safety investigator for the MnOSHA Compliance Division. She majored in Industrial Technology and minored in Business Management at Bemidji State University and has several specialized certifications, authorizations and trainings.

Welcome aboard, Janet!

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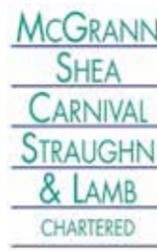
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- on banners at MMUA events;
- in MMUA publications.

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Conference or Technical and Operations Conference trade shows;

- Two meeting registrations at either the Summer Conference or T&O Conference.

- A variety of other ac-

knowledgements throughout the year, at various MMUA events and in other media.

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more information, particularly related to advertising, call Steve Downer at 763-746-0702.

Questions regarding meetings should be directed to Rita Kelly at 763-746-0707. Late sign-ups accepted!

Foes request suspension of MPUC docket on fees charged to qualifying facilities by cooperatives

Fresh Energy and the Minnesota Rural Electric Association Feb. 9 jointly requested the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission suspend the comment period on a docket investigating fees charged to qualifying facilities by cooperative electric associations under amendments made in

2015 to Minn. Stat. 216B.164, subd. 3.

The one paragraph request noted that the comment deadline was set for Feb. 10. The parties noted that the Legislature "is currently considering changes to the section of the statute under investigation . . ." and requested the

suspension in "the interest of efficiency of Commission resources."

In a separate filing, the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Department) also requested that the Commission suspend comments "until the outcome of the current Legislative Session

is clear. The current Legislature is considering bills (S.F. 141/H.F. 234) to terminate Commission oversight of cooperative and municipal utilities, which contemplates terminating any proceedings currently pending before the Commission. The Department requests that the Commission suspend comments in this proceeding at this time, and reissue a notice for comment if needed once the out-

come of the pending legislation is known."

Numerous comments from cooperative customers critical of the cooperatives' interconnection fees have also been filed in the MPUC docket. Many of these comments also refer to municipal utilities, although MMUA had not sought legislation.

Editor's note: This article first appeared as 'Breaking News' on the MMUA website.

MPUC issues order for distributed generation workgroup

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Jan. 24

issued an order establishing a workgroup and process to

update and improve state distributed electric generation interconnection standards.

The order follows a proposal to reopen Minnesota's 2004 Interconnection Standards, filed with the Commission by a coalition of environmental groups. Dakota Electric Association, an electric cooperative, also filed recommended changes to the standards.

On Jan. 5, the MPUC and interested parties met to discuss the matter. (See the January Resource for a complete report on that meeting.) Most parties commenting at the meeting preferred to update the standards consistent with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission standards.

The MPUC agreed with that approach and will, in cooperation with the Department of Commerce, convene a work group to develop the record more fully.

MMUA has received assurances that it will have a spot on the work group.

Editor's note: This article first appeared as 'Breaking News' on the MMUA website.



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SMMPA, CMPAS seek solar economies of scale together

by Steve Downer

Municipal utilities have been working with each other, through a variety of arrangements, for decades. As time and technology march on, those arrangements promise to take new form.

While a final written agreement has yet to be signed, a current example of mu-

nicipals working together involves Central Minnesota Power Agency Services (CMPAS), the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) and the output of a new solar energy development in Owatonna.

CMPAS has explored the development of 40-kilowatt (kw) solar plants to be located



photo by Steve Downer

Work continues on the Lemond Solar Center despite frozen ground and freezing temperatures.

in certain member cities. Responses to a request for proposals showed solar development on that small scale to be uneconomic.

Economies of scale had also been an issue for SMMPA as it pursued solar development. The agencies became aware that each had received bids from the same developer. That led to discussions of working together to bring greater economies of scale to a solar project.

SMMPA in 2016 signed an agreement with Lemond Solar Center, LLC, a subsidiary of Coronal Development Services, to buy all electricity generated over 20 years from a 5 MW solar photovoltaic array that will be built, owned and operated by Lemond Solar Center, LLC. The project will be sited on approximately 40 acres near Owatonna, one of SMMPA's member communities.

A portion of the solar development may be carved out for CMPAS members, who said they would like to buy energy from the plant. These CMPAS member utilities could then sell subscriptions, for output from the plant, to their customers.

CMPAS CEO Steve Thompson said his agency was "not endorsing solar from a wholesale perspective," but was interested in this opportunity as an alternative to small-scale residential development.

The parties have an agreement in principle for SMMPA to sell a portion of the output to CMPAS who will in turn supply these individual

Electric vehicle support, awareness bolstered

A new organization called Electrify America has been created to manage \$2 billion over the next decade that will be provided by Volkswagen Group of America to invest in zero-emission vehicle infrastructure in the U.S. and to build awareness of electric vehicles.

CMPAS member utilities, said Chris Schoenherr, SMMPA chief external affairs officer. SMMPA recently amended its agency agreement to allow for project members. However, neither CMPAS nor CMPAS-member utilities participating in this development will become project members. Their involvement will be limited to a simple contractual arrangement, similar to a purchased power agreement.

For CMPAS, this is not a project for wholesale, but will be energy sold on a subscription basis to retail customers. The process of selling subscriptions locally is still in the early stages in the CMPAS-member communities.

While limited as a legal arrangement, in terms of electricity generated and dollars involved, the expansion of the principle of municipal utilities working together is at least interesting, if not potentially significant.

"Joint action works," said

Thompson. "We have to come together to get scale."

More generation coming

The 5 megawatt solar plant is being built adjacent to the Owatonna Energy Station, a 38.8 MW natural gas-fired power plant in Owatonna. That generation will replace electric generating capacity lost in September 2010 in a flood of the Owatonna Public Utilities Downtown Power Plant. The new generation, owned and operated by SMMPA, is expected to be nearly twice as efficient as the old generation.

The solar portion of the development is under construction. Panels will be attached to piles, which are being driven into the frozen ground this winter. An access road has been constructed and cable placed. A control building will also be placed on site.

The Lemond Solar Center is expected to be operational by late June and the Owatonna Energy Station by late fall.

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Tesla Supercharger installation a 'hassle free' experience for Worthington

It appears that Worthington Public Utilities (WPU) is the only municipal electric utility in Minnesota to have Tesla as a customer.

And, they are glad to have them.

Tesla, which designs and manufactures electric vehicles, among other ventures, also manufactures electric vehicle charging stations. The company installed a set of three "Superchargers" at the Ground Round restaurant south of I-90 in Worthington in late 2013.

It has been a hassle-free experience for the utility.

After being contacted by Tesla, WPU Electric Superintendent Pat Demuth helped select the site. Tesla cut a deal with the restaurant for the location, and placed its equipment adjacent to a public parking lot. WPU had three-phase power available at the site. The customer required 480-volt service. For a service that size, WPU billed the customer for all materials, but provided the labor.

It's something of a novelty, so people notice when somebody is using the Supercharger. While not a daily occurrence, somebody is charging their vehicle roughly every week, more in the summer time.

"It gets used a whole lot more than we ever anticipated," said Demuth.

Demuth said Tesla provid-

ed good documentation in regards to its electric needs and was good to work with. The site looks a little unusual perhaps, but clean and orderly in a modernistic sort of way.

Smart phone applications apprise drivers of the location and availability of charging stations. The city or utility have not received one call in regards to finding the charging station or its operation.

Technical aspects

The charging station includes six plug-ins and three rapid chargers, in a fenced enclosure. Given the high demand but rather intermittent nature of use, the utility set a 300KVA transformer.

The Supercharger is an outdoor rated DC charger capable of delivering up to 90 kilowatts (kW) to a single electric vehicle or a combined 120 kW DC to two vehicles simultaneously, with a peak DC current of 250 amps and a continuous current (DC) of 225A. Voltage range is 50 to 450V. The units are 90 percent efficient, according to Tesla.

The charger load per unit is 133 kW. The Supercharger can be powered from 208V or 480V three-phase power.

A Supercharger footprint is three-feet by 32 inches and they are six feet tall.

Larger sites, of course, may require more power.

When vehicles are charging, the station uses nearly



all the rated power of the installation. When no vehicles are present, the station draws very little power. Rapid load changes (on the order of seconds, not milli-seconds) near the maximum rated load, are possible.

Despite the rapid onset nature of the power flow, it hasn't caused any issues on the Worthington distribution system, which had recently been upgraded to serve several new customers in the growing commercial area.

Electric vehicles are often touted as a way to balance the time of power use on an electrical system, but that may not be entirely the case in Worthington. The highest-use months, for example, have been in July and August, which also coincide with the utility's peak months.

Location, location, location

There is currently at least one electric vehicle in Worthington, but it doesn't appear to need the Supercharger to fully recharge for daily use.

As of this writing, there are six Tesla Supercharger stations in Minnesota: Duluth, Baxter, Hinckley, Clearwater, Albert Lea and Worthington. The Albert Lea and Worthington sites are part of a corridor of Tesla supercharging stations along Interstate 90.



The fenced enclosure to the right in the top photo contains much of the Tesla Supercharger infrastructure in Worthington. The charging station plug-ins are lined up to the left of the enclosure. Pictured at left: A Supercharger station 'plug.'

photos courtesy of WPU

Tesla's stated strategy has been to install Superchargers along major travel corridors in the U.S., to connect people to different cities and major tourist destinations, and allow for coast-to-coast travel.

Tesla Superchargers are said to provide 170 miles of range after a 30-minute charge. A full charge, based on a 90 kilowatt-hour model, comes in 75 minutes. The next station to the west of Worthington is located in

Mitchell, South Dakota, 127 miles away.

Ambient temperature affects the actual charge rate, demand placed on the battery for heating or cooling, and vehicle range.

The Tesla Supercharger stations are often located at hotels, restaurants and shopping centers, giving people the opportunity to occupy themselves while charging their vehicle.



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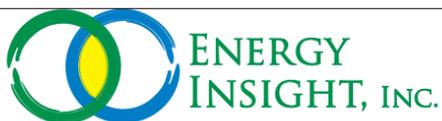
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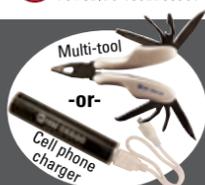
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Three municipals, cooperatives file electric service area boundary changes with MPUC

Three electric utility service area boundary adjustments involving municipal utilities were approved Feb. 2 by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. In each case, the boundary adjustment allowed municipal utility service within areas of the city. Each request was a joint filing, under Minn. Stat. 216B.39, subd. 3, and the Minnesota Department of Commerce recommended approval.

The municipals involved included Preston Public Utili-

ties, the City of Staples, and Elk River Municipal Utilities.

In Preston's case, the transfer includes four separate parcels, including the newly-developed Southeastern Minnesota Veteran's Cemetery, which encompasses 176 acres. The state, the federal government, Fillmore County and the city were all involved in the planning and implementation of the project. The municipal utility had been providing interim service in the areas involved. There was one existing customer. The

filing included a lengthy and detailed legal description of the property involved.

The Staples filing involved an agreement made 10 years ago by the city and Minnesota Power, involving a Lakewood Health System hospital on the east side of the city. The affected area included approximately 61 acres. At the time the hospital was being developed, the city allowed MP to serve the customer for 10 years, at which time service rights would transfer to the city, with no compensation due.

The Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU)-Connexus filing involved approximately 1,644 acres with 60 residential and 140 commercial customers. The bulk of this filing addressed customer notice provisions. ERMU began serving some of the customers last fall.

The parameters of this agreement had been reached by the parties in 2015. The regulatory filing noted that the parties had engaged in extensive technical discussions, spanning multiple years, to minimize disruption to customers, avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities and ensure a smooth transition. Due to the size of the acquisition, the transfer is occurring in stages. ERMU will eventually serve the entire city.

In each case, regulators noted only "that the parties have agreed upon appropriate compensation." The Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MNGeo) was directed to update the MPUC's service area maps to reflect the changes.

MPUC wants your territory adjustments

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission reminds utilities to file any electric service territory changes.

The Commission prefers that utilities use the MPUC's checklist when making these service area filings. The checklist is available in the 'documents' tab of the MPUC website and is a pdf file, No. 014449.

The Commission also requests that utilities file a summary report of all current service area exceptions.

The MPUC's official notice, complete with links to various related items, can be found in the 'Breaking News' section of at www.mmua.org

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In 2015, Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency announced a change in the name of its management and consulting division from Utilities Plus to **Central Municipal Power Agency/ Services (CMPAS - pronounced "compass")**.

Although the name changes, CMPAS will continue to serve as both a project-oriented power agency and electric utility services organization.

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The City of Moose Lake is changing its high pressure sodium street lights to light emitting diode (LED) lights. The change-out is occurring at both city installations and state institutions. So far, 68 percent of the city street lights have been converted. The Water & Light Commission is also considering a number of improvements, including a large solar plant.

The Nashwauk Public Utilities Commission has approved a 1.5 percent fee based on electricity usage to be added to customer bills. The fee is to offset conservation improvement program rebate costs. The utility had been spending approximately \$9,000 a year to fund the rebates, without recouping the cost. The fee will amount to about 75 cents a month for most customers.

A number of Sleepy Eye businesses and city departments held a job fair Jan. 5, in advance of the next school year's On the Job Training positions. The program was developed locally to create pathways to employment and careers that exist in Sleepy Eye.

The city of Sleepy Eye and

Around the State



Sleepy Eye Public Utilities participated, and the utility brought an interactive display of an electric line and lineworker's tools.

Former Lakefield Mayor Darrel Nissen was recently appointed to the local public utilities commission.

A petition from the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA) to exempt CenterPoint Energy from the state's Conservation Improvement Program investment and expenditure requirements has been denied by the Minnesota Department of Commerce. MMPA has requested the Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) rescind the Department's order.

The exemption was requested for gas supply to MMPA's Shakopee Energy Park, a 46.7 megawatt electric generating facility in Shakopee. The plant will use natural gas as its primary fuel source. MMPA reasoned it should not be required to

pay the CIP charges because its members contribute to the CIP program and the power plant qualifies for an exemption, as a large customer.

The Department of Commerce said the facility could not qualify as a large customer until it actually consumed more than 500 million cubic feet of gas a year. The plant is expected to go into service this year.

MMPA said applying CIP charges to fuel it would use to generate electricity would hamper its competitive position in the wholesale electric market.

A rural fiber-to-the-premise project that involves several MMUA members got a shot in the arm recently with the announcement that it had been awarded an \$807,966 state Border-to-Border Broadband grant. This portion of the RS (Renville-Sibley) Fiber project will serve 193 unserved households, 99 unserved businesses and three community anchor institutions in portions of Preston Lake, Boon Lake, Brookfield, Osceola, Kingman, Winfield, Crooks, Erickson, Sacred Heart (North), Emmet, Flora, Henryville, Norfolk, Birch

Coulee, Camp and Cairo townships in Renville County. Hiawatha Broadband Communications and RS Fiber will provide improved services that officials hope will stimulate business and population growth. There is a \$1.26 million local match.

The Hibbing Public Utilities Commission is considering a petition to extend services to the area near the junction of Spudville Road and Hwy. 169. The cost of extending natural gas service

was estimated to have a payback of 5.3 years. The cost of extending water service, however, was deemed cost prohibitive with an estimated payback of 472 years.

The Hibbing Commission has also approved increased rates for electric, gas, water and steam, each 2 percent, with another 2 percent effective July 1. Base rates will also be increased \$1 a month. The increase is meant to stem a decline in cash flow, since June 2015.

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SMMPA names Schoenherr Chief External Affairs Officer

ROCHESTER, MN – Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMMPA) has named Christopher P. Schoenherr as Chief External Affairs Officer. Schoenherr joined SMMMPA in January 2015 as Director of Agency and Government Relations.



Schoenherr

"We're happy to recognize the contribution Chris has made to our organization in his first two years by naming him an officer of SMMMPA. Chris joined our team to fill the open spot created by the retirement of the person that had done an outstanding job in that position for years. With Chris in that role now, we haven't missed a beat and the outstanding work continues," said David P. Geschwind, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer.

Prior to joining SMMMPA, Schoenherr was a member of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's cabinet serving as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Administration. He spent the first 30 years of his career in various capacities at two different Wisconsin investor-owned utilities.

SMMMPA was formed as a joint-action agency by its Members in 1977. SMMMPA generates and sells wholesale electricity to its 18 non-profit,

municipally-owned member utilities and develops products and services to help them deliver value to their customers.

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For a complete and up-to-date Classifieds listing, go to the News tab at www.mmua.org

Bits & Pieces

Dakota Electric, a large cooperative, has announced a free mobile phone application that its customers can use to report outages and track outage restoration progress. Users can customize the app's "push" notifications or have updates sent through

email or text messaging. The app will also notify members if their locations lose power when they are part of an outage reported by others.

The app eliminates the need for a phone call, noted the cooperative in its announcement.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission has approved an interim rate increase of 5.6 percent for Minnesota Power customers. Proceedings to consider the company's larger rate request are underway.

ALLETE Clean Energy has announced it will work with Montana-Dakota Utilities to expand the Thunder Spirit wind farm, 100 miles southwest of Bismarck, N.D.

Great River Energy announced it has signed a purchase power agreement with an affiliate of NextEra Energy Resources for a new 300-megawatt wind project to be built in south-central North Dakota. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2019.

Trishe Wind Minnesota Dec. 1 requested the MPUC allow its permit for a 41-megawatt wind project to expire. The permit had been issued in 2011. The company said the project was not economically or logistically feasible. Interconnection costs were prohibitively expensive, said the company. Other factors affecting the economics were new turbine technology, wholesale energy pricing, and the uncertainty of productive tax credits.

The company said it remains interested in developing a larger project on the site and is working to expand site control and develop new plans. The proposed project site is in Kandiyohi and Meeker counties.

USDA Rural Development Dec. 28 announced \$145 million in loans to fund five electric projects in Minnesota, Iowa and the Dakotas. Money spent in Minnesota will build or improve nearly 500 miles of transmission and distribution line, according to USDA, and includes \$12.5 million for smart grid technologies.

Lake Regional Electric Cooperative will use a \$20.3 million loan to build and improve 127 miles of line and provide smart grid technology for more than eight counties in north central Minnesota.

Minnkota Power Cooperative will use a \$66 million loan for a new headquarters, in Grand Forks, N.D.

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Brown County Rural Electrical Association has hired Michael Heidemann of CEO. Heidemann had been serving as chief operating officer. Heidemann has 26 years of experience in the industry. For the last 10 years, he served as Brown County's operations and engineering manager. For the last four years, he fulfilled those roles at both Brown County and BENCO Electric Cooperative.

Dave Sunderman has been named CEO of BENCO Electric Cooperative. Sunderman has been a manager at the cooperative since 1992 and has been serving as chief operating officer since June.

The announcements were prompted by the impending retirement of Wade Hensel,

who has been serving as general manager of both cooperatives.

Will Kaul, Great River Energy's vice president and chief transmission officer, is retiring after 38 years with the generation and transmis-

Gov. Dayton appoints Sieben to serve on Public Utilities Commission

ST. PAUL, MN – Governor Mark Dayton Dec. 29 announced the appointment of Senator Katie Sieben to serve a six-year term on the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. She will be replacing Commissioner Beverly Jones Heydinger, who currently serves as Chair of the Commission and did not seek reappointment. Governor Dayton has selected current

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sion cooperative. Kaul played a leading role in development of the CapX2020 projects.

Two solar projects are under construction in Dodge County. One site near

Mantorville will be capable of producing 5 megawatts of energy, while another near Claremont is sized at 4.3 MW. The 6 MW Aurora project near Dodge Center is operational.



Top: Anthony Flynn (seated) and Jessica Burdette of the Minnesota Energy Office addressed the group at the MMUA Legislative Conference Feb. 1.

Conference: *continued from front page*

Fabian, Chair of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. Committee chairs of other committees less germane to the utility business also attended.

The group re-convened the next morning for a variety of programming, including a discussion of the previous day's activities. Jessica Burdette and Anthony Fryer of the Minnesota Division of Energy Resources discussed developments with the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP). Lissa Pawlisch, Joel Haskard and Pete Lindstrom of the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) discussed several ways they could assist municipal utilities with CIP and community solar devel-



Left: Willmar Municipal Utilities General Manager John Harren was flanked by Commissioners Carol Laumer and Abdirizak Mahboub.

opment.

MMUA thanks all those who attended the event and the cities/utilities that sent them. For a look at the main

topics addressed by MMUA's public power advocates, see the Public Policy/State/Current Issues tab on the MMUA website.



Jon O'Niell of SMMPA, Deb Birgen of MRES, Jessica Burdette of the State Energy Office and Rob Scott-Hovland of MRES discussed conservation improvement program issues.



Greg French of Virginia and Bob Elston of Sleepy Eye. Elston is MMUA president and French is secretary/treasurer of the board.



photo courtesy of Deb Birgen, MRES

Scott Hain of Worthington Public Utilities, left, visited with Sen. Bill Weber, the former mayor of Luverne.



Amanda Duerr of MMUA, St. Peter's Pete Moulton and John Winter of SMMPA visited during a break.

Upcoming MMUA Events

Rodeo Clinic

March 7-8, MMUA Training Center, Marshall

If you are competing in the 2017 Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo, you won't want to miss this free (for members) clinic designed to help prepare you and your team. The clinic will be led by MMUA staff—experienced linemen and Rodeo place-winners. Many attendees will also be Rodeo veterans. Registration deadline is Feb. 24!

PCB Management & Recordkeeping

April 10-11, Ziegler Power Systems, Shakopee

MMUA and Minnesota Rural Electric Association are pleased to offer this program, one of the few available that specifically focuses on managing PCBs and PCB contaminated items. This workshop can benefit individuals responsible for PCB management at all levels of experience, especially those who have recently been assigned PCB management responsibilities.



Instructor is Mark Pennell, founder and President of Regulatory Compliance Services, Inc. (RCS), a PCB management consulting firm based in Springfield, Missouri.

RCS specializes in PCB regulatory compliance and risk management and provides diagnostic and educational services for approximately 400 electric utilities as well as numerous commercial/industrial facilities.

Substation School

April 11-13, Ziegler Power Systems, Shakopee

This school is designed to be beneficial to the substation technician as well as the lineworker that is learning more about substations. Top-notch presenters! Topics to include:



- Fundamentals of Equipment & Control Systems
- Inspections and Maintenance
- Testing: How, When and Why
- Tour of Ziegler's Power Distribution Equipment
- Substation Transformer Addition
- Tour - Shakopee Public Utilities Substation
- The 'Ins and Outs' of Substations

Generation School

April 18-20, Glencoe City Center and Glencoe Light & Power

MMUA is pleased to partner with American Public Power Association (APPA) on the 2017 Generation School. This School can benefit well-seasoned operators, as well as those just starting in the generation field.



This year, our hands-on plant training will take place at Glencoe Light & Power where participants will engage in a range of activities — from basic operation to technical maintenance.

Among our instructors will be Steve Payne on Cooper engines and Steve Lang of Fairbanks Morse.



Additional information can be found at www.mmua.org Go to Events/Calendar and the date for each event.