

Taking the reins

Stephen's next generation comes home and assumes leadership roles

by Steve Downer

It's the 'changing of the guard' at the City of Stephen—and the new leadership carries with it a promise of providing long-term stability.

Changes involve both policy-makers and staff.

BreAnne Patterson is the new city clerk/treasurer. Patterson has been on the job for just more than a year, starting in December 2018. A 2004 graduate of Stephen-Argyle High School and then Bemidji State University, she was formerly city clerk in Drayton, North Dakota (22 minutes to the northwest).

City government isn't a career path Patterson planned on. She graduated from college with a degree in exercise science. The business and accounting classes she took at the time weren't her favorites, but they came in handy when she was hired to replace the retiring Drayton city clerk.

Her husband is a Drayton na-

tive and when a position opened for him in Drayton, the move was made from Fargo, which ultimately led to her budding career in Stephen.

The city had been searching for the right person to fill the shoes of long-time clerk Roger Nelson, who retired in 2015, and Patterson was in the right place at the right time.

"I like the work," she said. There are plenty of challenges, lots to learn (such as the various utility reporting requirements). She is never bored, she said. "The days go by so fast."

She is thankful for the experience she gained in Drayton, where she learned how cities work and, among other things, fund accounting.

Patterson is working with many people whom she has known most of her life.

Mayor Brett Kuznia graduated from Stephen-Argyle a year before Patterson. Councilmember Daniel Douglas and Pat-



Stephen City Clerk BreAnne Patterson is a graduate of Stephen-Argyle High School. She joins a number of her contemporaries who are now in municipal leadership roles.

terson were classmates. Councilmember Paige Halfmann is a contemporary and Drayton native, while Patsy Heggen provides a long-term perspective

(and her daughter graduated with Mayor Kuznia).

"It's a small town," Patterson

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ERMU completes multi-year quest to serve

Century of division ends as municipal serves entire city

After nearly a century where the community was divided between two electric utility service providers, Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) has completed an initiative to provide unity in utility services to the City of Elk River through a multi-year electric service territory transfer agreement with Connexus—the neighboring cooperative electric utility.

The last administrative step was completed Jan. 23, when the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) accepted the joint request to update the official service territory map to reflect the agreed-upon transfer. The updated map will reflect the permanent transfer of certain areas located within the city limits of Elk River and formerly within the electric service territory assigned to the Cooperative.

The physical 'cutover' of customers from the cooperative to the municipal was completed last fall.

ERMU and Connexus have a history of big-picture territory



MMUA file photo

Citizens of the City of Elk River will benefit from the growth of municipal electric and water service throughout the entire city.

agreements.

In 1991, ERMU entered into a 20-year orderly electric service territory transfer plan with Connexus—then known as Anoka Electric Cooperative—for a portion of what was previously the Township of Elk River.

In 2015, ERMU entered into another multi-year electric service territory transfer agreement with the cooperative, to serve the remaining customers within the City of Elk River. The final areas connected to the municipal electric distribution system last fall, in the far northwest and northeast corners of

the city, include approximately 1,344 acres and 79 customers (73 residential and six small commercial).

"The vision of past ERMU governance and staff to invest in electric service territory helped to build the foundation for a reliably robust and fiscally sound utility and ERMU continues to build upon that foundation," said General Manager Troy Adams.

With the completion of the recent transfer, ERMU now serves nearly all electric cus-

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MPUC issues order on 'DG' standards

The Minnesota Public Utilities (MPUC) on Jan. 22 issued an order adopting Technical Interconnection and Interoperability Requirements (TIIR). The long-awaited order formalized a November 14 hearing decision. The requirements are part of the state's new Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Interconnection Process template, for all electric utilities.

The MPUC order follows months of meetings by a 'Technical Subgroup' appointed to develop the technical and engineering aspects of the new process. The subgroup, which includes MMUA's Bob Jagusch, will continue to work through a number of issues included in the recent MPUC order, including:

- Energy storage control modes, and harmonization of the language and structure of the energy storage requirements in the operating agreements;
- Determination of ex-

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explicit treatment of distributed energy resources (DER) using Power Control Systems for maximum capacity and export control in the Minnesota Distributed Energy Resources Process (MN-DIP) and the TIIR documents;

- Evaluation of Voltage-Reactive Power Regulation in the TIIR;

- Harmonization of the language and structure of voltage regulation considerations in the operating agreements to the extent possible;

- Harmonization of the language and structure of the communications operating agreements so as to not unduly burden DER operators; and

- Plan to reduce and/or track unintended curtailments due to Voltage-Active Power Control prior to implementation.

The MPUC established the full Distributed Generation (DG) Workgroup in January 2017, and set-up a two-phase process to update the 2004 In-

terconnection Standards:

- Phase I would update Minnesota's DG interconnection process based on the federal Small Generation Interconnection Procedures (SGIP) and Agreement (SGIA) to become the MN DIP, from which the municipals and co-ops drafted their own process and agreement templates for adoption by individual utilities.

- Phase II would update the Minnesota DG Technical Interconnection and Interoperability Requirements (TIIR) and incorporate newly revised national technical standards. The process templates referred to above incorporate the TIIR in its entirety

We've moved!

With our former offices slated for demolition to make way for re-development, MMUA has moved across the street to 3131 Fernbrook Lane N., Suite 200, Plymouth, MN 55447. All of our other contact info remains the same.



State law defines 'DG' as an electric generating facility with a capacity of 10 megawatts or less that interconnects and operates in parallel with the electrical grid.

by reference and need no changes to comply with state law. New MMUA templates for the filing of members' annual Cogeneration and Small Power Production Tariffs include changes to incorporate the TIIR by reference as well.

The state's rate-regulated electric utilities jointly submitted a draft TIIR as a starting point for discussion. The utilities proposed that each utility would have a companion Technical Specifications Manual (TSM) containing

utility-specific requirements.

Throughout 2018 and 2019, the Technical Subgroup (TSG) of the DG Workgroup (including Jagusch) met periodically to modify and update the TIIR. The TSG includes representatives of rate-regulated utilities, cooperatives, municipal utilities, and clean-energy advocacy groups.

Minnesota Technical Requirements

The Minnesota Technical Requirements applicable to interconnection of DER comprise both the TIIR and TSMs.

The TIIR includes technical requirements that apply across all utilities in Minnesota. Because of the differences among the utilities' distribution systems, the TSMs allow for utility-specific requirements when needed. TSMs also provide further detail in the absence of a common statewide or national industry standard.

The TIIR and TSMs are based on the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) 1547 standard for DG interconnection and other applicable national standards. In April 2018,

The Commission also requested input from the TSG as to when IEEE 1547-2018 certified equipment is "readily available."

The DG Workgroup will continue to discuss interim implementation of the TIIR while the equipment-certification process is underway. The DG Workgroup will attempt to draft a document to accompany the TIIR that clarifies which provisions are in place in the interim period until newly certified equipment is available.

If no consensus is reached, each utility shall adopt their preferred version of the guidance document to be included with the utility's TSM.

Statutory authority

In 2001, the Legislature enacted Minnesota Statute §216B.1611, requiring the MPUC to establish generic standards for DG interconnection and operation.

State law defines DG as an electric-generating facility with a capacity of 10 megawatts (MW) or less, that uses natural gas, renewable, or other "clean fuel," and that interconnects and operates in parallel with a Minnesota utility's distribution grid. The statute requires the MPUC to establish generic standards for tariffs governing the interconnection of DG.



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Has the time come to re-consider your municipal utility's primary mission?

Editor's note: The following first appeared in News > Blogs at www.mmua.org

Municipal utilities have long sought to provide reliable service at a reasonable rate.

At one time it may have been enough.

It isn't now.

Simple numbers add up to trouble in many places. About 20 percent of Minnesota's municipal electric utilities have fewer than 500 customers. A look at many city census numbers over the decades reveals a dismal fact of population decline.

A smaller pool of candidates promises less talent to pick from. But population decline (or stagnation, for that matter) may not be the biggest problem.

There is also a worrisome cultural trend that may be tempting to shrug off, as something that won't affect your utility. But it has contributed to the sale of two municipal utilities in recent memory, and remains a threat.

Others have put their finger on the problem. Granite Falls Mayor and Utilities Commissioner Dave Smiglewski calls it "an alarming decline in civic and community engagement, particularly in rural areas."

This is especially notable, since Granite Falls is no slouch when it

comes to operating a municipal electric utility. It is an MMUA member city and has operated a municipal electric utility since 1891. Its hydro-electric plant supplies approximately 30 percent of the city's electrical needs in a good year. The utility also maintains and operates a fossil-fueled electric generating plant. It builds and maintains its own lines. The city operates the 'Kilowatt Community Center.'

The city's population is approximately 2,500—which makes it a typical Minnesota municipal electric city.

That a well-respected leader in a well-run, typically-sized municipal utility city is sounding the alarm is notable. The alarm being sounded by Smiglewski is often confirmed in conversations with city and utility people around the state.

From this, I submit that it is not enough to diligently attend to the utility's business, seeking to make wise decisions to benefit the utility and its customers. A transition in leadership often leads to trouble for a utility. What happens when you go (and you surely will) and there is nobody prepared (or even willing) to take your place?

A person involved with MMUA once compared municipal utility leaders to offensive linemen: if they were

never noticed—if their number never got called—then they were doing their job. There is, however, much work to be done in promoting Public Power in Minnesota.

Somebody has to do it.

And it starts with you.

A municipal utility's first mission may well be to simply replicate itself. I offer two thoughts to consider:

- Start with the United States Marine Corps. Anyone interested in organizational mission, vision and values would find good study here. The United States Marines Corps spells dedication to its mission, vision and values in sweat and blood. This selfless devotion means nothing if the Marine Corps can't make Marines. That is its first and most important mission. (Why do you think the Marine drill sergeant is an iconic figure; the crucible of boot camp a transformative event?)

- Second (perhaps leaving philosophical convictions aside) consider the 'great commission' left to his disciples by Jesus of Nazareth: Go and make disciples. That is a clear mission. It was aimed squarely at perpetuating something that started, on the face of it, with 12 people.

While there is more to it, one of a local policymaker's jobs should be to simply keep the organization going.

This includes nurturing a replacement. That may strike the politician as heresy, but it is common sense for those who want the best for their community: Just because somebody has always stepped up to fill the void doesn't mean somebody always will.

Some local organizations have a proven track record of bringing in new blood to benefit the utility, its customers and their city. I salute you. It is easier said than done.

Nurturing a replacement grows more important as it grows increasingly difficult, what with the distractions of technology—news and entertainment at our fingertips—and the demands of modern life.

On the plus side, many Minnesotans care enough about the places they love to get involved in an effort to keep them going. Add the new blood—people moving to Greater Minnesota to raise families in a safe and nurturing environment—and you have good material to work with.

Then comes the flip side of the coin: knowing when to relinquish control. It rests on one generation, as it raises up another to take its place, to point the younger ones in the right direction and let them walk on their own. Therein lies great satisfaction, and the knowledge of a job well done.

- Steve Downer

Capacity markets, transmission costs, climate among key issues for APPA

by Paul Ciampoli

News Director, American Public Power Association

As the new year gets underway, the American Public Power Association is already gearing up for what promises to be a busy year on the regulatory and legislative fronts.

In the regulatory arena, the Association will work hard to ensure that transmission costs don't rise as a result of policy changes at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and will challenge a FERC decision that would greatly expand the Minimum Offer Price Rule (MOPR) in the PJM Interconnection's capacity construct.

The Association's 2020 legislative priorities include public power's efforts to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions to address climate change and preserving public power's exemption to regulate attachments to its poles at the local level.

Capacity markets

the Association continues to have serious concerns about centralized mandatory capacity markets.

The Association will seek rehearing of FERC's December 2019 order in which it directed the PJM Interconnection to expand its current MOPR to address state-subsidized electric generation resources, with certain

Washington Report



exemptions.

When the order was issued, the Association said that the use of a MOPR greatly increases prices and harms all consumers, with the only beneficiaries being a small group of incumbent merchant generation owners.

The expansion of the MOPR will also apply to new public power and electric cooperative self-supply resources. In a dissent to the order, FERC Commissioner Richard Glick said that the order represents a fundamental threat to the long-term viability of the public power model.

PJM is expected to submit a compliance filing at FERC in the proceeding in March

and petitions for review likely will be filed in federal appeals court.

More broadly, the Association this year will continue to monitor and take action on any other capacity construct developments that impact public power.

Transmission costs

Meanwhile, FERC is considering a number of policy changes that could increase costs to consumers.

FERC in early 2019 issued two notices of inquiry, one in which the Commission sought comments on possible changes to its electric transmission incentives policy, and one in which FERC is examining whether, and if so how, to revise its policies on determining the return on equity (ROE) used in setting rates charged by utilities it regulates.

The Association signed on to an August 2019 letter to FERC Commissioners that said that against the backdrop of increasing transmission costs, the Commission should strive to ensure that those costs remain at a reasonable level for consumers as it weighs possible changes to its transmission incentives and ROE policies.

The potential changes to FERC's incentive policy could increase rates by making it easier for transmission owners to obtain incentives. The Association has argued that FERC's current framework is working reasonably well.

FERC has not acted on its ROE notice of inquiry, but in a late 2019 order involving the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, FERC announced changes to its policy for setting the ROE used in cost-based transmission

rates. Transmission owners have argued the new method will set ROEs unreasonably low. The Association has requested that it be allowed to intervene late in the MISO case if FERC allows other late interventions.

Distributed energy resources

FERC is expected to act this year on a pending proposal to require regional transmission organizations and independent system operators to facilitate the participation of aggregated DERs in RTO/ISO markets.

The Association is concerned that allowing such participation without the consent of state and local regulators exceeds FERC's authority and could lead to adverse reliability, operational, and cost impacts for

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Investor-owned utilities file annual reliability reports with state regulators

With the onset of renewable energy and adoption of various technologies, utility comparisons may not be quite as straightforward as they once were, but rates and reliability remain as hallmarks of utility service.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Dec. 19 accepted investor-owned utilities annual Safety, Reliability, and Service Quality reports for 2018, and set reliability standards for 2019.

The reports are filed pursuant to state law. Municipal electric utilities are required to file similar reports with

their local governing bodies.

Utilities report normalized (adjusted to neutralize the effects of outages due to major storms) system average interruption duration index (SAIDI), System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI) and customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI) by work center and for the state. Utilities are required to use the IEEER 1366 standard (also known as the 2.5 Beta method) for normalizing major event days. The utilities propose standards for each work center. The MPUC then sets reliabil-

Minnesota Power			
Metric	SAIDI	SAIFI	CAIDI
2018 Standard	98.19	1.02	96.26
2018 Results (Normalized)	134.00	1.39	96.50
2018 Results (Non-normal.)	158.51	1.49	106.04
2019 Proposed	98.19	1.02	96.26

ity performance standards annually for the utilities.

Historically, the MPUC has directed utilities to use a rolling five-year average of SAIDI, SAIFI and CAIDI for each work center. However, standards have been 'frozen' at prior year's levels if there has not been sufficient progress. Otter Tail's standards have been frozen at 2013 levels and Minnesota Power's 2017 and 2018 standards were set at 2017 levels. Xcel's Southeast work center standards have been held at 2017 levels.

Utilities are required to provide "an action plan for remedying any failure to comply with the standard" or "why non-compliance was unavoidable under the circumstances."

Minnesota Power

MP did not meet any of its standards again in 2018. The company blamed weather and equipment failure as the main reasons. MP said it has

SAIDI, SAIFI, CAIDI: defined and formulas

- SAIDI means the System Average Interruption Duration Index and measures the average customer minutes of interruptions per customer. $SAIDI = \frac{\text{Total Customer Minutes of Sustained Outages}}{\text{Number of Customers}}$

- SAIFI means the System Average Interruption Frequency Index and measures the average number of interruptions per customer per year. $SAIFI = \frac{\text{Total Number of Sustained Customer Interruptions}}{\text{Number of Customers}}$

- CAIDI means Customer Average Interruption Duration Index and is measured by the average customer minutes of interruption per customer interruption. $CAIDI = \frac{\text{Total Customer Minutes of Sustained Outages}}{\text{Total number of Sustained Customer Interruptions}} = SAIDI \div SAIFI$

- Interruption means an interruption of electricity service to a customer greater than five minutes in duration.

- Major Service Interruption means an interruption of service at the feeder level or above and affecting 500 or more customers for one or more hours.

mended leaving MP's standards at 2016 levels for 2019. MPUC staff noted MP's decreasing reliability compliance for SAIDI and SAIFI, with a decrease in CAIDI.

Otter Tail Power

Otter Tail proposed leaving its 2018 reliability standards at 2013 levels. Otter Tail has seen flat or slightly increasing reliability indices (poorer reliability) over the past 10 years, aside from the Milbank and Wahpeton work centers,

hired additional engineers in 2017 to implement a trouble order tracking and remediation system, which was implemented late in 2018. The engineers also began to audit MP's system and develop an asset management program.

The Department recom-

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Xcel Energy					
Region	Metric	2018 Standard	2018 Result (Nrmld.)	2018 Result (Actual)	2019 Std.
Minnesota	SAIDI	x	96.07	125.00	x
	SAIFI	x	0.89	0.95	
	CAIDI		107.39	131.22	
Metro East	SAIDI	86.05	103.69	112.11	89.78
	SAIFI	0.85	0.93	0.96	0.86
	CAIDI	101.31	111.74	116.71	103.94
Metro West	SAIDI	85.71	83.26	88.23	82.08
	SAIFI	0.84	0.87	0.92	0.82
	CAIDI	102.56	95.47	95.70	100.37
Northwest	SAIDI	87.33	109.34	109.50	85.86
	SAIFI	0.79	0.87	0.87	0.76
	CAIDI	110.81	126.05	126.02	113.01
Southeast	SAIDI	94.82	118.80	353.32	94.82
	SAIFI	0.76	0.92	1.15	0.76
	CAIDI	124.79	129.64	307.95	122.04

Xcel Energy

Xcel met two of its 12 reliability goals for 2018, both in the Metro West region, for a success rate of 17 percent. This is a noticeable decline from the previous three years, when Xcel achieved a high of 83 percent compliance (2017), and a low of 50 percent (2016), with 2015 coming in at 67 percent.

Xcel has seen overall improvements in its SAIDI and SAIFI numbers across most of its work centers. However, the Southeast work center continues to see worsening SAIDI and SAIFI numbers. The MPUC froze Xcel's SAIDI and SAIFI goals for this work center at 2017 levels last year, and maintained that level for 2019.

Some proposed goals for Metro East and Northwest increased in 2019, making them easier to meet.

Southeast work center trends indicate that, unlike other areas of the state, its reliability has worsened or remained stagnant over the past years. The Metro West region has seen the greatest improvements in all categories and is the only service region to see improvement in

Otter Tail Power					
Region	Metric	2018 Std.	2018 Result (Norm.)	2018 Result (Actual)	2019 Std.
Minnesota	SAIDI	64.95	75.33	86.41	64.95
	SAIFI	1.13	1.23	1.31	1.13
	CAIDI	57.48	61.12	67.7	57.48
Bemidji	SAIDI	70.64	77.35	127.7	70.64
	SAIFI	1.26	1.14	1.38	1.26
	CAIDI	56.06	67.86	92.44	56.06
Crookston	SAIDI	69.33	74.75	83.66	69.33
	SAIFI	1.19	1.79	1.95	1.19
	CAIDI	58.26	41.7	42.98	58.26
Fergus Falls	SAIDI	66.97	57.65	57.65	66.97
	SAIFI	1.11	0.81	0.81	1.11
	CAIDI	60.33	71.35	94.68	60.33
Milbank	SAIDI	75.49	70.35	70.35	75.49
	SAIFI	1.82	0.74	0.74	1.82
	CAIDI	41.48	94.68	94.68	41.48
Morris	SAIDI	55.78	88.09	88.09	55.78
	SAIFI	1.01	1.41	1.41	1.01
	CAIDI	55.23	62.29	62.29	55.23
Wahpeton	SAIDI	57.24	201.38	201.38	57.24
	SAIFI	1.13	3.07	3.07	1.13
	CAIDI	50.65	65.67	65.57	50.65

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which have very few feeders, leading to higher year to year fluctuation.

Otter Tail had one day qualify as a Major Event Day in 2018. Outages following a severe thunderstorm would have added over 20 minutes to its SAIDI if not excluded. Weather and equipment fail-

ure were cited as the main outage causes. The Department noted OTP has had increasing difficulty meeting its goals over the past 10 years.

Staff noted that while Otter Tail has had frozen standards since 2013, its overall metrics have remained high in comparison to Xcel and MP, and to other investor owned utilities nationally.

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CAIDI.

Xcel has renewed its request for a Fault Location, Isolation and Service Restoration (FLISR) system, a grid

modernization initiative.

SAIDI and SAIFI have fluctuated, generally, while CAIDI goals have stagnated or crept slowly higher.

MPUC staff provided a framework to study Locational and Equity Reliability (by geography, income, or other relevant benchmarks). To date, the MPUC receives limited information on locational reliability and outages. Xcel reports on the 25 worst performing feeders per service region on an annual basis. Staff noted that "creating a metric to adequately gauge if reliability issues are tied to factors like location or customer income level is even more challenging."

More with less?

MP reported 111 full time field worker positions, 96 of which are responsible for operation and maintenance of distribution systems. The company has seen a slow decline in the number of line workers over the past few years.

Otter Tail has increased the number of line workers from approximately 116 in 2009 to more than 120 in 2018.

Xcel added two positions since 2017, but still has lower total numbers than its historical average. The Southeast service center has lost 27 percent of its staff since 2009. This region also has the poorest service quality numbers.

The IOUs are required to benchmark their reports to IEEE standards.

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East Grand Forks prepared as it can be for high water or economic challenges

by Steve Downer

As a slow-motion disaster potentially unfolds in the Red River Valley, the East Grand Forks Water & Light Department is as prepared as it can be.

American Crystal Sugar operates five district sugar beet processing plants in the Red River Valley, including one in East Grand Forks. The plant in East Grand Forks can be—at peak times—over half the Water & Light's electric load. By all indications, operations at the plant will be sharply curtailed early this year.

Wet weather troubled the 2019 harvest from beginning to end. Fields too muddy to support equipment were covered by up to two feet of October snow. Temperatures



The 'Sugar Hills' substation lies between the American Crystal Sugar processing plant (background) and the East Grand Forks Water & Light Department Distribution Service Center.

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dropped into the teens, freezing beets and rendering them unsuitable for processing.

While American Crystal Sugar has allowed some harvesting of frozen beets, processing is expected to end March 1. Processing in the company's five factory districts usually is completed in May or June. Because of the trucking of beets logistics, it was decided to shut the Hillsboro factory down in early February, which means the East Grand Forks factory will run a couple weeks longer.

The situation promises to cut heavily into electric sales, but with years of solid financial management, and only a thin margin on industrial sales, General Manager Keith Mykleseth expects the

Flood devastation led to preventative steps

The springtime Red River flood of 1997 occurred in Minnesota, North Dakota, and southern Manitoba and devastated communities, including East Grand Forks. Total damages for the Red River region were \$3.5 billion.

Unprecedented mutual aid efforts, particularly on the water side, restored service weeks before it had been anticipated.

After the flood, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) worked with East Grand Forks to clear residential and business development from a large area of floodplain. A system of new dikes was built beyond this on both sides of the river. Floodplain along the river was redeveloped as the Greater Grand Forks Greenway.

Water & Light Department to ride out the situation in good financial condition. Perhaps harder to predict is what potential layoffs in the local labor force will mean longer-term to the utility and local economy.

There are some troubling indications.

Farmer shareholders who had to leave beets in the field were required to pay back American Crystal Sugar \$343

see facing page please

MPUC approves Enbridge Line 3 on rehearing

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Feb. 3, on a 3-1 vote, approved a revised environmental review, a certificate of need and a route permit for the Enbridge Line 3 replacement project.

The PUC approved the project in June 2018 but the Minnesota Court of Appeals last summer rejected an environmental impact study for the project.

The line would replace an aging crude oil pipeline and would be built along a different route. It would have the capacity to transport about twice as much oil as the current pipeline.

Enbridge now needs to secure permits from additional state and federal regulators.

The company has said it hopes to begin work on the project this year.

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Crossing the Red River over the Sorlie Memorial Bridge brings you into East Grand Forks. The Water & Light Department is responsible for placing temporary floodwall structures in strategic locations, including this opening between the decorative floodwall pictured here.

continued from facing page

per acre for the unharvested acres, an unprecedented situation. The money will be used to cover the company's fixed costs.

Approximately one-third of the crop was left in the fields, a spokesman said.

Along with beets, reports are that about half of the potatoes in the Minnesota and North Dakota growing area of the Red River Valley were left in the field.

Utility floodwall duties

With spring around the

corner and a wet 2019, spring flooding is a real possibility. With a couple snowy months yet to come, predictions for this spring may be premature, but the Water & Light Department—which is responsible for storing and deploying sections of removable flood wall—is participating in pre-planning.

Among those involved in the planning is Distribution Superintendent Jeff Olson. He will start his 43rd year with the utility in June. He was 21 and working for a rural water cooperative, when a job opened in the city wa-

ter department. From there, with an interest and some background in electronics, he soon moved to the electric line department.

Olson works closely with Mykleseth and others, including Todd Grabanski, the electric crew foreman.

Although somewhat weather dependent, Olson is looking for a very busy 2020. There is a backlog of projects from 2018, he said, and 2019 was so wet a lot of planned work never got started.

Among the projects that have been recently completed is the addition of a second

transformer at the 'Sugar Hills' substation, located between Water & Light's distribution services center and American Crystal Sugar. The

electric crew did most of the electrical wiring work itself, skills that have been handed down over several generations of employees.



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Stephen:

continued from front page

said with a little laugh, when talking about the relationships. But relationships are important, and often influence where people live.

“I never imagined I’d be back home,” she said. But “family is very important. It’s part of small-town life.”

The change in city leadership was not only welcome but necessary in Stephen. In 2012, nobody ran for mayor. Long-time councilmember David Clark had planned on retiring but was elected in a write-in vote. He served admirably, but was looking for somebody else to take their turn.

Now, another generation is willfully taking the city’s reins. That bodes well for the future.

Small but productive

The City of Stephen is small, but it does a lot. The city provides electricity, natural gas, water and wastewater utility services, to approximately 350 residential, commercial and industrial customers, mostly within the city limits. The city also provides recycling and garbage service.

In addition, it operates a golf course, campground and pool. The community also boasts a curling club and various attractions.

Some funds have been a challenge financially, but steps have been taken to put each on a sound footing.

Stephen has purchased water from North Kittson Rural Water since 1993, and distributes it locally. Water rates have been increased to



Take 5th Street west from U.S. Hwy. 75 and you will head past the Stephen Community Center (at left) and head for the downtown business area. City hall is a couple blocks down on the left.

match the North Kittson rate. Garbage rates have also been increased to break-even.

The city is a member of the Northern Municipal Power Agency. It buys electricity at wholesale from the agency and distributes it locally.

The municipal natural gas system was established in the 1960s. Like many other municipal gas utilities in northwest Minnesota, Stephen works with Constellation Energy, a subsidiary of Exelon, on gas purchase and transportation issues. The city recently locked in gas prices through 2025.

Natural gas and electric service are a financial stabilizer and those rates were left unchanged for 2020.

Like most municipal operations, it’s a team effort.

Patterson appreciates the expertise and effort of Paul Rogus, a Stephen native who has been with the city for four years and takes the lead on electric issues. Dave DeLisle is the lead gas operator and Jim Christensen is the lead water operator.

Stephen works with contractors on various electric projects and has also received “quite a bit of help,” said Rogus, from the City of Warren.

The Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety checks on the gas system twice a year and Stephen is fully compliant with all state and federal regulations. The system is sound and the local crew does nearly all of the work itself, but did hire a contractor in 2013 for a system expansion.



If it looks like a municipal power plant, it probably is. While no longer used for its original purpose, Stephen’s old plant still houses utility infrastructure. Directly behind the plant and next to the water tower is a 250,000-gallon water reservoir. The Stephen plant was unusual in that it included a jail cell.

City’s electric utility still vibrant entering 120th year

Stephen is located in the Red River valley, 40 miles south of the Canadian border, 15 miles east of North Dakota and about 46 miles from Grand Forks. Population hit a high of 904 in 1970, and was estimated at 662 in 2013.

The City of Stephen’s electric utility began on June 22, 1900, when the village voted in favor for a \$7,000 bond issue to build an electric plant

and water pumping station. The power plant provided water pressure for fire-fighting. The brick building also included a jail cell. The electric plant was in operation by mid-December 1900. It remains next to the ground storage water tank and water tower. The historic building houses control panels and is used for various purposes.

The city was founded in

1878 along the Great Northern Railway tracks, on the north side of the winding Tamarac River (the settlement was originally called Tamarack). The city was named after George Stephen, one of the founders of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Stephen’s school district consolidated with Argyle in 1996.

Among the local industries is Terog Manufacturing, producer of Black Ace Parts and D&D Commodities, producer of premium foods and treats for wild birds and other wildlife.

The Stephen Area Endowment Fund (SAEF) was recently formed to meet individual, organization, and enhance the community.

SAEF operates as a component fund of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NMF).

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Around the State



Marshall Municipal Utilities and the City of Marshall recently signed a partnership agreement that included a dozen separate agreements.

Agreements cover areas where the city and utility work together, including provision of streetlights, maintaining fire hydrants and water towers, and the utility's payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) to the city.

The PILOT is based on a rolling five-year average of electric sales. Counting PILOT and industrial land development contributions, MMU's payment to the city will be an estimated \$1.3 million in 2020.

One change for 2020 is the city and MMU will no longer have shared information technology (IT) services. That move followed an IT consultant's regular report. Reasons for the change include the growing complexity and different needs of the two entities.

Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU), American Electric Power (AEP) and the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport are partnering to build a roughly 40-acre, 5-megawatt solar array at the airport. The development is expected to generate about 10 million kilowatt hours annually.

Brainerd Solar LLC, a subsidiary of AEP, will build and own the 16,000-18,000 panel solar array and sell the energy generated to BPU for its use. BPU customers will have the option to buy in to the project, though the cost has yet to be determined.

The solar plant is to be constructed northwest of the runway at the airport.

After eight years, BPU may buy the system.

Combined with its Mississippi River hydroelectric plant, approximately 15-20 percent of BPU's future electric sales will be locally-generated renewable energy.

The **Rochester City Council** Dec. 2 approved an agreement forwarded from the Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) board, which calls for RPU to buy the energy output from a 10 megawatt (MW) solar farm to be built locally.

The impact to RPU customers once the Rochester Solar LLC installation goes commercial in late 2021 would be approximately



photo courtesy of the Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce

The Blooming Prairie Public Utilities water tower has kept watch over the city for nearly a century. Replacing the tower with a new model appears more fiscally responsible than repairing the landmark.

\$0.47 per month, for an average residential customer.

The **Minnesota River Public Utilities Commission** has dissolved. The Henderson and Le Seuer city councils have both approved the dissolution. The commission was formed in 2005 to oversee operation of a wastewater treatment facility that serves both cities.

Henderson is now a customer of the City of Le Seueur, with the term of the agreement running 20 years.

Blooming Prairie Public Utilities is moving ahead with a process to replace its Main Street water tower. The issue has been discussed for five years, public input is being sought, and the utility hopes to have a design selected later this year.

A number of components of the existing tower, which

is nearly a century old, are no longer in compliance with state and federal regulations. Refurbishing the existing 65,000 gallon tank would cost an estimated \$650,000, with the cost of a new 100,000 gallon tank estimated at \$800,000.

The City of Mora recently recognized Public Utilities Commission Chair George Baldwin for his service to the utility, and the city. Baldwin served on the city council from 1988-1995 and on the PUC from 2002-2019.

Jill Wolf is the new Adrian city administrator and clerk-treasurer.

Mike Hardin is the new director of public works at the **City of Sleepy Eye**. He replaces Bob Elston, who left the position to become city manager.

Bill Schwandt has resigned as general manager of **Moorhead Public Service**. The long-time general manager had been with the utility since 1993.

Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission recently presented Ridgewater College a \$10,000 rebate for installing a new energy-efficient chiller for its air-conditioning system at its Willmar campus.

The Commission used the occasion to also talk about its upcoming rebates for electric vehicle chargers.

Electric and water bills will slightly increase for Owatonna residents in 2020, **Owatonna Public Utilities** (OPU) announced Dec. 12, at its annual State of the Utility community meet-

ing. The event brought local business and government leaders to learn more about OPU's rates and programs. The rates will include a less than 1 percent hike for electric bills after a 3 percent decrease in 2019. The adjustment reflects an OPU cost-of-service study. Monthly water rates will go up about 5 percent. There will be no change in natural gas rates, but an increase in purchased gas costs is expected.

The **Biwabik Public Utilities Commission** this fall voted to increase water charges \$2 per month, to \$33.50. Half of that increase will go to fund water treatment system upgrades and half to debt service. Wastewater charges were also raised \$2, to \$27.36, for similar reasons.

Street light and storm sewer charges were both raised \$1 per month.

The city council, as directed by the city charter, held a January public hearing on the rate increases but took no action, as allowed by the charter, since the PUC had already approved the rates.

The **Elk River Municipal Utilities Commission** has chosen to keep electric rates unchanged for 2020. In 2019, ERMU reduced rates 5 percent. ERMU credited competitive wholesale power pricing and conscientiously reducing expenditures, while maintaining responsible operation margins, for its ability to maintain steady rates.



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ERMU:

continued from front page

tomers within the city limits. All told, approximately 2,000 customers were transferred from Connexus to ERMU from 2015-2019. There are approximately 12 cooperative members remaining within the city's corporate limits which were excluded from the transfer due to other considerations.

The deal between Ramsey-based Connexus and ERMU marks one of the largest customer transfers where both utilities remain in business in Minnesota since electric service areas were established in Minnesota in 1974. Prior to the transfer, the utilities engaged in extensive technical discussions, spanning multiple years, to minimize any disruption to customers, to avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities, and to ensure a smooth transition of electric service.

According to Adams, this latest service territory transfer agreement was reached through extensive 'values-based' negotiations with intent for the utilities to maintain their excellent working relationship.

Significant effort was made



Elk River residents will receive hometown electric and water service from the locally-based employees of Elk River Municipal Utilities, pictured here in 2019.

through the conscious decisions and mindful division of the affected territory into areas to lower reintegration costs, through the timely sharing of system and meter data to allow for thorough planning, through the coordination and scheduling of the transfers to minimize outage time associated with the cutovers, and through the addition of emergency tie-points between the systems to provide additional mutual benefit to both utilities.

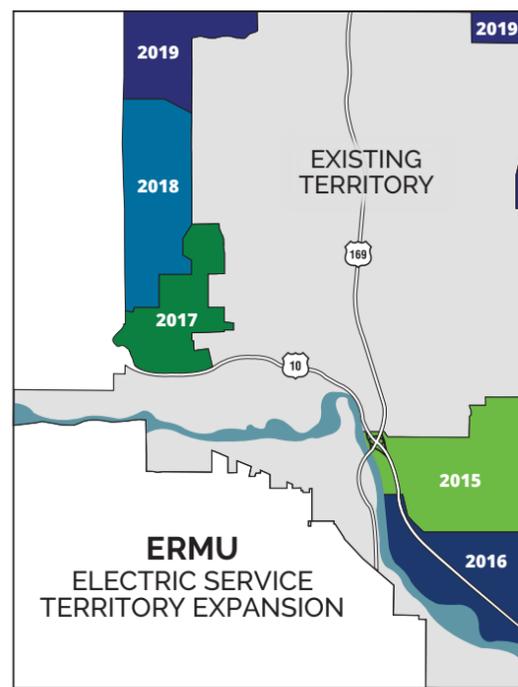
"We were intentional in providing value to both utilities while minimizing costs," said Adams.

The utilities mutually de-

termined the optimal transition dates of September 9-17, 2019 and arranged the transfer of service. The transfer occurred safely, efficiently, and without technical difficulties.

The utilities communicated extensively with the affected customers throughout the transition process. In addition, ERMU reached out to each affected commercial customers and met with customers as desired to assure understanding of rates and programs, and to answer any questions.

ERMU and Connexus have been working on this electric service territory transfer for over seven years.



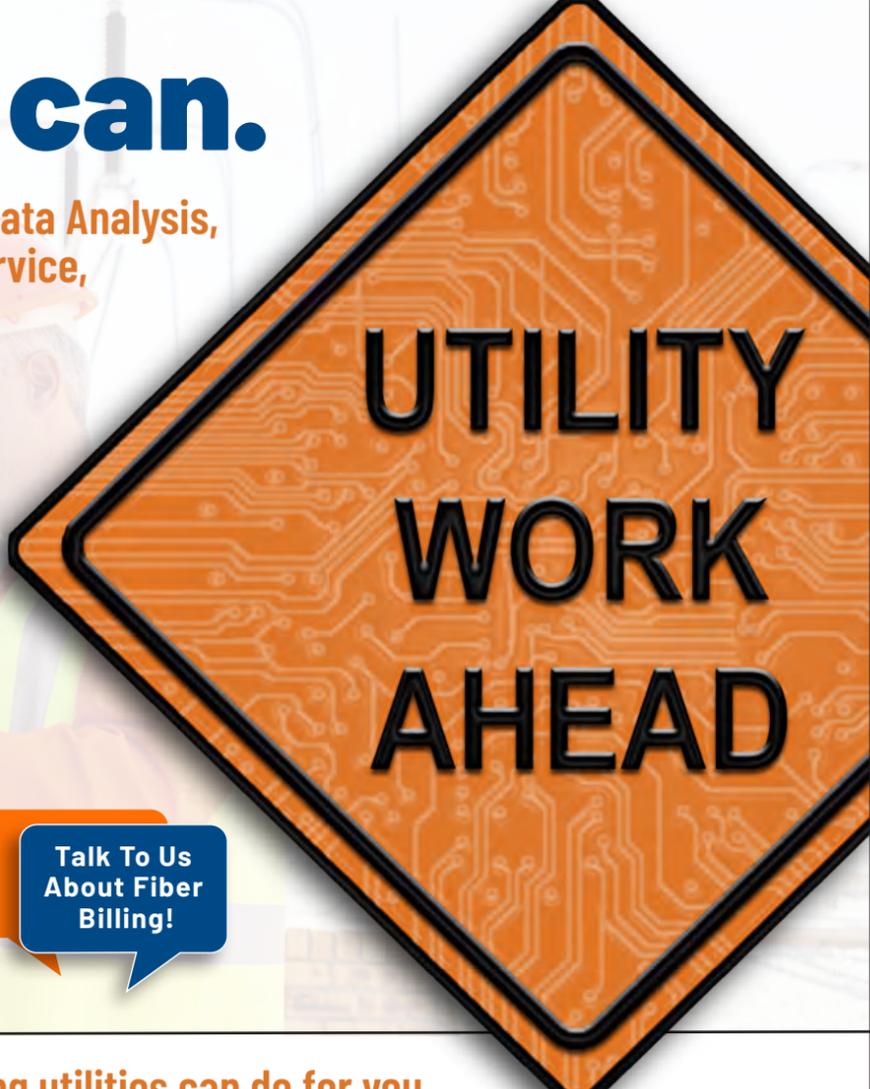
Map of Elk River Municipal Utilities electric service territory expansion.

Graphic and photo courtesy of Elk River Municipal Utilities

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ERMU lists five good reasons why it worked to grow with the municipality it serves

As the city of Elk River expands urban services, Elk River Municipal Utilities, with the support of the city, believes it makes sense to provide similar services to all customers within the city. ERMU has a vision to grow with the City of Elk River.

“The municipal electric utility is owned by our community. It stands to reason that our community should be able to receive services from the utility they own,” said ERMU General Manager Troy Adams. He noted that ERMU had several reasons for working to serve all electric customers within the city limits. They include:

- All residents and businesses benefit from having electricity provided by ERMU because a percentage of revenue goes to the city as a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT). The territory transfer has resulted in a larger PILOT payment to the city which will further offset expenses that would otherwise be funded through taxes or fees.

- ERMU is governed by a commission of local customers who are appointed by the City Council; therefore the utility is directed by those it serves.

- The openness and transparency of the municipal public power business model allows customers to be informed on the utilities’ operations and planning. The open meeting law allows for the public to witness the municipal utilities’ governance firsthand. The customers, community leaders, and elected officials provide feedback and direction for utilities that they own. ERMU provides local control and local accountability.

- One of the greatest advantages of municipal public power is the ability for collaboration, cooperation, and partnership with the city when working towards common goals. A city and its mu-

nicipal utility can be mutually successful through growth.

- Generally speaking, money paid to ERMU stays in the community.

Law preserved right to grow

Municipal electric utilities have always had the right to serve throughout their city limits.

City franchise authority originally conferred this right. When investor-owned utilities (IOUs), cooperatives and municipals agreed to service territory legislation as adopted by the Legislature in 1974, this long-standing right and practice was preserved.

While each segment of the industry had its reasons for seeking service territories,

MPUC approves North Branch-ECE request

The Elk River agreement wasn’t the only one of the MPUC addressed Jan. 23—it also accepted a joint request of North Branch Water and Light Commission of the City of North Branch and East Central Energy to update electric service territory records.

The municipal and cooperative asked the MPUC update the official service territory map to reflect an agreed-upon

change in the utilities’ electric service territory boundaries. The joint request concerned the permanent transfer of an area located within the city limits of the City of North Branch and within the electric service territory assigned to the Cooperative.

The transfer area, which is known as Lucht’s Crossing Third Addition, involves approximately 32.02 acres and no current customers.

municipal utilities insisted that they continue to be allowed to grow with the cities they serve.

Other segments of the utility industry agreed to this municipal demand, and the territory statutes were enacted.

State law allows two venues to handle disputes: the newly-formed (at the time) and quasi-judicial Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) or a condemnation proceeding in district court.

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Xcel Energy reported 2019 fourth-quarter profits rose 35 percent, as the company's stock hit an all-time high Jan. 20 of \$68.76.

Rate increases necessary to pay for capital improvements were the key earnings driver for the year.

Meanwhile, according to recent reports, Xcel expects to have more than 11 gigawatts of wind on its system by 2021, which it said would be the most of any electric utility in the western hemisphere.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Jan. 16 approved Xcel Energy's \$650 million purchase of Southern Power's natural gas power plant in Mankato.

Rebuffed in September, Xcel restructured the deal so that the company's shareholders will bear the risk of the purchase. The PUC previously opposed Xcel's plan, and the state's attorney general office still does, saying ratepayers could be on the hook for later costs associated with the facility.

Xcel has been buying the

Bits & Pieces



power generated by the plant from Southern Power, a subsidiary of Atlanta-based Southern Co. Xcel in 2018 announced plans to buy the power plant.

The plant has a capacity of 760 megawatts and went into service in 2016.

S&P Global on Jan. 15 reported that it expected credit ratings for public power to remain resilient and stable despite "significant credit disruptors" for the industry overall in 2020.

Low interest rates, moderate economic growth, and low natural gas prices all help public power's financial health. Factors negatively affecting the agency's outlook included disruptions from technology and extreme weather events (such as wildfires).

Utilities also face significant challenges in determining economic viability amid changing environmental regulations at the federal,

state and local levels. The agency noted that some state regulations and carbon emissions goals might be "ambitious" and "aspirational" and that when these goals and current technologies are mismatched, utilities are likely to be saddled with the resulting economic burden.

The report calls out storage technology as needing significant innovation to match such goals, and notes that current prices make the economics of battery storage "questionable."

According to a report from Edmunds, sales of plug-in electric vehicles in the United States were down 6.8 percent from 2018: from 349,000 to 325,000.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) Jan. 14 issued its January edition of the Short-Term Energy Outlook (STEO), which included the first energy forecasts for 2021.

The outlook forecasts that the United States will remain a net exporter of total crude oil and petroleum products, that renewable en-

ergy generation will increase from a 17 percent share of electricity generation in 2019 to 22 percent in 2021, while energy-related carbon dioxide emissions will decrease by two percent in 2020 and 1.5 percent in 2021.

A Minneapolis ordinance requiring one- and two-family homeowners to collect certain energy efficiency data before listing their homes for sale went into effect Jan. 15.

An inspector will need to evaluate a home's windows, heating system and attic and wall insulation and compile the data into an "energy score."

The city's Climate Action Plan calls for 75 percent of houses to undergo energy retrofits by 2025.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce is again investigating Frontier Communications, now focusing on customer service and billing practices. The Department and company settled a separate investigation earlier this year.

Primary issues now include whether Frontier failed

to inform customers of their service options and whether Frontier enrolled customers in long distance service plans that customers did not want or use.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Dec. 5 approved a 5.8 percent interim rate increase for CenterPoint Energy natural gas customers. The PUC continues to analyze the company's initial request for a 6.8 percent rate increase.

The attorneys general of 15 states said in mid-January that they oppose a Trump administration proposal to allow rail shipments of liquefied natural gas, arguing the trains will share tracks with passenger trains and travel through congested areas.

The other objecting states were California, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington, as well as the District of Columbia.

Florida court blocks electric competition ballot measure

The Florida Supreme Court on Jan. 9 blocked a ballot measure that would have opened the state's electric power market to competition.

"The ballot summary tells voters that the proposed amendment grants a personal right to 'sell electricity,' when in fact the amendment does no such thing," the court ruled.

The proposed constitutional amendment would have granted several rights, including the right to choose an electricity provider, the right to purchase electricity in competitive wholesale and retail markets, and the right to generate electricity oneself or in combination with others.

The court found that "at no point does the Initiative grant a freestanding constitutional right to sell electricity," despite its claim that it did nothing to "limit the right of electricity consumers to buy, sell, trade, or dispose of electricity."

The 'Citizens for Energy Choices' proposal would have compelled enabling legislation by June 1, 2023. The group, whose supporters include Infinite Energy, NRG Energy, and Vistra Energy, faced a Feb. 1 deadline to submit 766,200 signatures to be able to include the measure on the ballot in November. The group collected about 642,300 signatures.

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Truman receives Heartland economic development grant

The City of Truman received a grant from wholesale power supplier Heartland Consumers Power District (HCPD) at their council meeting Jan. 6 to help with costs related to the new Dollar General recently constructed in town.

Heartland Customer Relations Manager Kelly Dybdahl presented the \$5,000 grant to the council.

The grant will be used to assist with costs related to installing necessary electrical infrastructure for the store recently built along Highway 15.

Heartland provides wholesale power to the city of Truman as well as other mu-

nicipal utilities and state agencies in the Midwest. Heartland provides economic development grants to customers to help fund projects that spark growth and development, including supporting new business opportunities.

“A new retail establishment is an exciting benefit to any rural community,” said Heartland Director of Economic Development and Governmental Affairs Casey Crabtree. “Heartland was proud to partner with Truman to help prepare the necessary infrastructure to help Dollar General get established in town and we look forward to partnering on more opportunities in the future.”



Truman City Administrator Bethanie Ekstrom (left) and Councilwoman Kathy Hendrickson (right) hold the check in front of Mayor Lynn Brownlee. Men from left to right include: councilmembers Brian Nickerson and Jake Ebert and Utility Operations Foreman Taylor Varpness. At right is Heartland Customer Relations Manager Kelly Dybdahl.

Appeals Court rules MPUC must consider impact of power plant proposed to be built in Wisconsin

The Minnesota Court of Appeals Dec. 23 ruled that the state’s Public Utilities Commission must consider the environmental impacts of a power plant proposed to be built in Wisconsin.

The ruling delays a plan by Dairyland Power Cooperative and a Minnesota Power (MP) affiliate to build a \$730 million, 550-megawatt, natural gas-fired power plant in Superior, Wisc.

The PUC in October 2018 approved MP’s plan to build, run and buy about half the capacity of the Nemadji Trail Energy Center power plant through agreements with an affiliated company, South Shore Energy.

The PUC rejected a petition to prepare an “environmental assessment worksheet” for the project because it did not have jurisdiction to order an environmental review for a project outside the state. The Court ordered the PUC to determine whether the power plant might have significant environmental effects and, if

so, to prepare an environmental assessment. The Court said the Minnesota Legislature didn’t limit the PUC’s jurisdiction to state boundaries.

The Court also said the PUC has authority to approve or reject Minnesota Power’s agreements with its Wisconsin affiliate because affiliated-interest agreements fall under the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act.

The Court dismissed arguments that requiring an environmental assessment would violate the U.S. Constitution’s Commerce Clause, which bars state laws that expressly limit interstate trade.

In 2016, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a Minnesota statute called the Next Generation Energy Act that barred agreements to import or buy power from a source outside the state that would contribute to or increase statewide power-sector carbon dioxide emissions,

because the law violated the Commerce Clause.

Parties to that litigation included the state of North Dakota, the Industrial Commission of North Dakota, the Lignite Energy Council, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, the North American Coal Corp., Great Northern Properties Limited Partnership, Missouri River Energy Services and Minnkota Power Cooperative.

Wisconsin regulators Jan. 16 authorized construction of the Nemadji Trail Energy Center power plant in Superior, despite concerns over the project’s environmental impact.

The Public Service Commission voted 2-1 to approve a permit for Dairyland Power Cooperative of La Crosse, Wisc., to proceed with the plant, which is to be jointly owned by Duluth-based Minnesota Power.

North Dakota pipeline and gas plant to reduce ‘flaring’ of natural gas

ONEOK’s Elk Creek Pipeline and Demicks Lake Gas Plant are in operation in the Bakken region of North Dakota. The infrastructure is expected to be a critical component in reducing the amount of natural gas ‘flaring’ in the state. As much as 29 percent of gas produced in the area was flared in 2017, according to state regulators.

North Dakota flared 284 million cubic feet of gas in total in December, according to media reports, or 13 percent of produced natural gas.

Demicks Lake has a total design capacity for 400 million cubic feet per day.

The company owns several other natural gas processing facilities in the Bakken.

Its total processing capacity is reportedly 1.2 billion cubic feet per day.

Demick’s Lake was announced as part of a \$2.3 billion capital expenditure plan for ONEOK now through 2020. That plan also included a 400,000 barrel per day (BPD) natural gas liquids (NGL) pipeline to take NGLs from Oklahoma to Texas, as well as a 125,000 BPD NGL fractionator for an existing plant in Texas.

In January, the company also announced the \$1.4 billion Elk Creek Pipeline to take 240,000 barrels per day of NGLs from the Bakken to Kansas.

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APPA:

continued from page 3

public power utilities.

Similar issues are presented in the Association's pending appeal of FERC's storage rule, Order No. 841. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit is expected to rule on the case this year.

PURPA reform

The Association in 2020 will also keep a close watch on FERC's pending rulemaking proposing changes to its Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (PURPA) implementation regulations. In early December, the Association and the Large Public Power Council filed comments in the proceeding in which they said that the development of competitive power markets and the dramatic growth of a renewable power sector now largely independent of the boost once provided by PURPA justify significant changes in PURPA regulations.

Western markets

The Association will also continue to track developments in the Western energy markets.

With respect to the California Independent System Operator's Energy Imbalance Market (EIM), the Association will focus on the Governance Review Commission and the stakeholder process to extend the day-ahead market to the EIM.

The Southwest Power Pool's Western Energy Imbalance Service (WEIS) market will also remain on the Association's radar.

Several public power utilities have agreed to join CAISO's EIM or SPP's WEIS.

Reliability

The Association is keeping an eye on developments at the North American Electric Reliability Corporation related to supply chain risk assessment.

In 2018 FERC issued Order No. 850 putting in place critical infrastructure protection reliability standards to help mitigate cyber security risks associated with the supply chain for high and medium impact bulk electric system cyber systems. The order included that NERC report back to FERC on several aspects associated with the order.



General Manager

Marshall Municipal Utilities (MMU) in Marshall, Minnesota, the second largest municipal electric utility in the state, is seeking an experienced General Manager to direct and oversee operations and continue its role as a leader in providing public power. This position is available as a result of the announced retirement of the current General Manager who has served MMU for 17 years.

Marshall Municipal Utilities is an electric transmission and electric and water distribution utility with 36 full time employees, 11,400 combined water-electric customers, and utility revenues projected at \$45 million in 2020. Reporting to the MMU Commission, the General Manager ensures that MMU customers are provided with high quality water and electric service, while promoting conservation and responsible management of resources.

The City of Marshall, located approximately 150 miles southwest of the Twin Cities and 75 miles northwest of Sioux Falls, is a vibrant community with a population approaching 14,000. The City-MMU partnership is a source of great civic pride and the General Manager will demonstrate an active commitment to maintaining this partnership.

This position requires a Bachelor's degree in public administration, business, engineering or an equivalent field and five years or more of senior level municipal utility management and administration experience. Qualified candidates must demonstrate high-level knowledge of power and water utilities functions, familiarity with the power and water regulatory environment, and experience working on the development, construction, and financing of large capital projects.

Qualified candidates please submit your cover letter and resume online by visiting our website at <https://bakertilly.recruitmenthome.com/postings/2530>. This position is open until filled; candidates are asked to submit their applications by March 9, 2020. For more information, please contact Sharon Klumpp at sharon.klumpp@bakertilly.com or 651-223-3053.

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National legislative priorities set as APPA Rally nears

The American Public Power Association has set its legislative priorities for the year.

These include:

- Public power's efforts to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions to address climate change;
- Pushing for legislation that would provide public power utilities with comparable incentives to various energy-related tax credits they cannot take advantage of due to their tax-exempt status;
- Maintaining and enhancing tax-exempt financing for

public power utilities' electric infrastructure investments;

- Protecting the ability of the Tennessee Valley Authority and Power Marketing Administrations to continue to fulfill their historic mission of providing affordable electricity to the nearly 50 million customers they jointly serve;
- Preserving public power's exemption to regulate attachments to its poles at the local level;
- Supporting legislation to promote energy storage technologies; and
- Supporting policies that promote the electrification of

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1 www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes499051.htm | 2 www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes499052.htm
3 www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes47152.htm

Associate Member News

CitiRep / Saginaw Control & Engineering has joined MMUA as an Associate Member.

The company is a manufacturer's representative company serving the electrical market in the Upper Midwest.

The company is located at 6440 Flying Cloud Drive, Suite 223, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. Phone is 612.518.8453 and the website is located at www.saginawcontrol.com

Jeff Elstad, Regional Manager, is the main contact.

Upcoming Events

We are entering the busiest season for MMUA schools and workshops. Our upcoming slate of meeting and training opportunities includes:

Emergency Preparedness & Restoration Conference
February 19-20

Rodeo Clinic
February 26-27

PCB Management & Recordkeeping Workshop
March 17-18

Sign-up closes on Feb. 18 for this in-demand workshop, so act today!

Substation School
March 24-26

This school is popular enough to keep on our annual calendar. If you are not registered, hurry! Registration fee increases Feb. 18 and closes Feb. 28.

Legislative Conference
March 31 - April 1
St. Paul

2020 promises to be a very active session for municipal utilities. Click on this event at the Calendar > Events page on our website for the latest program details!



Generation School
April 21-23

Generation School offers participants valuable classroom and hands-on instruction plus networking opportunities for generator operators and technicians. Whether a seasoned operator or just starting out in the field, all can benefit.

This year we will offer in-plant, hands-on instruction on three different engine sets: Enterprise, Cooper and Fairbanks Morse. Plus we'll tour one of Hutchinson Utilities' generation plants and 3M's manufacturing plant in Hutchinson.

School headquarters will be in Hutchinson, with hands-on training in the Glencoe and Delano municipal power plants.

Registration fee increases March 20 and sign-up deadline is March 30.



Underground School
May 12-15
MMUA Training Center, Marshall

MMUA offers this school in partnership with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and American Public Power Association (APPA).

The Underground School offers a hands-on training track with a variety of training sessions and an advanced technical course. In addition to top-notch instructors, we strive to keep class sizes small to maximize participation and learning. Whether you are a seasoned Journeyman looking to stay current or are an Apprentice just starting out, this school offers something for everyone.

Individuals registered for the Multi-Session Class will rotate through six different training sessions, covering a variety of topics that can enhance safety and improve efficiency.

Minnesota Public Power Fishing Tournament

Saturday, May 30
Rush Lake, Ottertail



Mark your calendars now for this popular event for a good cause! Two-person teams per boat compete for prizes and bragging rights! Proceeds go to lineworker training

programs in Minnesota. Registration will open in early March.

Annual Summer Conference
August 24-26
Cragun's Resort

Yes, we know it's early, but check your calendars. This conference has been moved back one week from its original date!

For more information, see the 'Events' calendar at www.mmua.org



Well-known instructor John Miner led the Line Design Workshop.

MMUA holds sold-out workshop on electric distribution line design

Well, that was a popular one.

MMUA held a sold-out workshop on Overhead and Underground Line Design, Jan. 21-22 at the Plymouth Comfort Inn. The workshop was originally set for the MMUA office, but the location was switched as the MMUA offices were in the process of being moved at the time.

The importance of line design was apparent in the response to the program—the first time in recent memory that MMUA has devoted an entire workshop to this topic.

Instructor John Miner offered a thorough overview of electrical distribution theory and its application to overhead and underground distribution systems. Participants gained a better understanding of customer load estimates and decisions about the sizing and location of service transformers, cable and conductors. Additional understanding was gained of distribution component designs and the

purposes and practices of voltage regulation, grounding, lightning protection and maintenance.

Miner is a registered professional engineer and an accomplished executive manager and educator with over 45 years of experience in the electric utility industry. He is a frequent presenter at MMUA workshops and was formerly General Manager of Rochester Public Utilities and Chief Operating Officer for the Austin, Texas, Electric Utility Dept. He has been a course instructor for APPA for 30 years.

Miner is a senior life member of the IEEE and past chair of the IEEE Committee on Technology Accreditation Activities.

Given the strong support for and positive reviews of this workshop, MMUA is already planning a follow-up workshop for 2021.

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