Xcel plan envisions new utility business model
IRP seeks transition to more ‘customer-centric, sustainable framework’

Xcel Energy filed its 2016-2030 Integrated Resource Plan Jan. 2 with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Under the plan, Xcel would more than double its renewable energy portfolio.

Perhaps more significantly, the plan is based on a new utility business model and regulatory compact. How changes to regulation of the state’s largest utility would affect municipal utilities is unclear, but could be significant.

The Xcel plan, anticipating public policy directives, reduces carbon emissions from 2005 levels—a 30 percent reduction by 2020 and a 40 percent reduction by 2030. Carbon reductions would be achieved by:

• Adding 600 megawatts of wind by 2020 and 1,200 megawatts by 2030, bringing total wind power on Xcel Energy’s Upper Midwest system to over 3,600 megawatts;

• Adding 187 megawatts of large-scale solar energy by the end of 2016 and an additional 1,700 megawatts of large-scale solar and 500 megawatts of customer-driven small-scale solar—such as rooftop solar panels and solar gardens—bringing total solar power on the company’s Upper Midwest system to about 2,400 megawatts;

• Operating the carbon-free, baseload Monticello and Prairie Island nuclear plants through their current licenses, which begin expiring in 2050; and

• Gradually decreasing reliance on Units 1 and 2 at Sherburne County (Sherco) Generating Plant through 2030.

“Our resource plan proposes nation-leading carbon emission reductions and renewable energy integration,” said Chris Clark, president of Northern States Power Co. Minnesota, an Xcel Energy company. “It charts a course to cost-effectively meet and exceed the carbon, renewable energy and energy efficiency requirements of the states we serve in the Upper Midwest.”

The resource plan will also be filed in North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Clark said the resource plan should be viewed in the context of the e21 Initiative Phase I Report: Charting a Path to a 21st Century Energy System in Minnesota, and Xcel Energy’s request to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to discuss a potential roadmap for advancing the e21 vision.

Minnesota e21 Initiative

The Great Plains Institute, beginning in February 2014, convened a group including Xcel, Minnesota Power, Center for Energy and Environment, Envision Solar and Minnesota Public Utilities Association.

Shannon Mortenson

by Steve Downer

Recent decades have been full of challenges for Warren, Minnesota, but reasons for optimism now abound.

Warren, the county seat of Marshall County in northwest Minnesota, had a population of 1,563 in 2012, down 6.9 percent from 2000. And previous to that, about 20 percent of the population was lost between 1980 and 2000. The city straddles the winding Snake River. Major floods, typically occurring in spring because of heavy rain and snowmelt, punctuate the city’s history. Recent floods include 1996 (twice) and 1997.

A four-mile floodway channel, complete with a 550-acre impoundment, now surrounds Warren on the east and south sides, directing excess water around the city and back to the river. The floodway, completed in 2010, was a partnership between the city, the watershed district and the Minnesota DNR.

The floodway has saved local property owners significantly on flood insurance, and gave business the confidence to invest again in Warren. In 2014, the city issued $14 million in building permits, including an expansion at the CHS Ag Services elevator, and a new hospital and assisted living facility.

Along with being the county seat, Warren is home of the Warren-Alvarado-Oslo school district.

Shannon Mortenson has been a part of several significant developments during her time as Warren city administrator-clerk treasurer.

The district has one six-year high school and one elementary school, both located in Warren. Enrollment is increasing.

“With the new hospital, good school and good overall infrastructure, the city has a lot to market and a lot to grow off of,” noted a recent city newsletter. “We are excited for the possibilities.”

Shannon Mortenson is the Warren city administrator-clerk treasurer. She previously was clerk-treasurer a half hour up the road in Kennedy, where she worked for 11 years. A number of significant changes have been made in Warren during her five years there.

Some of these changes involve the municipal electric utility. Jeff Wohlers is the public works working superintendent. He oversees the electric, water, natural gas, wastewater, streets, garbage, pool and campground.

For many years, the electric department had constant turnover. It seemed the city would no sooner train a person than they would leave for higher wages elsewhere. Having a rural electric cooperative headquartered a few blocks away from the city shop made Duerr bolsters government relations team

Amanda Duerr has joined MMUA as a government relations representative.

Duerr was most recently employed as a lobbyist with Flaherty & Hood, where she started in August 2012. At the firm, she represented a number of clients—including the Coalition of Utility Commissioners of Greater Minnesota Cities and the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership—before the state legislature and regulatory agencies.

She developed legislative strategy, a media program and grassroots outreach efforts to advance her clients’ priorities, and also prepared advocacy materials, research reports, committee testimony, legislative and regulatory agency correspondence and media releases.

Duerr, a North Branch native with ties to east central Minnesota, has significant political experience. She worked for Senate Research from 2006 to 2011, where she served as a resource for various committees.

Prior to that she worked as a Senate legislative assistant.

Duerr is a University of Minnesota Morris graduate with a degree in Political Science and Management.
Electric generating sector sheds jobs, according to latest federal statistics

from the federal Energy Information Administration

The electric power generation sector lost more than 5,900 jobs from January 2011 through June 2014 despite a gain of nearly 1,800 non-hydro renewable electricity generation jobs, according to the latest data available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Jobs involved in the construction of new facilities, processing or transportation of fuels, or behind-the-meter distributed generation installations (e.g., solar panel installers) were not counted by BLS as jobs in the electric power sector. The overall decline in electric power generation jobs coincides with a period in which the United States has seen declining year-over-year electricity sales, driven by energy efficiency improvements, and growth in distributed generation, such as behind-the-meter rooftop solar, among other factors. Additionally, the growth in some types of non-hydro renewable generation, particularly wind and solar, brings relatively few ongoing operations and maintenance jobs.

Fossil fuels. Recent coal plant closures, which were partially offset by new natural gas capacity additions, drove the net decline of 1,750 fossil fuel power generation jobs since 2011. While BLS does not break out the jobs category by fuel, the operations of the new natural gas power plants are less labor intensive than those of the older coal plants that are being displaced.

Nuclear. Nuclear power facilities have shed more than 4,900 jobs since 2011. Most of the nuclear generation job losses occurred since January 2013, and are attributable to reactor closures at three locations. Renewables. BLS first provided separate data series for renewable generation jobs in 2011. All four categories of non-hydro renewables have seen gains in power generation jobs since 2011. Solar has led the way, with the number of jobs related to the operation of solar generation installations in the electric power sector more than tripling in that timeframe. Although wind jobs have grown at a slower rate than solar since 2011, increasing 16 percent, there are still more than twice as many wind jobs as solar jobs in the electric power sector.

Renewable jobs are more geographically concentrated than fossil fuel jobs, corresponding to the location of renewable generation capacity. California is home to the most solar, geothermal, and biomass jobs, and the second most wind jobs behind Texas. Employment at hydroelectric generators fell six percent over this time, but it was still more than double that of all other non-hydro renewable generation employment.

Austin Utilities announces closure of Northeast Plant

AUSTIN, Minn. — The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners at its Dec. 9, 2014 board meeting set a goal of decommissioning the Northeast (NE) Power Plant beginning in June of 2016. The action was taken based on the Austin Utilities staff recognizing the Austin Utilities Power Supply & Resource Plan. The Board also voted to continue operating the NE Power Plant and to sell the capacity of the plant through May of 2016. Austin staff will begin negotiating to sell the available capacity into the electric market.

Many factors led up to these decisions, including inefficiencies of the plant, low electric market prices and local upgrades that have significantly reduced the potential need for the NE Plant. Ultimately, the Board of Commissioners determined it was in the best interest of the customers to move forward with decommissioning the Plant. Discontinuing operation of the Plant from Austin Utilities power supply portfolio is not expected to impact customer rates. The NE Power Plant is a 30 Megawatt power generating facility commissioned in 1971. The NE Plant was fueled predominately with coal until 2012 when the Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners set direction to eliminate the burning of coal, and move to natural gas in an effort to meet future environmental regulation requirements and reduce operating costs. Austin Utilities currently obtains nearly all its electric needs from Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) through an agreement that is set to expire in 2030. Austin Utilities will continue to monitor the Austin Utilities Power Supply & Resource Plan and update the plan as future industry and local utility operations change.

Austin Utilities is a municipal utility serving approximately 12,300 electric customers, 10,300 natural gas customers, and 9,000 water customers. Its mission is to offer utility products and services in a safe, reliable and responsible manner in order to enhance the quality of life in its community.
The American Public Power Association and several other organizations have voiced a range of concerns in comments submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency about its proposed rule, known as the ‘Clean Power Plan,’ which seeks to regulate carbon dioxide emissions under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act.

APPA agrees that the electricity sector needs to reduce CO2 emissions, but cautions against the dangers of the proposed rule trying to do too much too quickly.

If implemented in its current form, EPA’s proposed rule, which was issued in June 2014, will affect, among other things, create economic inefficiency, impose additional costs on electricity customers and force risky overcapacity control measures—natural gas—to generate electricity, APPA said.

APPA urged the EPA to withdraw the proposed rule, revise it, and re-propose it. If the agency moves ahead with the rule as drafted, APPA recommended a number of revisions to improve the rule’s workability and affordability, while still continuing to reduce CO2 emissions.

“This rule, as proposed, aims to make unprecedented changes to the way energy will be generated and used in this country,” said APPA President and CEO Sue Kelly.

“These changes will ripple over the next several decades, so they must be made carefully and collaborative-ly. In our comments, we’ve laid out constructive changes to make the proposed rule more likely to work in the real world and fulfill its intended purpose.”

APPA said in its comments that the proposed rule’s requirements go beyond what is legally permissible under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act, and conflict with the authority of other federal, state, and local government entities.

APPA is highly skeptical about EPA’s assertion that while electricity costs will rise due to compliance with the proposal, consumers will see only ‘negligible’ increases in their actual bills after 2020 and could even see a decrease. APPA believes the EPA has relied too heavily on optimistic assumptions on key elements—the price of natural gas; the ability of utilities and system operators to dispatch natural gas units at significantly higher capacity factors; the availability in some states of viable, economic, renewable energy resources; and the rate at which new energy efficiency programs can be implemented.

“For EPA to assert that the electric utility industry can achieve a 30 percent reduction in CO2 emissions and also lower consumers’ electricity bills by 2030 recalls the adage that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn’t true,” APPA said.

Meanwhile, 17 attorneys general noted in Nov. 26 comments filed at the EPA that the proposed plan has numerous legal defects, each of which provides “an independent basis to invalidate the rule in its entirety.”

EPA’s proposal “attempts to use the Clean Air Act to override states’ energy policies and impose a national energy and resource-planning policy that picks winners and losers by solely on EPA’s policy choices, forcing states to favor renewable energy sources and demand-reduction measures over fossil fuel-fired electric production,” the attorneys general said in their comments.

“Just the Clean Air Act generally and Section 111(d) specifically do not give EPA that breathtaking broad authority to reorganize states’ economies,” they added.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation and some regional reliability organizations highlighted the potential reliability impacts of the proposed rule.

NERC in early November issued an initial reliability review of EPA’s proposed plan. NERC examined the assumptions made in the four “building blocks” referenced by EPA in its proposal. The four building blocks make up the best system of CO2 emission reductions under the Clean Air Act, according to EPA. The blocks are: make fossil fuel power plants more efficient (by increasing heat rates); make more use of lower-emitting power sources (natural gas combined-cycle units); use more zero- and low-emitting power sources (nuclear and renewables); and use electricity more efficiently.

NERC said that it identified several inefficiencies, timeliness, imposition of additional costs among other things, create economic inefficiency, impose additional costs on electricity customers and force risky overcapacity control measures—natural gas—to generate electricity, APPA said.

The American Public Power Association (APGA) meets with the FERC commissioners. This issue has major significance on public natural gas systems.

APGA addresses end-of-year issues at FERC, including gas-electric coordination

APGA: see next page please
MMUA convenes group to study common municipal approach to solar

Is solar power a threat or an opportunity for municipal utilities? The fact is, it could be either. With that in mind, MMUA has convened a group of members in an effort to further develop the municipal approach to solar. The end goal? Turn solar into a win-win for municipal utilities and their customers.

The initial meeting of the MMUA Solar/DG Task Force was Nov. 21 at the MMUA office. Dave Berg of Dave Berg Consulting led the group through a discussion of rates. Jim Losleben of tenKoLa talked about solar demonstration projects. Steve Thompson and Chris Kopel of Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (CMMPA) analyzed various solar strategies.

The CMMPA analysis concluded that DG/Solar poses a potential financial threat to municipal utilities and that adopting a passive approach will result in acceptance of the negative consequences. Alternatively, taking a more pro-active or defensive approach to DG/Solar could potentially result in the strategic/financial benefits.

In developing a strategic response to DG/Solar, a 'high level' cost of service analysis is needed to help develop a better quantitative understanding of the potential differences in the financial impacts of different strategies.

After discussion and a review of strategies a task list was developed. The following tasks were identified by the Solar/DG Task Force as essential in developing the municipal approach to solar.

- Education. The task force will develop educational materials regarding solar aimed at three distinct audiences: customers; municipal electric utilities; legislators and regulators.
- Model ordinance. The task force will work on developing a model ordinance for distributed solar installations that includes the appropriate elements to protect the public interest.
- Interconnection agreement. The task force will develop a model interconnection agreement.
- Technical requirements. The task force will prepare a set of technical specifications and requirements for distributed solar installations so that they will not present a danger to the home or business owner; utility personnel, firefighters, contractors, and others who must work around the solar installation; and the public.
- Demonstration projects. The task force will encourage and work to facilitate municipal utility solar demonstration projects, particularly with Minnesota-made solar collectors.
- Costs. The task force will conduct financial research on costs.
- Rate design. The task force will develop educational materials regarding rate design alternatives to ensure that the utility recovers its costs.


Xcel: continued from front page

e Systems Consulting Services, George Washington University Law School, and other stakeholders to map out a transition of the Minnesota regulatory model in Minnesota, “to develop a more customer-centric and sustainable framework.”

The executive summary of the report begins with this statement: "A growing and fundamental misalignment exists between the traditional utility business model (and the regulatory framework that supports it), and the realities of today’s marketplace and Minnesota’s public policy goals."

Some of the 12 recommendations, which were released in a December 2014 report, are:

- Allow a multi-year, performance-based regulatory framework for utilities that wish to opt-in.
- Revise Minnesota statutes to allow utilities that opt into a multi-year, performance-based framework to replace the current Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) with a 15-year (or longer) Integrated Resource Analysis (IRA) that guides the utility business plan;
- Encourage the use of pilot programs or other methods for testing and evaluating components of a multi-year, performance-based framework, and establish clear methods for determining the value of grid services and DER services.
- The Commission should review and adjust time-varying rates for energy services so that they send more accurate and effective price signals.
- Enable innovative product and service options and technologies by revising Minnesota statutes and regulations, specifically including options for energy-intensive trade-exposed industries.
- The Commission and Department of Commerce should use their existing authorities to achieve e21 Principles and Outcomes; and revise and recommend revisions to their authorities where needed.

The Minnesota Legislature should appropriate the resources necessary for the Commission and the Department to implement e21’s recommendations.

- Develop a transparent, forward-looking, integrated process for modernizing the grid.
- Identify and develop opportunities to reduce customer costs by improving overall grid efficiency.

“In light of the evolution occurring in our industry, we believe a comparable evolution in the regulatory and utility business model is necessary if this vision is to be achieved,” Clark said.

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The city of Chaska Electric Department celebrated its 125th birthday on December 20, 2014. On that date in 1889, the City Council adopted a resolution calling for a special election to consider the sale of $7,000 in bonds to finance the construction of a municipal power plant. Following a vote, electricity within the community was born. Shortly after, Chaska residents were the first in the area to have the modern convenience of electricity. After 125 years, the goals of the Chaska Electric department remain: to provide safe and reliable power to the residents and businesses of Chaska.

The city of Windom Municipal Utility has started replacing high pressure sodium street lights with light emitting diode (LED) lights. So far, the utility has replaced lights in an industrial park and is working to replace lights along highways through the city. It will likely be several years before all the street lights in the city are replaced. Payback on the new lights is anticipated to be six years.

The Hibbing City Council recently approved the local Public Utilities Commission’s plan to borrow $3.4 million to install gas burners in existing boilers. When installed, the gas burners will help curb emissions at the power plant by better drying wood for easier burning. The Commission approved a two percent rate increase for 2015 for electric, water and steam customers. The increase is the first since 2009 and will help deal with increased wholesale power costs.

The Grand Marais Public Utilities Commission has increased rates two percent for 2015. The increase will apply to electric, water and wastewater bills. The commission also approved a donation to a local group promoting a class geared toward installers of solar electric systems.

The Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission has received a consultant’s recommendation calling for a 4.5 percent increase in electric rates and a 20 percent increase in water rates. The last cost of service study performed for the utility was in 2008. When taken together, the increases are expected to reflect several years of deferred projects.

The Hutchinson City Council Dec. 9 held a public hearing on a $1.47 million proposal to install 400 kilowatts of solar power at the city wastewater treatment plant. The city has secured $958,000 grant from Xcel Energy to pay for two-thirds of the cost. Former City of Arlington and Sibley County administrator Matt Jaunich has been hired as the new Hutchinson City Administrator. Jaunich was an economic development intern at the city in 2001 and 2002.

A rate increase sought by the Ely Public Utilities Commission was approved by the city council in December. Sewer charges will jump by 10 percent, water rates by 20 cents per 100 cubic feet and electric customers will see a four percent increase. Minimizing the increase on customer bills is the elimination of a $75,000 franchise fee the city had formerly levied on customer bills.

The recommendations came from the utility rates committee, which put together a long-range forecast that includes projected rates and budgets extending to 2021.

Long-term capital projects and maintaining sufficient reserves are factored into the budget, along with increased wholesale power costs.

The Worthington Public Utilities Commission approved an electric rate increase for 2015. On average, residential customers will see a nine to 11 percent increase, commercial customers six to 10 percent and industrial customers a six to eight percent increase, depending on use. Increased wholesale power cost is driving the increase. A 1.5 percent increase in wholesale power plus a 19 percent jump in transmission charges is leading to increased electric rates in Adrian. It would take a 6.2 percent increase to cover the increased costs, but, due to a number of economies an overall 3.5 percent increase has been approved. From 2005 to 2014, the utility’s total purchased power costs increased 112.54 percent.

The city of Peterson has adopted a water service line ownership policy, which identifies the property owner as owner of service lines, from the curb stop to the premise. The city, with rates significantly lower than surrounding suppliers and significant work in the offfing, is considering an electric rate increase in 2015.

Elementary students in Springfield in December were treated to a presentation on electricity and electric generation. War of the Currents: Fug for our Electrical Future was presented by the Bakken Museum of Minneapolis.

The city of Hinckley Municipal Utility is replacing high pressure sodium street lights with LEDs.

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission has approved a 1.5 percent electric rate increase, largely in response to a projected 2016 increase in wholesale rates. No charge to water or natural gas rates is expected.

Austin Utilities worked with the solar installer course at Riverland Community College to build an electric vehicle charging station at a downtown city parking lot. The station will be able to charge two cars at once. The $20,000 project was 75 percent funded through grants and donations from the Hormel Foundation and Clean Energy Resource Teams.

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MMUA tried something new for 2015—bundling a number of associate member opportunities into a sponsor-ship package.

We are pleased to report that the sponsorship idea was well received, and thank those associate members that signed on as an MMUA Sponsor.

The annual cost to become an annual MMUA sponsor is $1,500.

Benefits include:
• Recognition as an MMUA Annual Sponsor on the new website
• Recognition as an MMUA Annual Sponsor on banners at MMUA events
• Recognition as an MMUA Annual Sponsor in MMUA publications
• A Resource newsletter ad
• A trade show table and

The logos of MMUA’s 2015 sponsors are displayed above.

Thanks extended to MMUA’s 2015 Annual Sponsors

MMUA staff and consultants continue to work on the new MMUA website. Our target date to go ‘live’ with the site is late January/early February.

The site enables you to sign-up for workshops online, purchase products, track attendance, and a variety of other functions relating to meeting attendance.

The MMUA database will be integral with the website. While this enables automating many functions, to fully experience the site’s full functionality may require a bit of initial work on the part of members.

For example, website users may find it convenient to set up a profile. Individuals currently associated with all active Regular, Associate and Affiliate members can establish a profile and account.

MMUA will be able to accept credit card payments. Various goods and services can be placed in an online ‘shopping cart’ for purchase at one time. MMUA will still bill members, if they wish.

Members will be able to post classified ads directly, without going through an MMUA staff member.

The site will also better enable the use of other online tools to set-up discussions forums, etc.

Owatonna enrolls customers in water line protection program

Owatonna, Minn. - Owatonna Public Utilities will provide a new service to residential water customers starting in 2015. Owners of single family homes will have added protection against the cost of repairing or replacing a broken or frozen water service line starting January 1, 2015 with OPU’s new Water Service Line Protection Program. Homeowners will be automatically enrolled in the program which will be offered free of charge as of January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015 for all eligible customers.

Water service lines are the property and responsibility of the homeowner and can be costly to repair when damaged. Aging pipes, harsh Minnesota winters, and ground shifts can cause unexpected damage to water service lines requiring repair or replacement. Repairing or replacing a damaged water service line often includes tearing up part of the street and sidewalk and can cost the homeowner upward of $3000.

OPU’s Water Service Line Protection Program will cover the cost to repair or replace a damaged service line for protected customers. The new program will also cover restoration or replacement of landscaping disturbed by the repair up to the property line. Landscaping restoration may include repairing the street, public sidewalk, curb, boulevard, and driveway approach in the public right of way. Landscaping restoration between the property line and the building will not be covered under the program.

Enrolled customers will also have the added protection to have a frozen service line thawed under the new program. "Last winter is still fresh on everyone’s mind," said Roger Warehime, Director of Field Operations and External Management. "We received numerous reports of frozen service lines in town. Most were thawed without incident but customers with more stubborn lines reported service bills over $500 for the extensive work. With the new program, customers will have the cost to thaw a frozen service covered over one year."

Owners of multi-family housing units may also qualify for the program and should contact OPU’s Customer Service Department to verify eligibility and sign up for protection. To be eligible, the water service line must be one inch in diameter or less and provide water to a residential building.

Program participants will be charged a fee of $1.99/month to be enrolled in the protection. During the free trial period, January 1 and December 31, 2015, enrolled customers will receive a credit on their bill of $1.99/month, offsetting the charge. Automatically enrolled homeowners will start seeing this charge and corresponding credit on their January water bill and should contact OPU immediately to verify they are receiving protection if it does not appear.

Customers who wish to opt-out of the protection program may contact OPU’s Customer Service Department or fill out the opt-out form in the program brochure included with their January bill.

OPU provides electric, water, and natural gas services in Owatonna.

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Owners of multi-family housing units may also qualify for the program and should contact OPU’s Customer Service Department to verify eligibility and sign up for protection. To be eligible, the water service line must be one inch in diameter or less and provide water to a residential building.

Program participants will be charged a fee of $1.99/month to be enrolled in the protection. During the free trial period, January 1 and December 31, 2015, enrolled customers will receive a credit on their bill of $1.99/month, offsetting the charge. Automatically enrolled homeowners will start seeing this charge and corresponding credit on their January water bill and should contact OPU immediately to verify they are receiving protection if it does not appear.

Customers who wish to opt-out of the protection program may contact OPU’s Customer Service Department or fill out the opt-out form in the program brochure included with their January bill.

OPU provides electric, water, and natural gas services in Owatonna.
The temptation arises, from time to time, to ask the lineworkers to drive a snow-plow, or perform some other duty. Mortenson said the city strives to keep McMillan and Jevne working on electric duties.

A good lineworker will want to focus on line work, she noted. And Warren wants good lineworkers.

There is always distribution system maintenance to perform. The city is also implementing electric demand metering.

Workers are at a premium in the area. Warren residents often work in Thief River Falls, Crookston or Grand Forks.

“If you’re not working, you’re choosing not to work,” Mortenson said.

Lack of housing is a big issue. “If we had more, we could grow our community,” she said. Private developers have not been interested in building.

The city offers a number of development incentives. City-owned lots purchased for new construction are sold on a deferred loan, which will convert to a grant upon completion of a home within one year. The city provides free electrical services to the site during construction and upon completion of construction, the owner will be provided with utility credit of $2,000, and passes to a number of local amenities, including one year of free cable television.

Incentives also exist for new residents purchasing an existing home, new construction on a private lot, current residents purchasing an existing home as primary residence, and commercial developments.

The city recently hired Brent McMillan, left, and Tyler Jevne comprise the Warren electric line crew. McMillan is a journeyman; Jevne an apprentice.

Another city employee, Tyler Jevne, had dreams of becoming a lineman, but with a family to take care of, going to work was a more realistic option than going to school. Jevne got his chance, however, when the city, knowing it needed a qualified person to help McMillan, asked Jevne if he was interested in working as an apprentice while also working his way through the Northwest Lineman College Lineworker Certification Program. He jumped at the chance. (As part of the program, MMUA staff provides hands-on training and facilitates tests.)

Grant Peterson as a deputy clerk, freeing up Mortenson to focus more on economic development. That can be difficult in any city, but the work done over the last few years in Warren certainly make further development a real possibility.

The magazine features a photo of Hometown BioEnergy on the cover of its December issue.

This unique project uses the process of anaerobic digestion of food processing and agricultural waste products to produce methane gas, which powers turbines to produce electricity. This innovative way to produce renewable energy is a part of the electricity profile of the 12 municipal electric systems which are members of the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA). The 8 MW facility began operations in December 2013.

“This significant award recognizes MMPA’s innovation, community focus, and support for renewable energy,” said Kelsey Dillon, Vice President of BioPower for Avant Energy, MMPA’s long term management partner and developer of the project. Avant provides a wide range of services to the Agency under long-term contracts, including strategic management, day-to-day operations, power plant development, energy trading, accounting and finance, and regulatory compliance.

Dillon said, “We’re generating valuable, dispatchable on-peak electricity. When the power is needed and its value is highest, we draw biogas from storage to run the generators.”

She pointed out that the ability to dispatch the power when it’s needed is a significant advantage to this facility and is complementary to other, intermittent renewable resources such as solar and wind.

Electrical output from the plant is consumed locally in Le Sueur, an MMPA member community, and is part of the renewable energy generation portfolio of all MMPA members. The 44 MW Oak Glen Wind Farm near Blooming Prairie began operating in 2011, and MMPA also operates Faribault Energy Park generating facility, which is powered by natural gas.

The Hometown BioEnergy facility also fits with MMPA’s mission to provide reliable, competitively-priced energy to members, Dillon said. MMPA members include municipal utilities in Anoka, Arlington, Brownton, Buffalo, Chaska, East Grand Forks, Elk River, Le Sueur, North St. Paul, Olivia, Shakopee and Winthrop. Avant Energy, a Minneapolis-based energy management company, provides management services to MMPA including both strategic and day-to-day management.
In June 2014, EPA proposed emission guidelines for carbon dioxide emissions from existing fossil fuel-fired power plants, invoking its authority under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act (CAA). The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in early December announced plans for a series of technical conferences it will hold related to the EPA’s proposed plan. Conferences will be held in February and March.

Among the issues to be explored: electric reliability considerations; identifying and addressing infrastructure needs and; potential implications for FERC-jurisdictional markets.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Dec. 30 approved four stipulation and consent agreements between the Office of Enforcement and the following entities: Twin Cities Power-Canada Ltd., Twin Cities Energy LLC and Twin Cities Power LLC. The companies are based in Minnesota. FERC enforcement staff concluded that the Twin Cities entities and the traders violated the commission’s anti-manipulation rule by manipulating electricity prices in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) from January 2010 through January 2011. The Twin Cities entities admitted to the violations and agreed to pay a civil penalty of $2,500,000 and disgorgement of $978,186 plus interest.

2015 is expected to be the final year of construction related to the CapX2020 transmission project, with the scheduled completion of the Brookings County-Hampton 345-kV line. The $662 million project stretch-250 miles and includes 1,435 structures.

Xcel Energy owns 68 percent of the project, and partners include Great River Energy, Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Missouri River Energy Services and Otter Tail Power.

An administrative law judge Dec. 26 recommended a reduced rate increase for Xcel Energy electric custom-ers. The company had requested a $291 million, 10.4 percent rate increase over two years to cover investments in carbon-free energy and upgrades to power plants and the electric grid. The utility, at the urging of regulators, reduced that request by $41 million.

The judge recommended a return on equity of 9.77 percent; Xcel requested 10.25 percent. Customers have been paying a 4.6 percent inter-terim rate since Jan. 1, 2014. The proposed increase is the sixth for the company in the last eight years and follows a 3.8 percent in-crease in 2013.

Minnesota Power ceased electrical generation at four of its coal-fired power plants for two months in 2014 due to low coal stockpiles. Opera-tions were resumed at two of the plants beginning in late November and the company said all units would be back in operation by January. The company said it took the steps to avoid the problems it faced last year, when rail operators failed to deliver the coal needed to sustain operations.

The Coyote Station power plant near Beulah, North Dakota, went offline follow-ing a Dec. 4 fire, but crews and contractors brought the plant back on line by Christmas time. The early-morn-ing fire stated in one of two feeder pumps that connect the boiler to the generating turbine. Nobody was hurt. Local crews and a team from Dakota Gasification responded and extinguished the blaze.

Enbridge Energy held a series of public meetings in December to explain plans for a proposed reconstruction of a pipeline from Canada to Superior. The 1,031 mile pipeline would replace a line built in 1968 and carry Canadian oil to Superior, Wisc. The proposed route is similar to the company’s proposed Sandpiper line. Public hearings are sched-uled for that line beginning in January. A number of groups have expressed envi-ronmental concerns.

Mower County’s sixth wind farm project—the

Pleasant Valley Wind Farm—is under construction and is expected to be produc-ing energy later this year.

The board of directors at the Midcontinent In-ependent System Operator on Dec. 11 unanimously approved a transmission expansion plan that includes $90 369 newly approved projects totaling $2.5 billion in trans-mission projects. The approved expansion plan also marks the first MISO transmission plan-ning cycle to include the full participation of the MISO South region. The Southern region accounts for $359.2 million in new projects.

The MISO South region includes the following transmission owners and local balancing authorities: Entergy, Cleco, Lafayette Utilities System, Louisiana Energy and Power Author-ity, Louisiana Generating, South Mississippi Electric Power Association and East Texas Electric Cooperative. Flooding in 2012 dam-aged Minnesota Power’s 71-megawatt Thomson Hydro Station, but the plant was restored to service in November.

The plant has been pro-ducing electricity from the St. Louis River for nearly 110 years. All six turbines suffered significant dam-age in the flood and repairs included extensive work in the powerhouse and water diversion facilities. The company believes the $90 million project will lead to another century of carbon-free electric production from the facility.
HELP WANTED

Line person &
Power Plant Operator
The City of Lake Crystal/
Lake Crystal Municipal Utili-
ties has an opening in the
Electric Department for a
Line Person and Power Plant
Operator. Applicants must
have a MN Driver’s License
with a CDL, Journeyman
lineworkers license or cer-
ification or ability to work
wards such a license or certi-
fication. Pay Range $22.30 to
$31.86. Job description and
applications are available at
City Hall, 100 E Robinson
St, Lake Crystal MN 56055
or on-line at www.ci.lake-
crystal.mn.us. Position is
open until filled. Priority
will be given to applications
received on or before Janu-
ary 30, 2015.

Marketing/Customer
Relations Director
The Shakopee Public Utili-
ties Commission is accepting
applications for the position of
Marketing/Customer Re-
lations Director. Consider-
atation will be given to those
candidates that are knowl-
edgeable of or possess experi-
ence in the following:
• Prior experience in cus-
tomer service, customer bill-
ing and collections processes,
key accounts administration,
and state conservation im-
provement programs
• Managerial experience
with strong leadership skills
• Development, establish-
ment, and maintenance of
customer service operating
policies
• Experience in preparing
and managing operating
budgets, capital improve-
ment plans, and marketing
programs
• Excellent written and oral
communication skills
• Bachelor degree preferred
or a minimum of two years
of college with experience in
key account/marketing ad-
ministration, customer ser-
vice, and management expe-
rience
• Preference for extensive
work and management expe-
rience with municipal utili-
ties or related fields.
This position reports to the
Shakopee Public Utilities
Manager. Shakopee Public
Utilities provides electric
and water service to ap-
proximately 16,600 electric
customers and 11,000 water
customers in the City of Sha-
kopee, Minnesota and adja-
cent areas. This position has
management responsibility
for approximately a staff of
eleven. Interested persons
must submit an application
and resume to Shakopee Pub-
lic Utilities, Attn: Human
Resources, PO Box 470, Sha-

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Accountants and Consultants

Attorneys

McGRANN
SHEA
CARNIVAL
STRAUSSL & LAAM

McGRANN
SHEA
CARNIVAL
STRAUSSL & LAAM

Electrical Equipment and Suppliers

 Engineers and Engineering Firms

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Consulting Engineers & Surveyors

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Wastewater, Transportation, Water Resources,
Landscape Architecture and Land Surveying.

Fourteen offices service the Upper Midwest
www.bolton-menk.com
Moose Lake Water & Light is an equal opportunity employer. Questions may be directed to Deb Mohelaki @ 218-485-4100 or by email debmohelaki@mluw.us.

Wastewater Superintendent

The City of Pierre is accepting qualified applications for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent position. The Superintendent is responsible for directing & supervising the operation, maintenance & repair of the wastewater treatment facilities and lift stations. Individuals should have knowledge of plumbing, electrical, electronics, pumps & motor controls & must have knowledge in the operation of Aerobic Digestion and SCADA systems. The Superintendent will: assist in developing the department budget; work with management & other agencies & departments; & must possess strong administrative, oral & written communication skills. The Superintendent should have a minimum of 2 years supervisory experience in the wastewater treatment field, & 2 years supervisory experience in a management role. Salary: $30,000 – $35,000.

Application & job description are available online at: www.cityofpierre.org. Open until filled.

Building Code Official/ Zoning Administrator/ Engineering Technician

The city of Breckenridge, population of 3559 located in West Central Minnesota, is searching for a Building Code Official/Zoning Administrator. The position is responsible for the inspection of properties for compliance with state & local regulations, codes, ordinances & laws. Will issue building permits & ensure they are accurately carried out. Will do some surveying, designing, & drafting of public improvement projects. Starting wage from $31,424 – $54,555 with a maximum salary of $61,403 negotiable upon qualifications & experience. Job description & supplemental questionnaire are directed upon request to lbuch@breckenridgemn.gov. Application available online at 218-643-1431. Position open until filled.

Energy Services

Delano Municipal Utilities - Energy Services

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>763-979-5257</th>
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</table>

Customer Engagement
Technical and Predictive Maintenance Services:
- Demand & Supply Analysis
- Power Quality Testing
- Energy Logging, Measurement & Verification

Wanted to Buy

Digger Derrick truck

Any size Digger Derrick truck, with a lifting capacity of 10,000-12,000 lbs. at the 10’ reach. If you have one for sale, call Superintendent Ron Melson at 507-427-2999, ext. 6, or 507-822-0212.

Steam Meters

Cadillac Steam Condensate meters, parts for sizes A or B. Please contact Bob Engman at (218) 748-7540 – Virginia Public Utilities.

Surge Arrestors

UTILITIES PLUS ENERGY SERVICES, INC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREET ADDRESS</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66 (ABB POLIM'S SURGE ARRESTORS) STYLE: Q1025A01A RATING: 12 KV RMS MCOV 10.2 KV RMS WEIGHT: 22 LBS DATE: 09/18/2013 STATION CLASS 3 PRICE: $1,380.00</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please contact Jamie Foster at 763-441-1200 or jfoster@utilplus.com.

Mobile Substation

Shakopee Public Utilities has a trailer mounted Westinghouse 7500 KVA, HV 115000 volt Delta with Taps, LV 4160Y/2400V X 13800Y/7970 X 2400Y/1380 Mobile Substation with a Westinghouse 115kV, 3 Phase Fused Switch Trailer. This Mobile Substation was rebuilt in 1988. It was last in service during 2010. Interested Parties should contact Marvin Athmann, Electrical Superintendent at (952) 233-1502, or by email: mathmann@shakopeeutilities.com

For a complete and up-to-date listing, see the ‘Classifieds’ section at www.mmua.org.

January 2015 The Resource/11
Minnesota law sets standards for electric distribution utilities and stipulates that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission adopt standards for safety, reliability, and service quality for state-regulated distribution utilities. Municipal electric utilities are required to report to their local governing boards. There are three main annual reporting requirements: the safety report; the reliability report; and the service quality report.

The state’s investor-owned utilities recently filed their reports with the MPUC and the Commission on Dec. 4 established reliability goals.

The investor-owned utilities report ‘storm normalized’ numbers. Storm-normalized data means data that has been adjusted to neutralize the effects of outages due to major storms.

This article covers Xcel’s reliability report. The other 10U reports will be covered in next month’s newsletter.

In 2013, Xcel’s Southeast region experienced several significant substation outages that negatively affected CAIDI. The specialized personnel required to restore service was outside the normal service territory attending to other duties. The travel time necessary to reach these substation outages negatively affected CAIDI. The company has begun training additional personnel to perform substation outage activities. The company also started to use contractors for some appointments so that the workforce remains at a steady level to meet non-outage customer expectations.

To improve CAIDI numbers, the Distribution Control Centers will isolate the fault, restore as many customers as possible through switching, and then patrol the rest of the circuit to finish repairs for the remaining customers.

Over the past six years, Xcel met the standards 41 of 72 times, or 57 percent. Xcel stated that “[d]ue to the fact that these goals are five-year averages, we would expect to achieve target results 50 percent of the time and miss the target 50 percent of the time.”

Need to assist lineworkers? MMUA offers ‘Cross Training’

This course is designed for employees in other departments that would assist lineworkers on a call-out or in an emergency.

Does your city or municipal utility need a competent ground person—who can recognize tools, equipment and hazards—to assist and help keep the lineworker efficient and safe?

To help you meet that need, MMUA is pleased to offer a Basic Cross Training School. This school will be held Feb. 25-27 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall.

The class is very basic. It is designed for employees in other departments that would assist lineworkers on a call-out or in an emergency.

Instructors are Pete Wyffels and Gary Greenwald from MMUA's Cross Training School.

• Introduction to Powerline Maintenance
• Personal and Job Safety
• Overhead & Underground Equipment
• Grounding, Rope, Rigging
• Meters & Meter Safety
• Distribution Transformers & Equipment
• Troubleshooting (Primary & Secondary)
• Basic Cross Training School.

Need to assist lineworkers? MMUA offers ‘Cross Training’

The date and times of the course are:

2. Personal and Job Safety
3. Basic Electrical Theory
4. Overhead & Underground Construction
5. Grounding, Rope, Rigging
6. Meters & Meter Safety
7. Distribution Transformers & Equipment
8. Troubleshooting (Primary & Secondary)

Luncheon Buffet at Hotel
1:15 Shuttle Buses to Front Steps of Capitol
1:30-4:00 Meet with Your Local Legislators
4:00-6:30 Legislative Reception

To invite your legislators to join us at the reception for some social time.

The conference is not just about visiting the Capitol. We have a full slate of informative sessions to bring you up to date on our industry and where it’s headed.

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