Improvements latest in a very long line . . .

Granite Falls upgrades its hydroelectric plant

by Steve Downer

Work is winding down on a $2 million project to upgrade the Granite Falls Municipal Hydroelectric Plant. The improvements are the latest in a long line—the city has operated a Minnesota River hydroelectric plant for over a century.

It’s a significant resource. The hydro plant, at times, meets approximately 30 percent of the city’s total electrical need. The plant contains three hydro turbines and generators. The two smaller turbines are rated at 250 kilowatts (kw). The larger turbine is rated at 750 kw. A 2013 inspection was determined that it would cost an additional $200,000 per year to re-place the electricity generated by these units. New turbines were installed. The generators were re-wound and placed back in service. The 750-kw turbine was installed as part of a mid-1980s major renovation and was found to be in good condition.

“The power we produce with the hydro-electric turbines is cheaper and cleaner than purchasing electricity from our wholesale supplier, American Electric Power (AEP).” said BPU President Lucy Nesheim. “The AEP offer accomplishes that goal. It is clear that accepting this low-cost offer is in the best interests of BPU, our customers and community.”

BPU’s current wholesale power supply contract with Minnesota Power (MP) runs through June 2019. The AEP contract begins July 1, 2019 and will run through June 30, 2025. BPU has purchased wholesale electricity from MP since 1912. The two entities will maintain a business relationship, as MP will continue to provide electric transmission service to BPU.

“BPU serves 7,900 electric customers in the city of Brainerd and part of Baxter. BPU was formed in 1892 and has provided reliable, competitively-priced electric service since that time. BPU owns a local hydroelectric generating plant and also provides water and wastewater service. AEP serves nearly 5.4 million customers in 11 states, and is one of America’s largest electricity generators. BPU is its first wholesale customer in Minnesota.”

Bob Elston of Sleepy Eye Public Utilities participated in a small group discussion at the T&O Conference. Standing in the left back is presenter Kit Welchlin.

Brainerd selects AEP as electric power provider

The Brainerd Public Utilities Commission (BPU) Dec. 29 voted to accept a wholesale power supply offer from American Electric Power (AEP).

The decision was a result of analyzing a variety of offers and in-depth discussions, the decision was made to go with AEP.

“The goal was to reduce and stabilize our power supply expense by accessing low-cost power in the wholesale power market,” said BPU President Lucy Nesheim. “The AEP offer accomplishes that goal. It is clear that accepting this low-cost offer is in the best interests of BPU, our customers and community.”

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MMUA members benefit from meetings, well beyond the planned agenda

I participated in. We had our agenda. Prior to the meeting, member representatives entered into a discussion over some topic of particular relevance to it. They had nothing to do with our agenda. This may have been the most important issue the people around that table were going to discuss that day.

One of the best things about the T&O is seeing the utility people meeting during breaks and after hours. Information is being exchanged and bonds are being formed. I look to see old friends get together again. But it is particularly heartening when the exchanges involve younger people, who are forming new relationships and will carry the position of public power forward in the years to come.

I have in my possession an MMUA directory (Volume 1, Number 1), dated June 1933. There is much food for thought in this little booklet. For today, I will let these snippets suffice:

"Since the inception of this organization in June 1931 at St. Cloud, much good has come from this organization to the Municipal Utilities of Minnesota and especially to those who have been members and taken an active part. . . . It is very easy to foresee wonderful accomplishments provided the utility men look and become interested in Municipal Utilities beyond the boundary lines of their own immediate city.

"We cannot live unto ourselves, many particular problems and experiences are common to us all and the problems or experience of one property if given to another may, in a great many instances, save that property hundreds of thousands of dollars. Oftimes the same problem is solved differently by different men and when these solutions are cited through an organization of this nature, they cannot help but be a benefit to a great many of us."

This purpose remains for MMUA. It is clear, from the above, that this purpose cannot be fulfilled without the active support and involvement of the utility people.

MMUA member support and involvement, not only for the association but for the other municipal properties around the state, was displayed at the T&O Conference.

The issues may have been different, but the need for the municipal utility people to get together, talk, share information and develop relationships, remains the same. That was the real value.

F.S. Posthumous thanks to Mr. G.E. Basom of Fairmont, MMUA’s first president, for putting his thoughts down on paper in 1933. They remain relevant today.

-Steve Doaner

Editor’s note: The following originally appeared as a blog in the ‘News’ section at www.mmua.org

The more I learn and observe, the more I am convinced that issues come and go but human nature stays the same.

This thought follows the MMUA Technical and Operations (T&O) Conference, held Dec. 15-17 in St. Cloud. While MMUA does its best to present a program that will be of benefit to the membership, I cannot help but think the real value of these meetings is simply to get the utility people together and let them meet and talk together.

This thought first occurred to me during one of the first MMUA committee meetings I attended. For today, I will let these snippets suffice:

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Natural gas cooperative starts service to Mahnomen, Twin Valley

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Dec. 17 approved a request from Community Co-ops of Lake Park (CCLP) for exemption from certain state laws regulating natural gas utilities, because it will be operating as a small utility under franchise to the cities of Mahnomen and Twin Valley. CCLP will also be serving in parts of four townships in Norman County and four in Mahnomen County.

CCLP provides various services, including propane and fuel delivery.

No natural gas service was available in these communities. CCLP worked with the municipalities to develop the system, with the understanding that it would be regulated by the cities under Minnesota’s statutory exemption for small gas utility franchises.

Each municipality has granted CCLP a non-exclusive franchise. CCLP is currently providing service. CCLP and the municipalities have developed a single system rate based on system-wide costs.

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Public power needs to stay fit as Congress is showing signs of moving again

by Joy Ditto
APPA Sr. V.P., legislative and political affairs

January is here and many of us are returning to gym routines left by the wayside. Muscle memory is probably helping us rebound, even if we’re initially short of breath on the treadmill.

After a lengthy period of near-paralysis, Congress, in late 2015, started to get back into a routine and flex its legislative muscles again. The result: notably bipartisan energy legislation aimed at electric utilities cleared the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The full House approved similar legislation, although in a less bipartisan way than the Senate. Congress approved and the President signed a long-term transportation funding bill that folded in key APPA priorities.

Public power was able to move its priorities forward in this process because APPA members, grassroots advocates, and staff in Washington never quit our routines, as tempting as it may have been to take a break. In 2016, we are focused on two bills that tee up items important to public power — H.R. 8, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act (passed by the House in 2015) and S. 8, the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 (passed by the Senate Energy Committee in 2015).

Both bills have pending provisions that give the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission a role in reviewing major federal agency rulemakings that might affect electric reliability. (Another provision will spare utilities from choosing between reliability and compliance with other laws.)

Both bills contain important hydropower licensing reform measures to facilitate early coordination and provide additional resources where needed. FERC is designated as the lead agency to coordinate project licensing or relicensing. Once the application is filed, FERC is directed to work with other agencies to develop a master schedule for all required reviews and authorizations. It will no longer be acceptable for an agency to delay a decision indefinitely.

While these issues are shaping up in a favorable way, public power advocates should consider taking a course in self-defense at the gym as the hydropower relicensing legislation will face environmental community scrutiny once the bill reaches the Senate floor. The sooner new hydropower licenses can be approved, the faster electric utilities can implement the more stringent environmental requirements under the new license.

Another fight looming on the Senate floor is about distributed generation interconnections, particularly rooftop solar. A number of bills and amendments proposed in 2015 use the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act to insert the federal government into what should be state and public utility power decisions about what distributed generation to interconnect with, and at what cost.

At the state and local levels, distributed generation interconnection and retemarketing issues are controversial enough. The strictly for-profit motives of solar companies that rely on deep subsidies through state net metering plans clash with public power’s not-for-profit values. Public power is concerned that, where net metering programs provide excessive rebates, customers without rooftop solar are subsidizing solar customers with rooftop solar.

Such language did not make its way into the Senate Energy Committee-passed bill, but it will be an issue for Democrats on the Senate floor. The House approved an amendment filed by Representative Castor (D-FL) to allow community solar projects to interconnect with utilities and have the electricity credited directly to consumers that own a share of the system.

The amendment is redundant under current law, and bypasses the model in states without retail competition to allow third-party solar developers to sell direct to consumers.

Public power advocates must use the_gap created by the Senate to educate the Senate on the progress public power is making on solar offerings. We must maintain our head start and make the difference with public power’s ability to make decisions will be unfair to customers.

We will also need long-distance aerobic training to protect our right to self-supply our own power generation. Provisions to this effect are missing from the House and Senate bills and must be included to ensure that the ability of public power systems to allow third-party generation resources to members is not impaired by mandatory capacity markets in the mid-Atlantic and northeastern Regional Transmission Organizations. We must ensure that RTO’s mandatory capacity markets do not spread to other regions of the country without the express, unanimous approval of the states in that region.

Public power utilities in regions with mandatory capacity markets have experienced high prices and have not seen new generation these markets were supposed to provide. They could even pay a penalty (and be forced to pay twice) for self-supply.

We also must stop those who want RTOs to report on whether assets bid into the market meet certain performance requirements, feed back market clearing prices to some generators at the expense of a true, well-performing market.

APPA made considerable headway in 2015 in educating Members of Congress and keeping the worst language on these topics out of the House bill. We now seek champions to advance these concerns in the Senate.

The presidential elections in 2016 may set Congress back in its routine. However, the progress made in 2015 by public power shows it pays to never rest, and never abandon the gym.

Public power advocates will be polishing our self-defense and aerobic capacities throughout 2016 to maintain progress on key issues. We want to ensure that distributed generation decisions do not become federal decisions, and that poor market constructs do not impair our ability to serve our customers.

Let’s stay fit and prepared!
Marilynn Ogden has decided to end her service on the East Grand Forks Water and Light Commission after 27 years. Her last regular Commission meeting, serving as Chair, was December 17, 2015.

Ogden has a professional accounting background, and was knowledgeable in many parts of the utility. She had an active role over the years in pay equity compliance and wage negotiations.

Water & Light achieved a number of milestones during her time on the commission, including recovery from the 1997 flood, construction of two new substations and a new Distribution Service Center. She was also instrumental in making the decision for the Department to become a member of the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency.

Bill Mars became mayor of Shakopee in January. He has stepped down as Shakopee Public Utilities Commission president, but will continue to serve on the Commission until his term expires March 31.

After more than 32 years, Dick Thynes is retiring from the Willmar Municipal Utilities. Thynes began his career with WMU as an Apprentice Lineman on July 5, 1983. He started as an Apprentice Lineman and retired as Line Distribution Supervisor. Thynes was a very important part of the WMU and will be greatly missed by all. His final day with the utility was Jan. 15.

Willmar Municipal Utilities has taken over full maintenance responsibilities for two utility-owned wind turbines. The utility anticipated record turbine output at the end of 2015.

City of Keewatin employees will no longer have to punch a time clock. The city council unanimously voted to discontinue the practice in December. The move will save the city $1,500 a year in software costs and a $400 monthly charge for phone lines.

A new power line into the city was put into service Dec. 16. A power outage of several hours was endured at that time.

The Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board has granted $250,000 to the City of Nashwauk for costs related to development of a new residential subdivision. The city was also successful in obtaining $256,000 in state bonding for the project.

The Wadena City Council in December approved an approximate electric rate increase of three percent per year for the next four years. Rising wholesale rates drove the increase.

Water and sewer rates will also increase over each of the next three years. The total increase is approximately 40 percent. The money is needed to pay for infrastructure improvements, increased operating costs and to meet environmental regulations.

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission Nov. 24 approved its 2016 budget, including a 2.5 percent decrease in the residential natural gas rate and a three percent residential electric rate increase. The electric rate increase reflects a six percent increase in wholesale electric costs.

Commercial and industrial customers will see a two percent natural gas rate decrease.

The Hibbing Public Utilities Commission recently updated its customer service policies. Among the changes is a requirement that the property owner is now responsible for payment of all utilities to leased or rented properties.

The Commission also approved a four percent rate increase for electric, water and steam. Half of the increase went into effect Jan. 1, the second half is effective July 1. It is the first electric and water increase since 2009.

Bids for phase one of the project are expected later this winter. The city acquired 127 acres for the project, from Itasca County, in June 2011.

Nashwauk’s Public Utilities Commission recently approved a thermographic and ultrasound survey of its electric distribution system.

The City of Nashwauk for costs related to development of a new residential subdivision. The city was also successful in obtaining $256,000 in state bonding for the project.
Agency reveals new name, logo and website

Blue Earth, MN – December 23, 2015 – Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (CMMPA) has changed its consulting division’s name from Utilities Plus to Central Municipal Power Agency/Services (CMPAS – pronounced “compass”). Although the name changes, the agency will continue conducting electric portfolio management and consulting business for public power utilities in Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

While serving as a municipal, consumer-owned, non-profit joint power agency, the name change to Central Municipal Power Agency/Services better reflects its relationships and presence in several states. CMPAS provides individualized consultative planning and procurement services for power supply, transmission, and MISO market services as both a power agency and utility services organization.

“As we grow and serve a larger geographical area, our name needs to reflect the municipal utilities we serve,” said CEO Steve Thompson. “We wanted a name that reflects our members and affiliates while at the same time highlights our electricity portfolio management and consulting services.”

Along with the renaming, CMPAS unveiled a new logo and website (www.CMPAS.org) that includes in-depth project and service information, details about agency membership and affiliate member services, as well as information about rebates and other resources for electric consumers. CMPAS’s full members include municipal utilities in Blue Earth, Delano, Fairfax, Granite Falls, Janesville, Kasson, Kenyon, Mountain Lake, Sleepy Eye, Springfield, and Winona.

“Central Municipal Power Agency/Services will continue to serve as a municipal, consumer-owned, non-profit agency that helps municipal utilities identify strategies that minimize wholesale power costs, manage future risks, and maintain stable, competitive rates,” said Mountain Lake City Administrator and CMPAS Board Chair Wendy Meyer. “The Agency remains committed to helping municipal utility boards address their full or partial requirement needs while allowing them flexibility and autonomy to customize their own electric energy portfolio.”

In a consultative role, CMPAS offers individualized strategic, technical services that support municipal utility partnerships. Through transmission ownership or electric power contracts, these partnerships help municipals offset operational costs and stabilize rates for their consumers. The tag-line “Municipal Compass to Power” further describes the services and partnerships CMPAS offers to guide electric utilities in navigating the complexities of the power industry.

Over the Agency’s 28-year history, CMPAS has attained transmission ownership status in the MISO grid, negotiated contracts for power purchases and other long-term projects, initiated coalitions to study power supply options, and arranged for excess energy capacity sales.
Three months. The city also estimated at six years and part of the project alone is in revenue. Payback on this in energy generation and net produce a 14 percent increase in efficiency is expected to turbines. However, while operating one or two than the 750-kw unit, the city can operate at a lower flow greater flexibility in its electric controls will apportion the available water level across the turbines.

During periods of high flow, the city will be able to generate electricity by running all three turbines. At lower flows, because the two smaller units can operate at a lower flow than the 750 kw unit, the city can continue to produce power, while operating one or two turbines.

This efficiency is expected to produce a 14 percent increase in energy generation and net the city an annual $35,000 in revenue. Payback on this part of the project alone is estimated at six years and three months. The city also expects a significant decrease in maintenance expenses, due to a smoother functioning system.

The dam is 300 feet wide. The drop in elevation at the dam is approximately 18 feet. The original dam at the site was built in the late 1800s to supply mechanical power to a mill. The city first harnessed hydropower in 1901. A new power house was built in 1911 and the run-of-the-river hydro plant, continually upgraded over the years, has operated since that time. The dam, spillways and generating equipment were modernized during a $1.2 million project in 1984-86.

Illustrious electric history
Granite Falls (population 2,870) once supplied electricity to a wide area. Neighboring towns, still without electricity 20 years after Granite Falls was wired, asked to buy current. Maynard took service in 1911 and Clara City and Wood Lake in 1913. Farms along the line were energized. In Stony Run township, a farm cooperative was formed and built its own lines and bought power from Granite Falls. This is believed to be the first rural electric cooperative in the country.

As it has throughout most of its history, Granite Falls also has additional electric generation. A three-unit, 6-megawatt reciprocating internal combustion engine plant was constructed in 2003. This plant is away from the river, tucked away in an industrial area on the city’s west side. The city is upgrading emissions controls at the plant at an estimated price of $150,000.

Granite Falls is a member of the Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency and also has an allocation of federal hydropower from the Western Area Power Administration.

The local electric distribution system was hit hard in recent years. A spring flood in 1997 was followed by an F4 tornado in 2000 and another flood in spring 2001. The twister destroyed between 500-600 trees and a third of the homes in the city sustained damage (a dozen simply disappeared). About a quarter of the municipal electric distribution system was damaged, including 300 poles. Damage was estimated at $1.2 million.

The distribution system is in good shape now, said Superintendent Don Reznechek.

Following the 2001 flood, a new transmission line from the hydro plant across the river was built. A new flood wall also has been built. Some river-side homes were torn down and businesses and city hall itself have relocated.

Granite Falls has operated a municipal electric utility since 1891. It maintains its own distribution system with a three-man electric crew. Reznechek has been with Granite Falls 39 years and has been superintendent for 31 of those. Notable new developments include a new county jail and nursing home.

Millwright Bob Mashak, Granite Falls Superintendent Don Reznechek and Jerry Mashak, from left to right, in the hydro power house. The Mashak brothers work for the hydro project contractor.

The hydro transmission line was upgraded after the 2001 flood.
Thanks extended to MMUA’s 2016 Annual Sponsors

The initial offering of MMUA’s Annual Sponsorships proved very popular last year, but met with even greater support for 2016. The MMUA Annual Sponsorship offers a convenient one-stop payment that allows a company to participate in our most popular events and have a significant presence in our most visible communications vehicles. MMUA thanks those associate members who renewed their annual sponsorships for 2016, and those who signed-up for the first time.

Sponsorship benefits include increased visibility with MMUA members and recognition as an MMUA Annual Sponsor:

• on the MMUA website;
• on banners at MMUA events;
• in MMUA publications. Additional benefits of becoming an MMUA Annual Sponsor include:

• One 2-column by 5-inch Resource newsletter ad,
with the option of upgrading to a larger size;
• Complimentary exhibit space (including power) and two complimentary registrations at either the Summer Conference or Technical and Operations Conference trade shows;
• Two meeting registrations at either the Summer Conference or T&O Conference.

The total value of the Resource ad, trade show exhibit space and meeting registrations is $1,870. So you can see that the $1,500 sponsorship package represents a solid value.

To sign-up as an MMUA Annual Sponsor, go to the Sponsors/Become a Sponsor link on our website. For more information, particularly related to advertising, call Steve Downer at 763-746-0702. Questions in regards to meetings should be directed to Rita Kelly at 763-746-0707.

The 2016 sponsorship price remains at $1,500. Late sign-ups accepted!

T&O: continued from front page

petition to the North Pole translate to the workplace opened Thursday’s meeting. The presenter was polar explorer John Huston. Mary Athmann of Shakopee Public Utilities, along with Willetts, Jack Kegel and Rita Kelly of MMUA updated the group on the MMUA website, preparations for the 2016 APPA Line-workers Rodeo, which will be held April 2, 2016 in Shakopee.

MMUA staffers Kegel, Jagusch, Bill Black and Amanda Duerr closed the show with an update on all things MMUA.

MMUA thanks all of its associate members who generously sponsored breaks, reception hors d’oeuvres, beverages and were part of the trade show. We also thank all who attended and the municipal utilities that sent them.

Meeting Sponsors:


Darwin Anderson, Redwood Falls Public Utilities (December 2014)
Nick Fast, Springfield Public Utilities
Mitchell Girtz, Elk River Municipal Utilities
Justin Hinnenkamp, Sauk Centre Public Utilities
Tim Howard, Spring Valley Public Utilities
Matthew Jacobson, Spring Valley, Public Utilities
Zachary Johnson, Elk River Municipal Utilities (December 2014)
John Manz, Springfield Public Utilities
Matthew Schwartz, Elk River Municipal Utilities
Shane Simonson, Spring Valley Public Utilities
Doug Walton, Springfield Public Utilities
Warren Willcox, Glencoe Light & Power.

The meeting also featured a brief presentation to recognize recent grades of Northwest Lineman College. They include:

Joe Whealy of T&R Supply, Don Qualley of Lake Park Public Utilities and Scott Grabe of the City of Henning, from left to right, visited during the trade show.

Dale Lyon of Melrose Public Utilities visited with former co-worker Tracy Ekola, now of SEH, at the trade show.

Steve Korte and Ty Severson of Cargill, visited with MMUA President Troy Adams of Elk River and Joe Steffel of Buffalo (left to right).

Richard Roen of Locators and Supplies talked shop with Steve Scholz of Melrose.

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January 2016 The Resource/7
Eight more municipal employees recently completed the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association Firstline Supervision/Leadership course through Central Lakes College. The graduates are: Todd Graves of Willmar, Paul Twite of Delano, Jeremy Carter and Myron Polzin of Hutchinson, Brad Gunderson and Todd Keach of Rochester, Shakopee’s Cody Schuette and Matt Maiers of Stewart. Nearly 300 municipal employees have completed the leadership series which is offered at CLC’s Brainerd campus and MMUA headquarters in Plymouth.

The utility management program was developed in 1988 and has graduates in MMUA member cities all over Minnesota. The program is a cooperative effort, between MMUA and the CLC Business and Industry Center, designed to provide the leadership skills needed in challenging times. The 68-hour course is offered in four three-day sessions over two years. Participants work with and learn from each other, trained facilitators and instructors, using the internationally recognized Achieve Global leadership materials and especially created units with a utility focus.

Public works directors, fi-
nance and office managers, customer service personnel, utility superintendents, crew supervisors, parks directors, and other municipal employees from municipal power and water/wastewater departments have benefited from this highly interactive program that emphasizes core leadership skills, performance management, communication, and handling challenging situations.

Past graduates from these cities include: Dick Thynes, Czech, Randy Blake, Jerry Troy Zwilling, Randy Iverson, Steve Wearda and Stacy Stein of Willmar; Troy Zvoling, Randy Czech, Randy Blake, Jerry Ebert, Tony Hand, Corey Harneung, Teri Hofmeister, Jon Hombach, Dave Hunstad, Bruce Krueger, Dan Lang, Jared Martig, Brian Mehr, Jo Sifferath, Nate Smutka, Dale Sturges, Steve Sturpis, Bill Juaire, and Lonnie Weerts of Hutchinson; Mike Heimer, Jon Lenn, Linda Bly, Dale Olafson, Steve Fisk, Peter Bennett, Brian Nash, Dan Quimby, Randy Reinhardt, Mike Sommer, Steve Johnson, Kevin Meyers, Tom St. Marie, Bjorn Olson, and Mike Wilde of Rochester; Brad Gustafson, Roger Hennen, Mike Enright, and Justin Rotert of Shakopee.

Associate

MMUA has been joined by two new associate members: Anderson Underground and Trenchers Plus.

Anderson Underground provides underground utility contracting services. The company is located at: 4985 Quail Road NE Sauk Rapids, MN 56379 Telephone 320-203-1830 Fax 320-203-1831 www.andersonug.com

Main contact is Nick Anderson, President. He can be reached at 320-280-4938 or email nick@andersonug.com

Trenchers Plus, Inc., is the distributor of Utility and Environmental equipment for: trenching, plowing, directional boring, vacuum excavating and jetting equipment, forestry mowers, brush chippers, stump grinders, utility loaders, cable/pole/transport trailers, power pole pullers/setters, generators, and air compressors. We have select units available for your rental needs as well. Manufacturers represented consist of “Toro” (Underground & Construction Division), RingOMatic, Rayco, MultiOne USA, Morbank, Easy Spot, Felling, Butler, Brooks Brothers, Redi-Haul, Magnum, Ingersoll Rand, Sullair, Doosan, and more.

The company is located at 2306 West Highway 13, Burnsville, MN 55337. Telephone 952-890-6000 or 888-203-1419. Fax 952-890-4563. www.trenchersplus.com

Main contact is John Rabideaux, Store Manager. He can be reached at Direct 952-890-4563 or Cell 612-868-5646. Email john@trenchersplus.com

Eight more join the ranks of Firstline Supervision leadership course graduates

Cody Schuette, left, and Matt Maiers are recent Firstline graduates. Bill Hawkinson, Brian Peters, Dennis Nesges, Odean Iverson, Steve Wearda and Stacy Stein of Willmar; Troy Zvoling, Randy Czech, Randy Blake, Jerry Ebert, Tony Hand, Corey Harneung, Teri Hofmeister, Jon Hombach, Dave Hunstad, Bruce Krueger, Dan Lang, Jared Martig, Brian Mehr, Jo Sifferath, Nate Smutka, Dale Sturges, Steve Sturpis, Bill Juaire, and Lonnie Weerts of Hutchinson; Mike Heimer, Jon Lenn, Linda Bly, Dale Olafson, Steve Fisk, Peter Bennett, Brian Nash, Dan Quimby, Randy Reinhardt, Mike Sommer, Steve Johnson, Kevin Meyers, Tom St. Marie, Bjorn Olson, and Mike Wilde of Rochester; Brad Gustafson, Roger Hennen, Mike Enright, and Justin Rotert of Shakopee.

A big batch of graduates recently came from a group attending their final training in Plymouth, including Paul Twite, Todd Keach, Jeremy Carter, Myron Polzin and Brad Gunderson, from left to right.
The company missed SAIFI goals in two of its four work centers. The Southeast work center missed every goal in 2014.

Xcel’s reliability data is “normalized to account for major storms by removing outages that start on a storm day.” Xcel identifies “storm days” this way, using the previous five years of outage history:

- Calculates the number of sustained outages per day;
- Calculates the average number of sustained outages per day; and
- Calculates the standard deviation of the number of sustained outages per day. Xcel defines a “storm day” as any day meeting or exceeding the average number of outages per day plus three standard deviations.

In discussion of an action plan to improve reliability, Xcel noted that it “increased its achievement rate from 42 percent in 2012 and 2013 to 67 percent in 2014 (meeting its achievement rate from 42 to 25. Staff in the Metro West area increased from 181 to 197 over that time span. Xcel said 97.39 percent of all meters per month. Request for service at a new residential site took an average of 2.7 days and an average of 9.7 days at a new commercial site. The company answered 89.45 percent of calls within 20 seconds. This includes calls to its interactive voice response system. Agents answered 79 percent of calls within 20 seconds. The city is on the south side of the city.

City of Pierz, MP reach service area agreement

The City of Pierz and Minnesota Power Nov. 9, 2015, reached agreement on the transfer of Minnesota Power electric service territory within the city to the municipal- ity. The agreement provides for compensation if at least one new customer in the area begins receiving service from Pierz in a future timeframe.

A 10-year compensation period will start upon a cus- tomer locating in the prop- erty. However, no compensa- tion will be paid after Dec. 31, 2035, regardless of when compensation started. The city will compensate MP $0.01 per kilowatt hour “on all kilowatts connected in the described area to be paid annually to MP.” The area is on the south side of the city.
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Classified Ads

Project Coordinator – Electric Distribution Services

RESPONSIBILITIES: Performs routine and complex technical related work for electrical distribution system; construction, maintenance and repair project work orders, including the development and compilation of work order packages. Creates and maintains the technical database for reference and data used for development of electric system construction, maintenance and repair work orders.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: High school diploma or a GED. Possess a line technician degree, successfully completed a four-year electrical line apprenticeship program holding a certificate affirming successful completion or possess an associate’s degree from an accredited program in engineering, construction management, electrical construction technology, or energy technology. Five or more years of proven electrical distribution line work experience or three years proven work in electrical distribution system design, layout and specification drafting. Additional qualifications apply. Please visit our website at www grpuc org for a complete position description.

APPLICATION PROCESS: Applications are available on the website or by contacting the Minnesota Work Force Center, 1215 SE 2nd Ave, Grand Rapids, MN 55744, 218-327-6760, Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Return completed applications to the Work Force Center. Persons selected for an interview will be required to submit a cover letter, resume, and references.

DEADLINE: January 29, 2016

Equal Opportunity Employer

Electric Services Coordinator

The Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities (IAMU) is seeking a knowledgeable professional to provide training, support and serve as a resource to its 136 municipal electric members. Located by Des Moines, Iowa, the association’s state-of-the-art training & office complex includes an 11-acre Training Field. Plan and facilitate electric training workshops, safety programs, and serve as a resource for members. Help administer the linemechanic ap
prenticeship program. Have a thorough understanding of electric line work and corresponding knowledge associated with electric energy and safety and health matters. HS + 2-3 years of electric line school, and journeyperson status. Obtain an Iowa CDL and operate equipment. Some experience in safety and health matters. Obtain an Iowa CDL with an Electrician endorsement.

FOR SALE
55604. 218-387-1848
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Grand Marais Public Utility, PO Box 600, Grand Marais, MN 55604. 218-387-1848

Rodeo Team Training Clinic
Thinking about forming a team to compete in the Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo? Not sure how to get started or what to expect? Attend this clinic to get your questions answered and get your team prepared! No charge!

Feb. 2-3, at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall
For more information go to www.mmua.org/event/rodeo-clinic

MMUA Basic Metering Pre-Conference and Meter School

Basic Metering Pre-Conference
Feb. 16-17
This session will use interactive classroom and hands-on training. Students needing to learn the basics are encouraged to attend the Pre-Conference and continue into the Meter School with more hands-on training. Topics covered will include theory, definitions, common formulas, meters and troubleshooting.

Meter School
Feb. 17-19
This School offers basic or advanced training.

Basic Meter course

The Basic course is aimed at personnel with little experience with electric meters. This training will build on the pre-conference session with more hands-on training.

Advanced Meter School
The Advanced course uses self-corrected exam, interactive classroom and hands-on training. Topics Covered
• Meter Exam - self correct to focus training needs
• Hands-on Training - 16 different stations available to work through
• Troubleshooting - instructors will create problems or recreate problem scenarios
• Question and answers all week long!

This class is flexible and students can progress as fast as their ability allows.

About the Instructors
Larry Chapman of Chapman Metering will be on hand with his staff. Larry is a highly-respected metering professional, working in the metering business his entire career! We are glad to have Larry back at our school!

Scott Murfield has 30 years of electric utility experience. He was Regional Safety Coordinator for MMUA, and is a Journeyman Lineman, Journeyman Electrician and Loss Control Professional.

Additional instructors to be announced.

The school will be held at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. For more information, see Upcoming Events or go to the Events/Calendar section at www.mmua.org

January 2016 The Resource/11
A federal administrative law judge Dec. 22 recommended to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that it reduce the base rate of return on electric transmission investments two percentage points, to 10.32 percent. If approved, the reduction would affect transmission owners in Minnesota and a number of other states.

The rate of return was challenged by large industrial customers and others, including the Minnesota Department of Commerce. Minnesota Power has completed a three-year, $260 million emissions-reduction project at its 585-megawatt, coal-fired Boswell Energy Center in Cohasset. The new emissions control equipment was integrated with existing equipment during a 10-week outage of the unit. The upgrade will reduce mercury emissions by 90 percent and also significantly reduce the emission of sulfur dioxide and particulates. Minnesota Power reported that over the past decade it has invested more than $600 million to cut emissions from its power plants.

The company was also accepting bids through January for a natural gas-fueled turbine power plant. The plant would range from 200 to 400 megawatts and cost an estimated $300 million to $400 million.

Minnesota Power and Arcelor Mittal, the world’s largest steelmaker and owner of the Minora taconite operation north of Virginia, signed a new 10-year electric service agreement through December 2025.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued its opinion that found that the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) use of certain social media platforms to urge public protection of certain social media violated the Antideficiency Act, could have important implications for the pending WOTUS rule litigation, ongoing legislative efforts to block funding for the WOTUS rule, and within the Executive Branch. The GAO investigation was prompted by a New York Times article.

The Minnesota Supreme Court Dec. 15 declined petitions from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and Embree Energy to review a Court of Appeals decision requiring an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Sandpiper Pipeline. The pipeline would carry oil from North Dakota across Minnesota to a Superior, Wisc. The project first began seeking regulatory approval in 2012.

The developer obtained a certificate of need for the project from the MPUC in June. The Court of Appeals ruled the MPUC erred by granting the certificate before a full EIS had been completed.

According to press reports, Xcel Energy executives Dec. 3 at a New York investment conference unveiled a five-year, $15.2 billion investment plan. The plan, for the eight states where the company operates, could grow by another $1.6 billion.

The company is aiming for a 60 percent cut in carbon dioxide emissions from 2005 levels by 2030, and said it would like to own more renewable energy assets. That could benefit investors, as those assets would be part of the company rate base. Xcel Energy announced it will acquire the 200-megawatt Pleasant Valley Wind Farm, in Mower and Dodge Counties.

Meanwhile, the west-metro city of Independence has budgeted funds for an electric generator at city hall. The generator is being installed in anticipation of spring power outages, apparently a common occurrence in the area.

Minnesota-based Mortenson Construction has announced it plans to get into the energy storage business. The company said its focus would be on engineering, construction and integration of systems. No specific projects were announced.

According to the December issue of Power, the following are the new nuclear capacity and shutdown reactors during the years 2010-2015.

New nuclear plants

- China, 19 reactors, 17.64 GW
- South Korea, 4 reactors, 3.9 GW
- Russia, 3 reactors, 1.9 GW
- India, 3 reactors, 1.32 GW
- Iran, 1 reactor, 915 MW
- Argentina, 1 reactor, 692 MW
- Pakistan, 1 reactor, 300 MW
- Japan, 11 reactors, 6.7 GW
- Germany, 9 Reactors, 9.79 GW
- U.S., 5 reactors, 4.18 GW
- U.K., 3 reactors, 1.9 GW
- Canada, 1 reactor, 635 MW
- France, 1 reactor, 130 MW

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