Program seeks to train next generation of municipal lineworkers

As workforce issues and training have evolved over the years, so has MMUA’s approach to helping municipal utilities effectively serve their customers.

One example of that is the MMUA On-Site/On-demand Apprenticeship Lineworker Training program. This service is designed to bolster the ranks of municipal linemen, by recruiting and training those most likely to make a long-term commitment to their local utility.

The thinking goes this way: If a promising person with local roots can be hired and trained locally, there is a good chance the utility—given good management and competitive wages—can keep that employee for many years.

The MMUA service helps make this happen in a number of ways, including:

• The municipal utility employee who wants to learn more about the lineman’s trade recruits professional training from experienced instructors, right at the utility site.

• Program timing is flexible and hands-on work will be done primarily at the utility site. The program includes annual ‘tuition free’ attendance, for each enrollee, to the MMUA Overhead, Underground, Transformer and Meter Schools.

• Students are given a cutting-edge academic program, usually through the Northwest Lineman College, along with extensive hands-on training. The MMUA-provided instruction involves classroom and outdoor hands-on activities.

Federal proceeding could upend local control over public rights-of-way, to foster small cell deployment

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is taking comments until Feb. 6 on a matter that could affect the ability of Minnesota local governments to control public Rights-of-Way.

Mobilitie, LCC has petitioned the FCC for a declaratory ruling regarding access to public Right-of-Way (ROW). The Commission, in no uncertain terms, also required the company to acknowledge that it is subject to permitting authority of local governing units with respect to facilities they seek to put in public ROW.

The company readily agreed to those conditions. But it appears that isn’t the end of the issue.

Mobilitie Management LLC is reportedly an affiliate of Mobilitie LLC. And despite the fact that isn’t the end of the issue.

Transformer School

MMUA held its second Transformer School of the year at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall in late December. For more on the school and the pre-conference that preceded it, see page 7.
DG: Much has changed since 2004 order requiring adoption of local standards regarding Interconnection of On-site Distributed Generation were enacted in 2001 and required the MPUC to develop interconnection processes and technical standards. An order adopting those protocols was issued by the MPUC in 2004. Municipal and cooperative utilities were required by the 2001 law to adopt processes and standards consistent with the commission’s order within 90 days of the 2004 order. Over the last decade, MPUC staff noted in briefing papers, “much has changed in the distributed generation and interconnection realm . . . ” As a result, two different entities, from very different perspectives, filed proposals requesting the MPUC update the standards. The Environmental Law and Policy Center, Fresh Energy and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council joined together to file a motion to re-open and amend the standards. They suggested modifying these documents “to reflect their research into regional and national best practices and national standards” and submitted a version they called the new Minnesota Interconnection Protocol (MIP). A second proposal, filed four days later (on May 16, 2016), came from Dakota Electric Association, in conjunction with a group of other Minnesota utilities. This filing requested incremental changes to the state’s standards. The MPUC opened a dock- et, and 32 entities filed comments. The MPUC convened a meeting in September to review and discuss the comments. About 50 participants attended. A panel that included Black was assembled from the group to discuss which proposal to use as a starting point. There was general agreement that the 2004 standards need to be updated, and that the MPUC should provide guidance. However, the panel produced no clear answer as to whether to update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission provided no clear answer as to whether to update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.” The commission tackled the issue Jan. 5 with dueling proposals either to adopt the MIP after a notice and comment period or conduct a two-step process by having a work group update the current Minnesota model as DEA proposed or start with the SGIP-based “MIP.”
Obstacles, opportunities along energy landscape path outlined by Trump

by Jeaninne Anderson
APPA News Editor

President-elect Donald J. Trump has promised to do away with the Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Power Plan (CPP), eliminate the Waters of the United States final rule, and make other changes in the nation’s energy sector.

Court ruling on Clean Power Plan is pending

The EPA’s final CPP rule is currently on hold because of pending court litigation. If the D.C. Circuit court upholds the CPP, then the challengers could, and almost certainly will, ask the Supreme Court to take up the case. If the court strikes the EPA plan down, then states and others who support the CPP could, likewise, appeal to the Supreme Court.

If the D.C. Circuit court issues its ruling before Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, 2017, and upholds the EPA rule (a possibility that many legal experts consider likely) then the next move would be up to the incoming Trump administra-

tion.

The new administration could ask the court to remand the rule back to the EPA. The agency could then re-examine the rule through a new round of rulemaking.

Another approach the incoming administration could use, if the EPA rule is upheld by the courts, would be to decide not to enforce the rule. The new administration also could cut the EPA’s budget, making it harder for the agency to enforce all environmental regulations.

Section 111(b) litigation

The EPA’s regulations on CO2 emissions from new, modified and reconstructed coal- and natural gas-fired power plants were promulgated under Section 111(b) of the Clean Air Act. The agency’s regulations on CO2 emissions from existing power plants, on the other hand, were promulgated under a different part of the Clean Air Act: Section 111(d).

The Section 111(b) rule for new power plants also has been challenged in court, and that litigation provides another potential way of defeating the CPP for existing power plants. As the Washington Post reported last year, the EPA “is required to promulgate standards for new sources before it may impose standards on existing sources under 111(d).”

If a court decision strikes down the Section 111(b) rule, this could cause the rest of the CPP to fall.

Interpretations could change

When President-elect Trump takes office, his new administration could reverse the current statutory interpretation of the EPA’s authority to regulate power plant emissions under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act. For example, the new administration could conclude that Section 111(d) prevents the EPA from promulgating emission guidelines for source categories that are already regulated under Section 112 of the Act.

Under the new administration, the EPA also could revisit the “best system of emissions reduction, or BSER,” methodology that the agency used to establish performance standards based on generation shifting from fossil fuels to renewable resources.

Orders, rules, and final rules

President Obama has issued many executive orders over the last few years. In theory, at least, President-elect Trump could undo Obama’s orders with fresh executive orders of his own.

And in the case of rules that have been proposed but not yet made final, the new administration could simply opt to stop working on them and let them die.

But a final rule, such as the CPP, which has gone through an extensive public notice and comment process, is more difficult to roll back.

To undo such a rule, “you have to go through the same process that was used to create it,” said the Natural Resource Defense Council’s David Goldston. This means proposing a new rule, providing evidence to justify the new rule, taking public comments, then revising the draft rule in response to the comments, and so on, until a final rule emerges.

Congress could weigh in

Another possible way to undo the CPP would be to have Congress pass legislation, perhaps proposing a new rule to take its place.

If a court decision strikes the CPP to fall.

In the article, “Change in administration, change in course? What the next president could do to vacate or reform Obama’s Clean Power Plan.”

But this would be time-consuming, they said in the article, “Change in administration, change in course? What the next president could do to vacate or reform Obama’s Clean Power Plan.”

Whatever happens, environmental groups and states supporting the Clean Power Plan are bound to fight any attempt that would weaken the EPA or its rules. And efforts to undo regulations are likely to face significant hurdles both in Congress and in the courts.

Attorneys general square off over Clean Power Plan

Meanwhile, a group of attorneys general from more than a dozen states in late December asked Trump to stand behind the CPP.

The letter came two weeks after a different group of attorneys general wrote to Trump’s transition team urging him to scrap the EPA rule. The executive order, they specified, should rescind President Obama’s presidential memorandum directing the EPA to issue the rule, and should instruct the agency to take no further action to enforce it.

Oklahoma AG is Trump’s choice to head EPA

In related news, Trump’s transition team confirmed on Dec. 8 that Trump plans to nominate Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to lead EPA.

Pruitt, a Republican, has been at the forefront of lawsuits challenging both the Clean Power Plan and the agency’s “Waters of the United States” rule.

The EPA administrator is one of several government positions that has the status of cabinet rank.
Mobilitie: Company affiliate recently rebuffed over ROW by state regulators

continued from front page

dinances and concerns of local government units, Mobilitie LLC appears to be taking a different tack. To satisfy consumers’ rapidly growing demand for wireless broadband and other services, wireless companies are actively expanding network capacity and introducing new technologies and services, the FCC said in its notice.

“Many wireless providers are deploying small cells and distributed antenna systems, said the FCC notice. “These facilities are smaller than traditional cell towers and antennas but must be deployed in many more locations to function effectively. As a result, local land-use authorities in many areas are facing substantial increases in the volume of siting applications.”

While acknowledging competing interests in law—the important role of local interests in maintaining aesthetic safety weighed against a statutory mandate to facilitate deployment of network facilities—the FCC says it “now has an opportunity” to build on previous actions “by issuing a new declaratory ruling to further expedite the deployment of new network infrastructure that can give consumers across the country access to superior wireless services.”

“The successful deployment of wireless networks depends in large part on how quickly providers are able to obtain the necessary regulatory approvals,” said the FCC. Later, it noted that industry participants “assert that local permitting and zoning processing for both new tower and small cell builds continue to encounter frequent delays.”

In a 2009 Declaratory Ruling, the FCC found that a “reasonable period of time” under law is “presumptively 90 days for state or local governments to process collocation applications and presumptively 150 days to process all other applications.”

The FCC is also seeking comments on fees assessed by local governments. Small cells and distributed antenna systems require power to operate.

The FCC said, “We have heard anecdotally that some local governments allow only a single company to attach facilities to a particular pole or structure, and that some require unreasonable minimum distance limitations between wireless facilities in rights-of-way.”

In the Minnesota proceedings, the relationship between Mobilitie, LLC and Mobilitie Management LLC, or the companies’ other business relationships, was not explored. FierceWireless reported in June that the California-based company is “reportedly Sprint’s primary vendor as the carrier looks to roll out as many as 70,000 small cells in cities across the country.”

The online source also reported that the company “has come under fire for being at least partly responsible for a U.S. small cell market that has slowed due to local regulatory concern, as ‘vendors, carriers and local authorities struggle to develop policies and practices for deploying and maintaining the brief-case-size antennas on utility poles and other local rights-of-way.’”

Various business relationships may be unclear, but it is apparent that the issue of right-of-way management as it relates to the deployment of various telecommunications technologies will continue.

The FCC docket is 16-1427. Comments are due Feb. 6.

Ewert joins MMUA as Regional Safety Coordinator

Thomas Ewert has joined MMUA as a Regional Safety Coordinator.

Ewert comes to MMUA from the City of Janesville, where he worked for 12 years and was public works director. He managed employees and day-to-day operations and worked with the city council and administration on budget issues. He was a member of the city safety committee, wrote polices, purchased equipment and implemented safety procedures.

He is also experienced in maintaining training and safety records, maintaining and organizing licenses, permits and certifications.

Ewert was also a member of volunteer fire department and served as chief. In this position, he was also responsible for many training and education responsibilities and certifications.

Ewert graduated from Janesville Waldorf Pomer- ton High School and attended the University of North Da-
new charges were necessary to stem a decline in the utility’s cash reserves.

The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners Dec. 13 approved rate adjustments necessary to bring aging infrastructure up to date. Water rates will increase 4.9 percent and natural gas rates 3 percent. There will be no increase in electric rates but an adjustment will be made between the customer charge and energy charge. Utility staff confirmed the need for rate adjustments through a study performed in September 2016.

Since October 2006, with the exception of a few months, customers have been seeing a credit on their monthly bill in the form of a natural gas cost adjustment. A 3 percent increase will shift costs to the base rate and monthly customer charge. Additionally, although electric rates will not be increased in 2017, customers will see a change as costs are shifted from the energy charge to the customer charge. This is to allow the utility to fairly recover distribution costs from all customers.

The Worthington Public Utilities Commission in December received a favorable report on well levels, but, mindful of alarmingly low levels in recent years, expressed a desire to continue to purchase a portion of its water needs from an area rural water system. WPU continues to work toward completion of the Lewis & Clark Rural Water System line from Adrian to Worthington. Lewis & Clark recently received a $19 million federal appropriation to help fund construction from Magnolia to Adrian.

The Parkers Prairie city council isn’t concerned about water, but it would like to bring a natural gas system to town. It recently heard a presentation by Lake Region Energy Services, in regards to bringing natural gas service to Deer Creek and Parkers Prairie. A special meeting to gather citizen input was held Dec. 2 in Parkers Prairie.


dwonna Public Utilities announced a 2.5 percent reduction in natural gas rates at a Dec. 8 ‘State of the Utility’ address at the utility’s re-purposed downtown headquarters (shown). While the downtown plant no longer generates electricity, a new power plant is under construction in an industrial park on the city’s west side.
Sauk Centre’s Rykken retires after remarkable career of local and statewide public service

Dennis Rykken has retired from the Sauk Centre Public Utilities Commission after 27 years.

Rykken’s long and distinguished record of public service started in September 1982 when he was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Sauk Centre city council. He was elected in 1984 and served on the council until 1989. He was council president for six of those years.

In 1990, Rykken was appointed to the Sauk Centre Public Utilities Commission, which oversees the operation of the municipal electric and water utilities (wastewater operations has since been added to the utility’s responsibilities). Rykken served more than 20 years as its chair.

Three times Rykken has served as Sauk Centre mayor, having been appointed to fill terms in each case. His first service as mayor came for one meeting in 1988, followed by another stint beginning February 2, 2003 and running through 2006. He was most recently appointed mayor in Aug. 3, 2011 and served in that capacity until November 2012.

Rykken was elected to the MMUA board in 2008. He was elected president-elect in 2011 and served as president from 2012-2013. He was appointed by the board of directors as its secretary-treasurer in 2010.

He has also been active in other public power organizations. He served on the American Public Power Association’s Policy Makers Council in 2007. That same year, he received Missouri River Energy Services’ Public Official Award.

A Willmar native, Rykken earned a Bachelor’s degree at Augsburg College and a Master’s from the University of Hawaii. He worked for Blue Earth County family services for five years before joining the Minnesota Correctional Facility – Sauk Centre in 1973. He served as the facility’s program director and assistant superintendent until its closure in 1999.

MMUA thanks Rykken for his service to the association, Sauk Centre and public power, and wishes him well in his retirement.

Anoka’s Schmidt stepping down as MMPA president

Minneapolis, Minn. – After seven years of service to the Minnesota Municipal Pow- er Agency (MMPA), Steve Schmidt on Dec. 22 stepped down from the Board of Di-rec tors and his Chairman po-sition for health reasons.

Schmidt, a former city of Anoka council member, has served on the MMPA Board from 2009 through 2016, act-ing as Chairman since 2013. During his time on the board, Schmidt made several significant contributions that sup-port ed the successes of the Agency.

In honoring Schmidt with a Years of Service Award, MMPA’s board of directors and management said in a letter to him, ‘As Chairman, you helped MMPA’s Board remain an effective body by focusing discussions on policy and governance issues. You encouraged participation by all Board members, including those with differing opinions. The Agency is a stronger organization today because of your leadership.”

Succeeding Schmidt as MMPA Chairman will be John Crooks, Shakopee Public Utilities Manager. Crooks has served on the MMPA board since 2010 and is also the president-elect of the Minnesota Municipal Utili-ties Association.

Steve Schmidt

YOUR PARTNER IN POWER

FOR ALL YOUR POWER DEMANDS, WE CAN DELIVER THE SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT YOU NEED.

• Portable and permanent power
• Diesel, natural gas and low BTU gas
• Mobile and stationary units
• Fuel analysis and switchgear maintenance
• Emergency services available 24/7/365
• Preventive maintenance programs available on all makes

888.320.4292
MMUA holds late December Transformer School in Marshall

MMUA held its annual Transformer School and Pre-Conference in late December at the Training Center in Marshall. The Pre-Conference course on Basic Single-Phase Transformer Connections & Theory was held Dec. 13-14. The Conference, dealing primarily with Three-Phase Connections, started the afternoon of the 14th and ran through the morning of Dec. 16.

Our partners in the school were the Minnesota Rural Electric Association and American Public Power Association.

Scott Meinecke, an instructor from Northwest Iowa Community College, was the instructor. Through a combination of classroom and hands-on learning opportunities, participants were exposed to “real world” situations, without the real world risk/danger.

The three-phase transformer course started with the basics of transformers, including turns ratios, polarities, calculations, connections, and troubleshooting. In the hands-on portion of the course, participants worked with miniature transformers that are energized and will blow fuses, in order to experience what happens when something is wired incorrectly.

The class continued to build on the miniature transformer banks and work on troubleshooting. Students also discussed motor rotation as it relates to three-phase systems; as well as ways to prevent voltage surge when switching a three-phase bank.

The school was designed to give students an understanding of Basic Three-Phase, Delta, Wye and Open Delta Connections, as well as Three-Phase Troubleshooting.

The pre-conference served as a refresher course on the basics of single-phase transformer connections and theory. The course included classroom and hands-on instruction on topics such as safe work practices, transformer theory, basic calculations, connections, sizing, and troubleshooting.

This course is designed to be helpful for anyone that is involved with the electric line crew—from the apprentice to employees from other departments that may assist as a ground person. This pre-conference course was also useful to anyone who desires to strengthen basic transformer knowledge prior to attending the Three-Phase Transformer Connections course.

The 2017 Transformer Pre-Conference is scheduled for Dec. 12-13 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall, followed by the Transformer School Dec. 13-15. Mark your calendars now!

Above: A group of students at the Transformer School worked through a troubleshooting issue on a miniature transformer bank.

Andy Mackereth looked on while Logan Josephson and Al Resmen (left to right) worked on a miniature transformer bank.

Simplify YOUR life with a one-stop backup power supplier . . . HM Cragg!

HM Cragg has been providing customers like YOU with power solutions since 1968! We are an EF&I specialist for substation and generating station backup power. Our services also include load testing and routine maintenance.

Please contact us for a product quote or to discuss service options!

800.672.7244 • info@hmcragg.com • www.hmcragg.com

We are proud to be 100% Employee Owned! Choice of free gift with your first order in 2017!

Simplify YOUR life with a one-stop backup power supplier . . . HM Cragg!

HM Cragg has been providing customers like YOU with power solutions since 1968! We are an EF&I specialist for substation and generating station backup power. Our services also include load testing and routine maintenance.

Please contact us for a product quote or to discuss service options!

800.672.7244 • info@hmcragg.com • www.hmcragg.com

We are proud to be 100% Employee Owned! Choice of free gift with your first order in 2017!

Simplify YOUR life with a one-stop backup power supplier . . . HM Cragg!

HM Cragg has been providing customers like YOU with power solutions since 1968! We are an EF&I specialist for substation and generating station backup power. Our services also include load testing and routine maintenance.

Please contact us for a product quote or to discuss service options!

800.672.7244 • info@hmcragg.com • www.hmcragg.com

We are proud to be 100% Employee Owned! Choice of free gift with your first order in 2017!
Moorhead, New Prague file electric service territory boundary changes with state regulatory agency

In what is perhaps a sign of an improving economy, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) recently approved two electric utility service area transfers, from electric cooperatives to municipal utilities.

The MPUC Dec. 28 approved a joint request by the Moorhead Public Service Commission and Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association, to transfer service to the municipal utility, an area annexed into the city limits and assigned to the cooperative's service area.

The two parties have reached several agreements in the past, and have also litigated issues, including appropriate compensation.

The area included in this transfer includes 1,061 acres, including 349 residential and eight commercial customers. The customers are located in Oakport 2, a 'rural' residential area, along the Red River, on the north side of the city. The orderly annexation agreement between the city and Oakport Township was made years ago, when the city extended water and sewer service to the neighborhood, to address serious health issues.

The parties communicated extensively with the customers in the affected area throughout the transition process, and included copies of pertinent correspondence with their filing to the MPUC.

The city, as part of the 2014 area transfer, was sent to customers a letter specifically for property owners in the area. The news letter mentioned initial steps taken by the municipal to acquire electric service rights to the area. The parties also held a joint informational meeting for affected customers, in July 2016.

A joint letter, signed by the top managers of both utilities, was sent to customers inviting them to the meeting. Much of the discussion between the customers and the utilities involved the treatment of dual-fuel systems as part of the transfer process.

The MPUC requested, and the parties agreed to, a separate notice in regards to the state regulatory preceding.

The DER recommended the MPUC approve the transfer. DER noted that the parties “agreed upon appropriate compensation.” No details were made available.

New Prague
The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Jan. 5 approved a service utility service area transfer from Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative to the New Prague Utilities Commission. The joint request was filed on Sept. 13.

The transfer involves the New Prague Business Park, 11th Addition, approximately 20 acres on the northwest side of the city. The area had been previously annexed into the city limits and was within the electric service territory assigned to the cooperative.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (DER) approved the transfer.

The area acquired by New Prague currently contains no customers. No details in regards to compensation were available.

Regulatory agency recommends approval of transfers; cites state statute that addresses municipal growth

In both the Moorhead and New Prague service area transfers recently submitted to the state (see article on this page), the state Division of Energy Resources (DER) supported the boundary adjustments, citing Minnesota Statutes 216B.44, subd. (a), which states: “whenever a municipality which owns and operates an electric utility (1) extends its corporate boundaries through annexation or consolidation, or (2) determines to extend its service territory within its existing corporate boundaries, the municipality shall there after furnish electric service to these areas unless the area is already receiving electric service from an electric utility, in which event, the municipality may purchase the facilities of the electric utility serving the area.

216B.44, subd. (b) requires the municipality “acquiring the facilities” to pay to the electric formerly serving the area “the appropriate value of its properties within the area.”

Since the adoption of the electric service territory law in 1974, it has been the source of some conflict, even regulatory ruling and litigation.

That was not the case with either of the recently-approved agreements.

MPUC reminds utilities to file utility territory changes with state

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Dec. 14, 2016, issued a notice to all electric utilities, reminding them to file any electric service territory changes.

In its notice, the Commission said it prefers that utilities use the MPUC’s checklist when making these service area filings. The checklist is available in the ‘documents’ tab of the MPUC website and is a pdf file, No. 014449.

Pursuant to Commission order, it requests that utilities file a summary report of all current service area exceptions, including:

• The start date of each exception;
• The end date of each exception, if any, and;
• The city, rural electric association, or other utility participating in the exception. The summary filings may be made in the 12-567 docket.

The MPUC adopted the Electronic Utility Service Area (EUSA) digital map as the official electric service area map required under Minn. Statute 216B.39, with an April 9, 2014 order. The commission also specified that it would be issuing annual notices to all electric distribution utilities, reminding them to review the map and submit changes to the MPUC “for approval at the time of the boundary change.”

The MPUC’s official notice, complete with links to various related items, can be found in the ‘Breaking News’ section of the MMUA website.
Nine more graduates swell ranks of trained municipal supervisors

Nine more individuals recently completed the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association Firstline Supervision/Leadership course through Central Lakes College (CLC). Nearly 300 municipal employees have now completed the leadership series, which is offered at CLC’s Brainerd campus and MMUA headquarters in Plymouth.

Recent graduates include: Cassie Belak, Virginia; Jeff Bertram and Tom Foss, Owatonna; Debbie Boyer, Sauk Centre; Tom Geiser and Mike Langer, Elk River; Heather Olson, Detroit Lakes; Harlan Schmeling, Moose Lake and Jeron Smith, Willmar.

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, internationally recognized Achieve Global leadership materials and specially created units with a utility focus.

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

Past graduates from these cities include: Todd Graves, Dick Thynes, Bill Hawkins, Brian Peters, Dennis Nesges, Odean Iverson, Steve Wear, Stacy Stein and Zach Larson of Willmar; Richard Olson, Dan Busho, and Jamey Krogf of Owatonna; Michael Price, Mike Thiry, Pete Nielsen, Lloyd Lorenzen, David Berg, Mark Puchs, Wade Lovelette, Glenn Sundeen and Erik Volk of Elk River; John Egan, Mark Rachey, Marty Sunderman, and Glenn Bauer of Sauk Centre; Mike Lahlum, Detroit Lakes and Mike Kolum, Moose Lake.

MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award contest entry deadline set

MMUA has budgeted $5,000, for its 2017 Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award program.

This program was created as a public relations tool to increase the awareness of public power and create goodwill in your city for your utility. Consider this sentence from a recent winner: “While there have been many changes in the utility industry since our local utility was created, one thing has remained constant—its ability to provide a steady, reliable utility service at competitive rates to the citizens and businesses of Hibbing.”

Wouldn’t you like to have high school seniors in your community writing papers like this? You can, by bringing the program to the attention of your local high school guidance office.

Materials are available in the Services/Scholarship section of the MMUA website. Our fund is split into four prizes and awarded to essay contest winners who plan to attend a post-secondary educational institution.

Materials include a letter introducing this program to your local schools. MMUA relies on its members to forward this information to all your local high schools—public and private. Also available are scholarship program guidelines and an entry form for members to forward to the schools for their use.

Here’s how it works: The local governing body of the utility picks a local winner. Every MMUA member may then enter the one local essay contest winner to the state contest. The deadline for having utilities forward local winners to MMUA is April 14, 2017. Local deadlines will need to be set earlier, to allow the local governing board (or its designee) time to review the entries. Many members, with necessary local political support, award their own scholarships locally to encourage participation. A group of MMUA members will select the first, second, third and fourth place winners state-wide. MMUA will announce the winners by mid-May.

Students can find resource materials at www.mmua.org, the American Public Power Association website, and often from the local utility.

Please call Steve Downer at MMUA if you have any questions or comments. Thank you for helping make this program a success.
Accountants and Consultants

CliftonLarsonAllen

St. Cloud/Brainerd
Doug Host
Mary Ready

Austin/Mankato
Craig Popenhein
Sarah Crambott

Minneapolis
Dennis Hoogevan
Chris Knopik

888-529-2648 | CLAconnect.com

ADVISORY | OUTSOURCING | AUDIT AND TAX

©2016 CliftonLarsonAllen LLP

Engineers and Engineering Firms

T&R 7.75x5.75 7/21/05 1:11 PM Page 1

Civil / Survey
Electrical Power
Water / Wastewater

Trusted. Professional. Solutions.

Aviation

McGRANN SHEA
CARNIVAL STRAUHAN & LAMB

Proudly representing municipal clients
800 Nicollet Mall, Suite 2600
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(t) 612-338-2525 (f) 612-339-2386
www.mcgrannshea.com

Electrical Equipment and Suppliers

Telephone: 202.879.4000
Fax: 202.339.2386
info@spiegelmcdiarmid.com

1875 Eye Street, NW
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006
www.spiegelmcdiarmid.com

Electrical Services

Simplify YOUR life with a one-stop backup power supplier!

800.672.7244 • info@hmcragg.com • www.hmcragg.com

We are proud to be 100% Employee Owned!

Energy Services

ENERGY INSIGHT, INC.

MATT HALEY
President
952-767-7464
www.EnergyInsightInc.com
7935 Stone Creek Drive, Suite 140
Chanhassen, MN 55317

Power Plant Operator
Joint-action electric utility seeks an individual with a two year degree in an electrical or mechanical technician program (or equivalent work experience) to operate and maintain an Agency-owned generation facility, located in Owatonna Minnesota, in compliance with all applicable state and federal and industry related regulations. Experience in the operations and maintenance of diesel engines, combustion turbines, or electric generators preferred. Knowledge of electronic instrumentation, control equipment, or mechanical equipment repair/maintenance also preferred. Please submit resume by January 31, 2017 to: Sandra K. Feehan (sk.feehan@smmpa.org), Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency 500 First Avenue SW, Rochester, MN 55902

Network Administrator
The Shakopee Public Utilities Commission is accepting applications for the position of Network Administrator. Consideration will be given to those candidates that are knowledgeable or possess experience in the following:
- Knowledge with some experience in network and security administration, end user support, Microsoft Servers, SAN, and VMware desirable
- Knowledge of Microsoft Windows operating systems and Office suite products with ability to teach others
- Ability to multi task and be responsive to internal customer needs
- Ability to analyze, troubleshoot, repair and maintain computers, printers, and other office equipment problems
- Effective written and oral communication skills
- Associates degree or equivalent from a two year college or technical school desired with one to three years of experience as an IT professional.

Interested persons must submit an application and resume to HR@shakopeeutilities.com or by mail to Shakopee Public Utilities, Attn: Human Resources, PO Box 470, Shakopee MN 55379. Applications available at www.spucweb.com. A detailed job description is available upon request.

For a complete and up-to-date listing of ads, see the News/Classifieds section online at www.mmua.org
Engineers and Engineering Firms

According to a late October report from the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center, 22 states considered or enacted changes to net metering policies in the third quarter of 2016.

Natural gas dependency, distributed energy resource challenges and maintaining essential reliability services as the resource mix changes are among the most pressing emerging reliability issues facing bulk power system reliability, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation’s long-term assessment finds.

The 2016 Long-Term Reliability Assessment concludes that anticipated reserve margins are sufficient across North America for the next five years.

While the assessment shows substantive plans for maintaining capacity resources beyond 2021, significant uncertainty about plant retirements and new resources emerges sooner in some areas. For example, unconfirmed retirements totaling 3.3 GW and 7 GW in MISO and ERCOT respectively occur as early as 2018 and could compromise resource adequacy without the needed replacement capacity.

Deepwater Wind announced on December 12 that its Block Island Wind Farm has officially commenced commercial operation. The 30 MW, five-turbine project is located off the coast of Rhode Island, and ties into the New England grid via a submarine transmission cable system. It is the first offshore wind farm to deliver energy to the U.S. electric grid.

Red Lakes Falls Community Hybrid on Dec. 7 filed a request stated that Red Lake Falls had approached Otter Tail Power Company about negotiating an agreement for a 5.6 megawatt hybrid solar/wind project but the parties were unable to reach an agreement on a number of contract terms.

Local residents were disappointed, according to local press reports, after the Carver County Board Nov. 22 approved a conditional use permit for a 4.4 megawatt solar plant on Hwy. 7 in Watertown Township. Among the issues raised by residents: the agricultural/residential nature of the area, increased runoff, risks to horses and riders that use neighboring land, and potential traffic hazards, including glare, and disruption of traffic patterns. Township officials reportedly vowed to stall any road approvals requested for the project.

Meanwhile, Crow Wing Power announced it will build a solar facility north of Brainerd this coming spring. Surveys of cooperative customers showed a significant number were willing to pay the $1,300 fee for a share of the system.

A $300 million, 200-megawatt solar facility on Hwy. 7 in Watertown Township. Among the issues raised by residents: the agricultural/residential nature of the area, increased runoff, risks to horses and riders that use neighboring land, and potential traffic hazards, including glare, and disruption of traffic patterns. Township officials reportedly vowed to stall any road approvals requested for the project.

A construction accident interrupted natural gas service to the Waverly and Montrose areas Dec. 6. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Dec. 15 approved a 5.6 percent Minnesota Power electric rate increase. The company has requested an 8 percent interim increase, which is under study by state regulators. Long-term, MP has asked for an 18 percent rate increase to pay for capital investments including infrastructure upgrades and efficiency and environmental improvements.

The Edgerton City Council in December presented discussed a franchise agreement with the investor-owned utility serving the city. The council presented a company representative with photos of aging and deteriorating infrastructure and complaints about service. The company expressed regret and pledged better service to come.

EIA releases Annual Energy Outlook

The federal Energy Information Administration Jan. 5 released its Annual Energy Outlook 2017. Key points included:

- With strong domestic production and relatively flat demand, the United States becomes a net energy exporter over the projection period in most cases.
- U.S. crude oil production is expected to rebound from recent lows, driven by continued development of tight oil resources; with consumption flat to down compared to recent history, net crude oil and petroleum product imports as a percentage of U.S. product supplied decline across most cases.
- Natural gas production is expected to increase despite relatively low and stable natural gas prices, supporting higher levels of domestic consumption and natural gas exports.
- With modest demand growth, the primary driver for new electricity generation capacity is the retirement of older, less efficient fossil fuel units, largely spurred by the Clean Power Plan (CPP), and the near-term availability of renewable tax credits; even if the CPP is not implemented, low natural gas prices and the tax credits result in natural gas and renewables as the primary sources of new generation capacity; the future generation mix is sensitive to the price of natural gas and the growth in electricity demand.

January 2017 The Resource/11
Mike Willetts, MMUA Director of Training and Safety, said, “MMUA is proud of the work they do. The lineworkers are the backbone of our utility system. They are dedicated to their communities and work hard to ensure a safe and reliable power supply.”

Utility veteran Gatchell leads MMUA’s On-site/On-demand lineman training

Art Gatchell is MMUA’s primary Job Training & Safety and Apprenticeship instructor. Gatchell has four decades of knowledge, experience and wisdom.

Gatchell worked for the City of St. Peter for a decade and left as Utilities Supervisor. He moved to Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU), where he worked from 1988 to 2012 as lead lineman. His duties included job training for apprentices, where he helped new graduates make a safe and successful transition onto the working crew.

Gatchell comes to MMUA from Xcel Energy, where he was responsible for orientation and safety compliance on the CapX Fargo-St. Cloud 345-kV transmission project. Gatchell brings to MMUA a commitment to maintaining and operating electrical systems for the community in the most efficient and safest way possible. He is eager to help you contribute to the growth and development of the next generation of municipal electric linemen.

MMUA Job Training and Safety (JTS) and Apprenticeship Instructor Art Gatchell, left foreground, discussed a particular linework task with an attendee of the Overhead School. This particular school was held last fall at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall.

Training: continued from front page

linework, supervisory and teaching experience.

Much of the apprenticeship training program involves work on the utility’s own system. In some cases, neighboring utilities come together to train and work together.

The program has a price, a lineman noted, but hiring a contractor to do the work was also expensive, and the local lineworkers would miss the hands-on training experience. The training/work makes lineworkers more capable and more valuable to their communities. The work also leads to a sense of accomplishment and pride in their utility system.

“MMUA puts the program on at your utility, using your equipment, in your time slot, serving your customers,” said MMUA Director of Training and Safety Mike Willetts. “It’s the best way to learn your system. It lets the apprentice who wants to learn more about the lineman’s trade receive professional training from an experienced instructor right at the utility site.”

Linemen involved are appreciative of the experience. They like the training—which isn’t so much like training as forming real work with a real electric lineman is. And they like performing real work with a real benefit to a real utility.

Along with the hands-on training, students work on a nationally-recognized lineman’s correspondence training course. MMUA works with the correspondence course providers to tailor the training to the individual utility.

For more information on the program, contact Willetts at 612-802-8474.

Upcoming MMUA Events

2017 Legislative Rally
January 31-February 2

MMUA’s Legislative Conference is the municipal utility community’s primary opportunity to inform and influence state lawmakers. Day One will include briefing and lunch at the Embassy Suites in downtown St. Paul. The afternoon will be spent visiting legislators. We’ll cap off the day with a reception at the Embassy Suites, providing MMUA members the opportunity to visit with additional lawmakers. Day Two will provide timely and useful conference sessions.

Meter School

The Basic Metering Pre-Conference will use a combination of self-corrected meter exam, interactive classroom and hands-on training to present and reinforce instruction. The pre-conference will provide a good foundation for those interested in continuing on with the Meter School Basic/Intermediate class. The Advanced class will use a combination of self-corrected meter exam, interactive classroom and hands-on training to present and reinforce the instruction.

Instructors will include Larry Chapman and staff from Chapman Metering. Also instructing will be Scott Murfield, who worked for 30 years in the electric utility industry.

Rodeo Clinic
March 7-8, MMUA Training Center, Marshall

If you are competing in the 2017 Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo, you won’t want to miss this free (for members) clinic designed to help prepare you and your team. The clinic will be led by MMUA staff—experienced linemen and Rodeo place-winners. Many attendees will also be Rodeo veterans. Come and learn from among the best.

PCB Management & Recordkeeping
April 10-11, Ziegler Power Systems, Shakopee

This workshop is designed to be a vital resource for PCB program managers to remain aware of changes in EPA and state regulations, interpretations and current enforcement priorities. The class is perhaps most vital, however, for those just beginning their PCB education and in need of comprehensive, plain-language instruction.

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

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

Substation School
April 11-13, Ziegler Power Systems, Shakopee

This school is designed to be beneficial to the substation technician as well as the lineman that is learning more about substations.

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