

Elk River moves to ride electric vehicle ‘wave of the future’

Is it time for municipal utilities to reach back to a strategy from their earliest days, and once again promote electric use?

Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) thinks so, at least when it comes to electric vehicles (EV).

“It’s the wave of the future,” said Elk River Mayor John Dietz, who also serves as chair of the ERMU Commission.

ERMU currently operates three public charging stations in Elk River—one downtown, one in the ERMU parking lot adjacent to City Hall and one at the Coborn’s fuel station on U.S. Highway 169.

The public charging stations reduce ‘range anxiety’ and build consumer confidence that the EV buyer can drive beyond their neighborhood. They are visible and have received good publicity, but what ERMU really wants—in an era of increased costs but little or no growth in electricity sales for many utilities—is to promote at-home chargers.

Increased sales, mostly off-peak, are the

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Elk River Municipal Utilities has installed three public electric vehicle charging stations, including this one adjacent to its headquarters and city hall.

MMUA files amicus brief in railroad crossing case

MMUA has joined the Minnesota Telecom Alliance, Minnesota Cable Communications Association and the Minnesota Rural Electric Association in submitting an amicus brief to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. The effort follows from a Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) docket involving telecommunications carrier Qwest and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad.

The MPUC on Nov. 7 issued an order in favor of Qwest (CenturyLink) and against BNSF, finding that Minn. Stat. 237.045 applied to “paralleling” as well as crossings of railroad rights-of-way (ROW). This allowed CenturyLink to install new replacement cable within the BNSF ROW after providing required notice and paying the statutorily set fee of \$1,250. BNSF had sought \$27,000 in licensing fees.

BNSF argued that the law establishing the \$1,250 fee did not apply to paralleling because it only expressly referenced crossings. The MPUC, however, agreed with CenturyLink and held that the term “paralleling” was defined and used throughout the statute, and that it would render the definition meaningless if the term did not apply to paralleling as well as crossing.

BNSF has appealed the MPUC order to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. The MPUC ruling would benefit utilities needing to run power lines, pipes and other infrastructure within a railroad’s ROW.

An amicus brief advises the court on special or unique impacts of the case. MMUA is awaiting word on whether the court will accept its brief.

MMUA broadens training to include Leadership; students give new Academy the highest marks

MMUA has for years provided information on timely topics and systematically trained people how to perform certain tasks. Now it is embarked on a program to train people how to lead.

While leadership has been a part of various workshops and meetings over the years, it has only been since the advent of the MMUA Leadership Program that the association has offered Public Power in Minnesota a systematic method of developing its leadership core.

Two groups of students are currently enrolled and participating in the program.

MMUA Executive Director Jack Kegel is a member of the first group. “Participating in the Leadership Academy has made me a better leader. The program starts by focusing on a key issue that every leader confronts—building better teams,” Kegel said. “Building trust, embracing conflict, generating commitment and accountability, and focusing on results are some of the key skills in a leader’s team-building toolbox.”

Chris Olson, finance manager at Alexandria Light & Power and an MMUA board member, started in the program this year. He is impressed.

The program itself is interesting and good and instructor Kent Myers does “a really good job of it,” Olson said. “He’s a good choice.”

The first session is Building Great Teams. Myers gets everybody in the room engaged. He also leads people into uncomfortable issue areas and gives them the tools to have the ‘crucial conversations’ that are necessary in a relationship, including those at work.

“You have to do that,” Olson said.

The second session deals with Political



Kent Myers, second from left, joined Wally Schlink, Bill Schwandt and Mark Kotschevar (left to right) at last year’s Annual Conference.



Chris Olson



Jenny Hazelton



Todd Kispert

Intelligence and Conflict—Navigating the Minefields. Myers leads his students through a systematic method to lay the groundwork to deal with difficult issues.

Though not always easy or comfortable, “this will be extremely beneficial to anybody who goes through it,” Olson said.

Class attendees often know somebody else in the class, but they certainly don’t know everybody. Others come in with no acquaintances among their fellow students.

That changes quickly.

Following the first day of class, there is a group dinner, with focused discussion. Conversations often continue into the evening.

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Todd Kispert, Kasson Public Utilities Electric Superintendent, said he was really impressed how people would take the time to listen to each other and talk about common issues. The program leads to good relationship building.

"It's a real help to me in my job," he said.

Jenny Hazelton is the Winthrop city administrator. She is also an MMUA board member, and a first Leadership class participant. Her small municipal utility is considering installation of automated

metering infrastructure. The contacts she has developed with other program classmates has already proven invaluable, she said, promising to save time and money.

People come from different backgrounds with different areas of knowledge. Once students go through a couple of classes, they often call each other to talk over various issues.

"You grow together as you go through the course," Olson said. It is good to make relationships with other utility providers, and to build the Public Power bonds. "It has been very beneficial," he said. "It's a great program."

Meeting municipal needs

The Academy focuses on the needs of Minnesota's municipal utilities. Curriculum was developed based on focus group feedback. The Academy instills the key skills, awareness, and perspective that 21st Century municipal utility leaders need.

The primary instructor for the Academy is Kent Myers, who has over 25 years of experience providing strategic visioning, operational effectiveness, and technology alignment consulting services to global companies. He

has a decade of experience in working with Minnesota municipal utilities on leadership and culture development and strategic visioning. In addition to his extensive consulting practice, Kent is an adjunct professor at the Harvard Business School.

The two-year program is broken into four, two-day sessions per year. Class size is limited to 25 students.

Sessions are held at the MMUA office, with an allowance for travel time on both days. The first day of each session will feature a net-

working dinner and focused discussion. Class size is limited to 25 students.

Some sessions will feature additional instructors and guest speakers who have been through their own journey of adversity and triumph and have expertise in that session's leadership topic.

We will follow the second class through the program in future articles. For more information on the MMUA Leadership Academy, call MMUA Executive Director Jack Kegel at 763-551-1230.

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Three Minnesota municipal electricians earn RP₃ status

Three Minnesota municipal electric utilities recently earned the RP₃ (Reliable Public Power Provider) designation from the American Public Power Association (APPA). The RP₃ program recognizes utilities that demonstrate high proficiency in reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement.

The three Minnesota utilities are:

- Shakopee Public Utilities

Commission - Diamond Level

- Brainerd Public Utilities - Gold Level

- New Prague Municipal Utilities - Gold Level.

The RP₃ application asks questions in four disciplines—reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement. The rigorous application process provides a framework to review operations and to get help from the experts in fostering best practices. Applicants provide documentation of the utility's practices and procedures and can receive feedback.

Criteria within each of the four RP₃ disciplines are based upon sound business practices and recognized industry leading practices. Disciplines include:

Reliability: Key elements include collecting and analyzing various reliability data, having a mutual aid agreement, devising and using a system-wide disaster management or

emergency response plan, and implementing cyber and physical security.

Safety: Utilities must create a culture of safety. Commitment to safety must begin with top management and be included in all aspects of operations from generation to line work. Benchmarking safety metrics, focusing on frontline workers, and implementing rigorous safety training is crucial to the delivery of safe and reliable electricity.

Workforce Development: How staff is trained and opportunities to network with public power colleagues from across the state nation is important.

System Improvement: The utility must show a commitment to system integrity and long-term planning and improvement, including procedures to maintain distribution system and financial health with the growth of distributed energy resource.



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Highline Heroes Foundation leader thanks MMUA for help raising needed funds

Editor's note: MMUA recently received a thank you note and letter from Tracey Moore, founder of the Highline Heroes Foundation. Moore formed the foundation following the tragic death of her husband, Marc Moore. MMUA's Rita Kelly annually makes a quilt that is raffled at the national Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo. This year's quilt brought in \$3,785, with proceeds going to the foundation. Moore wrote:

Thank you so much for the quilt raffle donations again this year for Highline Heroes! I cannot tell you how much it means to me, as together we will further the ministry and Safety and support for our Line Family.

It's people like the talented Ms. Rita Kelly that enable me to continue to honor Marc, keep his memory alive through my Foundation and bring comfort and peace to others in need.

I wanted to let you know some of the many ways Highline Heroes and your donations have helped others over the past year, since I was pre-

sented last year's donations at the APPA Rodeo in San Antonio:

Just a little over a month after returning home from San Antonio I received news that one of the Oklahoma linemen that I had met while in San Antonio had been diagnosed with a brain tumor/cancer. I sent a monetary donation to him as well as a care package for him, his wife and little girl. He is doing awesome and he and his family have become dear friends.

Monetary donations were also recently made to:

- A lineman in Fort Meade, Fla., to assist him during his time away from work due to his mother's cancer.
- A Georgia lineman that was crushed between two trucks during Hurricane Irma.
- An Alabama lineman who has a daughter battling cancer.
- A Florida lineman who fell 80 feet from a helicopter while helping the people of Puerto Rico after the hurricane.
- Cystic Fibrosis and sev-

eral lineworker families who have children affected by this disease.

In addition to these donations, I was able to assist at the command centers around my area when Hurricane Irma hit in September. We took food, water, drinks and did multiple linemen's laundry while they were helping with storm restoration.

Also I can't tell you the number of memorial shirts and or support packages that I've mailed to the families of injured linemen or linemen who have unfortunately lost their lives.

Highline Heroes has a mission to support any lineworker family that suffers catastrophically and it doesn't have to be job related.

None of this would be possible without people like all of you. Thank you so very much for helping me continue my ministry of safety and compassion for the trade that I love so much! My love, prayers and appreciation always!

Thank you,
Tracey Moore



MMUA's Rita Kelly, with the quilt she made to raffle as a fundraiser for Highline Heroes Foundation.

photo by
Mike Taylor

Scholarship Contest winners thank MMUA

Editor's note: MMUA recently received the following 'thank you' cards from two of the four winners in the recent Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award essay contest.

Dear Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association,

I want to sincerely thank MMUA and Steve Downer for the \$1,500 Tom Bovitz Scholarship! It was truly a pleasure to meet you and learn more about how utilities make a dif-

ference in our communities. I will use this scholarship as I attend the University of Minnesota-Duluth to further my education in marketing and graphic design.

Sincerely,
Alyssa Nielsen
Elk River, Minn.

Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association,

Thank you so much for the scholarship and support on my graduation. It will help me immensely next year at St. Thomas. I also want to thank you for all that you do for our great State. You are the core of Minnesota that allows it to thrive, and I felt honored to highlight the amazing works and doings of municipal utilities!

Brownwyn Tollefson
Willmar, Minn.



MMUA's Steve Downer presented a certificate denoting her success in the MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award Contest to Alyssa Nielsen. The presentation came June 12, during the Elk River Municipal Utilities Commission meeting. Downer made a similar presentation June 26 before the Rochester Public Utilities Board, to first place award winner Eric Chestolowski.

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MPUC approves Xcel time-of-use rate pilot program; slated for early 2020

Xcel Energy gained regulatory approval May 31 to run a residential time of use (TOU) rate design pilot program. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) granted approval as it received the utility's regular 'distribution grid' modernization report.

Xcel, according to regulatory documents, has offered an optional residential TOU rate for over 35 years, with low participation. This TOU rate has a 12-hour on-peak period of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays,

except designated holidays. The long on-peak period "significantly limits the price response potential by residential customers" and "impedes a focus on the lowest cost hours." It also includes a \$2 per month additional metering charge.

This old TOU rate had an on-peak to off-peak ratio of 3:1; the new three-part TOU tariff provides a 4:1 ratio.

The new pilot program will be implemented to approximately 10,000 customers, of

	Rates – Cents per kWh		
	Average Monthly	June-Sept.	Oct.-May
TOU Pilot Rate			
On-Peak 3pm-8pm weekdays	23.821	25.949	22.385
Mid-Peak Other Hours	11.07	12.125	10.43
Off-Peak 12am-6am all days	5.676	5.676	5.676
Standard Flat Rate	12.386	13.437	11.742
TOU Percentage Change from Standard Rate			
On-Peak	92%	93%	91%
Mid-Peak	-11%	-10%	-11%
Off-Peak	-54%	-58%	-52%

various classes, in two geographic areas: the Hiawatha West/Midtown area of Minneapolis and part of Eden Prairie and adjacent cities served by the Westgate substation. The TOU pilot program provides select customers with TOU pricing and increased energy use information, education and support to encourage shifting energy use to low-load conditions. Xcel explained that the TOU pilot uses price incentives to shift load away from peak to reduce or avoid the need for investments in fossil fuel plants that serve peak electric load.

The program aims to explore the ability to reduce peak demand by providing customers with price 'signals,' and enable customers to shift to off-peak energy use through awareness building, education and data access.

The pilot is to be operated for two years, to begin in early 2020.

Customers excluded from the program, due to billing system/rate design limitations, include those on: net metering, residential electric vehicle service, off-peak and energy-controlled service, medical equipment dependent.



Meters with two-way communication capability are at the heart of the TOU pilot program.

Customers in the target areas will be auto-enrolled with the opportunity to opt-out, and will have an opportunity for a partial bill true-up to flat rates during the pilot. Xcel noted it is devoting "substantial resources" to attract volunteers to a TOU pilot in Colorado and "hopes it can devote more resources to facilitating customer education and satisfaction with engaging tools and targeted messages" in Minnesota.

Pilot participants will be split into "treatment" and "control" populations, with both receiving an AMI meter. The "treatment population" will be placed on the TOU rates, while the "control" population will remain on a flat rate.

The monthly TOU rate would not change the monthly customer charge and the TOU charge is designed to recover the same revenue as present energy charges.

Xcel proposed three TOU rate periods (see table at left). Xcel said the off-peak period is intended to encourage customers to shift consumption to the lowest system loads when low-cost wind energy is likely to be on the margin. Xcel noted that as more wind is added to the system, it anticipates that instances of wind energy on the margin and negative pricing will increase in frequency, especially during the off-peak period.

The mid-period, which includes the majority of hours, results in a rate similar to today's volumetric flat rates.

The summer on-peak rate reaches 25.949 cents per kWh, which, Xcel noted, provides a strong price signal for demand reduction. The price for most hours is 10 percent less than the current flat rate.

Xcel does not anticipate significant adverse bill impacts, but did include some billing protections to maintain customer satisfaction and avoid major or unanticipated impacts.

Xcel said the AMI meters, with two-way communication and interval data capability, would provide significant benefit to participants and provide a critical learning opportunity for the company. Xcel's current residential metering technology communicates from meters to data aggregating devices upstream.

For more information, see MPUC docket No. 17-775 and 17-776.

ERMU:

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goal.

ERMU offers a \$500 rebate towards the purchase and installation of a 240-volt EV charger, used for the sole purpose of charging on-road vehicles.

The customer is also responsible for the purchase and installation of a 200-amp bypass meter socket, to be set in a mutually agreed-upon location. Inspection by a State Certified electrical inspector of all metering equipment is required before ERMU will install the meter.

The electric vehicle charging program places ERMU on the technological forefront. ERMU supplies 100 percent renewable energy to cover EV sales. All EV charging is metered separately. Rates vary depending on time-of-use (TOU). Because the price of electricity fluctuates depending on system demand, a TOU rate fluctuates based on time



Tom Sagstetter with ERMU's electric-powered Chevy Bolt at the utility's Hwy. 169 charging station.

or day. ERMU's highest TOU rate—on-peak summer—is \$13.7 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Off-peak is less than half that—just over 6 cents per kWh.

The rate is subject to application of any Power Cost Adjustment but is not subject to load control.

So far, nine ERMU customers have installed at-home chargers. Two more customers are working through the process to install in-home chargers, said ERMU Conservation and Key Accounts Manager Tom Sagstetter.

'Energy City' partners to promote electric vehicles

Elk River's downtown EV charger ribbon-cutting ceremony brought together event partners including: the National Drive Electric Week, Great Plains Institute and Drive Electric MN, Cornerstone Automotive, the City of Elk River, the Elk River *Star News*, the American Public Power Association, ERMU staff members, and especially the EV community.

Partnerships are the key to success. ERMU worked closely with the City of Elk River



to include electric vehicles and charging infrastructure in the City of Elk River - Energy City Action Plan. ERMU also applied for DEED Grant through APPA and received a grant of \$40,000 to implement an EV marketing plan, a electric vehicle fleet assessment, and implement time-of-

use pricing for public charging stations.

The city of Elk River was established as the "Energy City" in 1996. The city and its partners pursue the goal of making Elk River the most environmentally friendly and energy responsible city in Minnesota. The Energy City Commission is made up of local business leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, residents, City Council members, and ERMU utility staff.

As part of the APPA DEED grant the City of Elk River and ERMU recently concluded an Electric Vehicle Suitability Assessment.

The assessment tracked 20 city and utility vehicles for nine months to determine if electric vehicles were viable options for inclusion in fleet discussions going forward.

The study found that 80 percent of the vehicles drove less than 50 miles per day and that 97 percent of vehicles drove less than 100 miles per day.

Based on the driving distances of the vehicles tracked they were suitable for either all electric or hybrid, but consideration has to be given for how vehicles are used (towing, large loads, all-wheel or four wheel drive) in addition to miles per day.

The City also produced a Green City Fleet Guide as part of a Metro CERT Seed Grant funded project that can guide other cities in taking action.

Public charging stations

The public ERMU charging stations were installed in the last 12 months. The three stations have provided 184 charging sessions and delivered over 1,350 kWh of green renewable energy to EV owners reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 580 kilograms.

The downtown and ERMU charging stations are 240-volt Level 2 chargers, capable of adding 10 to 20 miles of range per hour. ERMU charges a connection fee of \$2 per session and applicable TOU rate for energy depending on the day and time of the session.

The charging station at Co-

born's is a 480-volt DC Fast Charger, which can fully charge a depleted battery in as little as 20 minutes, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. DC fast charger connection fee is \$5 at the applicable TOU rate for energy, depending on the day and time of the session.

EV drivers pay for each session through an account they set up that utilizes either a proximity card or a mobile application on their smart phone. The online app vendor processes all charges and remits payments back to ERMU less a processing fee.

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Conference to feature Policymakers' Track on 'Board Policies that Work'

Editor's note: MMUA is offering a half-day seminar at the upcoming Summer Conference on governance and policymaking. Participants will learn about the importance of documented policies in (1) strengthening board leadership and decision-making; (2) supporting the consistent application of sound governance principles and practices; (3) establishing board and management accountabilities for performance; and (4) sustaining the beneficial legacy of municipal utilities for the next generation.

by R. John Miner

Pres. Collaboration Unlimited/Collaborative Learning

One of the often-stated core benefits of a municipal utility is "local control." With local control, a municipality is both empowered and obligated to make many important decisions concerning its utility enterprises and services. For an electric utility, these decisions involve such wide-ranging elements of the business as sources of electric supply, physical and financial assets, rates and charges for electric service, and workforce. For "local control" to deliver on its advertised benefit, a municipality must make business

decisions that are aligned with and responsive to customer and community needs and values. Such decision-making calls for the combined perspectives and expertise of professional managers and elected or appointed policymakers. Such decision-making also calls for effective governance . . . and effective policy development and use is at the heart of effective governance.

Policy development and use is difficult and requires discipline. Too often in our work with municipal utilities, we find that both management and the governing body (city council or board) are confused about policy. When asked about policies, a common response goes something like this: "Of course we make important policy decisions! We just don't always document them." . . . or . . . "No, we don't really have a policy manual . . . our policies are documented in the meeting minutes and resolutions." At one level, confusion arises when policies are not fully documented, well-organized, and readily available. With this situation, past policy decisions are not remembered or used. For anyone who was not there when the decision was made, it doesn't

really exist. At another (deeper) level, confusion arises when the management and governing body have failed to address important policy issues or have addressed them in a manner that did not establish any long-term agreement that would be useful as a point of reference for future decisions.

What can be done? The first step toward effective policy development and use is for the governing body to recognize that its leadership is fundamentally defined by the process through which it develops and implements policies. Another way of stating this is that the principal work products of the governing body are its policies and its legacy is the result of those policies in action. Because a state statute, city charter, articles of incorporation and by-laws, on their own, are seldom adequate for effective governance, a board's documented policies provide the basic structure and processes through which it fulfills its fiduciary and other mandated responsibilities.

To put a more practical spin on this topic, let's get specific about policy. What is it? What does a policy statement look

like? At its most basic level, a policy is a statement of value, agreed upon and adopted by a governing body, that establishes expected outcomes, actions and behaviors . . . or establishes boundaries/limits on expected outcomes, actions, and behaviors. For example, in adopting a policy for its own members, a governing body might state:

"Board members are expected to be present at all regular and specially called meetings of the Board and any Board committees to which they are assigned. Board members will properly prepare themselves to perform their assigned duties as Board officers and members, and for effective Board deliberation, decision-making, and representation in advance of all assigned meetings and other Board-approved and Board-related activities."

As another example, a governing body might adopt the following policy statement for its chief executive when delegating authority to act on their behalf with respect to customer service:

In all interactions with customers and customer representatives, the General Manager shall not intention-

ally allow situations, processes, actions, behaviors or attitudes that are unsafe, undignified, inattentive, disrespectful or unresponsive to customer needs and requests, or otherwise in conflict with the organizational purpose, mission, and values advocated by the Board."

The bottom line is that a governing body uses statements of policy to define performance expectations for the utility overall, for itself, and for management. It assigns those expectations to someone and then monitors actual performance against expectations. In the first of the two policy examples above, the governing body would expect individual members to be self-accountable, but the board's presiding officer (chair or president) would routinely monitor and report on policy compliance, as well as take appropriate steps to correct any noncompliance. In the second example, the governing body would expect the General Manager to routinely monitor, report, and maintain compliance.

Policy development in the manner described here can

Governance: see page 9 please

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MMUA invites you to Annual Summer Conference; annual gathering of municipal utility people

MMUA holds its 87th annual meeting, beginning Monday, Aug. 20 at Alexandria's Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center.

The Annual Summer Conference begins officially with an outside welcome reception and dinner the evening of Monday, Aug. 20. Those arriving early often participate in the popular afternoon 'scramble' golf tournament or group bike ride.

MMUA President John Crooks, general manager of Shakopee Public Utilities, opens the meeting the morning of Tuesday, August 21. The program includes:

Shifting Gears & Changing Lanes,

Jay Gubrud
A Catalyst for Performance Improvement

A New Vision for CIP (Conservation Improvement Program)

Mark Kotschevar, Rochester Public Utilities and Jared Echternach, Beltrami Electric Cooperative

The Washington Scene

Michael Nolan, MMUA Washington Rep.

The Tuesday, Aug. 22 afternoon program will consist of two tracks—Management or Policymaker

Management Track

Looking Ahead – Large Scale Solar with Storage
Mike Fosse, Dakota Electric Association

Electric Vehicles (EVs): Opportunity Now or Later?

Hear how the EV market is unfolding and how advances in public charging infrastructure are accelerating market forces. The program will also include a discussion of how one of our members leveraged their opportunities to create the framework for a robust utility program.

Municipals Helping Municipals

Scott Hain, Worthington Public Utilities; Jeff Becthold, MRES, Jim Maras, Madelia Municipal Light & Power

Our panel of MMUA Regular and Affiliate Members discusses how they are involved in working with other municipal organizations to strengthen Public Power in Minnesota.

Keynote speaker promises to energize, educate and entertain!

Whether an organization is growing or simply moving in a new direction, change is inevitable and happens at a dizzying pace. Jay Gubrud's presentation on Shifting Gears & Changing Lanes will provide the tools to effectively navigate the road to change by:

- Finding out the four major reactions to change and how to make them work for you and people you lead
- Discovering practical communication skills that facilitate change

- Finding the four steps to highly effective conflict, change can be a rocky road
- Breaking out of old roles, habits and assumptions

Shifting Gears & Changing Lanes will enable people to accept change, confront their fears and move forward in a positive direction. Change is inevitable. Why not embrace it?

Get energized, educated and entertained. Don't settle for the same old ideas that are being used in your industry.

Policymaker Track Board Policies that Work

John Miner, Collaborative Learning
Policy development and use is at the core of effective municipal utility governance. Because enabling legislation and by-laws on their own are seldom adequate for effective governance, a board's documented policies provide the basic structure and processes through which it fulfills its responsibilities.

In this seminar, participants will learn about the importance of documented policies in strengthening board leadership and decision-making. As a relevant and important example of policy leadership, participants will focus on the development of documented policy describing the Board's role and responsibilities for performance planning and

evaluation of the chief executive (general manager, utility director, superintendent, etc.).

Time permitting, seminar participants will also consider other selected governance issues that are common to municipal utility organizations, as well as alternative responses to those issues and the development of policy statements to address them.

Evening Activities

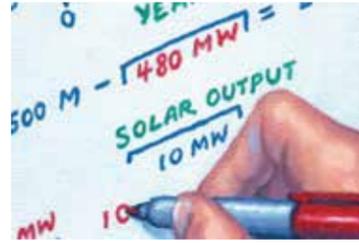
Trade Show and Reception
Banquet and Awards

Wednesday, August 22

(Wednesday's meeting is open to Regular & Affiliate Members Only)

MMUA Business Meeting

This meeting is necessary for the carrying on of association business as required by the MMUA bylaws. Attend



and carry on the business of Public Power in Minnesota.

Minnesota Public Power Forward Partnership

Patricia Keane, American Public Power Association

The electric industry is in a period of rapid transformation. New technologies have emerged, energy markets across the country have dramatically changed, and customers expect and demand 21st Century services. This creates opportunities and challenges for the electric utility industry – particularly smaller publicly owned electric utilities – where meeting customer expectations for new services while maintaining the current high standards in reliability and affordability may not be easily accomplished.

With that in mind, the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA), Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) and the American Public Power Association (APPA) have entered into the Minnesota Public Power Forward Partnership to assist Minnesota's public power utilities as they plan for the future. Attend and learn about the toolkit that will walk you through topics

including rate design, new technologies, and IT/OT.

Getting Rates Ready for Competition – A Guide for Policymakers

Dave Berg, Dave Berg Consulting

MMUA and Dave Berg Consulting are developing 'Getting Rates Ready for Competition – A Guide for Policymakers'. This guide is designed to assist policymakers and other non-technical utility personnel in their understanding of electric rates and the theories that support the design of rates. As the industry evolves toward greater reliance on renewables, distributed generation, storage and other new technologies, rate design must evolve with it. Dave Berg will present a summary of the guide to give participants an overview of the materials.

Electric Service Issues: Analysis and Developments

Steve Downer, MMUA and Mark Fritsch, Owatonna Public Utilities

State Legislative Developments

Kent Sulem and Bill Black, MMUA; and Doug Carnival, McGrann Shea

Issues Round-Up

Jack Kegel, Bob Jagusch and Mike Willetts, MMUA

For more information, see the 'Events' calendar at www.mmua.org or contact Rita Kelly by email rkelly@mmua.org or phone 763.746.0707.



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The Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (CMMPA) and Central Municipal Power Agency/ Services (CMPAS) Board of Directors June 15 announced the appointment of **Christopher Kopel** as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) effective June 6. Kopel had served as Interim CEO since January 2018. In 2013, he joined the Agency as Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Kopel brings more than 25 years of power industry experience.

Prior to joining the agency, Kopel served in leadership and business development roles at NextEra Energy Resources, Iberdrola Renewables, and NRG Power Marketing, as well as various regulatory, operations, and planning roles at Northern States Power Company, now known as Xcel Energy.

Daniel J. Harmelink will join Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) Aug. 1 as general counsel and director of the organization's Legal Department.

Harmelink is a native of Sioux Center, Iowa, and since 2000, has practiced law with Woods, Fuller, Shultz & Smith P.C., in Sioux Falls,

Around the State



S.D. He has served as one of the primary legal advisors to MRES since 2008.

Harmelink earned his law degree in 1999 from the University of Iowa College of Law.

The **Sleepy Eye Public Utilities'** office has moved from its power plant location into city hall. The Post Office box has been discontinued and the new address is: Sleepy Eye Public Utilities, 200 Main Street East, Sleepy Eye, MN 56085.

Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) is decommissioning its district heating system on July 1, 2020, and with the dwindling steam load the existing power plant boilers are no longer an efficient supply option.

As a result, WMU is using a mobile boiler, small enough to meet the district heat needs. The natural gas-fueled boiler is inside a trailer outside of and connected to the power plant.

Last year, there were ap-

proximately 220 heating system customers; now there are 165 with more leaving this summer, including a handful of large customers that make up the majority of the load.

Virginia Department of Public Utilities is moving forward with a downsizing of its steam heating system and converting residential customers to natural gas service. The downtown commercial area will remain in the core steam district. Steam will be turned off to residential areas by 2021.

Wendy Meyer retired as **Mountain Lake** city clerk/administrator May 4 and has been replaced by Michael Schulte. A native of the Bird Island area, Schulte was most recently an intern in Nebraska City, Neb., and is receiving his master's in public administration from the University of Nebraska-Omaha this summer.

New Prague Public Utilities Commission and Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative held a joint open house April 24 in regard to the municipal utility acquisition of four areas and some 750 cooperative customers locating within the city limits. Approximately 50 people attended the event.

The Commission approved a territory transfer agreement April 30. It moved its meeting to a larger room, in anticipation of accommodating more interested persons than usual. However, only one person turned out to address the issue.

According to press reports, the transfer deal had been under discussion for approximately two years.

After discussion of a rate consultant's findings, the **Baudette** city council adjusted electric rates. Large power customers will see an energy rate decrease from \$0.1090 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to \$0.1000 per kWh but a demand charge increase from \$4.37 per kilowatt 9kW to \$7.50 per kW.

The uncontrolled heat category was discontinued and merged with the appropriate residential, commercial or large power category.

Meanwhile, the council heard a report on progress of the new Willie Wall-eye statue, which is being constructed in Sparta, Wisc. The existing 40-foot, 2 1/2 ton statue is to be demolished and replaced this summer.

According to local press reports, both the **City of Randall** and the **Aitkin**

Public Utilities Commission have joined the North-eastern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency. The stated goal is to help members negotiate a better wholesale power contract.

The city of **Blooming Prairie** has received a state Legacy grant to pay for a survey and evaluation of the Blooming Prairie water tower, to determine the structure's eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The survey is expected to be complete by year's end. If found to be eligible, a second grant application is antici-

pated to complete the nomination, and position the city for future grant applications.

The 1922 Elk River water tower was placed on the National Register in 2012.

The towers are architecturally significant because hemispherical-bottom towers, built from about the 1890s to about 1940, are being rapidly replaced.

The Blooming Prairie tower was built in 1925 and has a capacity of 65,000 gallons. Blooming Prairie Public Utilities is considering a 100,000 gallon tower to give the city sufficient storage to handle population growth.



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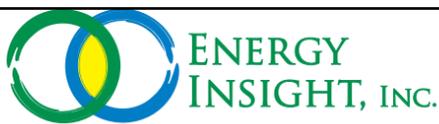
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Members of Dodge County Concerned Citizens expect to challenge a proposed wind farm that would stretch across Steele and Dodge counties, according to the Steele County *Times*.

Florida-based NextEra Energy has proposed a 71 turbine development, called the Dodge Wind Energy Center. The permitting process before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission has started.

The Dodge County citizens

Bits & Pieces



group has previously battled feedlot issues all the way to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

The report also noted that Bent Tree Wind Farm, in Freeborn County, has agreed to purchase the homes of two families that have long complained about excessive noise.

Judge recommends denial of site permit for wind farm

An administrative law judge (ALJ) May 14 recommended the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission deny a site permit to Freeborn Wind Energy to construct and operate an up to 84 Megawatt portion of a wind farm in Freeborn County. As an alternative, the judge recommended the Commission allow a certain amount of time for Freeborn Wind to submit a plan demonstrating how it will comply with Minnesota Noise Standards.

Among the ALJ's findings:

- The turbines cannot be lawfully operated if it results in total noise in excess of the standards in Minnesota Rule 7030.0400. A total of 78 homes in the project footprint will experience more noise than permitted.

- The project will result in benefits to the local economy.
- The preponderance of

evidence demonstrates that current science supports a determination that people who live near wind turbines may experience annoyance, loss of sleep and headaches.

- It is not in the best interest of the local community to locate wind turbines in a manner that angers and alienates the people whose lives are most directly affected by the wind turbines

The ALJ recommended that, if the Commission issues a site permit, the draft site permit conditions be amended to require residential setbacks of 1,500 feet for all non-participating landowners.

A number of parties intervened in the case, including a group of local landowners opposed to the project. The landowner group requested that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency develop rules

governing wind turbine noise. The MPCA said "the current understanding of wind turbine noise and its potential effects is insufficient to support rulemaking at this time."

State agencies, including the MPCA, said the current state noise standard was not promulgated with wind turbine-like noise in mind.

Freeborn Wind is an affiliate of Invenergy LLC, a large-scale developer headquartered in Chicago. Freeborn Wind has entered into an agreement with Xcel Energy, whereby Xcel will acquire Freeborn Wind upon conclusion of all development activities, and then own and operate the project.

The MPUC has not yet set a date for hearing. It generally follows ALJ recommendations, but is not bound by them.

- Steve Downer



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The MPUC has recently dealt with several large wind development proposals. During its May 17 meeting alone, it dealt with site permits or transmission related developments for:

- Nobles 2 Power Partners, a 260-MW project in Nobles County;

- Flying Cow Wind's proposal for the 152-MW Bitter Root Wind Project in Yellow Medicine County;

- Blazing Star Wind Farm 2's request for a high-voltage transmission in Lincoln County;

- Wisconsin Power and Light's request for a site permit for the Bent Tree Project in Freeborn County;

- Lake Benton Power Partners, an 107 MW facility in Lincoln County;

- and Trimont Wind I, in Martin and Jackson Counties.

The MPUC May 11 approved a permit for the 44.8 MW Palmer's Creek Wind Farm in Chippewa County.

According to a report issued in June by the Solar

Energy Industries Association, Minnesota has 849.5 MW of solar energy installed. In the first quarter of 2018, 105 MW of solar was added in Minnesota, the fifth most among states during that time. Minnesota's solar market grew 89 percent during that quarter.

According to the report, Minnesota now ranks 14th among states for total solar power and there were 105 'community solar gardens' operating in Minnesota.

Governance

continued from page 6

appear to be an overwhelming task for a council or board . . . but it need not be. With some up-front planning and a basic commitment to devote a portion of every meeting to policy, real progress can be made in just a few weeks. Before getting stated, it is best to develop a basic framework that establishes a process and schedule for policy development and approval, a policy document template, a structure of policy types (e.g. organizational results, governance, management) and specific policy topics (e.g. board member responsibilities and conduct, budgeting and rates, employee interests).

Participants at the Conference will focus on the development of a documented policy describing the Board's role and responsibilities for performance planning and evaluation of the chief executive. Time permitting, seminar participants will also consider other selected governance issues that are common to municipal utility organizations.

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General Manager/CEO
 The Owatonna Public Utilities, supplier of electricity, water, and natural gas services in Owatonna, Minnesota is seeking qualified candidates for the position of General Manager/CEO. Candidates must have experience in the utility industry including operations, organizational management, strategic planning, and financial management. Candidates should also possess exceptional communication, interpersonal and leadership skills, and have a personal commitment to providing excellent customer service. Experience in employee engagement, marketing and knowledge of engineering principles is a plus. The General Manager/CEO reports to an appointed board of commissioners and is responsible for carrying out all board policies and directives. A bachelor's degree in public administration, business, engineering, finance or equivalent and 5-10 years senior level management experience in a municipal public utility with more than one commodity is preferred. OPU's compensation and benefits are competitive and will be dependent upon qualifications and experience. An Opportunity Profile for this position is available upon request; see e-mail below. Interested candidates may apply by submitting a cover letter and resume no later than September 14, 2018 to: madsonm@owatonnautilities.com or mail to: Marge Madson, Owatonna Public Utilities, P.O. Box 800, 208 S. Walnut Avenue, Owatonna, MN 55060. 507-446-5414 Equal Opportunity Employer EOE-M/F/H/V

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continued on facing page:

ticeship Program

- Course instructor at MMUA Training Center, Marshall, MN

Position Requirements:

- Applicant must have a strong technical lineworker background (Journeyman Lineworker)
- Graduate of accredited lineworker college preferred
- Applicant must have a strong understanding of safety standards, including OSHA 1910.269 and 1926 Subpart V
- Must have strong planning, organizational and time management skills
- Must have good communication skills and enjoy public speaking
- Applicant must have good computer skills; proficient in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
- Must have good driving record. Extensive travel required.

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Email: mwilletts@mmua.org

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- Demonstrated experience in rate structure and analysis.
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a customer-focused mentality and will have a degree preferably in an electrical technical field such as, electrical engineering or electrical construction management, along with a strong interest in energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as 7+ years of experience in the electric utility field. Qualified candidates will also possess excellent interpersonal skills and strong communication skills, and should anticipate speaking in public, frequent travel, and occasional evening city commission meetings. Customer service experience and a record of active community involvement is a plus.

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Associate

Member News

MMUA has two new Associate Members: Open Access Technology International (OATI) and Southern Minnesota Inspection.

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Spiegel & McDiarmid LLP is proud to announce that in its 2018 rankings Chambers & Partners has once again recognized Spiegel & McDiarmid LLP as one of the nation's leading law firms. Chambers recognizes Cyn-

thia Bogorad, David Pomper, and Scott Strauss individually as among the top lawyers in the United States for 2018 in the area of "Energy: Electricity (Regulatory & Litigation) — Nationwide." Chambers ranks "the world's best lawyers and law firms based on in-depth, objective research" and extensive interviews with clients and colleagues. Their guide is considered the premier survey of attorneys and law firms in the country.

For the year 2018 in the practice area of Energy & Natural Resources, Washington DC Super Lawyers has selected Cindy Bogorad, Jeff Schwarz and Scott Strauss as "Super Lawyers," and Katie Mapes has been named a "Rising Star." Super Lawyers, a Thomson Reuters business, is a rating service of outstanding attorneys from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement. Super Lawyers are selected through a process involving independent research, peer nominations and peer evaluations.



Upcoming training events – Overhead School and Lineworkers Rodeo

Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association and our partners, Minnesota Rural Electric Association and American Public Power Association, are pleased to announce the 2018 Overhead Lineworker School. Classes offer useful instruction for all levels of lineworker.

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2018 Rodeo Recap

A total of five teams and six apprentices competed this April in North Carolina. Hear from several who participated. Plus we'll recap this year's Minnesota Rodeo.

Second Annual Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo

Sept. 11, MMUA Training Center in Marshall

This event will be held prior to the Overhead School. The Rodeo offers lineworkers the opportunity to increase proficiency, gain confidence and experience some healthy competition.

Events will include Hurtman Rescue, Rope Toss and an Obstacle Course. All events will be single-person so that any lineworker can participate!



The event precedes the Overhead School and is free to MMUA members. Any lineworker, however, may participate.

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

MULTI-SESSION CLASS DETAILS

Session 1: Primary Double Dead-End

This session will cover all the proper steps needed to change a wood tangent inline arm into a double dead-end fiberglass arm.

Session 2: 3-Phase Transformer Bank Troubleshooting

This session will go through different scenarios to help better understand troubleshooting issues. Testing, hook-up and safety protocol for replacement of transformers and returning them to service will be covered along with important things to be looking out for in the field.



Session 3: Rigging and Knots

Knowing the proper way of rigging and tying knots plays a crucial role in linework. This session covers knots and rigging used in all aspects of line construction and maintenance.

Session 4: Troubleshooting

Participants will have the opportunity to practice several different troubleshooting techniques including testing, grounding and proper rubber cover up.

ADVANCED CLASS

Budgeting and Finance 101

Making the transition from the line crew to management can be a big undertaking. This class is designed to help you along that path. Topics to be discussed include the following but are not limited to: safety, work management, budget planning, mutual aid/emergency preparedness, and finances.

Register by Aug. 10 for best rate. Deadline to register is Aug. 20.

Schedule

Tuesday, September 11

1:00 pm Registration
2:00 pm Welcome
2:15 pm General Session: Customer De-escalation Strategies
5:00 pm Reception/Rodeo Awards

Wednesday, September 12

8:30 am Multi-Session / Advanced Class Training
12:00 pm Lunch (provided)
12:30 pm Multi-Session Class (rotate) / Advanced Class (continued)
5:00 pm Golf or Sporting Clay Shoot (at participant's expense)

Thursday, September 13

8:30 am Multi-Session / Advanced Class Training
12:00 pm Lunch (provided)
12:30 pm Multi-Session Class (rotate) / Advanced Class (continued)

Friday, September 14

8:30 am General Session: Drone Operation
10:00 am Rodeo Recap
12:00 pm Closing Comments & Wrap Up

* Schedule subject to change without notice.

Questions?

Please contact Theresa Neddermeyer by email tneddermeyer@mmua.org or phone 763.551.1230.

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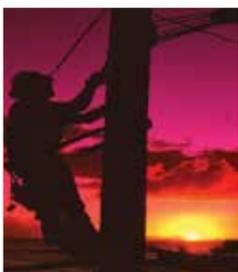
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