

Back on the field

With power supplier's help, Barnesville restores local municipal electric line crew

by Steve Downer

Several smaller municipal utilities have ceased to work on their electric distribution systems in recent decades, due to economic reasons, often turning the work over to contractors or neighboring utilities.

While it is not big news for a municipal utility to get out of running a line crew, it is unusual when one gets back into distribution maintenance. And that is just what Barnesville Municipal Utilities has done, with a little help from its supplemental wholesale power supplier, Missouri River Energy Services (MRES).

Barnesville got out of linework 15 years ago, when it signed a five-year maintenance agreement with a neighboring utility. There was no other alternative at the time, said Guy Swenson, City of Barnesville Telephone, Electric, Cable (TEC) Manager.

Over the years, that original five-year agreement was signed two more times.

The city enjoyed a good working relationship with its service provider, said Swenson, and thought of the lineman (who lived



MRES-employed linemen now headquartered in Barnesville and working for the city are Sam Jones (left) and Alex Klovstad. The city owns the truck, and other materials and equipment.

Barnesville: see page 6 please

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Willmar transmission project to increase local, regional reliability

Rates are a big consideration, but for most municipal electric utilities the day-to-day concern is reliability. And in this age of the inter-connected electric grid, one giant step toward a more reliable electric system is securing multiple transmission feeds.

Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) has had two transmission feeds for many years, but unfortunately—for reliability purposes—both those feeds entered the same substation. According to regulatory docu-

ments, both an Xcel owned transmission line and a higher-voltage Great River Energy (GRE)-owned line interconnected to separate transformers at the same WMU substation.

One localized severe storm and Willmar's outside electrical connection could be severed. To rectify that vulnerability, a dual voltage transformer from the existing sub has been moved to a new location several miles away, allowing WMU to separate the vital transmission

feeds.

The multi-faceted project increases reliability for Willmar electric customers, and those served by other utilities in west central Minnesota.

WMU worked closely through the process with GRE, and also with Xcel. WMU owns the substation. GRE will be the operator, as the facility is in GRE's regional transmission control area.

GRE contracted to build two transmission lines, including

the line connecting the existing substation to the new substation. WMU was responsible for substation construction. A second GRE line continues from the new WMU substation to nearby GRE substations, increasing the overall load serving capability of the transmission system in the area.

The substation project carries an approximately \$4.9 million price tag. Willmar Municipal

Willmar: see page 9 please

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MMUA and MnOSHA study silica dust hazards with help of members

by Mark Hottel
Regional Safety Coordinator

MMUA helps members comply with OSHA standards. But did you know the association also works with MnOSHA to provide for scientific sampling and analysis of real-life activities? The goal is to help members comply with certain regulations in the most efficient manner. This type of work also builds trust and leads to a good working relationship with MnOSHA staff.

One such effort is currently underway.

A recently rewritten OSHA standard concerning "respirable crystalline silica" has the potential to affect municipal utilities and public works

departments across the state. The new federal standard for general industry operations became enforceable in Minnesota on July/August 23, 2018. Since most of our operations fall under the definitions used for general industry work, the 1910.1053 standard has our closest attention.

Silica dust has a long history of causing illness and fatalities in occupational settings. Public works and utility employees are performing tasks that can generate very fine "respirable" silica dust. One of our objectives is to determine what levels exist for those tasks. Indeed, the new standard requires that

Study: see page 9 please



MMUA Regional Safety Coordinator Mike Hottel (foreground) inspected a water spray nozzle during routine maintenance activities on a City of Kenyon street sweeping machine—a typical municipal piece of equipment.

MMUA members urged to know the law when it comes utility railroad crossing payments

by Bill Black & Kent Sulem

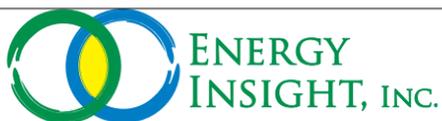
Many MMUA member utilities have been told by railroads or railroad agents that a law change or court case in 2018 has added to what railroads may charge for utility crossings. As there were no relevant statutory changes passed by the Legislature, and the only court case MMUA is aware of went primarily in favor of the utilities and against the railroads, MMUA is concerned that municipal utilities may be misled into spending more than required to with regard to crossings in a railroad's right-of-way. Here are the facts

of which a municipal utility needs to be aware:

In 2017, the Minnesota Legislature enacted a law limiting railroads to charging \$1,250 for new utility crossings. For existing crossings under existing agreements, utilities that terminate an agreement—according to its termination conditions—may cease to make future payments if they have already paid in excess of \$1,250 for that crossing. The law also clarified that crossing fees are not required to be paid for crossings in public rights of way (see Minnesota Statutes §237.045).



Many municipal utilities, including the one in Grove City, have interactions with railroad companies.



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Following the state's enactment of this new law, CenturyLink petitioned the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) to rule that the statute governed its planned replacement of an underground cable in St. Louis Park, and located in BNSF right-of-way running a distance of 206 feet roughly parallel to and 38-46 feet from the track. The MPUC ruled in CenturyLink's favor,

finding that the statute applies to parallel installations as well as crossings, and that the \$1,250 fee limit was sufficient and applies in such situations.

BNSF appealed the MPUC's ruling. In a Sept. 24, 2018 decision, the Minnesota Court of Appeals upheld the MPUC's decision, agreeing that the statute applies equally to both crossings and parallelings, and denying BNSF's claim that the statute is unconstitutional because the \$1,250 fee limit is insufficient and thus constitutes an uncompensated taking. While the Court of Appeals ruled the statute constitutional, it also found it does not prevent a railroad from filing a separate inverse condemnation claim to recover any actual diminution in the property's value caused by the facility installation by a utility. (MMUA participated in the case by joining in the filing of a multi-party amicus brief.) BNSF opted not to appeal

this ruling to the Supreme Court. Thus, the Court of Appeal's ruling is controlling law in Minnesota, which means Minnesota Statutes Section 237.045 is applicable to both crossings and parallelings, and that no utility should have to pay more than \$1,250 for a crossing or paralleling. Because a particular crossing or paralleling may cause diminution in the railroad's property value, utilities do need to be aware of the risk of the railroad filing an inverse condemnation action.

The level of risk seems slight, but there could be unique, local facts that may make it prudent for a utility to, by a written agreement, voluntarily pay more than the \$1,250 cap on fees, but no utility should feel compelled to pay more, and those with older agreements should be aware of their rights to stop paying in most cases where they have already paid the railroad at least \$1,250.



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A sense of place

Each MMUA member city — and utility — has a unique history and is well worth taking care of

Editor's note: The following first appeared in the News > Blogs section of the MMUA website.

A sense of place.

That is one thing that each of the 124 Minnesota cities operating a municipal electric utility has in common.

It's not surprising. When your bedrock tenet is local control, it stands to reason that your city would be unique. While traveling through the bustling Chicago suburbs (where my wife grew up) the thought often occurs to me — I could be anywhere, maybe Eagan.

That thought is unlikely to intrude when visiting, say, Granite Falls.

Granite Falls is one of six Minnesota municipal electric utilities with a municipally-owned hydroelectric plant. These plants have been churning out power for decades. They are, of course, located on rivers, which normally run the same course year in, and year out. And given the fact that you generally still have to spin metal to make electricity, some of the equipment in many of these plants has also been in service for many decades.

If it works, no sense in spending good money just to change it. And, in some cases, equipment installed years ago was 'overbuilt'—it was meant to last, not be replaced after a few years. Brass fixtures have been polished by numerous hands over the decades—each taking pride in keeping it in good working order.

Any city with a municipal power plant is a fascinating place to visit. You can scoff at the notion of maintaining a century-old building to house electric generators, some of which might have started life pushing a World War II submarine through the ocean, but these units continue to show their worth. The most recent example came during this winter's polar vortex. With the natural gas system unable to keep up with demand in some areas, diesel-fueled municipal generators rumbled into service. As they have time after time, year after year, decade after decade.

The basic goodness of the design and manufacture of these engines must be acknowledged. You also have to be impressed at the skill of the men who have kept these units in running order over the years. Many a municipal power plant operator treats these engines as if they were his own. Or better.

While largely sidelined by economics, the previous-generation municipal power plant has proven its worth over the years. A new wave of investment is now sweeping the state, driven by, paradoxically, wind energy. A big internal combustion engine with a generator attached to the crankshaft is a perfect tool for 'firming up' a sprawling 'wind farm.'

It appears the municipal power plant will remain viable (and absolutely necessary for propping up the state's electric grid, under certain circumstances).

Most MMUA-member cities don't have any type of power plant. Yet they retain their unique characters. Maybe it's a main street, with a clock, or a cafe. Or a railroad depot sporting the city's name, or a ballpark, or an arena. Many of these places border a beautiful lake, or are home to a widely-recognized business.

Buildings are made from local material: pine, limestone,



The Keewatin city hall council meeting room. The municipal electric utility celebrated its centennial in 2018, when this photo was taken.

sandstone. Kasson stone. Chaska brick.

And some places appear to have been forgotten by time. The railroad no longer runs through, the highway took a different route, people left, the elevator shut down, a church closed its doors. But

pride in the place lives on in the hearts of people there. Many hold a common last name—a name that might leave the town but will be forever associated with it.

All of these places have an interesting history, and

thrived at times, if not enjoying a steady trajectory of growth and prosperity.

They are home, to somebody. And home is worth taking care of.

- the editor

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Strong winds, lightning, hail and an unconfirmed tornado came through the city of **Rochester** and southeast Minnesota on Tuesday, June 4. In the wake of the storm, Minnesota public power utility Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) called on assistance from other public power utilities in the state to help with restoration work.

The storm caused significant damage to trees and property of many Rochester residents, as well as causing damage to RPU infrastructure.

A total of 3,255 RPU customers were affected by outages. A majority of customers were only affected for a few hours the evening of June 4. By 8 am on June 5, only 179 customers were still without power, and those remaining customers had service back by the evening on June 5.

RPU received mutual aid assistance by 11 a.m. on June 5 from municipal utility crews from the following Minnesota cities: Austin, Owatonna, Waseca, Blue Earth, and Shakopee.

All mutual aid crews were

Around the State

released by the evening on June 5.

RPU serves 55,000 electric customers and 40,000 water customers and operates under the direction of a five-member, mayor-appointed Utility Board and under the Rochester City Council.

Blue Earth Light & Water, along with Central Municipal Power Agency Services (CMPAs), Drive Electric Minnesota and Energy Insight held an electric vehicle 'ride and drive' event 3-7 p.m. Thursday, June 6 at the local chamber of commerce office.

Robert Wolfington is the new city manager in Montevideo. He was most recently city administrator in Tyler.

The City of Worthington, **Worthington Public Utilities** (WPU) and other city organizations, citing a lack of available housing, have purchased land for a city-owned residential development,



The City of Lanesboro is among those places grappling with the cost of updating infrastructure to deal with growth and/or increasingly stringent regulatory requirements. Pictured is the city's public library (foreground), which is attached to city hall and next to the municipal campground.

designed to include 91 lots of varying sizes and prices.

WPU recently reported that since LED bulbs were installed in city street lights, electricity consumption has decreased by 63 percent and cost by 66 percent.

WPU is also investigating electric and water meter reading systems that offer a customer 'portal.'

Truman Public Utilities and its power supplier—Heartland Consumers Power District—have conducted in-home energy audits, resulting in significant savings. The utility is making plug-in meters available to customers to measure the electrical consumption of various devices.

The **City of Lanesboro** continues moving forward on

the process for a possible new wastewater treatment plant. The current plant was reportedly built in 1938, making it the oldest operating plant in the state. Estimated project costs range from \$6.5 million to \$7.75 million, a lot of money for a city of 765 people. Funding options are being investigated.

A person familiar to many Minnesota municipal utilities—**Mike McGlone**—retired June 7 after nearly 27 years of committed service to The Salvation Army and the HeatShare program.

A retirement party was held in Roseville following McGlone's last HeatShare Advisory Council meeting on Thursday, June 6.

Scout Clean Energy on June 5 announced the completion of a power purchase agreement with **Minnesota Municipal Power Agency** (MMPA) for the purchase of 200 megawatts of energy from the Three Waters Wind Farm in Jackson County.

The project calls for the installation of up to 71, 2.82 MW GE wind turbines to be located across approximately 45,000 acres in Jackson County.

"This purchase of renewable energy contributes to MMPA's renewable portfolio and reduces MMPA's carbon footprint in a cost-effective manner," said Oncu Er, Chief Operating Officer of Avant Energy, Inc., MMPA's management partner.

The project is expected to begin construction in 2021 with an anticipated in-service date of late 2021. Three Waters is being developed and will be owned and operated by Scout Clean Energy, a portfolio company of Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners, a leading private equity infrastructure fund.

Solar developer fights Wisconsin territory law

In Wisconsin, Eagle Point Solar wants to partner with the City of Milwaukee to power seven city buildings with solar, but We Energies is refusing to connect a series of solar arrays to each other.

The We Energies utility claims Eagle Point would essentially be selling electricity to the city within We Energies' service area, which the utility argued would be illegal.

Eagle Point also sued the Wisconsin Public Service Commission, which declined to take up its complaint against We Energies, also known as Wisconsin Electric Power Co.



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In April 2019, U.S. monthly electricity generation from renewable sources exceeded coal-fired generation for the first time, reported the Energy Information Administration (EIA) in its June 26 Electric Power Monthly. Renewable sources provided 23 percent of total electricity generation to coal's 20 percent.

Wind generation reached a record monthly high in April 2019 of 30.2 million megawatt hours (MWh). Solar generation—including utility-scale solar photovoltaics and utility-scale solar thermal—reached a record monthly high in June 2018 of 7.8 million MWh and will likely surpass that level this summer, according to EIA.

Seasonal increases in hydroelectric generation also helped drive the overall increase in renewable generation, the report noted.

Xcel Energy July 1 filed its Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. The IRP lays out the utility's plan for meeting customers' needs in a reliable and low-cost manner.

The company had pledged

Bits & Pieces



to generate 100 percent of its electricity from "carbon free" sources by 2050. Following extreme cold and electric supply challenges last winter, the company said that between the years 2031 and 2034 it foresees adding about 1,700 megawatts for "dispatchable" electric generation, which might include natural gas-fired generation.

Energy storage batteries were identified as another option.

According to a July 1 report from the New York Department of Public Service, energy storage could replace as much as 500 MW of peaking capacity in that state.

The study conducted a unit-by-unit analysis of the operational and emissions data of about 4,500 MW of peaking power plants across the state, but "almost entirely" concentrated in New York City, Long Island and in the Lower Hudson Valley.

The study found that at least 275 MW, or about 6

percent, of the state's peaking fleet are candidates for replacement with six-hour storage facilities sized to the 2013 peak output. If the storage duration is stretched to eight hours, about 500 MW of peaking units would be candidates for replacement.

Solar developer representatives held an informational meeting in early June in Luverne, for a proposed 200-megawatt solar plant, to cover 1,600 acres in eastern Rock County.

An administrative law judge has recommended route options for a proposed 345,000-volt electric transmission line, to connect the Wilmarth substation northeast of Mankato to the Huntley substation near Blue Earth. The line, of approximately 50 miles, is planned to help move power from wind energy projects.

Dodge County Wind has proposed an up to 70-turbine, 170-megawatt wind plant, which would include a 345,000-volt transmission line to connect to a substation at Byron. Additional transmission line route op-

tions are being considered, and local residents are expressing concerns. Public hearings will be held upon completion of a draft Environmental Impact Statement, which was expected to be complete in late June.

The line would connect the Dodge County Wind Substation in Ripley Township to the Byron substation in Olmsted County.

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Barnesville:

continued from front page

in the city) as its own staff person.

But with the five-year agreement nearing the end of its term, Barnesville started to seriously consider its options. It put out a Request for

Proposals for electric distribution maintenance. Options considered included: work with an investor-owned utility, an electric cooperative, a joint arrangement with other municipal utilities, its municipal joint action agency, or staff its own line crew.

There were drawbacks and benefits to whatever options



Barnesville TEC Manager Guy Swenson, Alex Klovstad, Sam Jones and MRES Distribution Systems Superintendent Jeff Becthold, from left to right, in the city utility shop.

And when work was needed on higher-voltage 'primary' electric distribution, costs escalated rapidly, as the utility called in a crew to do the work.

The cost of the old agreement kept going up, noted Swenson.

"Things changed, and here we are," he said.

MRES Distribution Systems Superintendent Jeff Becthold, Manager of Transmission Services Terry Wolf, and Swenson started interviewing candidates for a lead lineman and lineman positions in February.

Maintenance Crew Leader Sam Jones was hired April 22, followed by lineman Alex Klovstad. Jones came from the Detroit Lakes Public Utility and Klovstad from an area electrical contractor. Both are journeymen. The crew was up and running in May.

Jones left Detroit Lakes on the best of terms, and said 'DL' has been "more than helpful" during the Barnesville transition period. He is thankful for the close working relationship that continues with that utility—35 miles to the northeast of Barnesville. He hopes to foster a similar relationship with Moorhead Public Service, just 25 miles

continued on facing page

were considered. After study and consideration, Barnesville thought the MRES offering was the best solution to serve its need. It helped that Barnesville is an MRES member, and both the city and the joint action agency have an interest in the other's success and well-being.

The numbers show that the Barnesville electric system has above-average reliability—last year there was only one recordable outage (longer than five minutes).

But numbers tell only part of the story.

Barnesville has seen a lot of

underground construction in the last five years, with Xcel building a natural gas distribution system and the city (which has long offered telephone and cable TV service) completing an underground fiber-to-the-premise network.

The old electric maintenance contract called for one employee's time three hours a day. With all the underground construction occurring in Barnesville over the last five years, much of that person's time was spent locating underground utilities. That left precious little time for electric system mainte-



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State highways and county roads converge in Barnesville, and share the city's designation of its main thoroughfare as Front Street. The downtown area is on the upswing, thanks in part to the impact of a growing software company, which benefits from the city's 'gigabit' internet service.

continued from facing page

to the northwest.

The linemen are employed by MRES and the city owns the equipment, including one of the first diesel-hybrid bucket trucks in the state (which was previously used as a vendor's demonstration model). The line crew is obtaining materials and tools and learning their way around town. The crew from Benson (also employed by MRES) came up to help replace a broken pole, and some of the other more urgent tasks are underway.

MRES has a different maintenance standard than the previous provider, and Barnesville will methodically work toward that standard, including conductor sizing, facilities placement and street lighting. The city has been buying dual-voltage transformers for a decade, in anticipation of a potential conversion from 2,400 to 7,200 volts.

Barnesville does have Advanced Metering Infrastructure, though a few meters remain to be changed-out. It remains a winter-peaking system. The distribution system is more than half underground.

The crew shares shop space with the telephone and cable crews. The downtown shop is adjacent to one of the utility's two substations. A new electric/cable shop is planned.

While the linemen are MRES employees, they work back-and-forth with the other city employees. Both linemen acknowledge that they may be called on to help out with

other duties, but expressed gratitude for the help that comes their way from the other city crews.

Maintenance alternative

MRES launched its Distribution Maintenance Program in 1998, to provide utilities an option to contract with MRES crews to maintain electric distribution systems and other related services.

Along with Barnesville, MRES provides full distribution services to the municipal electric utilities in Benson, Luverne, Ortonville, Olivia and Jackson. MRES also provides supplemental distribution services to Lakefield, Grove City and Big Stone City, S.D.

"The MRES Distribution System Operations and Maintenance Program can be an incredibly important and valuable tool for municipal electric utilities. By placing a priority on proper system maintenance, participating utilities can keep power costs down and reliably serve the community," said Joni Livingston, MRES Member Services and Communications Director.

Barnesville growing 'gigabit' city

Barnesville is one of the few Minnesota cities providing telephone, cable and internet service. The city installed a municipal underground 'fiber to the premise' system in 2014-15, for just under \$4 million.

Barnesville is a 'gigabit city,' and has one customer

taking service at that blazingly fast level: Stoneridge Software, a company formed by several former Microsoft employees. The company has renovated several brick buildings and Barnesville's main street is clearly on the upswing. Many local residents are working from home.

The fiber "business case is working," said Swenson.

The city has aggressively courted residential and commercial development. A new industrial park is largely filled, and the Barnesville Economic Development Authority has only a few lots left in the second addition of a new residential development.

The city also developed an 80-panel community solar garden, at a cost of \$60,000. Residents can purchase a panel for \$775. They receive its energy output for 20 years and a utility bill credit.

From ensuring that its citizens have reliable and affordable power, to offering the latest technology and resources, the City of Barnesville is working to help its community grow and prosper.

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Locate issues continue to hamper utility construction; members urged to track difficulties

It has been a frustrating construction season for many utilities and contractors, as there has been an unprecedented amount of mishandled locate tickets, according to the Minnesota Association of General Contractors (AGC). Gopher State One Call (GSOC) this spring estimated that a large percentage of the mishandled locate tickets belong to CenturyLink.

There may be some recourse for the resulting delays and increased expense, but utilities need to document these items and report them to the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MnOPS), which ensures utility operator and excavator compliance with M.S.

§216D, the state's excavation notice system statute.

Cities and municipal utilities affected by the unprecedented delay in locating facilities should:

- Document with photos and keep records with the date and time of any and all issues you are having with a locate ticket.

- Create invoices that keep track of lost downtime and wages.

- And most importantly, MnOPS requests that you contact it regarding locate or excavation related issues. You may contact MnOPS via telephone at 651-201-7230, though its work will be expedited if you visit its web-

site and utilize the OneCall Excavation Complaint Form, which you can access from a link on the agency's home page.

MMUA also requests that you copy Bill Black (bblack@mmua.org) so MMUA can also be aware of the magnitude of the issue for MMUA members, and for any potential future reference.

A MnOPS inspector is reportedly investigating the complaints.

MnOPS said its staff continue to be in regular contact with CenturyLink regarding these issues, and has reiterated that it will send a notice of probable violation for complaints in which a state stat-

ute is violated. Violations of Minnesota Statute §216D can warrant civil penalties up to \$1,000 for each violation per day of violation.

The difficulties stem from CenturyLink Inc.'s transition to a new locating company to mark the location of CenturyLink underground facilities in Minnesota. CenturyLink changed locate contractors (from USIC to DirectSat) as of April 1.

CenturyLink said it is training staff to locate and mark its facilities and the company expected to be caught up with its backlog by sometime in mid-June.

Reports from MMUA members, however, indicate that failure to locate underground facilities continues to hamper construction activities.

Finally, in information provided to Gopher State One Call, CenturyLink warned that "Excavators who dig without positive confirmation risk civil and criminal penalties associated with 911 and government communication infrastructure outages. If CenturyLink has not yet provided an 'all clear' confirmation or physical locates, you cannot proceed with excavation."

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RPU, People's adjust service territory boundary

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) June 6 approved a joint request of Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) and People's Energy Cooperative "that the MPUC update the official service territory map to reflect an agreed-upon change" in the parties' electric service territory boundaries.

The request reflected the permanent transfer of 21 areas located within the Rochester city limits and within the electric service territory assigned to the cooperative. The areas involve approximately 635 acres and 322 residential customers.

The transfer was made pursuant to Minn. Stat. 216B.44(a), which provides that a municipal utility expands its assigned electric service territory, upon reaching agreement with a neighboring utility as to compensation.

The parties engaged in extensive technical discussions, designed to minimize any disruption to customers, to avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities, and to ensure a smooth transition of electric service. To avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities, the parties agreed to RPU providing interim service. There is a portion of the affected areas in which the cooperative is providing electric service, and RPU will begin providing service as mutually determined by the parties.

The utilities acknowledged that the MPUC wished to direct separate notice to customers as the proceeding before the Commission. The utilities sent the MPUC a proposed set of notice letters to be sent to all affected customers.

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Study:

continued from front page

employers make those determinations.

Alternately, if an employer can document the existence of applicable “objective data” for their operations then they don’t need to spend the time and money to collect their own data. MMUA is collaborating with Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Workplace Safety Consultation to establish “objective data” for use by cities and utilities in their efforts to comply with the rules and protect employee health.

Ten MMUA member organizations have participated, beginning last year. Participating members coordinate the timing and the tasks to match up with a visit by an industrial hygienist, (a scientist or technician specializing in occupational health, instrumentation, and methods).

So far, only street sweeping and mowing activities have been sampled. Weather



Left: MMUA's Mark Hottel, along with Peter Kerr, Nate Craig and Wayne Ehrich (from left to right) of the Kenyon city crew. Kenyon is one of 10 cities that is helping MMUA collect scientific data on levels on silica respiratory dust levels raised during typical municipal activities. Below: Peter Kerr re-installs the cabin air filter after an inspection and cleaning.

photos by Steve Downer



conditions during the study period hampered getting some conditions included. However, from what we have seen so far, we predict we will have challenges getting many street sweepers to stay below acceptable levels without some work on our part. This could include routine maintenance, strict operational pro-

cedures, repairs, upgrades, and administrative controls like job rotation.

We are interested in seeing results come in this year on mowing operations. We will withhold predictions due to the small sampling size in 2018.

More sampling is planned for this year which will likely

involve the addition of street repair activities such as crack filling. Please consider whether your city and/or utility would be willing to become a test site for these activities. Let your safety coordinator know if you are.

Lastly, if MNOSHA enforcement comes to your location and discusses the above

activities with your personnel, you can remind them that MMUA members are engaged in long-term research to analyze and mitigate our exposure. (This will not be an adequate defense if you are observed dry-sawing pavement or other known high dust level tasks!)

Willmar:

continued from front page

Utilities is also upgrading protection systems at nearby substations.

Getting to this point has been a lengthy endeavor. WMU has been engaged in discussions with transmission-owning utilities in west central Minnesota for many years.

The original Kandiyohi County transmission planning study was completed in 2011 (when former WMU electrical engineer Wes Hompe became general manager). With Hompe at the helm, WMU bought the land for the substation—a former turkey farm—in 2014.

With steady guidance from the WMU Commission, the project stayed on track as Jeron Smith took over as WMU electrical engineer in 2014 and John Harren moved up in the organization to assume the WMU general manager’s duties following Hompe’s 2016 retirement.

WMU coordinated with Xcel to obtain an interconnection agreement. As the project progressed, a federal government shutdown in 2018 delayed GRE in obtaining a permit it needed from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to install its transmission lines out of the substation.

The subgrade work for the transmission lines was put on



WMU's main downtown location includes offices and a steam cogeneration plant.

hold due to bitter cold winter weather. Despite difficulties, the substation control building was completed last year,

as were foundations and the underground work for the new transmission line.

The new substation was placed into service June 26.

WMU now has seven substations, including one adjacent to the downtown steam cogeneration plant.

WMU is also evaluating the feasibility of new generation resources to replace its existing steam plant and complement its diesel generation fleet. The diesels bolster reliability and prevent city-wide blackouts.

WMU has three two-mega-

watt diesel generators located on the east side of Willmar and another three two-megawatt generators on the west side. All the WMU diesel generators are compliant with the latest emissions regulations.

WMU electric and water crews are also busy this summer with a number of projects, including moving power lines and water mains as part of a railroad bypass project, which will also re-route U.S. Hwy. 12, on the west edge of Willmar.

MMUA Annual Summer Conference

August 19-21 • Breezy Point Resort

Municipal utility people in Minnesota have been meeting every year since 1933 to conduct MMUA's business. Join us in August for this fun, educational and even occasionally uplifting event.

The MMUA room block with Breezy Point will be held until July 19. The registration fee for the conference increases on July 27.

Associate members are also welcome to attend the conference (as well as the trade show.)

Sponsorships available

We also have an opportunity for Associate Members to sponsor events at the Summer Conference.

For more information

Email or call Rita Kelly at rkelly@mmua.org or go to the www.mmua.org Events > Calendar webpage and click on Annual Summer Conference!

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Associate Member News

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Q Market Research specializes in public utility research, including customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, pricing, customer segmentation, brand development and product research. QMR was founded in 2001 and has a 12-person call center, an in-house mail/print facility, and proprietary research technology that enables access to real-time reporting and dashboards. The company does qualitative and quantitative research by phone, mail or electronic formats. The company has evaluated such topics as communications, net satisfaction scores, bill paying, community reputation, crisis response, customer interactions, pricing clarity and reputation.

The company is located at 2900 Lone Oak Parkway, Suite 120, Eagan MN 55121. Phone is 612-875-9081 and website is at qmarket-research.com

Primary contact is Rick Naymark, vice president. He can be reached at 612.875.9081 or rmaymark@qmarketresearch.com

Cooperative Response Center, Inc. (CRC)

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The company is located at 2000 8th St. NW, Austin MN 55912. Phone numbers are 507-437-2400 or 800-892-1578. Website is www.crc.coop

Primary contact is Leah Ferch, marketing manager. She can be reached at 507-437-2137 or INFO@CRC.COOP

Associates: see facing page

Associate
Member News
continued from facing page

Basic Concepts, Inc., dba Justrite
Justrite Engineered Solutions offers a variety of customizable, adaptable, preventative oil containment and filtration systems for the power utility industry, all typically 25-50 percent less than traditional methods. All of the solutions are in compliance with IEEE Std. 980 and meet or exceed SPCC and Clean Water Act regulations. Installing more than 10,000 secondary containment solutions globally, Justrite provides containment, management and filtration options to help electric utilities identify and solve their containment needs. From the initial process of assessing the site and drafting engineered drawings to identifying the best customized solutions and installation, our consultative team of experts have you covered. The company is located at 1310 Harris Bridge Rd., Anderson, S.C. 29621. Main phone is 864-224-7227. Contact is Thom White, Regional Sales Manager, who can be reached at 502.267.0101, ext. 5554 or twhite@justrite.com. Website is justrite.com/ secondary-containment

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phone is 763-497-1490 or call 1-800-783-4273. Contact is Kent Johnson, Sr. VP, Director - MN Office, who can be reached at 612.509.2560 or kjohnson@pmanetwork.com. Website is www.4mfund.com

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is Danny Parker, regional sales manager, at 417-210-9683. Company website is www.mastermeter.com

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Upcoming Training Events

All events to be held at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall

Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo September 10

The Lineworkers Rodeo is open to all lineworkers—you don't have to be from Minnesota to participate!

The Rodeo offers lineworkers an opportunity to step out of your comfort zone as you challenge yourself to complete three different events with skill and proficiency!

Rodeo events are individual so that any Apprentice or Journeyman lineworker can participate!

This entire event is free to lineworkers whose utility/company is an MMUA member, however registration is required by August 16. Non-member fee: \$25.00 per person. Sorry, no on-site registration.

The top three overall winners in the Apprentice and Journeyman categories will be awarded a trophy. Plus, in each individual event, plaques will be awarded to the top three Apprentice and top three Journeymen. (Awards will be presented at a Reception.)



Schedule

Competitor Check In	9:00 AM
Opening Ceremony	9:45 AM
Rodeo Competition	10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Lunch	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Awards Reception	5:00 PM

The three events in this year's Rodeo include:
Event 1: Hurtman Rescue
Event 2: Single Phase Conductor Tie In
Event 3: Obstacle Course



Overhead School September 10-13

Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA), along with our partners Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and American Public Power Association (APPA), are pleased to offer the 2019 Overhead School. Whether you are an Apprentice just starting out in your career or a seasoned Journeyman looking to sharpen your technical skills, Overhead School offers something for everyone.

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Advanced Class
Relays, Mapping and Switching
This class is designed to help individuals better understand the 'ins and outs' or substation relays, mapping strategies and switching procedures:

- Substation Relays - mechanical and digital
- Written switching procedures and mapping, including digitized maps
- Scenarios, including tying substations together and different circuits within the same substation.

Note: Registration fees increase \$50 per person on August 6. Registration deadline: August 16!

Cross Training October 15-17

Cross Training is intended for the non-lineworker who may, at times, be called to work alongside a qualified lineworker. Regardless of the lay employee's role, it is crucial that they be sufficiently trained.

Cross Training provides fundamental "basic training" for utility personnel. Participants can increase their knowledge of lineworker tools and equipment, broaden their understanding of electricity and the hazards, and increase confidence in their ability to assist.

Our qualified instructors, Cody Raveling and James Monroe, will incorporate safety and best practices into the hands-on training, which simulates commonly experienced situations. We make every effort to ensure this program is applicable

to the diverse group of participants, so that each leaves with a solid foundation to build upon.

Training To Be Covered

All topics are taught at a basic level, including but not limited to:

- Introduction to Powerline Training
- Personal and Job Safety
- Basic Electrical Theory
- Overhead & Underground Construction
- Meters & Meter Safety
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