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MMUA
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The Moose Lake Water & Light municipal power plant was built in 1933 and improved numerous times throughout the years. The most recent improvement is across the street, at the North Substation.

Municipal plant remains hub of progress

More than meets the eye with utility service in Moose Lake

by Steve Downer

Eighty-five years after it first began providing electricity, Moose Lake Water & Light continues to improve the lives of its customers. While there is more to it than meets the eye, the hub of that service delivery remains at the corner of 4th and Douglas—the municipal power plant.

Across the street from the plant is the North Substation, which was recently the scene of a substantial improvement project. A new control house, controls and underground feeders are in place. The project was estimated to cost \$2.7 million,

but hard work and diligence by the utility staff kept the price tag down to just under \$2 million.

The old control house went into service in 1979. Replacement parts were difficult if not impossible to find. The facility had to be replaced. Substation transformers are adequate for now, and are expected to be so for another five to 10 years.

Superintendent Harlan Schmeling and his four-man crew did a substantial portion of the work themselves. Most of the savings came from diligent work ahead of time, including poring over blueprints with the

project engineer. There was a lot of pre-planning and very few change orders, Schmeling said. If an issue did come up, work-arounds were often developed.

One change that was approved included a little more green space between a sidewalk and the substation fence. With conductor going underground, the utility wanted room to dig it up, if need be. The city gardener will landscape the area to lessen the industrial look.

Once the decision was made to place feeder lines from the

Moose Lake: back page please

Otter Tail, PKM settle service area dispute

by Steve Downer

The first significant electric utility service area dispute to reach the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) in a decade has been settled.

Otter Tail Power Company (OTP) and PKM Electric Cooperative have entered into a stipulation and settlement agreement and agreement for service by exception. The MPUC April 28 granted the parties' request to dismiss the PKM complaint.

At issue was service to an Enbridge pipeline pump station.

Much of the OTP-PKM agreement was designated trade secret. However, PKM consented to OTP's past, present and future high voltage service to Enbridge for electric-powered pumps and related equipment at the Original Site, the New Site, and other possible Donaldson sites and agreed that OTP is the exclusive and permanent provider of high voltage service to Enbridge for any and all electric-powered pumps and related equipment at the sites.

Dispute: see next page please



photos by Steve Downer

Underground School

Pat Arnold of RDO goes over the finer points of directional drilling with Jon Duerksen of Westbrook (center) and Joel Gretjak of Fairfax (at the controls). The scene was captured at the MMUA Underground School, held May 17-20 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall.

SMMPA, MRES announce solar developments

In a true sign of the times, Minnesota's two largest municipal joint action agencies—the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES)—have announced involvement in solar energy developments.

SMMPA has signed an agreement with Lemond Solar Center, LLC, a subsidiary of Coronal Development Services, to buy all electricity generated over 20 years from a 5-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic array that will be built, owned and operated by Lemond Solar Center, LLC.

The project will be sited on approximately 40 acres near Owatonna, a SMMPA member community. Electricity from the solar plant, planned to be operational by late June 2017, will feed into the same substation connected to the Owatonna Energy Station, a 38.8-MW natural gas-fired, internal combustion power plant under construction on the western edge of Owatonna, and expected to be online in fall of 2017.

Approximately one-mile of line will be built to connect the solar plant to the substation. Energy will flow into the Owatonna Public Utilities electric distribution system.

"SMMPA and our members have been looking forward to having a large stake in solar to expand our already significant renewable energy portfolio, and we thank everyone who worked hard on this project to get us to this point," said Dave Geschwind, SMMPA's executive director and CEO.

"Coronal is thrilled to partner with SMMPA and the Owatonna community on this exciting project," said Ben J. Alingh, senior project developer for Coronal Development Services. "We commend SMMPA for taking a leadership role on an energy procurement strategy that is both environmentally and economically sound."

According to Coronal, once operational the Lemond Solar Center will produce enough electricity to meet the needs of approximately 775 homes per

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Dispute: Exception agreement, accuracy of electronic service territory maps come into play

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No information in regards to possible compensation, if any, was available in the public documents.

Enbridge operates seven pipelines that pass through the Donaldson Station. The additional pumps being added to the Donaldson Station are part of a company expansion project. Enbridge said that Otter Tail has provided service to Enbridge at the Donaldson Station since 1961, and that the additional pumps being installed are

simply an expansion of service that has been continuous for some 54 years.

Otter Tail said this is the fourth expansion of service at the Donaldson facility since 1961, when it began providing service to the facility. Otter Tail has a substation in the midst of the Enbridge operation.

Otter Tail said its position was supported by statutory and MPUC orders recognizing the requirement of service to a single customer only from a single utility and by PKM's prior consent.

PKM had alleged that Otter Tail Power is in violation of the exclusive service area provisions of Minn. Stat. §§ 216B.37 to 216.43. PKM said it had the exclusive right to extend electric service to the Donaldson Pump Station. It said the additional Donaldson equipment is being constructed as a new stand-alone facility.

Enbridge supported Otter Tail's request that the PKM complaint be dismissed.

The MPUC had ordered a contested case hearing and a lengthy record had been compiled in the dispute, by the office of administrative hearings. Testimony, rebuttal and surrebuttal testimony had been taken and exhibits filed and the contested case was closed Feb. 12. The parties

sought dismissal of the complaint on Feb. 24.

Exception validity questioned

Among the reasons MPUC staff said the record needed to be developed included whether PKM had consented, in writing, to Otter Tail previously providing service to the Donaldson pumping station. A 1967 statement, said Otter Tail, was signed six years after it began service to the facility and ratified the company's provision of all high-voltage electric service to the facility.

The exception agreement was not noted in the MPUC service area boundary map. Commission staff said it "cannot recommend granting PKM's complaint solely because the Commission-

approved service area maps do not reflect OTP's service" to the pumping station. The electronic map was adopted as the official map "without prejudice to any utility," noted staff. The electronic map was identified as a relevant factor, however, among other factors which could help the Commission reach a decision.

As part of its order dismissing the complaint, the MPUC also directed its staff to issue annual reminders to all utilities to file not only service boundary changes, but exceptions, and "engage utilities and the Department in a discussion about filing exceptions as new mapping products are introduced that more easily allow exceptions to be added to maps."

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Energy Assistance available until July 1; crisis benefit expanded

The snow may be gone but many Minnesotans are still digging out from under winter heating bills. The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps low-income households

pay their bills.

EAP has an opportunity to serve more households and offer additional benefits to households already served this year. This is because program participation is down due to energy and fuel prices remaining low, and mild weather.

With money available, EAP is taking action to deliver additional services to more households, including:

- Extending the deadline to receive applications from May 31 to July 1, 2016 (for this program year only);

- Increasing the maximum 'crisis' benefit from \$500 to \$1,000 for households experiencing an energy emergency (e.g. shut-off or threat of disconnect).

The EAP office reports that 70 percent of households eligible for EAP have not yet asked for help. With funds available, EAP wants to reach out to eligible Minnesotans who have difficulty paying their energy bills and encourage them to apply. Households that include children under the age of six, people with disabilities, veterans, and seniors are especially encouraged to apply.

For a printable flyer to help spread the word, go to the 'Breaking News' section of the MMUA website.

EAP encourages MMUA members to perform outreach to the people you serve, through whatever means are available.



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What is truth?

You can read what you agree with, or use MMUA as balanced information source

Editor's note: the following piece originally appeared as a blog entry in the 'News' section at www.mmua.org

I recently received two pieces of mail that gave me pause as a resident of an MMUA-member city. They also made me consider why it is increasingly difficult for different people to solve complex problems, and what I could possibly do about it.

One letter, dated May 4, came from a Minnesota conservation group. Like many appeals, most would agree with the way at least one of the main points was put: reducing mercury pollution in Minnesota lakes. Two other bullet points contained language more problematic in advancing a reasoned dialogue: a widely-cited study regarding "coal plant pollution" and another regarding the "ongoing discussion"¹ about the EPA's Clean Power Plan proposal.

The conservation group, in its own words, "was instru-

mental in passing our state's nation-leading Renewable Energy Standard in 2007." It also "helped thousands of state citizens write to the PUC asking that (coal-burning Sherco 1 and 2) be replaced by dependable renewable energy."

This organization created a stir when it surveyed nearly 100,000 residents of MMUA-member cities, and asked if they support actions related to energy use and conservation. This move bypassed local public bodies addressing these issues. While admittedly not scientific, the survey results were said to show those answering the questions "are strongly supportive of the city taking more steps to use healthy, renewable energy here . . . and believe the city should support similar efforts at the state level."

The second piece of mail came from a Pennsylvania company, in regards to a "Community Solar Program of Xcel Energy Customers"

(which I am not). The company said "our records indicate that your home . . . may qualify for up to a 25% electric bill reduction as a result" of Minnesota's renewable energy standard. A Metro-area phone number was given to "confirm eligibility."

Will people calling that number get unbiased information from a company looking to make a buck? Not likely. How many will turn to the internet?

According to a recent blog (POTS and PANS) by telecom consultant Doug Dawson, "People are browsing less and instead are having their web experiences orchestrated by big companies . . . These companies are also strengthening cognitive dissonance by showing people only things that agree with their life view. And this seems to be polarizing the world, making us a little more inflexible and more strident that our world

view is the only right one."

Another statement gleaned from recent news sheds chilling light on another trend, in regards to political commentary: "It is meant to appear to be coming organically from people and their social media networks in a groundswell of activism, when in fact it is highly paid and highly tactical."²

People used to agree on facts but disagree on policy. Now facts themselves seem in dispute. You might well despair.

Instead, determine facts, as best you can. On energy issues, start by familiarizing yourself with MMUA's positions on current issues. Go to the 'Public Policy' section of the MMUA website. From there our policy statements are linked for both Federal and State issues.

Then you can't just sit and gripe. Get involved, listen

carefully and speak respectfully. You can contribute to a better understanding and a reasoned discussion. To those already involved, thank you. To many others on the sidelines, it is clearly time to get started.

— by Steve Downer

1.) Petitioners, including the American Public Power Association and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, contend that EPA has exceeded its authority and failed to consider the cost burdens and lack of viable technology to meet the Clean Power Plan requirements. A federal appeals court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in September. (Which is quite a "discussion.")

2.) Brian Donahue, chief executive of the consulting firm Craft Media/Digital, as quoted in the Los Angeles Times, May 9.

Editor's note: The following information was gleaned from various American Public Power Association communications.

Legal proceedings in regards to the federal Environmental Protection Agency's proposed 'Clean Power Plan' are moving forward.

The D.C. Circuit Court Monday, May 16, issued an order, on its own motion, rescheduling the oral argument in the Section 111(d) case from June 2 and 3, 2016, to Tuesday, September 27, 2016, before all of the judges on the D.C. Circuit, not just a three-judge panel. The granting of 'en banc' review by the D.C. Circuit is very rare, said observers, and the fact that the court did this on its own accord shows the significance of the case. Overall, the American Public Power Association viewed this step as a positive development.

House Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI), Energy &

Bits & Pieces



Power Subcommittee Chairman Ed Whitfield (R-KY), and Oversight & Investigations Chairman Tim Murphy (R-PA) May 13 sent a letter to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy regarding EPA's plans to propose 1) a Clean Energy Incentive Program and 2) guidance on trading to comply with the Clean Power Plan.

The letter sought answers from EPA on how these activities are not in direct violation of the stay issued by the U.S. Supreme Court that puts implementation of the Clean Power Plan on hold until the Supreme Court decides on its legality.

In light of recent developments, the members concluded, "The agency's decision to move forward with a shadow regulatory structure to implement the Clean Power

Plan presents several obvious concerns, continuing to develop a suite of derivative rules and guidance raises questions about whether EPA is complying fully with the Court's stay order, about what legal authority the agency has to proceed with such actions, about how these actions affect the equities of states and stakeholders, as well as about the agency's stewardship and use of taxpayer resources."

Carbon dioxide emissions from electricity generation totaled 1,925 million metric tons in 2015, the lowest since 1993 and 21 percent below their 2005 level, the Energy Information Administration reported on May 13.

The federal agency, which is part of the Department of Energy, said that total CO₂ emissions from the electric power sector declined even as demand for electricity remained relatively flat over the previous decade.

The EIA said recent capacity additions have favored natural gas and renewable energy, while retirements have been mostly coal units.

"In 2015, warm winter temperatures reduced the demand for electricity, lessened the need to bring marginal generators online, and lowered natural gas prices," EIA said, adding that during seven months of 2015, electricity generated from natural gas exceeded coal generation.

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Solar

continued from front page

year.

SMMPA provides electricity and related services to 18 municipally-operated utilities, mostly in south-central and southeastern Minnesota. The Agency's energy resource mix includes coal-fired and natural gas-fired resources, various renewable energy sources such as wind, biodiesel and waste-to-energy, and an array of intermediate and peaking units owned by member utilities.

Coronal Development Services, LLC (CDS) is the solar development arm of Coronal Group, a renewable energy company backed by Panasonic North America.

MRES solar project

Construction work is slated to begin in mid-July on a solar energy project to be located at the Pierre Regional Airport. The project is a joint effort by the City of Pierre, Geronimo Energy of Edina, and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), which is headquartered in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Geronimo Energy is developing the one-megawatt solar photovoltaic facility, and MRES will be entitled to the output under a power purchase agreement. MRES and Geronimo Energy expect that the project will be operational by the end of October.

"Developing a solar project of this magnitude can get complex quickly just due to the fact of where it is physically sited," said MRES Director of Federal and Distributed Power Programs Jeff Peters. "Because of the complexity, we needed to partner with someone who has a proven track record in developing solar projects. Not only does Geronimo Energy have that experience, but they also were able to structure the deal in an innovative way to reduce costs to MRES versus more traditional methods."

MRES staff completed a solar feasibility study in March 2015 and began looking, along with Geronimo Energy,

at three potential sites for the project. Geronimo Energy executives visited each of the sites and met with officials from the local utilities to discuss specific sites and ways the communities might be able to support such a project. Following those evaluations, the Pierre site was selected.

"Although the economics showed that the Pierre location was preferred over the other communities researched, this project would not be located there if not for the hard work and 'can-do' attitude of the City of Pierre," Peters said.

Geronimo Energy has experience in developing similar projects, including approximately 1,500 MW of wind and solar projects that are either operational or under construction. MRES has existing power purchase agreements with the company for the output of two wind energy facilities in the State of Minnesota.

"Geronimo Energy is

pleased to have the opportunity to work with MRES on another renewable energy project," said Geronimo Energy Chairman Noel P. Rahn. "We look forward to the start of construction this summer, as well as to the project providing an economic boost to the local South Dakota community in the form of tax revenue and jobs."

The Pierre solar project will be the first renewable energy project for MRES that will be located in South Dakota, as well as its first experience in solar energy.

MRES is a wholesale electric supplier to the City of Pierre along with 59 other communities in the states of the South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota. The project will be interconnected to the City of Pierre's distribution system, but the output of the solar project will be purchased by MRES as part of its wholesale power supply mix.



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RS Fiber expands network in Renville, Sibley counties

Winthrop, MN – RS Fiber Cooperative (RS Fiber) has begun the 2016 construction season with plans to expand the fiber-optic broadband network that was activated last year in parts of Renville and Sibley Counties.

During the project's initial construction phase last year, the network's backbone was built to RS Fiber facilities in MMUA member Winthrop and extended to Gaylord. Internet and video services were

launched this past November in Winthrop with service installations currently taking place in Gaylord.

In early April, work began in Green Isle on the final portion of Phase 1 construction. By the end of 2016, RS Fiber hopes to expand its state-of-the-art Fiber-To-The-Premises (FTTP) network to several additional communities.

"We are really excited to get construction underway for this year," said RS Fi-

ber General Manager, Toby Brummer. "Our goal is to begin offering services to eight more communities by the end of 2016."

Those cities include Buffalo Lake, Gibbon, Green Isle, Lafayette, New Auburn, and Stewart and the MMUA member cities of Brownton and Fairfax.

When the entire FTTP project is completed in 2021, the network will bring high-speed internet service to 10 cities and 17 townships in Renville and Sibley Counties.

In addition to the FTTP network, RS Fiber also began construction of its rural broadband service, RS Air, which delivers internet service via tower-mounted antennas. The network currently consists of eight towers with additional sites expected to be added this year.

RS Fiber Cooperative is a community-driven effort to deliver a high-speed fiber-optic connection to Sibley County and portions of Renville, Nicollet, and McLeod Counties.

Renewables to expand

Renewable capacity will rise by 10-20 gigawatts over the next 15 years as a result of the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation concludes in a report released on May 19. The NERC assessment assumes that the EPA rule will be implemented as outlined in the final version of the Clean Power Plan that was issued in August 2015.

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MMUA Nominations and Awards Committee accepting nominations for board

The MMUA Nominations and Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for the MMUA board of directors. Board members traditionally serve two three-year terms.

Three current board members will be up for re-election for a second three-year term, and there will be an opening for a policymaker.

Current board members who will be up for re-election include: City of Sleepy Eye Public Works Director Bob Elston, Virginia Department of Public Utilities General Manager Greg French, and

Redwood Falls Public Utilities Superintendent Chuck Heins.

In selecting board nominees, the MMUA Nominations and Awards Committee will consider the following: personal integrity; independence and knowledge of the industry; providing a broad geographic balance on the Board representing all sizes and types of utility operations; a commitment to the promotion of municipal ownership of utilities; willingness to commit the time and energy necessary to the organization and the office; and a

demonstration of interest in the affairs of the members and the Association through active participation and in furtherance of the goals and purposes of the Association.

Nominees must be designated representatives of member municipalities to be eligible for election. The Nominating Committee will not discriminate against age, race, sex, sexual preference or national origin in the nominating process.

Forms for submitting nominations to the MMUA board are available in the 'About' and then 'Awards and Recog-



Elston



French



Heins

nition' section of the MMUA web site.

If you have any questions, you may contact Bob Elston, MMUA President-Elect and Nominations and Awards Committee chairperson, at 507-794-4371.

Nominations will be accepted through July 15, 2016.

Election takes place during the MMUA Annual Summer Conference, which will be held at Cragun's Resort Aug. 15-17.

Nominations now being taken for variety of MMUA individual and utility system awards

Doing an exceptional job locally is expected. So it often takes somebody from outside your community to recognize outstanding achievement.

At times, recognition of an individual is called for. These individuals can be utility employees, policymakers, or even a citizen. At other times, the utility as a whole should be recognized.

In addition, individuals outside of our cities and/or utilities often play significant roles in advancing the interests of public power. These people should also be recognized.

Those reasons, in part, are motivating factors behind the MMUA Awards and Recognition program.

The MMUA Nominations and Awards Committee and the MMUA Board of Directors have approved the following slate of awards.

While eligibility for the awards June vary somewhat, in general individuals and utilities must represent or be MMUA Regular Members. Individuals cannot receive the same award twice. Utilities can earn awards once every five years.

All nominations of MMUA's Awards and Recognition Program will be forwarded to the MMUA Nominations and Awards Committee for their consideration. Awards will

be presented at the MMUA Annual Summer Conference Aug. 15-17, at Cragun's Resort.

MMUA Honorary Lifetime Membership

This prestigious award symbolizes a long professional life dedicated not only to the advancement of municipal utilities locally, but also for the betterment of our industry on a state-wide basis.

Eligibility: Individuals who have concluded or are about to conclude a long and distinguished career in the municipal utility industry.

Criteria: Nominees should have:

- a long professional life dedicated to the achievement of excellence in the municipal utility industry;

- a strong record of involvement in MMUA and efforts on behalf of the betterment of the industry on a statewide basis.

Public Service Award

This award is given to a local, state or federal elected or appointed official who has been a strong supporter of MMUA and its members.

Eligibility: Any publicly elected or appointed official at the local, national or state level whose activities have advanced the objectives of public power.

Criteria: Nominees should have:

- made substantial contributions to public power;
- made contributions with lasting impact.

Community Service Award

This award is given to an individual who has performed long and well in support of a municipal utility at the local level.

Eligibility: An individual who has a long record of service to an MMUA member utility.

Criteria: An individual

who has performed long and well at the local level, but who may not have the level of involvement with MMUA to merit a lifetime membership.

Distinguished Service Award

This award is given to individuals who perform outstanding service in support of the association and its goals.

Eligibility: Individuals who demonstrate leadership on various issues.

Criteria: Performance of outstanding service in support of the association or its goals.

System Innovation Award

This award is given to a utility that has demonstrated leadership and innovation in customer service, energy efficiency or renewables, technology, or other areas.

Eligibility: The utility must be an MMUA regular

member system.

Criteria: Nominees should have achievement or sustained performance that:

- was widely recognized in the public power field;
- served to enhance public power's prestige;

- improved service to their communities;

- represented an earnest, coordinated effort on the part of the system.

Nominate now

Nomination forms are in the 'About' and then 'Awards and Recognition' section of the MMUA web site.

Nominations are due to the MMUA office by July 15, 2016.

Please submit nomination forms to MMUA via e-mail at tneddermeyer@mmua.org, via fax at 763-551-0459, or via U.S. mail at 3025 Harbor Lane N., Suite 400, Plymouth, MN 55447.

Study: Dereg no benefit

Even though large parts of the U.S. electricity market have been deregulated for the better part of two decades, there are no appreciable savings to consumers in the deregulated areas, said a new report by the American Public Power Association.

The report found that retail rates have remained fairly flat since 2013, but have increased more in states that have deregulated than in states that have not.

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In 2015, Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency announced a change in the name of its management and consulting division from Utilities Plus to **Central Municipal Power Agency/Services (CMPAS - pronounced "compass")**.

Although the name changes, CMPAS will continue to serve as both a project-oriented power agency and electric utility services organization.

CMPASgroup.org

Please visit our website for in-depth project information, details about agency membership, non-member affiliate services, and access to customer rebates and other resources.

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Municipal Compass to Power

MMUA holds annual Underground School May 17-20 at Training Center

MMUA held its annual underground school May 17-20 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. Attending were nearly 70 participants from 32 municipal utilities in Minnesota, three in South Dakota and three Minnesota cooperatives. Our partners in presenting the school were the Minnesota Rural Electric Association and American Public Power Association.

Kit Welchlin, Welchlin Communication Strategies, started the school with a Tuesday, May 17 general session. His topic was crucial to safe and efficient operations: Human Performance, Situation Awareness and Communication.

Bookending the school was a general session on Friday, May 20, titled Commercial Drivers License and Requirements, led by Dave Busse, Minnesota State Patrol. This session addressed Load Securement and Commercial Drivers Licensing, as well as various other topics.

The bulk of the school consisted of four hands-on training classes, held on the training field.

Class 1: Proper Cable Identification, Testing and Grounding Methods, was led by instructors Nick Hall and Mark Johnson, of Rochester Public Utilities.

Class 2 was Performing and Preparing General Switching Orders for Tying Circuits on Your Grid, led by instructors Todd Keach and Mark Larson, Rochester Public Utilities and Joe Moore of Moorhead Public Service.



Students at the Underground School had time to discuss the latest in construction techniques and safe work practices at their utilities.



Nic Jenson of City of North St. Paul Electric Utilities, participated in the hands-on training.

Class 3: Underground System Maintenance and Repair, was led by James Monroe of New Ulm Public Utilities, Rick Hoftiezer of MRES/Luverne,



Above, students worked in an underground cabinet as part of the underground system maintenance and repair portion of the school.

and Brad Olson of Brainerd Public Utilities.

Substation Feeder Construction, Class 4, was led by instructors Miles Heide and Wade Williams of Fairmont

Public Utilities.

A breakout session on Table Top Splicing and Terminations was held throughout May 18-19 in the Training Center building. This session



Brad Olson of Brainerd Public Utilities tutored Alex Becker of Anoka Municipal Utility.



Attendees compared notes.

was led by Jim Stephens of 3M and Bill Bumgarner, Austin Utilities.

The school had something for everybody, including an advanced training session on Horizontal Directional Drilling. Instructor was Kevin Kollos, Ditch Witch, along with Jeff Rustad of Baroid. Participants acquired advanced knowledge and skills required for operating a directional drill.

The May 19 training activities concluded with a fun,

Underground: see facing page

Risk Management Program revisions expected in December

Joe Schmidt, CSP
MMUA Regional Safety
Coordinator

There is currently a proposal to revise the Risk Management Program (RMP) regulations. Many members have developed a RMP in relationship to the quantity of highly hazardous chemicals in use at water treatment plants or other municipal operations.

President Obama signed executive order 13650 in response to several incidents involving RMP regulated facilities. Some of these incidents involved water treatment plants and the related chlorine releases. Thus the executive order created action that needed to be addressed by the EPA involving chemical process safety.

The revisions to the RMP regulations that are applicable to utility operations include revisions to the accident prevention, emergency response and availability of

information portions of the RMP.

Accident Prevention Revisions

Facilities would be required to conduct a root cause analysis as part of an incident investigation of a catastrophic release or an incident that could have reasonably resulted in a catastrophic release. Facilities would be required to contract with an independent third party to perform a compliance audit after the facility has a reportable release.

Emergency Response

Facilities would be required to coordinate with local emergency response agencies at least once a year to ensure that resources and capabilities are in place to respond to an accidental release of a regulated substance. Facilities would be required to conduct notification exercises annually to ensure that their emergency contact information is accurate and complete.

There are also proposals related to conducting full field exercises every five years and annual table top exercises.

Availability of Information

Facilities would be required to provide certain basic information to the public via easily accessible means such as a website.

There are also proposals making technical corrections to various provisions of the rules. It is anticipated that the final rule revisions will be published in December 2016. Exactly how this may affect member facilities is not yet clear, however it is anticipated that there will be some changes required to RMPs already established. Facilities that are required to implement a RMP may also be required to have a Process Safety Management (PSM) plan for OSHA. Additional information may be obtained from the EPA website or your MMUA safety coordinator.

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Underground:

continued from facing page

Lineworker Rodeo Mystery Event, which demonstrated safe working practices and a little speed.

Evening activities included a May 17 pizza reception and, at the participant's expense, May 18 golf or sporting clay shoot.

MMUA extends a hearty 'thank you' to the following companies and utilities that provided assistance (equipment, materials and/or instruction):

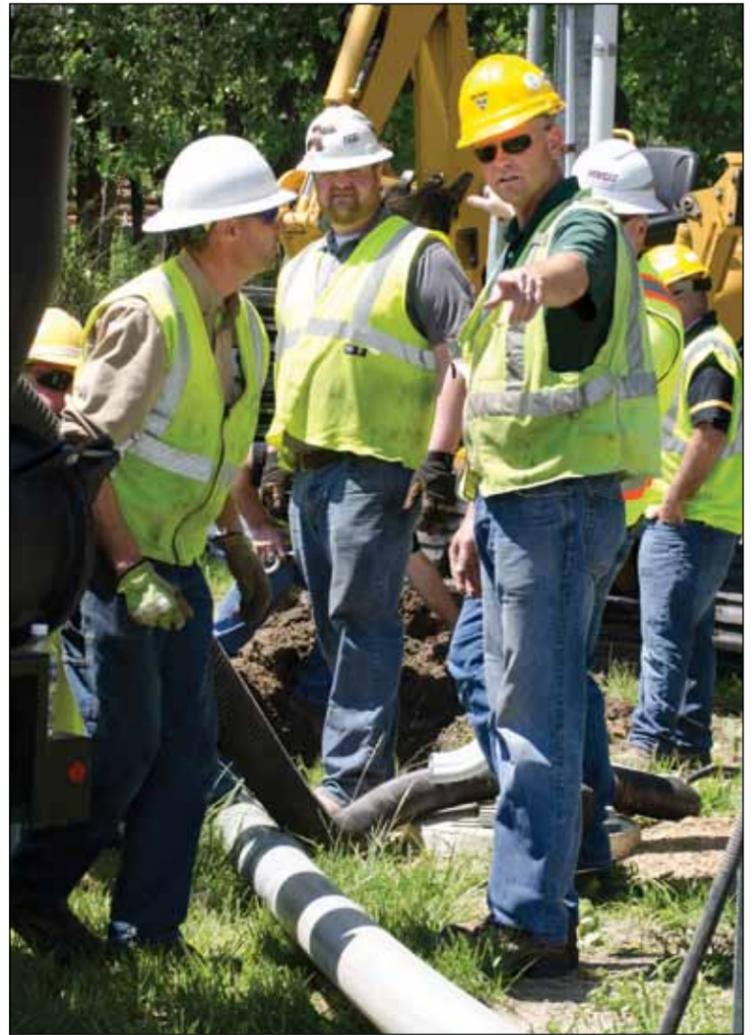
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- MN Dept. of Public Safety
- Moorhead Public Service
- MRES - Luverne
- New Ulm Public Utilities
- Okonite
- RDO Equipment Vermeer
- Rochester Public Utilities
- Titan Machinery
- Welchlin Communication Strategies



Art Gatchell, left, and Al Fischer of MMUA's 'safety team' kept a close eye on the proceedings.



Identification and preparation of underground cable was a significant part of the Underground School.



photos by Steve Downer

Tim Williams of RDO Equipment/Vermeer (yellow hard hat) directed directional drilling work while constructing and installing feeders from the Training Field east side substation to the MMUA Training Center distribution system. As part of this work exercise, conduit was installed underneath a wetland and cable pulled through to make the connection.

MMUA Annual Summer Conference

Aug. 15-17, Cragun's Resort, Brainerd

MMUA will hold its 85th annual Summer Conference, beginning Monday, Aug. 15 at Cragun's Resort in Brainerd.

A golf tournament and bike ride will be held Monday afternoon. That evening, the group gets together with a welcome reception and outdoor bbq.

Tuesday's agenda features a variety of speakers on the hot topics of the day. The day gives way to a popular trade show followed by the evening banquet and awards ceremony.

Wednesday is a half day, devoted primarily to MMUA business. There will also be general session speakers and a look at state legislative developments.

MMUA's popular golf tournament will be played on Cragun's Legacy Championship golf course. The shot-gun start will be at 1:00 pm, with check-in at the golf course beginning at noon. All golfers need to pre-register as an individual or as a scramble team on the MMUA registration form. Walk-ins will not be allowed. You do not need to be registered for the conference to play in the tournament.

Individual golfers will be assigned to a team. We will try to accommodate requests. When registering with a team, please confirm with the group in advance to make sure they are golfing and that they are not already registered with another team.

Bike ride participants should meet at MMUA's table in Cragun's Lobby by 12:30 or meet at Trailblazer Bikes in Nisswa. The ride will follow the black-topped Paul Bunyan Trail. Bikes and helmets will be available for rent or you can bring your own. Please register in advance for the ride. We will also take registrations the day of the ride. To rent a bike, please call Trailblazer Bikes at 218-963-0699. You will pick up and pay for your bike rental at the bike shop prior to the start of the ride.



Associate member opportunities!

The MMUA Summer Conference offers many opportunities for Associate Members to get involved! Associates are invited to sponsor events, host a table at our trade show or rub elbows with members at a hospitality suite. We will also consider your unique ideas!



Sponsorships Available (assigned on a first-come basis)

- Co-sponsor a Refreshment Break
- Co-sponsor Hors d'oeuvres at Tuesday Reception
- Sponsor Keg of Beer at Receptions (Monday or Tuesday)
- Sponsor Beer Cups with Logo (Monday or Tuesday)
- Sponsor Prizes for Golf Tournament
- Sponsor Beverages during Golf Tournament
- Sponsor Golf Balls for Tournament

A sign with your company name or logo will be posted at the event and the conference program. Please let us know if you are bringing cups or golf balls.

Hospitality Suites

To host a hospitality suite call Maris Zachary at 218-825-2852 or email mzachary@craguns.com. Cragun's does not allow you to bring in food items from outside the resort.

Watch your 'inbox' for more details! Register by August 2, 2016. Questions? Contact Rita Kelly at 763-746-0707 or rkelly@mmua.org

Breckenridge celebrates new city hall; water system improvements next

The city of Breckenridge has a new city hall, but things aren't slowing down in the Red River Valley border city.

The old city hall was an impressive structure but the foundation was crumbling, there were fist-sized cracks in the wall, and repair costs were estimated to add up to more than \$800,000.

In the spring of 2015 crews began knocking down the turn of the 20th century brick and mortar building. City offices were temporarily moved across the parking lot into

the old law enforcement center. Once the demolition was done, work began in earnest on constructing the new \$1.64 million energy-efficient and structurally-sound city hall. The new building is located where the old city hall parking lot used to be; a parking lot is where the old building used to be.

City staff moved into the new building in December 2015. The city dedicated the building with an open house Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2015. Refreshments were served



photo by Steve Downer

The new Breckenridge city hall is a modern, attractive building. Affection for the old building remained, however, and the citizens kept the old doorway (at left in the picture), which will be used as part of a landscaped area.

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and guests took informal tours of the building. City officials were on hand and commemorative postcards handed out.

Roger Avelsgard, city director of public service, oversaw the city hall project.

Avelsgard oversees utilities, streets and parks, and much of the city outside services. As the building inspector at the time, the city hall project seemed to naturally fall under his care. Avelsgard is not sentimental about seeing the old building go. It was most cost-effective to move



Roger Avelsgard

out, he said, demolish the old building and build a new one.

There was discussion over a new site, but the council decided city hall should remain in what remains an impressive downtown area.

The decision to replace the building came in 2013, just before Avelsgard joined the city. Completing that project was a relief, but there is no time to rest.

There are problems with the water system. Valves are beginning to fail at an alarming rate. In April, crews attempted to repair a leaky water main valve and in isolating the problem, nine more valves sprung leaks. Bolts that hold the 30-year-old valves together are failing.

The local soil, great for agriculture, is corrosive to certain metals, including the bolts on the water system valves. The pipes appear to be in good shape. A maintenance schedule is in place to replace the valve bolts, if possible. Otherwise the valves will need to be

replaced, at a cost of \$6,000 per valve.

A bigger problem is the 1930s-era water treatment plant. It has issues of its own. Repair of some equipment is virtually impossible. A failure "could be catastrophic," Avelsgard said.

Staff from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Public Facilities Authority recently visited, toured the facilities and discussed financing for a new water treatment plant. Cost is estimated at \$13 million (a lot of money for a city of approximately 4,000 hardy souls and some 1,800 water customers.)

The city went out for bids once. They came in high and were rejected.

The water supply itself

is adequate, with two wells sunk into an aquifer.

The price of water will increase, but Breckenridge does boast some of the lowest electric rates in the state. Contributing to that, along with an efficient local operation, is power supplied from the Western Area Power Administration and Missouri River Energy Services.

Local policymakers, including the five-member Breckenridge Public Utilities Commission, are thankful for the steady electric supply situation. There are certainly other issues to work through. If they can negotiate those problems as well as their predecessors did with electricity, the city will remain well-positioned for the future.

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Austin Utilities was a little greener on April 21 (Earth Day), filling its first newly-purchased Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueled fleet vehicle. The first "fill-up" came at the Kwik Trip CNG station located off I-90 in Austin, one of 34 CNG stations in the Kwik Trip chain.

The Austin natural gas vehicle (NGV) was purchased as a replacement for a vehicle being retired. It will be used as a service vehicle in the Gas Service department. A vinyl wrap installed on the vehicle will identify it as running on compressed natural gas.

The biggest advantage of NGVs is they emit fewer

Around the State



emissions than a diesel engine. They also reduce noise emissions by 80 percent.

Natural gas burns cleanly so it results in less wear and tear on the engine and extends the time between tune-ups and oil changes.

Three organizations held a free one-hour seminar on the benefits of solar energy and presented potential investment options, March 24 at Owatonna Public Utilities.

The city of Brainerd has

proposed to issue 15-year general obligation utility revenue bonds totaling \$10.7 million to pay for a water and sewer extension to the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport. Most of the project funding is planned to come from a city of Baxter local option sales tax. State bonding funds are also being sought. The Brainerd Public Utilities Commission is examining potential rate impacts. The project is in the construction phase.

The Bagley Public Utilities Commission recently invested in a new higher-capacity terminating system to increase internet speeds. PUC services include electricity, water, sewer, natural gas, cable TV and internet.

Two municipal utilities received local news attention for their conservation efforts.

The Grand Marais Public Utilities Commission recently presented rebate check for \$3,697 to the Cook County Schools, which installed LEDs and lighting controls in a new industrial arts shop.

Wadena Light and Water recently presented a check for \$3,536 to a local clinic for a lighting upgrade.

Rochester Public Utilities (RPU), teamed with a local nursey and the city Parks & Recreation Department to host the 14th Annual Arbor Day Celebration on Friday, April 29.

The free community event featured a variety of activities and displays including: A tree giveaway (while supplies lasted), a free lunch of hot

dogs, corn on the cob, chips, cookies, and soda. Tree experts were on hand to answer questions on tree planting and care, along with many other vendor displays.

Children enjoyed Smokey Bear, balloonists, a scaven-

ger hunt, temporary tattoos, bean bag toss, and much more.

This event was chosen by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as the official state of Minnesota Arbor Day event.

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Electric Line Worker
The Wells Public Utilities of Wells, MN, population 2,247, is seeking applications for the position of electric line worker. This position involves a variety of skilled line work in the operations, maintenance and repair of overhead and underground distribution systems and the operations of a variety of specialized related equipment and vehicles. Line Worker experience is preferred. Must possess a class B CDL or obtain one within six months. This is a full time position with excellent fringe benefits. Successful candidate will be required to be on a rotating on-call schedule and must be able to respond within 20 minutes. Salary will be dependent on qualifications and experience. Request an application and send application and resume to the Wells Public Utilities, 101 1st St. SE, PO Box 96, Wells, MN 56097, (507) 553-3119. Position open until filled with a priority deadline of June 30, 2016. EOE

Apprentice Lineman
The City of Flandreau, South Dakota is accepting applications from interested and qualified individuals for the position of Apprentice Lineman. Under general supervision, this position assists in the operation and maintenance of the City's electric facilities and equipment. Applicant should have knowledge of the operation and maintenance of a municipal electric utility. Applicant should have knowledge of electrical theory, systems and equipment as well as the ability to analyze problems and draw logical conclusions. Applicant must be a high school graduate or possess a GED certificate and completion of Power Lineman Trade School or at least one year of line experience. Must have a valid South Dakota driver's license and the ability to obtain a SD CDL within 60 days of hire. Applications may be obtained on-line at www.cityofflandreau.com or they may be picked up at the City Office at 1005 W. Elm Avenue, Flandreau, South Dakota 57028. Position will remain open until filled. The City of Flandreau is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Line Supt/Plant Manager
Blooming Prairie Public

see next page please

Utilities is a community of 2000 residents and is governed by a Utility Commission which oversees the Power Plant, Electric, and Water. The General Manager directly oversees staff and day to day operations. Utility Supt manages crew and reports to General Manager. BPPU is looking for a person to Supervise a staff of 3 utility workers and power plant, train apprentice lineman and oversee water projects and wells, for full description contact jmmbppu@frontier.com. Resumes may be mailed to Blooming Prairie Public Utilities at 333 2nd St NE Blooming Prairie MN 55917 or emailed to address. Blooming Prairie is a progressive community just outside of Rochester, Owatonna, and Austin MN and provides great schools for family and a good small town atmosphere. Only an hour and a half from the twin cities it offers every amenity of a large community but in a small town package.

Journeyman or Apprentice Lineman (Electric)
This full-time position is responsible for performing skilled tasks associated with construction, maintenance and repair of electric overhead and underground distribution lines, transformers, cabinets, insulators, fuses and other associated equipment. Qualified applicants must have an associate degree from an accredited power line program and / or equivalent work experience performing lineman work. CDL driver's license required. Salary commensurate with experience and qualifications. Excellent benefits package, including SDRS pension, health, dental, vision and life insurance, 457 plan, paid sick leave and vacation. A completed application and resume, including salary history, references and a cover letter, are required. Job description and application form are available online at www.watertownmu.com.

Water Plant Supervisor
Moorhead Public Service (MPS) is accepting applications for a Water Plant Supervisor. This position has the overall responsibility to direct and control staff and equipment of MPS' Water Treatment Plant, laboratory, Water Treatment Plant Computer Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems, raw water pumping stations, and finished water pumping stations and reservoirs. This position is directly

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responsible for implementation of the Water Treatment Plant's work plan, productivity, effectiveness, policy enforcement, and ensuring safe working procedures and conditions. Minimum qualifications include a Bachelor's degree with curriculum in chemistry or civil sanitary engineering, three years of operating experience and laboratory work at a surface water lime softening water plant, a Class C Water Supply Operator's License, and a driver's license valid in the state of Minnesota. Desired qualifications include an advanced degree, equaling a Master's degree, in engineering or science, two years of ozone disinfection experience, Class A Water Supply Operator's License, and PE designation. The 2016 salary range for this position is between \$5,475 and \$8,422 monthly. Benefits include pension (Minnesota Public Employee Retirement Association), low deductible health insurance (no cost for single coverage), and generous vacation and sick leave. Application form and job description are available at www.MPSUtility.com/em-

ployment; at the MPS office in Moorhead City Hall, 500 Center Avenue, Second Floor; or by calling 218.477.8000, Option 4. Applicants MUST complete an MPS Application for Employment to be considered for employment with MPS. EOE. Closing Date: Friday, June 10, 2016.

Community Dev. Director
The City of Melrose, MN is seeking applications for a Community Development Director. This position is responsible for development and planning activities for the City of Melrose with a focus on city planning. The ideal candidate will be energetic and motivated, and possess excellent communication, interpersonal and presentation skills and will be required to exercise initiative as well as collaborate well with others. Candidate will be detail oriented. Some evening meeting attendance required. Education and Experience: Bachelor's degree (B.A.) in public administration, economic development, business administration, planning, urban studies, real estate development or related field; or equivalent

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combination of education and experience. Salary Range: \$53,928 - \$72,875 per year. For more information or to request an application packet contact HR Coordinator Diane Gruber at 320-256-4278, dgruber@cityofmelrose.com, or the City's website www.cityofmelrose.com. Submit completed applications with resume to the City of Melrose, 225 1st St NE, Melrose MN 56352. Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m., June 8, 2016.

Project Manager
Utilities Plus Energy Service (UPES), a Municipally owned electrical service provider, is looking to fill several growth positions within our service group. Qualification may include some or all of the following: BS in Electrical engineering; Graduation from a 2 year Power distribution school; Knowledge of and

experience to test complex relays; Knowledge of and experience to test electrical distribution and transmission equipment; Ability to lift 70 lbs.; 8-10 years field experience in Power Distribution and Transmission. Work description: Assemble proposals and quotations; Supervise field testing technicians; Some field testing as required; Project Manage from start to finish various projects. E-mail resume to jobs@utilplus.com

FOR SALE
The City of Windom Municipal Utility has for sale a Dura Life 24 x 24 x 12 bucket liner, 46 KV insulated. Contact Cheryl or Brent at 507-831-6151.

For an up-to-date and complete list please see the 'News' and 'Classifieds' sections at www.mmua.org

Moose Lake

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substation underground, there was no work-around to digging through rock, common in the area (Moose Lake is the agate capital of Minnesota). While the crew is busy this summer placing some distribution lines underground, in part to improve reliability, the utility's electric distribution system remains 75-80 percent overhead. That is due, in large part, to the rocky ground.

The system is seeing some growth, including most notably a new combined elementary to high school. Lines in this area will be placed underground. The old school building will probably be demolished. Thankfully, both locations are in the utility's electric service territory.

The upgrade project started with an electric system study in 2000.

Among various other recent projects, in 2003 the power plant received a \$2.25 million upgrade, including three new Caterpillar 2,250-kilowatt engine-generator sets, one in the downtown power plant (where switchgear was also upgraded) and two engines adjacent to the substation by the Minnesota Correctional Facility. The engines meet all current emissions regulations. (One older opposed-piston engine is kept solely for emergency use.)

Moose Lake buys power at wholesale from Lake Country Power Cooperative (Great



Take the county road westward from Interstate 35W and you cross the Moose Horn River and enter a commercial district in Moose Lake. There is also significant new commercial development along the west side of the interstate, heading into this part of the city.



The busy and varied work life of a municipal utility superintendent is evident in the office of Moose Lake Water & Light Superintendent Harlan Schmeling.

River Energy) and receives capacity payments to keep the power plant at the ready. The Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) does call on the utility to generate, which happened a handful of times in 2015.

Also in 2003, the utility in-

vested another \$1 million for ancillary support infrastructure including an upgrade to its south substation, which supports two large state facilities. Future development and the new school will use power from that substation.

With that bond paid off in

2013, the utility started budgeting for the control house project. A rate study calls for a rate increase, which will be implemented in steps.

Along with new controls and relays, the utility installed a new SCADA system and updated computers. Information is carried over a Water & Light fiber optic community backbone, which includes the utility, city hall, street and sewer services, the library and downtown area. (The utility also installed and operates a wireless system.)

Utility workers have used laptops in the field for over a decade. The utility provides its own Voice Over Internet Protocol telephone service. The utility sponsors a public computer kiosk and provides wireless internet access.

Among the other projects the utility crew is working

on this season are installing LED streetlights, and undergrounding and looping some electric distribution lines.

The system is very reliable and power outages to any of the over 1,100 customers served by the municipal power plant are very rare. The utility has a total of seven full time employees and a three-person public utilities commission that oversees the overall operation.

Overwhelming support, fierce opposition to municipal

The utility was created in 1929, when voters, by a margin of 115 to 8, authorized the city council to proceed with a municipal utility feasibility study. The study continued until 1931, when the council ordered plans for the municipal power plant.

The first building contract was awarded in 1931 and voters approved the construction by a vote of 258 to 96. This was the largest vote total of any election in Moose Lake history to that point in time. Legal maneuvering by the incumbent power company failed to stop the municipal effort. Construction began May 1, 1933.

The municipal power plant was operational by Aug. 21, and within a month all local residents of Moose Lake were on the new system. The private power company then removed its poles and wires. The plant was paid for through earnings. That continues to be the case today.

Moose Lake was connected to the electric grid in 1979, when a 69,000 volt line from United Power Association connected to the power plant substation. The power plant went on a standby basis at that time.

Another power plant addition was completed in 1993, and the building was remodeled at that time.

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