

Regulatory authority part of state's solar DG debate

by Steve Downer

Locally-regulated municipal electric utilities remain engaged with solar 'distributed generation' advocates at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC).

The MPUC on Jan. 24 issued an order establishing a workgroup and process to update and improve state distributed electric generation interconnection standards. MMUA is among the parties participating on this workgroup.

While the process grinds on, the MPUC is considering creation of a Distributed Generation (DG) Subcommittee. The purpose of the subcommittee would be to "more quickly move issues forward that are raised in customer complaints or other filings at the Commission."

Comments, which were due May 22, followed a fairly predictable path.

Fresh Energy (an environmental advocacy group) and the Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association said "members and

DG: See next page please



photo by Steve Downer

More than meets the eye

A variety of training opportunities were available to participants in the MMUA Underground School, held May 16-19 in Marshall. While most of the activity took place at the MMUA Training Center, various activities were held off-campus, including a class on infrared technologies. Here, Jeff Eliassen of Grand Marais used an infrared camera in a Marshall Municipal Utilities substation.

MMUA
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Thief River Falls utility making way for Digi-Key

Digi-Key Electronics, the Thief River Falls-headquartered global distributor of electronic components, March 6 announced it was reviewing several potential options for a one million square-foot fulfillment, value-added manufacturing and warehouse center with an investment value of between \$200-\$300 million.

The announcement set off a flurry of activity, which soon involved Thief River Falls Municipal Utilities. The utility headquarters is adjacent to Digi-Key. As part of its expansion planning, the company has offered to buy the land where the Municipal Service Center stands.

With negotiations underway, the utility has dispersed materials and equipment to various locations in and around the city and has identified temporary office space.

Digi-Key's potential expansion would add more than 1,000 new jobs over the next 10 years to its existing base of 3,200 employees in Minnesota.

While multiple options are under review,



Digi-Key and the Thief River Falls Municipal Service Center have been neighbors for many years. Now, with the company planning a major expansion, the utility is looking for a new home.

Thief River Falls would be its preferred location, said the company. The City is proposing an Economic Development Tax Increment Financing package to assist with the building expansion. The state Legisla-

ture appropriated \$1.6 million in 2018 to the City for utility extensions, roads and other public improvements, under certain

Digi-Key see page 6 please

Mountain Lake invests to serve growth now and coming in the future

by Steve Downer

Mountain Lake is typical of Minnesota's municipal electric utilities in some ways; but as with all municipals, it is also unique.

With a population of 2,104 at the 2010 census, it is right in the middle of municipal utility cities, population wise. The population is up approximately 2.5 percent from 2000, but is still short of the 1980 high-water mark of 2,277.

As it was in the 1870s when

immigrants from the Ukraine first settled the area, the economy is closely tied with agriculture. Several agriculture-related businesses dot the city. Milk Specialties Global accounts for roughly a third of the city's electric load, and is growing. Mountain Lake Municipal Utilities is building a second substation in this area, to serve the growth. Reliability and keeping rates low are important. Having customers contribute to the expansion wasn't seriously consid-

ered—nobody wanted to make it hard on an expanding industry.

A 69,000-volt transmission line serving the city makes a turn where the new sub will be situated. The transformer, and various other equipment, has been delivered. Construction is scheduled for this summer and Superintendent Ron Melson and City Clerk/Administrator Wendy Meyer are hoping the sub is in service by the end of the year.

Like many municipal utility

people over the years, both Melson and Meyer are quite familiar with agricultural issues. Melson farms when he's not working for the city, and Meyer's husband remains active with the family farm.

The electric department is charged with maintaining the power lines, substations and power plant. It's a big job—especially for one person—Melson currently is the electric depart-

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clients would benefit from a streamlined and more efficient process . . ." An allied organization, the Institute for Local Self Reliance, said it would "fully support the addition of a subcommittee."

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association, with members embroiled in dockets before the MPUC, flatly said, "No. The subcommittee process outlined . . . is inappropriate for non-MPUC regulated cooperative utilities that have already developed policies within Minne-

sota Statutes and applicable Rules." It said the suggested subcommittee process "would be duplicative and unnecessary" for cooperative utilities and cited cost concerns.

MMUA, in its comments, also resisted the notion of state regulatory expansion into local decision-making: "To the extent that the proposal is aimed at resolving issues that require interpretation where statutes, rules and tariffs are either unclear or apparently silent, MMUA finds the subcommittee proposal unacceptable."

MMUA did allow that a subcommittee might have value if strictly limited "to

cases where it is clear that jurisdiction lies with the state Commission and not the local governing body . . ."

Xcel temporized: "We believe a DG subcommittee may be a reasonable way to create needed efficiencies, however, this depends on the scope of issues, details of the subcommittee procedures, and due process safeguards in place."

The state's largest utility also referenced potential issues with 'ex parte' communication and open meeting laws. It suggested a DG subcommittee "be initially limited to undisputed matters only. A narrower scope of issues would provide a trial period for learning and evaluation, with an opportunity to implement future modifications and improvements based on lessons learned."

A reply comment period closes June 2.

Expedited process?

In introducing the topic, MPUC staff noted that it receives complaints and formal filings on DG and solar issues that "do not involve the determination of high level policy

Benefits of 'DG' said to include choice

Distributed generation (DG) means generating electricity with multiple, dispersed power sources. The MPUC order establishing a DG Workgroup notes that "many benefits are attributed" to distribution generation, including increasing customer choice.

The order follows a proposal to reopen Minnesota's 2004 Interconnection Standards, filed with the Commission by a coalition of environmental groups. Dakota Electric Association, an electric cooperative, also filed recommended changes to the standards.

On Jan. 5, the MPUC and interested parties met to discuss the matter. Most parties commenting at that meeting said they preferred to update the standards consistent with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission standards. The MPUC agreed with that approach.

In issuing its order, the Commission noted that the 2004 standards have "become outdated due to continued maturation of distributed generation technologies, evolving national standards, increasing numbers of interconnection requests, and experience gained."

The MPUC has designated authority to its Executive Secretary to issue notices, set schedules and designate comment periods. The Executive Secretary, working in cooperation with the Department of Commerce, has convened a work group to develop the record more fully.

MMUA staff is participating on the work group.

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Mike Willetts, mwilletts@mmua.org

Natural Gas Circuit Rider

Troy Dahlin, tdahlin@mmua.org

Regional Safety Group Program Leader

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JT&S and Apprenticeship Instructor

Mike Taylor, mtaylor@mmua.org

Regional Safety Coord./JTS Instructors

Bruce Westergaard,

bwestergaard@mmua.org

Shane St. Clair, sstclair@mmua.org

Generation Coordinator/JTS Instructor

Bob Sewell, bsewell@mmua.org

Training Center Coordinator/JTS Instructor

Cody Raveling, craveling@mmua.org

Mgt. Services and JTS Instructor

Rich Maxfield, rmaxfield@mmua.org

Regional Safety Coordinators

Janet Aultman, jaultman@mmua.org

Al Czczok, aczczok@mmua.org

Tom Ewert, tewert@mmua.org

Mark Hottel, mhottel@mmua.org

Robin Klug, rklug@mmua.org

Dave Lundberg, dlundberg@mmua.org

Marc Machacek, mmachacek@mmua.org

Ryan Mihalak, rmihalak@mmua.org

Joseph Schmidt, jschmidt@mmua.org

Kevin Thompson, kthompson@mmua.org

Chris Trembley, ctrembley@mmua.org

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considerations." Interpretation of the material is relatively clear, said staff, but it is "unable to issue definitive advice and clarification." Such issues would benefit from an expedited decision-making process.

Decisions currently are issued through MPUC orders and regular meetings. The subcommittee, noted staff, would reduce delay and increase efficiency.

MPUC staff envisioned that the subcommittee would deal with complaints filed with the MPUC's Consumer Affairs Office or filed in formal dockets where it is fairly clear that a non-violation or a violation exists; undisputed filings; and disputes that come up repeat-

edly and affect multiple parties.

Common disputes, said staff, include:

- Interpretation of state law in regards to individual capacity system limits, etc.;
- Customers on dual fuel or time of use customers who are unable to stay on those special rates while receiving net metering;
- Approval of deviations from the uniform statewide contract;
- Interconnection costs or requirements for systems under 40 kilowatts;
- Calculations of average retail rates;
- Clarifications on filing requirements.

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Tell us your story so we can help preserve tax-exempt municipal bond financing

By Paul Ciampoli

With some members of Congress talking about removing the tax exemption for municipal bonds as part of larger tax reform measures, the public power community must ensure that lawmakers understand all the benefits that flow from tax-exempt municipal bonds.

In 2017, the American Public Power Association has ramped up advocacy efforts to maintain the tax exemption for municipal bonds.

Hundreds of public power officials earlier this year visited offices on Capitol Hill to underscore the vital importance of tax-exempt financing for public power utilities.

The public power officials, who were in Washington, D.C., for the Association's annual legislative rally, spoke with one voice in letting lawmakers know that when it comes to tax reform, Congress should leave municipal bonds alone.

Tax-exempt municipal bonds are the primary source of financing for infrastructure that enables public

Washington Report



power communities across the country to keep the lights on.

The Association earlier this year also coordinated efforts to gather signatures on Capitol Hill for a letter that emphasized that tax-exempt bonds are a very important financing tool and should not be disturbed in any tax reform.

The bipartisan letter from Reps. Randy Hultgren, R-Ill. and C.A. 'Dutch' Ruppersberger, D-Md. was sent to the leadership of the House Ways and Means Committee on March 8. The letter had a total of 156 signatures.

We can't take our foot off the pedal when it comes to continuing to highlight the vital role that this form of financing plays for the public power community.

Here is how you can help. Has your utility issued municipal bonds in the last five years to fund an electric

infrastructure project in your community? If so, would you let us know? If you've had new successes/accomplishments with an earlier bond-funded project, we'd love to hear about that, too.

Here are some examples of how public power utilities have utilized bonds as a mechanism to help finance important projects that benefit their communities:

Idaho Falls Power in 2015 became debt free after it paid off two, \$48 million bonds. The bonds, approved by the town in 1978 and 1984, were used to finance the construction of hydroelectric power infrastructure that still powers the town of Idaho Falls, Idaho. Idaho Falls Power celebrated the occasion with a "bond fire," setting fire to the pages of a spare bond book from when the bonds were first approved;

Washington state's Snohomish County PUD in 2015 issued approximately \$40 million of tax-exempt bonds to help fund the design and construction of new hydro power generation projects,

primarily two new hydroelectric facilities. The Washington utility benefitted from very favorable market conditions to lock in a low borrowing rate for the 30-year bonds. The public power utility in 2015 also issued approximately \$141 million of tax-exempt bonds to fund a number of system improvements including overhead and underground power lines and substations;

In 2014, Seattle City Light successfully sold \$265 million of bonds. The utility noted that the sale provided \$172 million in new money to support the utility's capital investments, including upgrades to its aging infra-

structure that will improve electric service reliability for customers.

The Association will work closely with you to highlight your "built by bonds" projects — in its news publications, website, social media, blogs, and more.

What Members of Congress most want to hear is what their constituents are doing and how the elimination of tax exemption on muni bonds can impact them. So please let us know your municipal bond story.

You can send an email to us at News@PublicPower.org with a sentence or two about your project and we'll take it from there.

Minnesota utilities win safety awards

Nine Minnesota municipal electric utilities are among 111 utilities that earned the American Public Power Association's Safety Award of Excellence for safe operating practices in 2016.

The awards were announced May 8, during the Association's annual Engi-

neering & Operations Technical Conference, held in San Antonio, Texas. A total of 270 utilities entered the annual Safety Awards, which is among the highest number of entrants in the history of the program. Entrants were placed in categories according to their number of worker hours and ranked based on the most incident-free records during 2016. The incidence rate, used to judge entries, is based on the number of work-related reportable injuries or illnesses and the number of worker-hours during 2016, as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Minnesota utilities honored were:

Group A — for systems with less than 15,000 worker-hours of exposure: Grand Marais Public Utilities; Sleepy Eye Public Utility; St. Peter Municipal Utilities.

Group B — for systems with 15,000 to 29,000 worker-hours of exposure: New Prague Utilities Commission; Worthington Public Utilities.

Group D — for systems with 60,000 to 109,999 worker hours of exposure: Detroit Lakes Public Utilities; Elk River Municipal Utilities; Marshall Municipal Utilities.

Group E — for systems with 110,000 to 249,999 hours of exposure: Austin Utilities.

The American Public Power Association helps members track outage and restoration data through its subscription-based eReliability Tracker service and then compares the data to national statistics tracked by the U.S. Energy Information Administration for all types of electric utilities.

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East Grand Forks, Staples file electric service territory changes with MPUC

Editor's note: The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) acted May 18 on two electric utility service area boundary changes filed by municipal utilities. In both cases, the changes involved a neighboring electric cooperative. The Minnesota Department of Commerce recommended approval of the transfers and the updating of service area maps.

The City of Staples and Todd Wadena Electric Cooperative on March 21 jointly filed a modification of their electric service territory boundaries with the MPUC. The Commission accepted the parties' request and filed the documents.

The transfer area includes approximately 352 acres, mostly on the northwest side of the city, and contains approximately 11 residential and small commercial customers. The parties noted that they had agreed to the terms and conditions for the transfer, including compensation provisions.

The cooperative will continue to serve the customers on a service-by-exception basis until the parties arrange the transfer of service. In the case of one customer, the coopera-

tive will serve on an exception basis until Dec. 1, 2026, unless the parties mutually agree otherwise.

The MPUC's maps will be updated by MnGEO to reflect the changes.

East Grand Forks - PKM

East Grand Forks Water & Light and PKM Electric Cooperative on March 7 agreed to a realignment of their electric service territories. The parties filed the agreement with the MPUC, which approved the transfer.

East Grand Forks has reached several territory transfer agreements with neighboring cooperatives over the decades, and the most recent agreement echoes certain aspects of those prior agreements.

In stressing their desire for a good working relationship, the parties said a "fair and workable agreement regarding territory transfer and compensation is important to encourage and promote general growth and development" in the Red River Valley region of northwestern Minnesota. The agreement is to provide for an orderly transfer of territory and customers, with defined compensation,

while providing the longest possible planning horizon.

The agreement includes two separate annexations, one of slightly less than two acres and one of approximately 40 acres.

For existing cooperative customers located in the cooperative's service territory that will be transferred to the city (of which there are none in this case), the municipal agreed to a lump sum payment of 2.5 times the annual gross revenue billed to those customers, based on an average of the preceding three-year period.

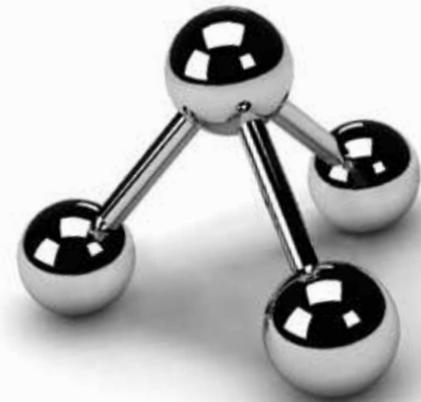
For future customers locating in the area, the city will make a payment of \$0.006 (6 mills per kilowatt-hour) for all electricity sold to the customer for a 10-year compensation period, commencing with the first electricity sale to that customer. Perhaps reflecting the relatively slow pace of development in the area, the 10-year compensation period begins "no matter when the customer receives service from the city."

For facilities acquired, the municipal will make a lump sum payment for the original cost of the facilities, less accumulated depreciation. The

municipal will also pay the cooperative for all reasonable system re-integration costs.

The agreement remains in effect until the end of 2027 and may be renewed. It gives the municipal utility "inter-

im" service rights to any areas annexed into the city. The transfer date is effective upon the date of the MPUC order in regards to a joint petition.



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MMUA taking nominations for individual, utility membership awards

Doing an outstanding 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 may 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. 21-23.

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 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, technol-

ogy, 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.

Nomination forms for each award are available on the MMUA web site in the About/Awards and Recognition section.

Nominations are due to the MMUA office by July 25, 2017.

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.

Nominations being taken for open seats on MMUA Board; three directors up for re-election

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

Two current board members will be completing their years of service on the board.

William Wroolie, Brainerd Public Utilities Commission-

er and past MMUA president, will complete eight years of board service at the upcoming summer meeting. Wroolie was elected to fill out a departing board member's term, in September 2009. He was elected to the board in August 2011 and re-elected in August 2014.

Chuck Heins, superintendent of Redwood Falls Public

Utilities, was elected to fill the unexpired term of a departing board member in 2011 and was re-elected in 2013. Having served six years, Heins has decided to step down, in part to set the board succession schedule back on track.

MMUA thanks Heins and Wroolie for their dedication and outstanding contributions to the association.

Along with the two openings, three current board members will be up for re-election for a second three-year term. They are: John Crooks, Utilities Manager, Shakopee Public Utilities; Chris Olson, Finance Manager, ALP Utilities (Alexandria); Vernell Roberts, General Manager, Detroit Lakes Public Utility.

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. Nomination forms for each in the About/Awards and Recognition section.

If you have any questions, you may contact John Crooks, MMUA President-Elect and Nominations and Awards Committee chairperson, at 952-445-1988.

Nominations will be accepted through July 25, 2017.

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Thief River Falls:

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conditions. The appropriation, to be funded out of the Department of Employment and Economic Development, enjoyed bipartisan support.

If everything falls into place, it could take two to three years before construction is complete. That would give the municipal utility some time to re-consolidate its operations in one place.

Digi-Key, which was founded in 1972, has worked with the City to build workforce housing. It also buses employees from other cities, including Bemidji and Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Digi-Key is a distributor of electronic components for many leading industry suppliers. The company's initial market was the electronic hobbyist, but it has become the largest electronic component distributor in North America and the seventh



photo by Steve Downer

While modest, in the way of most municipal utility home bases, the Thief River Falls Municipal Utility headquarters is functional and has served the city well over the years.



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largest worldwide. Digi-Key's current operations are said to generate approximately \$1.5 billion in economic output and add over \$940 million to the state's gross domestic product. The proposed expansion is estimated to contribute an additional \$500 million to state economic output.

So far, Digi-Key has been powered by Thief River Falls Municipal Utilities. It appears that will continue in the future.

Minnesotans win reliable, safe service awards

One hundred ten of the nation's more than 2,000 public power utilities, including six from Minnesota, earned the Reliable Public Power Provider (RP₃)® designation from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for providing reliable and safe electric service.

Willmar Municipal Utilities received the highest designation—Diamond.

ALP Utilities (Alexandria), Hutchinson Utilities Commission and Marshall Municipal Utilities received Platinum designation, while Detroit Lakes Public Utilities and Elk River Municipal Utilities received the Gold designation.

Awards were presented May 8 during APPA's annual Engineering & Operations Technical Conference held in San Antonio, Texas.

The three-year RP₃ designation recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement. Criteria include sound business practices and a utility-wide commitment to safe and reliable delivery of electricity.

Other Minnesota RP₃ utilities include Moorhead Public Service, Owatonna Public Utilities and Rochester Public Utilities and Shakopee Public Utilities.

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Mountain Lake:

continued from front page

ment. A highly-valued assistant recently left to take a job with a larger utility. The city is looking to fill the position.

The utility lost a good lineman/operator, but the community also bids farewell to a member of the volunteer fire department, a solid local citizen and perhaps for many, a friend.

The city has seven 'outside' employees in the streets, water and electric departments. "We're cross trained fairly well," Melson said. Losing his other lineman hurts, but it won't paralyze the department.

Mountain Lake is also helped in that it maintains good relationships and mutual aid agreements with neighboring municipals and electric cooperative. Meyer provides administrative support to the five-member utility commission, which has charge of the administration, maintenance and control of the water, sewer and electrical utilities.



Wendy Meyer

The electric department every year has been putting a few blocks of distribution line underground. With other big projects underway and being shorthanded, that probably won't happen this year.

All five engines in the power plant have been upgraded and are compliant with the latest emissions regulations, at a cost of \$350,000. The utility's power agency—Central Minnesota Power Agency Services—helped city/utility staff understand the issues (Meyer, a former president of the agency, is also a former two-term Cottonwood County

commissioner.) A transmission interconnection study is underway, as Mountain Lake hopes to sell two megawatts into the regional electric capacity market. That should help pay for the project.

The city's peak electrical demand is 5.5 megawatts. During a time of high prices in the newly-instituted wholesale electric market, the city installed a 1.25 MW wind turbine on the west edge of town. Output is capped at 1 MW, to keep it from overwhelming the system at low-use times. The installation is unique in that electricity feeds right into the distribution system.

"It gets gobbled up before it hits the plant," Melson said.

Utility customers have expressed very little interest, so far, in solar.

Industrial developments

The city is developing a 26-acre business/manufacturing subdivision with direct access to U.S. Hwy 60. The plat was recently approved and accepted by the city council. Improvements include curb and gutter, electric, water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. The city's estimated total cost of readying the land for development is estimated at \$1.8 million.

The local Economic Development Authority's efforts to expand the industrial area began last fall with the purchase of property. The city annexed additional parcels. Electric service rights to the area were secured in 2004.

The city's timing on the industrial park development appears to be good. State Hwy. 60 runs from the Twin Cities and provides connections to Sioux Falls and Omaha. It has been widened to four lanes up through Iowa to Windom. Economic development is following in the wake of the improvements. Work is currently underway to widen the stretch from Windom to



St. James. Mountain Lake is in the middle of the project.

Not content to watch the world pass them by, the good people of Mountain Lake are positioning themselves to contribute to, and share in, the bounty.



County State Aid Highway 27 also serves as main street through downtown Mountain Lake (above). This picture was taken as the city prepared for Memorial Day weekend. The well-kept municipal power plant (left) was built in 1934 and has been updated many times since. The latest improvements involved upgrading emissions controls of the five reciprocating internal combustion engines. Ron Melson, pictured above in the plant, oversees the utility substation, power plant and distribution system.

Photos by Steve Downer. Photo of Wendy Meyer courtesy of Minnesota Public Radio.

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Minnesotans, compete, heavily involved at national Lineworkers Rodeo

The American Public Power Association's 17th annual Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo, was held May 5-6, in San Antonio, Texas.

The "rodeo" is a series of competitive events demonstrating lineworker skills and safe work practices.

Seventy-three teams and 158 apprentices from not-for-profit, community-owned electric utilities across the nation participated. Of the 78 teams competing in San Antonio, five were from Minnesota.

Twelve teams and 15 individuals won awards.

There are two levels of competition—journeyman and apprentice. The journeyman teams consist of three members—two climbers and a ground person. A qualified journeyman has more than four years of experience; an apprentice four or fewer years of experience.

The Minnesota teams came from Austin Utilities, Elk River Municipal Utilities, Rochester Public Utilities and two from Shakopee Public Utilities.

The Shakopee team of Justin Rotert, Jamie VonBank and Mike Enright, finished 20th overall. This same team competed at last year's rodeo, held in Shakopee. Another Shakopee team included Matthew Griebel, Cody Schuett and Brad Carlson with Greg Drent as an alternate.

The Austin team included Tyler Underdahl, Dillon Sprague and Jeffrey Martinson.

The ERMU team included Mitch Girtz, Jason Rolstad and Matt Schwartz. The RPU team included Chad Peterson, Rob Adamson and Tyler Meiners.

Journeyman events included Crossarm Change Out, Cutout Replacement, OCR Replacement and Hurtman Rescue. The top two journeyman teams hailed from South Carolina state-owned Santee Cooper.

There were 159 apprentices competing. Apprentice events were all individual and included the Hurtman Rescue, Insulator Change Out, Obstacle Course and a Written Test.

SPU apprentice Tyler Hanson finished sixth overall. Marshall Municipal Utilities apprentices Trevor Morin placed ninth overall and Dustin Cole 19th overall. Shakopee apprentice Matt Kahle placed 27th. Also competing were SPU's Nick Kochlin and RPU Apprentice Tanner Winter.

Minnesotans were involved in other ways, including act-

ing as judges. MMUA Executive Director Jack Kegel was a Scoring Master Judge. MMUA Training Center Coordinator/Job Training and Safety Instructor Cody Raveling was Chief Judge for the 12kv Cutout Replacement Journeyman event. Serving as judges for this event were Larry Lamote and Tony Mead of Marshall Municipal Utilities and Steve Tieg of Austin Utilities. Mark Fuchs of ERMU and Roger Moltzan of Detroit Lakes Public were judges of the Journeyman Hurtman competition.

Kent Sanders of SPU and Jim Griebel of Delano were judges in the apprentice Obstacle Course. Trent Hawkinson of Brainerd Public Utilities helped judge the apprentice Hurtman competition.

This was the first Rodeo missed by MMUA Director of Training and Safety Mike Willetts. Scheduled to lead a presentation on the APPA Safety Manual, Willetts had to cancel due to personal reasons.

Events began Friday, May 5 at the San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter, including training courses for apprentice and journeyman lineworkers. Marc Machacek and Joe Schmidt of MMUA taught a two-hour class called Lessons Learned from Safety Mistakes. Co-worker Shane St. Clair taught a two-hour class called If It's Not Grounded, It's Not Dead.



A quilt made by MMUA's Rita Kelly was raffled for just over \$1,700, and the proceeds went to Tracy Moore of the Highline Hero Foundation. MMUA Executive Director Jack Kegel is pictured here handing the funds to Moore. Also pictured, from left to right, are these MMUA attendees: Cody Raveling, Marc Machacek, Darla and Joe Schmidt, Vicki and Shane St. Clair.

There was a vendor expo, and the apprentice written test was held that afternoon.

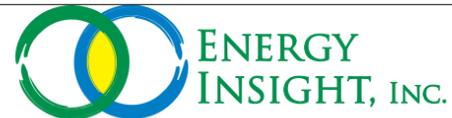
Competition events started Saturday morning. Events were judged based upon safety, work practices, neatness, ability, equipment handling, and timely event completion. All safety rules established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the American Public Power Association's Safety Manual were observed during events.

The awards banquet was held that evening. There was a raffle of a fantastic quilt made with love by Rita Kelly of the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association, from t-shirts donated by teams from the 2016 Rodeo. The proceeds went to benefit the Highline Hero Foundation.



The Minnesota contingent posed for a group photo May 6 at the Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo.

The event was held in conjunction with the APPA Engineering and Operations Technical Conference.



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Two companies recently joined MMUA as Associate Members:

MVTV Wireless is a broadband wireless internet service provider to over 6,000 customers in 24 southwestern Minnesota counties, covering 25,000 square miles. Rural customers are its primary customer base.

The company is located at 1790 Hwy. 212 W., Granite Falls, MN 56241. Gregory Isaackson is the primary contact. Company phone number is 320-564-4807 and fax is 320-564-0903.

MCR Performance Solutions is a management consulting firm serving the

Associate & Member News

utility industry. Its services include transmission strategy support to municipals, public power districts, joint action agencies, generation and transmission and other cooperatives.

The company is located at 155 N. Pfingsten Road, Suite 155, Deerfield, IL 60015. Primary contact is Jim Pardikes, vice president of transmission strategy. Company phone is 847-562-0066 and fax is 847-562-0077.

An MMUA Associate Member has changed its name. Effective May 1st, B & L Utility Maintenance, LLC, will be known as B & B Commercial Coating, LLC. The company feels this better describes it and its services.

The mailing address for B & B Commercial Coating, LLC is P.O. BOX 663, Maple Lake, MN 55358. Office contact person is Tammi Prevost. Her phone number is 320-282-1410. Email is Tammi@BBcoat.com

The City of Warroad has re-joined MMUA as a Regular Member.

Contact person is Ron Kleinschmidt, utility superintendent. Mailing address is P.O. Box 50, Warroad, MN 56763. The utility office number is 218-386-1873.

The City of Elk Point has joined MMUA as an Associate Member. Contact person is Jerry Buum, public works director. His email address is buumerstreet@iw.net The city provides electric/water/sewer and garbage service.

Mailing address is P.O. Box 280 and the address is 106, W. Pleasant St., Elk Point, SD 57025. Phone number is 605-356-2141 and fax is 605-356-2336.

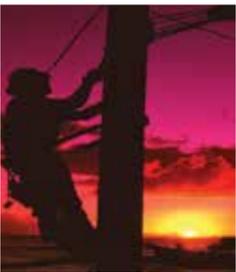
The City of Tyndall, South Dakota, has joined MMUA as an Associate Member. City offices are located at 110 E. 17th Ave., Tyndall, SD 57066. Mailing address is PO Box 29. Main contact period is Linda Pesek, finance officer.

Email is tyndalsd@heartlandpower.org. Phone is 605-589-3481 and fax is 605-589-3820.

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Summer meeting features effective governance track

MMUA's Summer Conference is Aug. 21-23 at Madden's Resort in Brainerd. This conference is an opportunity for networking, education and socializing for municipal utility leaders from around the state.

MMUA this year is presenting a two-part session called, "Taking Care of Business: Effective Governance for Public Sector Utilities." John Miner of Collaborative Learning will conduct this specialized training. Sessions will be held Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning during the conference.

This seminar is intended for policymakers and executive managers looking for an in-depth understanding of governance principles and practices in public sector utilities. Although the focus of this seminar is on electric utility governance, participants will also be able to apply their learning to the governance of other utility enterprises (gas, water, wastewater, telecommunications, etc.). Participants will improve their understanding of the legal requirements that typically apply to boards and they will be exposed to "best practices" in public sector governance.

For more on the program or to register, go to the month of August in the MMUA online 'Events' calendar.

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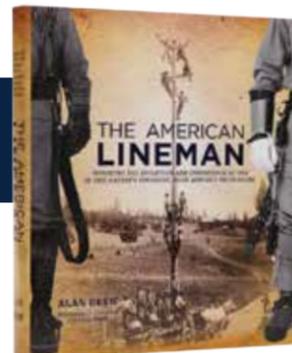
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continued on facing page

continued from facing page

communication skills. High school diploma or equivalent required with two years of previous customer service experience. Previous utility experience is a plus. Interested persons must submit an application and resume to HR@shakopeeutilities.com or by mail to Shakopee Public Utilities, Attn: Human Resources, PO Box 470, Shakopee MN 55379. Applications available at www.spucweb.com. A detailed job description is available upon request.

For a complete and up-to-date listing, including For Sale and Wanted items, see the News/Classifieds section at www.mmua.org

Bits & Pieces

Among the many other changes it outlines, the proposed budget for fiscal year 2018 that was released by the Trump administration on May 23 proposes to divest the transmission assets of the federal power marketing administrations. It also would take other steps that would affect public power utilities, including repealing the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and extending payment cuts for those using the Build America Bonds program.

On May 19, the American Public Power Association, together with two other electricity trade groups, filed an amicus brief in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in a case challenging a member public power utility's use of smart meters for its residents and businesses.

The City of Naperville, Illinois, was sued in federal district court in 2011 over its rollout of smart meters throughout the city. The trial court dismissed the complaint. The plaintiff, a group called Naperville Smart Meter Awareness, then appealed the case to the Seventh Circuit.

In the appeal, the plaintiff alleges that the installation of an electric smart meter by a government-operated electric utility, and the obtaining of electric usage data in 15-minute increments, constitutes an illegal search and/or seizure in violation of the Fourth Amendment.

Electric utility regulators in California are seeing "absolutely dramatic" changes

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in the industry, said Michael Picker, president of the California Public Utilities Commission, at the start of a May 19 hearing on the changing nature of consumer and retail choice in that state. The hearing, which took place in Sacramento, was a joint hearing of the CPUC and the California Energy Commission.

Between rooftop solar units, community choice aggregation efforts, battery storage and direct access service for commercial and industrial customers, as much as 25 percent of retail load formerly provided by investor-owned utilities, or IOUs, will be served by non-IOU sources later this year, Picker said.

"What happens when large

customers, or large numbers of smaller customers, leave the grid?" he asked. "Who's safe?"

The Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) May 15 released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and opened a public comment period for the Enbridge Line 3 Replacement Project. Partnership executives said this marks an important step in the regulatory process.

Built in the 1960s, Line 3 is a 1,097-mile crude oil pipeline extending from Edmonton, Alberta to Superior. A new 36-inch diameter pipeline will replace the existing 34-inch diameter pipeline along most of the route. In the U.S., the

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replacement pipeline will follow Enbridge's existing Line 3 route from Joliette, N.D., to Clearbrook, Minn., and then will primarily follow existing pipeline and transmission routes from Clearbrook to Superior.

The Department of Commerce is hosting 22 public meetings along Enbridge's preferred route and route alternatives beginning June 6. The public comment period began May 15 and will conclude on July 10.

Discounted APPA safety manual available now

The American Public Power Association (APPA) recently released its updated Safety Manual for an Electric Utility, 16th edition.

MMUA has made a bulk purchase of the new Safety manual is making them available to our members for \$24 per book, plus applicable sales tax and shipping.

For more information, contact rkelly@mmua.org or order here.

Midwestern lineworkers converge on MMUA Underground School

MMUA held its annual Underground School May 16-19 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. Fifty linemen from 31 municipal utilities attended—most from Minnesota but also from Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota—along with eight linemen from three electric cooperatives.

A perfect opening to the school was provided Tuesday afternoon by Bob Durkee of MnOSHA Consultation, who discussed soil testing and requirements for protective systems, along with excavation hazards. OSHA construction standards for trenching and excavations were the focus.

Bookending the school Friday morning was another general session: Advanced Rigging and Load Securement, taught by MMUA's own Marc Machacek. Our regional safety coordinator expanded his listeners' knowledge and understanding of rigging and loading transformers and other large equipment. The class referenced federal and state regulations.

Steve Cook of Rochester Public Utilities started Friday morning with a look at fault indicators. Samples of from several major suppliers were examined and discussed.

Hands-on training sessions were the school's main focus. These classes, held May 17-18, had something for lineworkers of all experience levels. Inclement weather drove the training indoors on Wednesday, but the rain relented Thursday, bringing the training back into soggy, real-world conditions.

In a reflection of the caliber of the municipal electric lineman, many of our instructors came from member utilities. Associate members also supplied several instructors.

Miles Heide and Wade Williams of Fairmont Public Utilities, along with Todd Keach and Rob Adamson of Rochester Public Utilities, led a class that built a substation feeder line. Pulling wire and proper terminating were stressed.

Paul Twite, Delano Municipal Utilities and Rich Maxfield of MMUA led a class on Preventative Maintenance Using Infrared Technology. For this class, groups of students traveled to a Marshall Municipal Utilities substation to test various cameras, which were provided by the Western Area Power Administration. The fundamentals of thermal properties were discussed, as they relate to electrical distribution maintenance. Class concluded with the development of a written report.

Scott Thoreson of Elk River Municipal Utilities, Brad Olson of Brainerd Public Utilities and James Monroe of New Ulm Public Utilities led groups focused on Underground System Maintenance, Repair and Troubleshooting. Among the work, crews were given an outage scenario and had to figure out the correct way of restoring power, while following proper safety procedures. A variety of topics were covered.

Instructors Kevin Kollos of Ditch Witch and Doug Reitz, Rycom Instruments, lent their expertise to a class on Underground Utility Locating. The training featured practical solutions to routine locating problems. A variety of locating scenarios were covered, as were the ever-present OSHA standards and best practices.

An advanced training session on Underground Distribution Design, Protection & Management was offered by Gary Roskos, Roskos Technical Services. This class was designed for seasoned lineworkers, engineers new to linework, staking personnel and others. Proper system layout and design, coupled with critical planning to ensure system reliability, operability and economic return on utility investments were discussed. Several topics were covered in discussion of fundamental principles of proper underground design and all aspects of proper planning.

Jim Stephens of 3M and Jeff Martinson, Austin Utilities, offered a breakout tabletop session on Splicing and Terminations. Stephens demonstrated how to properly terminate a splice, assisted by volunteers.

Thanks to the Utilities/

New Ulm paces Underground rodeo event

A Lineworker Rodeo Mystery Event added fun and friendly competition to the Underground School. The event was open to all classes of lineworker, from first-year apprentice to journeyman. This fun event demonstrated safe working practices and a little speed. A trophy plaque was awarded to the person with the best time and fewest infractions.

The top five finishers were, in order: Scott Schneider from New Ulm, Derek Varpness from Marshall, Ryan Vogel from Moose Lake Water & Light, Russ Holets from New Ulm, and Cody Reed from Owa-



Underground School Rodeo top finishers included, from left to right: Russ Holets and Scott Schneider (holding the trophy) of New Ulm Public Utilities, Cody Reed of Owatonna Public Utilities and Derek Varpness of Marshall Municipal Utilities.

tonna. Everyone did a great job and enjoyed the experience. We hope to see more participants in the upcoming

Minnesota State Rodeo that will be tied together with the Overhead School in September.

Vendors that helped with instructors and equipment, including:

- Fairmont Public Utilities
- New Ulm Public Utilities
- Austin Utilities
- Rochester Public Utilities
- Delano Municipal Utilities
- Elk River Municipal Utilities
- Brainerd Public Utilities
- Moorhead Public Service
- Ditchwitch
- Border States Electric
- Titan Machinery
- 3M
- Irby

Thanks also to 'pizza reception' sponsors States Electric and Titan Machinery!

Upcoming MMUA Events

Annual Summer Conference

August 21-23, Madden's Resort, Brainerd

Our Summer Conference offers networking, educational and social time for municipal utility leaders from around the state. The program is still being developed but we will let you know what we have planned soon!

Overhead School

September 12-15, MMUA Training Center, Marshall

MMUA and our partners—the Minnesota Rural Electric Association and the American Public Power Association—are pleased to offer the 2017 Overhead Lineworker School. The class lineup is under development. Watch your email for full details later this month.



Save the Date!

Minnesota State Lineworkers Rodeo

September 12, MMUA Training Center, Marshall

Individual Events

Apprentice: Hurtman Rescue, 5KV Insulator Change Out, Obstacle Course.

Journeyman: Hurtman Rescue, 5KV Insulator Change Out, Obstacle Course

Schedule

Registration	9:00 AM
Opening Ceremony	9:45 AM
Rodeo Competition	10:00 AM-12:30 PM
Awards Reception	5:00 PM

Trophies will be awarded to top 3 individuals in each category, for each event. Plus we'll award an overall trophy in the Apprentice category and Journeyman category.

The Rodeo is open to any public power lineworker in Minnesota. Rodeo precedes Overhead School; separate registration and waiver required for Rodeo participants. Watch your email for full details in the coming weeks.



Protect public power's ability to BUILD WITH BONDS

Municipal bonds help public power create new infrastructure at the rate of **\$11 billion annually**



The new administration is likely to try to **cap or eliminate** tax exemptions for municipal bonds

Congress should prevent further cuts of **Build America Bonds** and protect bonds from sequestration

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