



Hands-on training continues

MMUA held its annual Underground School May 15-18 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. As with all MMUA schools at the Training Center, the schedule provided plenty of opportunity for hands-on field work. Andrew Echternach of Adrian Public Utilities (at left) participated in a class on splicing and terminations. Jeff Martinson of Austin Utilities, one of the class instructors, is at right in the picture.

photo by Steve Downer

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CMMPA celebrating 30 years of innovative service to municipal utilities

Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (CMMPA) is celebrating 30 years of operation.

Over the years, the durability and flexibility of CMMPA's project-based business model has allowed utilities to belong as a partial or full requirements member or affiliate while retaining their ownership of local resources. CMMPA helps each participant manage their individualized power portfolio while aggregating needs of its

12 members and several affiliates in Minnesota and Iowa.

Agency created to negotiate, manage wholesale contract

Six municipal utilities joined in 1987 to form CMMPA. Thirty years later, the Agency continues to abide by its original tenets to serve as a "partial requirements agency with an emphasis on independence of operation, economical supply of energy for its consumer owners,

and perpetuation of municipally owned electric systems in Minnesota."

The agency was first involved in renegotiating and managing a power supply contract with Northern States Power/Xcel Energy. Member cities' managers, administrators, or superintendents took charge of the day-to-day management of the 20-year power supply contract.

In 1998, before the expiration of the NSP contract, CMMPA

members created a second joint action agency to operate as their energy management and consulting services agent. Initially named Utilities Plus, the agent is now known as Central Municipal Power Agency/Services (CMPAS—which is pronounced "compass").

Working alongside members, CMPAS conducted a long-term power supply study, completed

CMPAS: see page 5 please

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Truman's Rohman exemplifies commitment to the small city he has served

You can transfer knowledge. But can you transfer commitment to a community?

Monte Rohman works as the city of Truman clerk/treasurer, but like many people serving in a similar position, he is much more than that. He is retiring from the city at the end of the year, after 36 years. The city plans to have his replacement on board by July 1, allowing six months for a transfer of knowledge.

"I will miss the job," Rohman said, but he will remain active in the community in a number of ways.

Truman is located on Minn. Hwy. 15, 10 miles north of Fairmont, 20 miles from the Iowa border. The city's population was estimated at 1,080 in 2014, down 14.2 percent from the year 2000. Much of the downtown retail has left. Commercial devel-

opment, like many places, has migrated to the highway.

Truman remains a good place to live and raise a family, with plenty of recreational facilities, Truman Public Schools, and a local Lutheran school. Truman and a number of schools in the area combine in various ways for different activities and sports.

Rohman is a native of the area; his wife was born and raised in Truman, and they have family in the area.

Rohman likes baseball. He is heavily involved with the Truman Baseball-Softball Association, and has been the association's pull-tab manager for more than 15 years. He can often be found tending to the baseball field.

"I love doing that," he said.

Truman Public Utilities worked with the Association to



Monte Rohman will be retiring from the city of Truman but plans to stay involved in the local baseball and softball associations.

install lights at the field. A pool and playground area are located adjacent to the school and football and baseball fields.

The city provides a variety of

services, and infrastructure is in "good shape," Rohman said. The old water tower, which was

Truman: see page 4 please



MPUC tells cooperative to refine its filing in an unusual service territory case

Once power is delivered to a customer, has the utility's responsibility ended?

Utilities in Minnesota may be about to find out, as part of an electric utility service area complaint by Lake Country Power (LCP) against Minnesota Power (MP). The complaint alleges MP is violating the cooperative's service area by providing service to Canadian National Railway Company (CN) facilities near Hoyt Lakes.

Turning aside the cooperative's request, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) May 10 declined to

refer the matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings for a contested case proceeding. It did request an amended complaint, consistent, it said, with what LCP has learned through the process and to clarify what it is seeking.

MP delivers power to CN, which is improving and adding signaling and sensing equipment to its railroad facilities near Hoyt Lakes. The delivery point is within MP's service territory. The facilities then follow the tracks into LCP's territory. The power is carried over facilities

owned by a private party, to what is characterized as part of an integrated rail safety and signaling system.

LCP said the equipment is new, entirely within its exclusive electric service area, and it has the capacity to serve the load.

MP said that once power is delivered to a customer, the utility's responsibility ends. Further, it said there is a long-standing policy that once a utility delivers power to a customer, the customer can distribute that power over its own distribution system.

LCP disagreed, saying the same argument could be made in every case where customer facilities 'straddle' service territory lines.

"If MP's argument some-

how were valid," said LCP, "there would never be a reason to determine a straddling case, or for that matter, there would be no need for straddling exceptions to be codified within the statutory exclusive service territory scheme."

LCP said, "It is the potential of this precedent to destroy the entire exclusive service territory system . . . this matter, if not outright deemed a violation by the Commission, is certainly deserving of a contested case proceeding."

MPUC staff said it was unsure if the case has far-reaching implications, but advocated for a contested case. The Commission cannot apply the law nor set the policy until it understands the facts, staff said.

MP said additional fact-finding was not needed. It pointed out the load at issue was similar to a residential customer, making a contested case a disproportionately heavy use of resources.

CN said the Commission had all the information it needed to make a decision, that a contested case was unnecessary and recommended dismissal of the complaint. MP said that if LCP had a complaint against CN's actions, then the complaint should be directed to CN.

Apparently, CN choose to not pay LCP nearly \$1 million for a service extension to the electric load, and is distributing the power over facilities owned by a subsidiary.

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MPUC April 19 approved the requested transfer and requested the Commission's maps be changed to reflect the changed boundaries.

The agreement encompasses two annexations, totaling 21.47 acres. The parties agreed to terms and conditions, including compensation. Terms were not released.

The transfer areas are generally bare ground, with one existing customer (the county) that is in the process of construction. The parties had

Power supplies tight this summer in California

The California Independent System Operator (ISO) May 8 forecast power supplies will be tight this summer due to below average hydropower production and reduced generation.

The parties acquiesced to the MPUC's desire that each provide notice to the customer in regards to the change in service rights, and will update the Commission via separate filing. The municipal had provided a customer notice letter on Feb. 27, referencing the pending proceeding before the MPUC.

The grid operator said the system's capacity to serve consumers will be tight in high-load periods in the summer months, especially during the evenings of hot days when solar power dissipates.

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Living out of core values highlight essay winner's portrayal of RPU

Editor's note: The following is the first-place award-winning essay in the 2018 MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship award contest.

by Eric Chestolowski
Rochester Minn.

Imagine all of the necessary actions performed around your house on a daily basis.

Among many things you may have thought of on your list, you may have considered things like taking a shower, flipping on a light switch, or even turning on the stove for dinner. Thanks to local municipal utilities, these actions become second-nature to us, and we do not have to think about the work that makes all these actions possible. Municipal utilities often fly under the radar, but without their services, our communities would be unable to function efficiently and effectively.

Serving over 50,000 electric customers and 39,000 water customers, Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) is the largest municipal utility in Minnesota and provides much of my community of Rochester with services we often take for

granted in a safe and reliable manner.

Six core values define RPU's mission: safety, integrity, service, stewardship, accountability, and skill. These are a portrayal of RPU's immense impact on Rochester and prove that our reliance on them is returned with quality service.

Not only is RPU a provider for clean water and electricity, but also an advocate for conservation efforts. RPU employees are passionate about making sure their customers are informed about preserving Earth's resources, and even offer education courses that inform about changes one can make in their own home to benefit the environment. This is a fantastic example of how municipal utilities benefit us all. Yes, they provide us with necessary services, but they do not stop there. They dedicate time and effort into educating citizens of their communities in the importance of protecting and preserving our environment. Without this education, our actions could continue with

Winners selected in MMUA's Tom Bovitz scholarship contest

The MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award winners were selected May 9. The top four essays in the 19th annual contest were:

- First Place: Eric Chestolowski, Rochester
- Second Place: Alyssa Nielsen, Elk River
- Third Place: Izabella, Bishop, Grand Rapids
- Fourth Place: Bronwyn Tollefson, Willmar.

The first place scholarship carries an award of \$2,000,

second place \$1,500, third place \$1,000 and fourth place \$500.

The contest was created as a public relations tool to increase the awareness of public power and create goodwill in the community for the municipally-owned utility. Essay theme was "Municipal Utilities: Good for All of Us."

Winners of local contests were entered in the statewide contest. Judges included four MMUA member utility representatives and

one MMUA staff member. Judges ranked their top four essays, point values were assigned and winners selected.

The award is named in honor of the late Tom Bovitz, a firm believer in the value of education, who was a former general manager of Hibbing Public Utilities and MMUA president. MMUA, headquartered in Plymouth, represents the interests of the state's 124 municipally-owned electric and 33 municipally-owned gas utilities.

their detrimental influences on the earth.

During times of disaster, municipal utilities are also there to help. Severe storms are a natural part of our world, but the destruction they cause leaves people desperate for assistance.

When hurricane Irma struck the Southeast, immense damage was caused, and help was needed immediately. I am proud to say that

my local municipal utility, Rochester Public Utilities, sent a team of their own down to Kissimmee, Florida to help with relief. On the way down, they met up with teams from other municipal utilities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. In times of distress, municipal utilities are there for aid and relief, even in other parts of the country. These selfless actions exemplify the values municipal utilities have. Mu-

nicipal utilities have extremely busy schedules, with many people relying on them, and yet they still find time to serve and help around the country. If teams had not been sent down to help, recovery would have taken much longer, and more lives could have been lost.

Furthermore, municipal utilities help stimulate local economies, whether it be through transfer payments to the city, the jobs they create, or competitive rates with other utilities.

The common good of their communities is always put first, and they ensure that the needs of the citizens are met. Municipal utilities strive to create utility rates that are affordable and accessible to everyone in their communities, which is usually made possible through boards made up of community members that work to enact reasonable rates and policies. Community involvement is vital for a functional society, and municipal utilities truly understand the relationship between their companies and community members.

Municipal utilities are at the heart of their local communities, and benefit all of us, whether we choose to recognize it or not. Visualize a society where a municipal utility did not exist: people would be forced to revert back to primitive methods of obtaining clean water, and utilizing electricity, heat, and gas would be nearly impossible. Thus, our daily lives become much easier with their help. Altogether, municipal utilities deserve recognition for making our lives easier, coming together to help during times of disaster, and benefiting their local economies by putting the people foremost to allow access for everyone.

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Truman:

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located next to the downtown-area power plant, as been replaced with a larger water tower on the other side of Hwy. 15. The wastewater treatment plant has been recently upgraded.

The city recently completed a big stormwater improvement project. The need was obvious; how to pay for it was another matter.

On September 22-23, 2010, remnants of a tropical storm

moved north, resulting in a wave of heavy thunderstorms. With the ground already saturated, 13 inches of rain fell in the Truman area over the course of a day and a half. Flooding affected most everybody in the city, with many basements flooded to the joists.

It was clear the city would need financial help to upgrade its stormwater infrastructure. Rohman was among those who offered legislative testimony, and Truman received a \$1.425 million grant from the state bonding



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The main downtown thoroughfare in Truman, pictured above, in May 2018. The Truman Public Utilities office is at the left in the photo, with the peaked roof. At right: Visitors to Truman traveling from the south on Minn. Hwy. 15 are greeted by this sign.



bill, which was administered through the Public Facilities Authority (PFA). The project was constructed in 2015 with the final touches being put into place in 2016.

Leaving the city infrastructure in good shape, he said, is his biggest accomplishment.

The utilities are overseen by the Truman Public Utilities Commission. Rohman is quite familiar with the utility, having worked closely with the Commission from 1989 to 2007. He helped update the business practices, including being involved with MMUA and development of the PowerManager Users Group (PMUG) utility software.

At the time, though it is hard to imagine now, computers were new to the business office. Truman was one of the first to use PowerManager. Rohman said he also enjoyed working with MMUA in the early stages of the software development, and with PMUG.

Carrying responsibilities for the city and utility, however, proved to be "too much," Rohman said, and those duties were divided.

One thing he sees coming with the new city administrator is the use of social media to communicate with younger

citizens. Trying to communicate with different age groups is "a challenge, and getting harder," he said. It used to be communication was handled through personal interaction, or the local newspaper. There are different ways to communicate now, and he feels that social media can be "a blessing and a curse."

The population of older citizens—stalwart Truman supporters—is migrating to Fairmont, where there are more senior housing options,

and shopping available. Losing those citizens has been a "surprising change," Rohman said. Pride in the community and dedication to its institutions is still evident, however, and it is up to the younger generations to carry that on.

Rohman will continue to do his part.

"I enjoyed my years here," he said, with good mayors and councils to work with. "Truman has been good to me."

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CMPAS:

continued from front page

in 2002. After reviewing and evaluating the options, 10 members signed a CMPAS-sponsored contract for base-load power from Omaha Public Power District's Nebraska City Unit 2 Coal Station (NC2).

Each participant holds contractual rights to specific amounts of power from NC2. CMPAS directly assigns cost to participants by their proportional, contractual obligation without impacting the electric rate structures of non-participating members.

Today, 11 employees provide consultative advice for power supply, transmission, energy market, and utility and community services.

Landmark transmission case

When CMPAS members began experiencing the tripling of transmission prices over a short time period prior to 2006, they turned to CMPAS to pinpoint the problem and find solutions that would mitigate cost. The ensuing long-term analyses found that, after historically representing less than 10 percent of a municipal utility's wholesale power costs, transmission prices could double by the year 2020 from the 2006 level.

In this context, CMPAS determined that municipal utilities could no longer be content to remain "renters" of the transmission system. Successfully building a coalition of public power partners, CMPAS embarked on a 3.9 percent investment in the

CAPX 2020 Project.

CMMPA needed to earn acceptance as a co-investor from incumbent transmission owners (TOs) and gain approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

CMMPA endured four different interventions by the other TOs as it sought a TO designation and the right to use financial cost-recovery mechanisms on the same basis as investor-owned utilities.

After a nine-year process, the FERC approved CMMPA for transmission ownership in what is considered precedent-setting regulatory filings for other public power utilities to follow.

The result of CMMPA's \$35 million transmission investment saves its members and affiliates at least \$52 million over the project's 30-year life. The 15 CMMPA participants in Minnesota and Iowa will realize \$27 million in savings. Moreover, the agency's proportional share of the investment provides \$25 million in recovery that reduces its overall operating costs by nearly \$1/MWh.

CMMPA received tremendous support from public power partners such as the Midwest Municipal Transmission Group and others including the Spiegel McDiarmid legal team, led by Robert Jablon. Transmission ownership remains a long-term hedging tool to protect public power customers.

Baseload contracts to solar subscriptions

"When an outsider looks at CMMPA members' individu-



Nate Zimmerman, left, of Janesville Municipal Utilities talked with Chris Kopel of CMPAS last summer at the dedication of the Lemond Solar Center, near Owatonna.

alized power supply portfolios, they will notice that they look very different from each other and that the combined portfolios look different today than they did 30 years ago," said Chris Kopel, Interim CEO and former CMPAS COO. "The Agency portfolio is 48 percent carbon free and well-positioned against natural gas and market price volatility as well as potential carbon risks."

When CMMPA\CMPPAS was designated as a MISO market participant in 2006, it started an ongoing portfolio diversification process.

Through upstream and downstream contracts arranged and managed by CMPAS, six CMMPA members sell community solar subscriptions to local solar billboards and the Lemond Community Solar Project near Owatonna. The Lemond Project is a source of great public power pride since it exists as a collaborative project between CMPAS and Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency.

Presently, CMMPA/CMPAS is concluding a 2020 Power Supply Coalition effort with the goal of lowering portfolio costs and mitigating long term risks. Long-term power supply contracts signed in 2017 means that approximately 75 percent of the utilities' portfolio costs will have long-term price certainty at favorable prices. The agency is working on a wind resource component as the final piece for the participants' long-term portfolio.

CMMPA/CMPAS is headquartered in Blue Earth and recently opened a satellite office in Eden Prairie.



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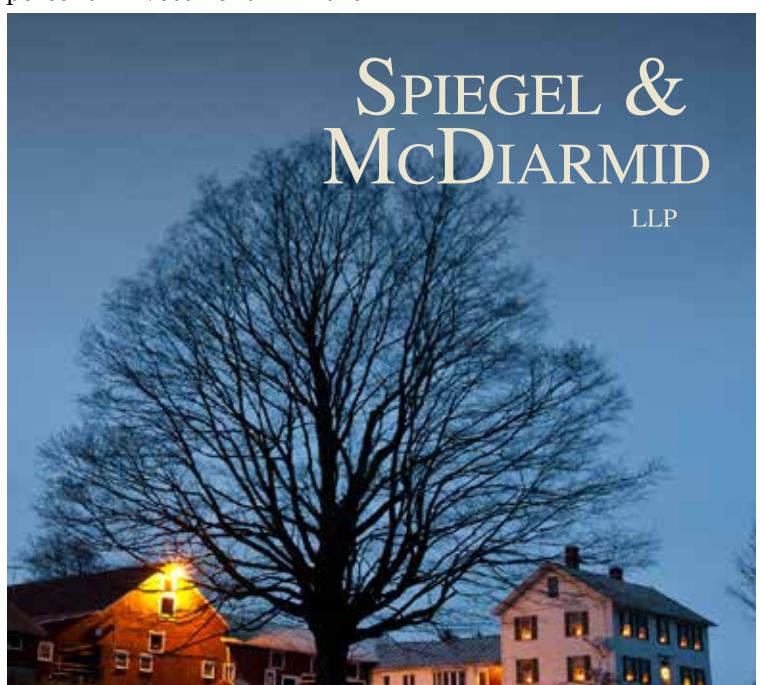


Through consultative collaboration, CMPAS provides individualized, strategic portfolio planning and procurement for members and affiliates to minimize power costs, manage risk, and maintain stable, competitive rates.

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With new class rotation in place, Underground School proves to be popular

Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association held its annual Underground School May 15-18, at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. Joining in the school were the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and American Public Power Association (APPA). Nearly 40 municipal utilities and one electric cooperative participated.

The Underground School offered a hands-on training

track with a variety of training sessions. A new offering—a multi-session class—proved very popular, with more than 60 people signing up for the class.

Multi-session classes included: Troubleshooting Issues on Secondary and Primary; Table-top Splicing and Terminations; Grounding and Use of Phasing Sticks; Equipment Operation; Understanding Current Safety



A class on splicing and terminations, led by Jim Stephens of 3M (in the white hard hat and blue shirt in the center of this picture) trained on performing the crucial task in real-world conditions.

Culture; Transformer Connections and Rotation.

Students rotated through six different two-hour trainings. This allowed all participants to take advantage of all hands-on training sessions, learn about a variety of topics and hone practical skills for

efficiency and safety.

The school also offered an advanced technical course on project management and underground distribution design. The Advanced class, while smaller in terms of numbers, was also very well received by participants who

especially appreciated the open dialogue among utilities.

The school started the afternoon of May 15 with a general session by Todd Heitkamp of the National Weather-

Underground: See facing page



The Competent Person and Excavation Safety Workshop, like many training events, was assisted with the provision of equipment by associate members.

'Competent people' come out of MMUA excavation school

MMUA held its Competent Person and Excavation Safety Workshop May 22-23 at the MMUA Training Center

in Marshall.

More than 50 personnel from 20 utilities, a rural water district and an excavation

contracting company participated in the one and a half day workshop.

Our primary instructors were Andy Smoka, former Minnesota OSHA principal safety consultant and Bill McClaflin from United Rentals Trench Safety. They shared their expertise and offered valuable insight on the subject. Estelle Hickman, Gopher State One Call and Joseph Hauger, MnOPS also presented.

Having a 'competent person,' as defined by OSHA, is crucial for any entity performing underground work.

Digging around natural gas and high voltage power lines is a very critical process and needs to be done with extreme care. This workshop taught the basics of OSHA's excavation standards.

Students learned the proper techniques when digging around obstacles.

This workshop included classroom and hands-on instruction/demonstration to ensure participants obtained the designation of a 'Competent Person.'

Thank you to our instructors, presenters and also to United Rentals, RDO Equipment and Titan Machinery for providing equipment for this workshop!



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Michael Berg of RDO Equipment (yellow hard hat) and Lance Messner of Glen-coe talked shop at the equipment operation station.



Javier Ruiz Leiva of Megger instructed participants in the Troubleshooting Issues class.

Underground:

continued from facing page

er Service on SKYWARN, which educated individuals on typical weather threats in this region, and the safe response to each.

The school ended the morning of Friday, May 18 with a general session presentation by one of our own—Keven Maxa of Austin Utilities. An underground utilities expert, Maxa shared his expertise on the Gopher State One Call process and guidelines, including planning for excavation, color coding, excavation safety, locating and more.

Thanks everybody!

Special thanks to our instructors and the utilities/companies that supported their participation: Joe Moore, Moorhead Public Service; Todd Keach, Rochester Public Utilities; Steve Tiegs and Jeff Martinson, Austin Utilities; Miles Heide and Mike Heckman, Fairmont Public Utilities; Scott Deitz and Josh Waldorf, ALP Utilities; Brian Lotto, MC Sales; Javier Ruiz Leiva, Megger; Jim Stephens, 3M; Kevin Kollas, Ditch Witch of Minnesota and Iowa; Michael Berg, Pat Arnold and Mark Rieckhoff, RDO Equipment Co.; Marc Machacek, MMUA.

Thanks also to our pizza reception sponsors: 3M and RDO Equipment Co.

The many utilities and companies that provided equipment for this school, including: MC Sales; Megger; Ditch Witch of Minnesota and Iowa; RDO Equipment Co.; Irby/HD Electric.

Thanks all, we couldn't have done it without you!

Correction

The *Resource* last month incorrectly identified Brad Carlson, a Shakopee Public Utilities contestant in the National Lineworkers Rodeo. MMUA regrets the error.



Miles Heide (pointing) and Mike Heckman (holding chart) were instructors of the Transformer Connections and Rotation class, one of six rotating classes offered at the MMUA Underground School. A deep pool of talented, experienced municipal electrical lineworkers provides valuable trainers for MMUA schools. Coupled with strong associate member and vendor support, MMUA offers unbeatable training opportunities.



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ALP Utilities names Cash new G.M.

Ted Cash has been named as the General Manager at ALP Utilities. Cash joins ALP with more than 26 years in the energy and natural resources industry, serving most recently as Vice President of Human Resources, Administration and Business Services at Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, N.D.

A native of Climax, Minn., Cash grew up in Bismarck and received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Mary. Cash began his career in corporate communication for MDU Resources Group Inc.

Following his work at MDU, Cash started in creative services at Basin Electric, the largest generation and transmission electric cooperative in the nation. Cash eventu-

ally managed the department and served as a national director for Touchstone Energy before being promoted to Vice President.

As a VP, Cash oversaw a number of departments, focusing on human resources, strategic business development, and community outreach. In addition to his work, Cash was the co-founder for Brave the Shave, a regional non-profit raising funds for childhood cancer research, and also served as United Way president and trustee.

"ALP Utilities has a long history of being a reputable public power provider who goes above and beyond for their community. I am very excited to be able to finish out my career with such a well-established organization



Ted Cash

and its excellent employees. I look forward to building a culture of servant leadership and employee empowerment while expanding even further the incredible legacy that has been built," stated Cash.

Cash has a wife, Emily, and a nine-year-old son. The family is in the process of making their new home in Alexandria.

Boston named RPU Director of Customer Relations

ROCHESTER, MN—Krista Boston has been named Director of Customer Relations at RPU. She joins RPU with 25 years of experience, focusing on services and leadership in designing innovative services for Minnesota citizens in partnership with counties, cities, nonprofits and providers of health and human services.

Boston has a law degree and maintains voluntary non-practice status. Through her work at the state and in collaboration with many local partners, her career has focused on seeking ways to build service delivery models that help people get access to information to make important decisions, as well as get support and advocacy through a variety of means.

Peppin's background includes serving as Vice President of Public Relations at US Bancorp. She has held numerous positions of leadership in national organizations. Jenny Glumack will continue as MREA's Manager of Legislative Affairs.

Jenny Glumack will continue as MREA's Manager of Legislative Affairs.



Krista Boston

Director of Consumer Assistance Programs for the Minnesota Board on Aging and through that, and other roles, led visible projects over the years that included services redesign efforts for the elderly, children, people in crisis and veterans. Boston is also an adjunct faculty at Metropolitan State University teaching instructional design and staff development.

RPU provides high-quality and reliable electricity to over 50,000 customers. RPU continually investigates innovative technologies to help customers realize the best value from the services they receive. Current initiatives include photovoltaic offerings, wind energy, energy and water efficient equipment, and electric vehicle charging.

MREA adds former state House majority leader to its team

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) is pleased to welcome Joyce Peppin as Director of Government Affairs & General Counsel. The MREA is a statewide association representing the state's 51 rural electric cooperatives, which bring reliable electric service

to 85 percent of Minnesota's land mass, and about a third of its population.

After 14 years representing district 34A in the Minnesota House of Representatives, Peppin, Majority Leader in the Minnesota House of Representatives, has resigned from her seat to focus on this

position.

Peppin's background includes serving as Vice President of Public Relations at US Bancorp. She has held numerous positions of leadership in national organizations.

Jenny Glumack will continue as MREA's Manager of Legislative Affairs.

Jenny Glumack will continue as MREA's Manager of Legislative Affairs.

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MMUA partners with Department of Labor and Industry to study silica dust

by Mark Hottel

Regional Safety Coordinator

A recently rewritten OSHA standard concerning “respirable crystalline silica” has the potential to affect municipal utilities and public works departments across the state. The new federal standard for general industry operations becomes enforceable in Minnesota on June 23, 2018. The new construction standard (1926.1153) went into effect state-wide on September 23, 2017. Since most of our operations fall under the definitions used for general industry work, the 1910.1053 standard has our closest attention.

Silica dust has a long history of causing illness and fatalities in occupational settings, particularly in areas of mining, construction, masonry and so forth. A West Virginia tunneling project near the start of the Great Depression has been called by some authors, “The worst industrial disaster in American history.” The Hawks Nest Tunnel was constructed for a hydroelectric power plant. Hundreds of laborers died during the project or shortly afterwards. The exact number was never



Mark Hottel

pinned down because many workers got sick and went home to eventually die in various parts of the country. The highest estimates of death go above 1,000 for this project. Public works and utility employees aren’t blasting tunnels but instead are performing other tasks that can generate very fine “respirable” silica dust. We know this can happen when we drill, break, saw, grind or otherwise disturb concrete and blacktop. Tool manufacturers and safety suppliers have marketed devices to help control the amount of dust that becomes airborne in common tasks. We also think that there may

be numerous other tasks that could produce high silica dust levels. One of our objectives is to determine what levels exist for those tasks. Indeed, the new standard requires that employers make those determinations.

Alternately, if an employer can document the existence of applicable “objective data” for their operations then they don’t need to spend the time and money to collect their own data. The MMUA is collaborating with Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Workplace Safety Consultation to establish “objective data” for use by cities and utilities in their efforts to comply with the rules and protect employee health. An Alliance has been formed to provide for scientific sampling and analysis of real-life activities in the most efficient manner. Participating members will coordinate the timing and the tasks to match up with a visit by an industrial hygienist, (a scientist or technician specializing in occupational health, instrumentation, and methods).

This Alliance has the possibility of working for two or three years to be able to find initial results and later revised results when changes are implemented. Modifications might take the form of engineering improvements or what OSHA calls “work practices” changes. As a last resort, respirators would need to be used for exposures that could not be reduced sufficiently. We plan to make data available as soon as practical to help members understand what they need to address and how to comply. The first testing won’t begin until after the June 23 start date, but there are things that can be done locally right away.

For starters, training could be done for workers with any potential exposure. It would fit well in the “Employee Right to Know – HazCom” niche. Supervisors and others can look at the tasks that involve creating concrete or aggregate dust and do whatever you can to eliminate the dust, contain it, or disperse it away from the breathing zone. Talk to your safety person(s) in your organization. Get ideas to lower dust levels and to see how you might fit in to the compliance picture. Look at what is labeled “Table 1.” in the construction standard, (1926.1153). There are 18 tasks listed with guidelines on how to deal with everything from heavy equipment operation to sawing concrete to hand drilling. In

short, learn as much as you need about this centuries-old “emerging” topic. Respirable crystalline silica dust is on OSHA’s short list of National Emphasis Programs so we’ll expect to hear a lot more about it during programmed inspections as well as spontaneous inspections spurred by an investigator noticing a dust cloud while driving by.

At this stage, the MMUA Safety Team is assembling a list of equipment and tasks to study for future testing. On that list are items like crack-filling, street sweeping, ballfield dragging, skidsteer

attachments including: angle brooms, milling, hydraulic concrete breakers and more. Items on Table 1. could make the list if alternative work practices need to be analyzed. We will sort through the list and set priorities for sampling. After that happens we will look for members who can work with us to arrange the testing.

We are looking forward to collaborating with “MnOSHA Consultation” to protect employee health for municipalities, utilities, and others doing similar work!



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Associate

Member News

MMUA has two new Associate Members: eLogger Inc., and Renewable World Energies

Renewable World Energies owns and operates 21 hydroelectric facilities in the Midwest, generating 100,000,000 kWh per year. Facilities are located in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa.

The company is located at 1001 Stephenson St., Norway, MI 49870. Phone is 906-396-3000 and fax is 906-563-9344.

Primary contact is Thomas Berutti, president and CEO. His email address is tom@rwehydro.com

eLogger Inc., has electronic logbook software to replace paper log books and disconnect systems—collecting, storing and distributing real-time data about your operations to those who need to know. In use by hundreds of facilities worldwide, eLogger contributed to the safety, compliance, efficiency and best business practices of organizations in dozens of industries.

The company is located at 24 N. 8th St., Cloquet, MN 55720. Phone is 218-878-2015 or toll-free at 855-579-6277. Fax is 218-878-2019.

Primary contact is BJ Lingren, president. Direct line is 218-878-2015 and email is bjlingren@elogger.com

Bits & Pieces

Great River Energy (GRE) made news June 6 at its annual meeting, when it pledged to supply its members with 50 percent renewable energy by 2030.

CEO David Saggau said renewables, particularly wind, is the generation and transmission cooperative's lowest-cost option for new generation resources.

The Maple Grove-based power supplier has 28 member cooperatives.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said May 7 that the total amount of new electric generating capacity expected in 2018 is 32 gigawatts (GW), which is greater than the capacity additions of any other year in the past decade and more than a 50 percent increase over 2017.

continued on facing page:

New renewable capacity in 2018 is expected to be approximately 11.5 GW, the same amount of renewable capacity added in 2017. For the first time in five years, new renewable capacity is expected to comprise less than half of the total annual new generation capacity.

The U.S. Dept. of Justice April 13 stated that Minnesota's right of first refusal (ROFR) law discriminates against and unduly burdens interstate commerce in violation of the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Minnesota's ROFR law, enacted in 2012, provides in-state utilities with "the right to construct, own, and maintain an electric transmission line that has been approved for construction" by a FERC-regulated transmission planning process.

The plaintiff in the case, LSP Transmission Holdings, charged that Minnesota created its ROFR "to protect its incumbent utilities from being required to compete with out-of-state-developers."

The case (LSP Transmission Holdings, LLC, v. Nancy Lange, et al.,) is being heard in Minnesota District Court.

LSP was a bidder on the proposed Huntley-Wilmarth project, which will connect Xcel and ITC substations. The project is under review by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

Informational meetings on the project, which has been in the works since 2009, were held in April in the Mankato area. The project is needed, said Xcel, to bring more windpower to market.

Xcel Energy has dropped its MMUA Associate Membership.

A couple decades ago, many municipal utilities had "Partners in Power" plaques on their office walls. And municipal utilities and NSP really were partners, as NSP was an active wholesale power supplier.

NSP was active at MMUA meetings, often providing speakers and hosting well-attended hospitality rooms.

The wholesale electric market changed. And NSP was involved in a merger, leading to the creation of Xcel Energy.

Patterns in electric wholesale markets are expected to change as renewable energy reaches the 40 percent level, with electricity prices dropping, volatility increasing and peak periods occurring later in the day, according to a report released May 16 by the Lawrence Berkeley

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National Laboratory (LBNL).

"The most fundamental changes relate to the timing of when electricity is cheap or expensive and the degree of regularity in those patterns," said the report, Impacts of High Variable Renewable Energy Futures on Wholesale Electricity Prices, and on Electric-Sector Decision Making.

By 2030, the renewable additions lower wholesale power prices by 15 percent to 39 percent, depending on the scenario and region, according to the report. The LBNL researchers expect average ancillary service prices to jump by \$15/Megawatt-House (MWh) to \$38/MWh with higher renewable penetration.

"Stronger price variability and irregularity will favor flexible resources that can start and stop frequently and on short notice, including storage," the report said. Reciprocating engines may be more appealing than combined-cycle power plants because wind and solar require increased flexibility while the provision of ancillary services will be more important.



Left to right: Mike Willets, Kenny Steffens, Todd McMichael, Duane Steffens, Dave Lundberg.

Public Power Walleye Fishing Tournament raises funds for schools

A total of 21 boats took part in this annual fund-raising event held June 2 on Rush Lake, Ottertail. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the three lineworker training programs in Minnesota

pulled in by Joe Ecklund from Key Contracting.

Thank you to the sponsors: Bell Lumber & Pole Co., RESCO, Beltrami Electric Co-op, Lake Region Electric Co-op, Todd-Wadena Electric Co-op, Minnesota Valley Electric Co-op, Osmose, Amaril, Asplundh and Highline Construction.

The first place team included Kenny Steffens and Duane Steffens. Kenny Steffens is employed by Lake Region Electric Cooperative. The largest walleye, measuring 24 and ¾ inches, was

portunity to partner with Todd McMichael, Primus Marketing, and look forward to continuing this partnership.

For a full and complete list of current job openings, for sale and wanted items, see the News/Classifieds section at www.mmua.org

MMUA invites members to Annual Summer Conference; the 87th annual gathering of municipal utility people

The tradition of municipal utility people gathering together continues Aug. 20-22 with MMUA's Annual Summer Conference at Arrowwood Resort near Alexandria. We encourage you to participate in this tradition which has spanned 87 years!

The official start of the meeting is a welcome reception and dinner the evening of Monday, Aug. 20. The afternoon includes a golf tournament and group bike ride.

MMUA President John Crooks welcomes those assembled the morning of Aug. 21, and keynote speaker Jay

Gubrud will rev up the group with a talk on Shifting Gears and Changing Lanes.

Following a break, RPU General Manager Mark Kotschevar and Jared Echternach of Beltrami Electric Cooperative will inform the members on joint cooperative-municipal talks regarding A New Vision for CIP (the state-mandated Conservation Improvement Program).

MMUA Washington Rep Michael Nolan follows with his take on The Washington Scene.

Following lunch, the meeting breaks into two tracks.

The management track will feature:

- Looking Ahead – Large Scale Solar with Storage, Mike Fosse, Dakota Electric;
- Electric Vehicles (EVs): Opportunity Now or Later?, charging station industry vendor and Tom Sagstetter, Elk River Municipal Utilities;
- Municipals Helping Municipalities, a panel featuring MMUA Regular and Affiliate members.

The other track is designed for policymakers, and follows from last year's successful offering. John Miner of Collaborative Learning returns to lead this group learning and discussion on Board Policies that Work.

The Trade Show, Reception and Banquet & Awards wrap-up the day.

MMUA Business Meeting is the first order of Wednesday.

Patricia Keane, APPA, will update the group on progress of the Minnesota Public Power Forward Partnership. In a topic crucial in today's utility world, Dave Berg, Dave Berg Consulting, will discuss Getting Rates Ready for Competition—A Guide for Policymakers.

The re-examination of a solid basis for the value of electric service areas has been under some study, and Mark Fritsch of Owatonna Public Utilities will discuss the most recent analysis of this topic.

Kent Sulem and Bill Black of MMUA and Doug Carnival, of the McGrann Shea et al. law firm will review State Legislative Developments. Jack Kegel, Bob Jagusch, Mike Willets of the MMUA staff will talk about recent developments at MMUA.

Keynote speaker promises to energize, educate and entertain!

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

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

Finding the four steps to highly effective conflict, change can be a rocky road

• Breaking out of old roles, habits and assumptions

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

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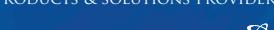
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