

Breaking the mold

Sauk Centre's Boyer first female to lead the utility in its more than 100-year history

by Steve Downer

Debbie Boyer is the new General Manager of Sauk Centre Public Utilities.

She was born and raised in Sauk Centre. Her father started a prominent Main Street business, which remains in the family today.

She started at the utility, as a billing clerk, 30 years ago this August. She was 20 years old. Boyer became familiar with various aspects of the operation, was a diligent and good co-worker, and several years ago was promoted to office manager.

That progression followed in the footsteps of former superintendent Marty Sunderman, who also was billing clerk, then office manager and general manager.

That progression of being led by people with a financial background started prior to Sunderman with Bob Essler, a local banker and commissioner who brought a strong financial background into the manager's



Sauk Centre Public Utilities celebrated its centennial last year. Debbie Boyer, a Sauk Centre native, is the utility's first female superintendent.

Boyer: see next page please

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photo by Steve Downer

Present at the organizational meeting of the Northeast Minnesota Municipal Power Agency were, from left to right, seated: Scott Magnuson of Brainerd, Greg French of Virginia, Scott Hautala of Hibbing and Craig Wainio of Mountain Iron. Standing, left to right: Sam Lautigar of Gil-

bert, Susan Thronson of Keewatin, Bob Otremba, Mayor Dave Fischer and councilmember Don Bujaski of Pierz, Dave Cluff of Aitkin, Todd Wicklund of Brainerd, Julie Kennedy of Grand Rapids, Harold Langowski of Ely, Carol Lind and Char Jones of Proctor and Jeff Marwick of Virginia.

NEMMPA elects board at organizational meeting Securing favorable wholesale power supply to be agency's first order of business

The Northeast Minnesota Municipal Power Agency elected officers during an organizational meeting Monday, May 6 at Grand Rapids Public Utilities.

Greg French, Virginia Department of Public Utilities general manager (and MMUA president), was elected chair of the board. Scott Magnuson, superintendent of Brainerd Public Utilities, was elected vice-chair. Scott Hautala, general manager of Hibbing Public Utility, was elected secretary/treasurer.

Also elected to the board were Aitkin Public Utilities General Manager Dave Cluff, City of Ely

Clerk Treasurer Harold Langowski, Grand Rapids Public Utilities General Manager Julie Kennedy and City of Two Harbors Administrator Dan Walker.

Proctor, Mountain Iron, Gilbert, Pierz, Nashwauk, Buhl, Biwabik, Keewatin and Randall are also agency members. Agency representatives and alternate representatives have been selected.

The agency, with its registered office in Hibbing, is meeting again after several years of inactivity. Its members are predominately wholesale customers of Minnesota Power (MP). With contracts generally expiring in 2024, the main

order of business will be securing a favorable future wholesale power supply agreement. (Brainerd becomes a wholesale customer of AEP on July 1; the Grand Rapids contract is of longer term.)

The four largest agency members—Brainerd, Grand Rapids, Hibbing and Virginia—will have permanent board seats.

With MP reportedly having made repeated buyout offers to a number of NEMMPA members, the agency's business promises to be urgent and of crucial significance to its members and Public Power in Minnesota.

Power agency outlines tools to help Truman

by Jack Kegel

On May 6 management of Heartland Consumers Power District, Truman's incumbent power supplier, met with the Truman City Council and Truman Public Utilities Commission to tell Heartland's story and describe what Heartland can do for Truman.

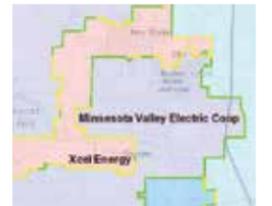
Representing Heartland at the meeting were Mike Malone, Chief Financial Officer; Nate Jones, Chief Operations Officer; Casey Crabtree, Director of Economic Development & Governmental Affairs; and Kelly Dybdahl, Customer Relations Manager.

Malone began the presentation with background on Heartland, which is a public corporation and political subdivision of the state of South Dakota. Heartland was formed in 1969 under

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position. Prior to that, Sauk Centre, like many municipal utilities, put a premium on technical proficiency for its top management.

Boyer works closely with Electric Supervisor Shannon Ellering, who has been with the utility 13 years. Ellering, a journeyman lineman, oversees three other linemen. Counting Boyer, there are also four people in the office. There are also four positions in the water/wastewater departments, overseen by Supervisor Glenn Bauer.

With Boyer's promotion the office manager and general manager positions have been combined.

"The days are full," she said. "It has been a good experience."

Like many municipal utilities, Sauk Centre has a fine sense of its more than 100-year history. The Commission meeting room includes pictures of nearly all of its superintendents/general managers and commissioners. You don't have to be an astute observer to note that the utility leadership has been dominated by men (one woman—commissioner Karen Tank—appears).

Boyer acknowledged that



Sauk Centre Public Utilities is located north of I-94 on U.S. Hwy. 71, which is the city Main Street. Across the road is a city park and the south end of Sauk Lake. To the north flows the Sauk River.

her serving as general manager is something different and "a new challenge."

It is also exciting and presents a great opportunity for the other female employees. All employees see that there is a path to the top of the organization, if they choose to pursue it. Boyer is encouraging all her employees to learn as much as they can, because there is no limit on the advancement of any employee at the utility.

Boyer admits to some trepidation, as she becomes familiar with all aspects of the

utility's operation, including its vital wholesale power arrangements and state and federal political involvement. She is encouraged by good working relationships within the utility and with its partners. It is also clear that Sauk Centre Public Utilities stands to be well-served by another dedicated, intelligent person with a deep commitment to the utility and her community.

Partners important to utility

The utility has an allocation of federal hydropower from the Western Area Power Administration, supplemented by Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). MRES supplies conservation and energy efficiency programs, and also worked closely with its members three years ago in launching automated metering infrastructure (AMI). The AMI system is up and running. Additional hardware is being added to better enable water meter reading.

Sauk Centre is a statutory city and the utility is governed by an autonomous commission. Utility and city

crews work back and forth, however, and that cooperation extends to neighboring cities as well. During an early April visit, utility crews were helping the street department remove trees, following the discovery of an infestation of emerald ash borer.

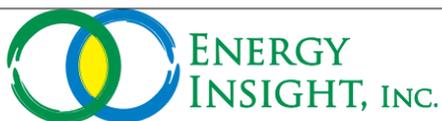
It's a serious situation. Two City of Melrose employees brought a wood chipper 10 miles up I-94 and worked on clearing diseased trees with the Sauk Centre crews.

Municipal electric crews also helped the city street department late this winter and early spring, moving snow.

The street department helps the utility as well, Boyer noted, and if the Sauk Centre electric crews need help Melrose Public Utilities comes over to assist, "which is huge."

This year is busy with completing a new water and wastewater project on the north end of town.

The utility and city are preparing for a big project six years from now: the rebuilding of Hwy. 71, which doubles as the original Main Street through the city.



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Help is on the way

Deep new pool of talent promises to help municipal utilities at their time of greatest stress

Anybody reading recent editions of this newsletter will note that this is a stressful time for many municipal electric utilities.

But there is help on the way.

Though the thought has occurred from time to time, this publication has never done what it does this month – acknowledge that a certain person is the first female manager in a utility's history.

There are a number of reasons for that.

The most prominent is that, when you consider the number of female city clerks or city administrators in Minnesota, and that many of these top city staff people also double as utility managers, it is often hard to distinguish when a utility gets its first female manager.

It is also true that municipal utilities have traditionally valued, for their top management, a technical and operational understanding of the local electrical system. The lineworker's trade (and the job is still often classified as 'lineman') has been dominated by men, and nobody knows the local electrical system better than a local line crew. Because of this reality, it has been natural for the ranks of municipal utility superintendents to be filled with men.

Much of this comes from the municipal dedication to reliable service—there is nothing worse than a power outage when you live and work in a city and your job is to provide electric service. It is generally taken as a personal affront when the lights go out. When it happens, you had better be able to figure it out, fix it, explain what happened, and take the proper steps to keep it from happening again.

MP service extension tariff increase approved

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission May 2 approved changes to Minnesota Power service extension tariffs, including increases in:

- the amount used to calculate single phase line extensions of 1,000 feet or less from \$17 per foot to \$20 per foot;
- the service extension allowance for the Residential class from \$668 to \$770;
- the General Service/Municipal Pumping three-phase service extension allowance to \$3,100.

The Commission directed the company to: Maintain the \$1,000 General Service/Municipal Pumping single-phase service extension allowance.



A visitor to a municipal utility is generally greeted by friendly office staff. The Sauk Centre Public Utilities office staff includes, from left to right: Stacy Groetsch, Debbie Boyer, Deb Metcalf and Jennie Frank.

Smaller to average-sized municipals, managed by superintendents, are often managed by former linemen. Part of this also has to do with the fact that the manager is at least occasionally in the field, performing or overseeing line-work or other technical tasks.

Larger, more complex utilities, were, and often are, led by people with engineering degrees.

Demographics and social

issues may be playing a role in the gradual changeover in municipal utility leadership. Anybody taking a look at the cities served by municipal utilities will often note the dismal fact of population loss over the decades.

Couple that with the fact that many young people are increasingly caught up in a digital world. It is heard too often to totally discount that many well-paying lines

of work, exposed to the elements and occasionally calling for some level of physical strength and personal discomfort, often go begging for willing workers.

Others sound the alarm over a trend of lagging commitment to community organizations. Making the decline in population worse, there are also increasing numbers of men who are failing to stand up and do what is right and necessary to build, care for, protect or perpetuate vital institutions.

A visitor to municipal utility offices over several decades has noted that, in many locations, male managers have come and gone while a solid cadre of office workers has steadily toiled away in the background. To deny that these people, generally women, have played a central role in the day-to-day workings of the utility and its continued financial health would be to deny reality.

It is apparent that there is a ready supply of dedicated, potential managerial talent already at work.

Fewer municipal electric utilities field their own line crews, reducing the available pool of, typically male, potential managers.

It is also well-established that more women than men are earning college degrees, better educating them for positions of higher leadership. It is a notable and encouraging fact that many of those enrolled in the MMUA Leadership Academy are women.

All these factors combine for a clear call, going out to those looking for good public service careers in Greater Minnesota. That many of these jobs are now being filled by women is good for them, good for their organizations and communities, and good for the continued and future viability of Public Power in Minnesota.

- the editor

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Around the State



The New Ulm Public Utilities Commission named Kris Manderfeld its new utilities director, at a special meeting May 13. Manderfeld was previously assistant finance director. In February, she was named interim utilities director.

Keith Butcher is the new general manager of Princeton Public Utilities (PPU). Butcher was formerly a Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) energy services representative. He replaced Connie Wangen, who recently retired after 33 years with utility, effective May 29.

SMMPA generates and sells wholesale electricity to 18 Minnesota municipally-owned utilities, including PPU.

Butcher joined SMMPA in 2007. He oversaw energy efficiency programs in six SMMPA member communities, including Princeton. Prior to joining SMMPA,



Pictured at a 2014 Public Power Week open house in Princeton were, from left to right: Tom Otto, Jon Brooks and Connie Wangen of Princeton Public Utilities, and Keith Butcher of SMMPA. Wangen has retired as PPU general manager, and Butcher has been named to the position.

Butcher served as external affairs manager for the Center for Energy and Environment. Butcher has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Minnesota and a master's degree in science and technology policy (with a concentration on energy policy) from the U of M's

Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

Seven municipal lineworkers recently graduated from Northwest Lineman College. They are Dillon Sprague of Austin Utilities, Troy Green of Breckenridge Public Utilities, Madison Allen and Kyle Morris of Waseca Utilities,

Jared Rolstad of Elk River Municipal Utilities, Scott Schneider of New Ulm Public Utilities and Justin Gifferson of Lake Crystal Utilities.

The East Itasca Joint Sewer Board, comprised of the cities of Keewatin and Nashwauk and Lone Pine Township, has received an \$850,000 Minnesota Public Facilities Authority grant.

Engineering and design is underway. Upcoming projects planned include replacement of Keewatin's wastewater collection/life station. Nashwauk's wastewater treatment plant will be upgraded to enhance phosphorus removal and filtration. The township will eventually be hooked up to the system, which will include a new wastewater holding pond.

If all goes as planned, construction could begin in spring of 2020.

Among the municipal power plants that surged into action during April's severe winter weather was that operated by Truman Public Utilities. The city's transmission feed was inter-

rupted at 8 p.m. on April 10. The municipal plant restored power to the city within an hour, while surrounding areas were dark, some for an extended period.

The Truman city council May 20 voted to put a question before the voters in an August referendum regarding the abolition of the local public utilities commission.

The Rochester Public Utility Board was presented with rate structure survey results at the April Board meeting. The purpose of the survey was to identify customer views and preferences with regards to the residential rate structure, energy conservation, knowledge and perception of electrification, preferred methods of communication, overall expectations of RPU, and overall satisfaction with RPU's electric service.

The survey found that:

- Three quarters of RPU ratepayers consider the environmental impacts of their daily electric usage.
 - Slightly more than half are willing to pay more for clean energy.
 - 74 percent would be willing to change their consumption habits if they would pay 20 percent less for energy.
 - Close to half of ratepayers would welcome information on energy usage with most preferring direct mail – however, interest in emailed information is on the rise.
 - Two thirds of customers would allow their air conditioner to be interrupted for 15 minutes an hour on “peak usage days” but most – over 63 percent – were not willing to have RPU manage their smart home devices to achieve the same goal.
- Overall ratepayers are satisfied with RPU (91.2 percent).

Lanesboro and St. Charles will soon be buying energy from a locally-sited solar electric plant.

The developer owns 10 projects in cities including Lanesboro and St. Charles in Minnesota, Forest City, Iowa, and seven cities in Wisconsin. Energy produced from the developer's portfolio will be sold to Upper Midwest Municipal Energy Group (UMMEG), which is a joint action agency that represents electricity providers in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin.

Austin Utilities (AU) was named a 2019 Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota by Workforce Development Inc. It is the second year in a row AU has been so honored.



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Xcel Energy announced in mid-May that it would seek to extend the life of its Monticello nuclear plant until 2040, while closing the coal-fired Sherco 3 in 2030, 10 years ahead of schedule.

Xcel operates and owns 59 percent of Sherco 3, with the remainder owned by the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency. Xcel and the agency have been in discussions on the matter.

The moves are part of Xcel's goal of providing carbon-free energy by 2050.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission May 14 approved contracts between Google and Xcel Energy for electric supply to a proposed data center in Becker. The project was proposed, in part, to soften the economic blow in Becker and Sherburne County of Xcel's closure of Sherco 1 and 2—two older, smaller coal-fired power plants—in the mid 2020s.

Google would become one of Xcel's five largest customers in Minnesota. The project will be located adjacent to the Sherco power plant. Energy will reportedly be supplied via wind power plants.

Bits & Pieces



Gov. Tim Walz in April appointed Valerie Means to an open seat on the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Commissioner Katie Sieben was appointed to the role of chairperson.

In a report released by the Energy Futures Initiative and National Association of State Energy Officials, 76 percent of natural gas utilities reported difficulty in hiring qualified people, with 32 percent reporting that hiring was very difficult.

Lack of experience, training or technical skills was cited over 46 percent of the time. Insufficient non-technical skills were cited over 22 percent of the time and insufficient qualifications nearly 17 percent.

A California state agency has found that the catastrophic Camp Fire in November 2018 was caused by electrical transmission lines owned by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E).

PG&E, the state's largest electric utility, filed for

bankruptcy protection in late January after being hit with a flood of lawsuits from devastating wildfires in Northern California in 2017 and 2018, including the Camp Fire in Butte County.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) on May 8 said that in all of the scenarios studied for its final summer seasonal assessment of resource adequacy (SARA), the grid operator has identified a potential need to enter Energy Emergency Alert status in order to maintain system reliability.

The updated Capacity, Demand and Reserves (CDR) report calculates higher planning reserve margins between 2020 and 2023, primarily due to an increased number of potential wind and solar projects that are currently in the interconnection queue and eligible to be included in the CDR.

Since the December 2018 CDR, approximately 733 MW of installed wind and solar capacity has been approved by ERCOT for commercial operations, with summer peak capacity contributions of 333 MW. Twenty-two distributed generation solar units totaling 143 MW were

also added to the report and have a combined capacity contribution of 106 MW.

ERCOT said that the CDR and SARA reports reflect the anticipated resource capacity available to meet the forecasted summer peak

demand. The anticipated capacity "may differ from what will actually be available based on system conditions and the operational status of the resources," it said in a news release.

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FirstLine Supervision boasts another group of graduates

Fourteen municipal utility or city personnel recently completed the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association FirstLine Supervision course through Central Lakes College (CLC). They are:

- Jeff Martinson, Austin
- Joyce Klepperich, Chaska

- Andy DeBlicek and Scott Sonnenberg, Detroit Lakes
- Jeremy King, East Grand Forks
- Tom Sagstetter, Chris Sumstad and Mike Tietz, Elk River
- Jerod Wagner, Lanesboro
- Joel Lingenfelter, Staples
- Ryan Hoffmann, Scott Os-

borne and Larry Pelzel, New Ulm

- Brad Lueders, Watertown, South Dakota.

Over 350 municipal employees have completed the leadership series, which is offered at CLC's Brainerd campus and MMUA headquarters in Plymouth.

The utility management program has graduates in many MMUA member cities. The program is a cooperative effort, between MMUA and the CLC Business and Industry Center, designed to provide the leadership skills needed today. The 68-hour course is offered in four three-day sessions over two years. Participants work with and learn from each other, trained facilitators and instructors, internationally recognized AchieveForum leadership materials and specially created units with a utility focus.

Public works directors, finance and office managers, customer service personnel, utility superintendents, crew supervisors, and other employees have benefited from this highly interactive program that emphasizes core leadership skills, performance management, communication, and handling challenging situations.



Graduating recently from a group meeting in Brainerd were, from left to right: Andy DeBlicek, Scott Sonnenberg, Joel Lingenfelter.



Graduating in April were, from left to right: Larry Pelzel, Jerod Wagner, Joyce Klepperich, Mike Tietz, Ryan Hoffmann.



Graduates from Plymouth in February were, from left to right: Scott Osborne, Jeremy King, Chris Sumstad, Tom Sagstetter, Jeff Martinson, Brad Lueders.



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Truman:

continued from front page

South Dakota's Consumers Power District Law to provide supplemental power above Western Area Power Administration allocations.

Heartland provides wholesale electric service to 19 municipal electric systems in South Dakota, six in Minnesota, three in Iowa and one each in Nebraska and Kansas. Heartland also serves 6 state institutions in South Dakota and a joint action agency in Iowa.

As a public body, Heartland is governed by a publicly elected board of directors. Board meetings are held once per month and open to the public as the agency is subject to South Dakota's open meeting laws. Heartland's Customer Connections Committee provides wholesale customer perspective and feedback to Heartland's staff and board of directors.

Crabtree provided an overview of Heartland's array of economic development programs.

The Growth Incentive program provides up-front money for new hires and rebates on electric power bills equating one year of free power over a three-year period to new and expanding businesses. More than \$1.3 million in incentives has been awarded under this program to 120 participating businesses.

The Heartland Economic Development Loan Program Fund, or HELP Fund, has provided more than \$6.5 million in loans for infrastructure improvements, regional preparations for growth, and investments in new business. In 2018 the fund made \$2.98 million in loans to eight recipients, resulting in more than \$10 million in total investments, 175 jobs created or saved, and 3,467 in MWh in new or expanding energy in Heartland customer cities.

Heartland also offers economic development grants to the communities they serve. More than \$1 million has been awarded in 27 Heartland communities for project financing, business startups, expansions and renovations,

infrastructure and community marketing.

Heartland's Energy ONE Incentive facilitates new business development and expansion of existing businesses by providing a special energy-only rate for three years for new or expanding loads. The incentive is designed to attract large users of electricity, specifically 1 MW or larger. However, in customer communities with populations of 3,000 or less, new loads of 500 kW or larger may qualify for the incentivized rate.

Crabtree pointed out that Heartland to date has invested more than \$500,000 in economic development efforts in Minnesota but has not yet received an application from Truman. He stated that he hoped to work with Truman on an economic development project in the near future.

Heartland also has a comprehensive suite of energy efficiency programs providing rebates for residential and commercial customers and grants to utilities for making upgrades at city facilities.

Other Heartland customer programs and services include a cybersecurity program, various customer education opportunities, assistance with reporting requirements, and providing APPA membership to customers.

Jones provided an overview from the operational perspective. Heartland has achieved rate stability going forward by selling an excess generation resource, minimizing exposure to the market, and decreasing expenses.

Jones explained Heartland's wholesale demand and energy rates and noted that Heartland pays Truman for its local generating capacity at about \$1.81 per kilowatt-month, which is substantially higher than the market price of \$0.10 per kilowatt-month.

Jones then explained that Truman is in the ITC transmission zone in Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), and that ITC's FERC-approved rate is substantially higher than many other MISO zones, and about 80 percent higher than the MISO-NSP zone.

Heartland conducted a study to determine whether

Truman could save on transmission costs by interconnecting with a different facility. Connecting to SMMPA or the local co-op would not provide rate relief because their facilities are also in the ITC zone. Connecting to NSP was evaluated, but the debt service cost on the necessary 15 miles of 69-kV transmission would exceed the savings from a lower zonal transmission charge.

Jones pointed out that Heartland acts as Truman's transmission agent, provides market participant service, load forecasts, demand bids, meter data submittals, PURPA interconnection assistance, and other services.

Heartland then turned to the many benefits of owning a municipal electric utility, including: Local control, with local governance and open meeting laws; community ownership in which every citizen has a voice and receives face-to-face customer service; reliability with local crews on the job; donated and shared services from the utility to the community; and the utility's transfer to the general fund, enabling the city to provide other services at lower cost.

The presentation concluded with Heartland staff expressing their interest in developing a closer relationship with Truman and working with the community to succeed as their partnership continues through the term of their power supply agreement which remains in force until 2041. Heartland looks forward to long-term rate stability and providing the many services they offer to Truman. Federated Rural Electric Association management previously met with the city council and PUC to present information on the cooperative and what it could do for Truman if it purchased Truman's municipal electric utility.

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State regulators approve three requests to update electric service area maps

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) recently approved three joint requests from municipals and neighboring electric cooperatives to memorialize municipal utility growth by updating the state's official electric utility service area maps.

ERMU-Connexus

The MPUC April 12 approved a joint request to update electric service territory records, filed by Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) and Connexus Energy.

The filing marked the next-to-last step in a process that began several years ago, which included a 2015 ser-

vice territory filing with the MPUC. That filing covered all areas of the city served by Connexus, which at the time included approximately 12 square miles (7,680 acres). There were approximately 2,000 existing customers involved, including a number of commercial customers. The acreage involved appears to be the largest ever involved in a Minnesota service territory case, as is the number of existing customers.

The most recent filing noted that the transfer "has been completed pursuant to Section 216B.44: the affected area lies within the city limits; the parties agreed upon

appropriate compensation; and have agreed to the municipal providing service."

The area covered in the most recent filing includes approximately 1,871 acres and 321 residential and 15 commercial customers. The parties did not have a legal description but offered a Shape or CAD file as an exhibit.

The parties engaged in extensive technical discussions, spanning multiple years, to minimize any disruption to customers, to avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities, and to ensure a smooth transition of service.

The service was switched from the cooperative to the municipal Sept. 13-18, 2018 and was accomplished efficiently and without technical difficulties. The parties communicated extensively with customers in the area throughout the transition process. Customer notices were included in the regulatory filing.

ERMU reached out to each commercial customer and met with them as they desired, to assure understanding of rates and programs, and to answer any questions.

The parties requested the MPUC provide evidence of its acknowledgment of the change in service territory boundaries and updating of the official records.

In its May 11 written order, the Commission "approved the permanent service territory transfer from Connexus Energy to Elk River Municipal Utilities of a large area on the northwest side of the city," and directed the state's official electric service territory map be updated to reflect the change.

ERMU expects the final transfer, involving approximately 100 customers, to occur this fall.

OPU-Steele Waseca

The MPUC May 2 approved, without comment, a joint request to transfer electric service territory from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric to Owatonna Public Utilities and ordered the state's territory maps be updated.

This joint request addressed the permanent transfer of six areas located within the city limits of Owatonna and within electric service territory assigned to the cooperative. The areas, mostly west of I-35, involve approximately 569.67 acres and 90 customers (six residential, 77 commercial, and seven industrial). A map and legal description of the area was included.

Prior to the filing of the agreement, the parties engaged in extensive technical discussions, designed to: minimize any disruption to customers; avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities; and ensure a smooth transition of electric service. The parties have agreed to transfer electric service on a mutually-agreed upon date.

Adrian-Nobles Cooperative

The MPUC April 2 approved a joint petition from the City of Adrian/Adrian Public Utilities and Nobles Cooperative Electric to amend their shared electric service territory boundary, on

the city's south side.

The filing noted that the parties agreed upon appropriate compensation and requested the MPUC update its official records.

One area transferred is a recently-annexed area, which is currently undeveloped.

The second area is an area which has been served by the municipal since development but was identified in the state's service territory maps as being included in the cooperative's service area. The filing resolved a large tract which was marked as 'Service Overlap' on the state's digital service territory map.



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MMUA Underground School brings real-world, hands-on training to utilities



Steve Laugen of RPU (Rochester, second from right) was an instructor in the 'Exposing Underground Utilities' session of the school. Here, Laugen leads his group in a training exercise.



Bill Bumgarner of Austin Utilities (right foreground) was an instructor in the session on cable splicing and terminations.



Michael Berg of RDO Equipment Vermeer brought some of the latest underground excavation equipment and provided instruction to participants.

MMUA trains large new batch of 'Competent People'

MMUA held a Competent Person and Excavation Safety Workshop May 1-2, at our Training Center in Marshall.

Thirty-four attended the school, mostly from municipal utilities but we also had attendees from rural water systems and a private business.

Participants learned the basics of OSHA's "Competent Person" excavation standards. This included learning about soil testing, how to use that information to determine the correct protective system needed, and how to identify the hazards associated with trenching and excavation.

Students also learned the proper techniques when digging around underground utilities.

The workshop included classroom and hands-on in-



Instructor Andy Smoka (center) led a group of students through the process of soil testing.

struction/demonstration to ensure participants' understanding of 'Competent Person' designation.

Our lead instructor was Andy Smoka, former Minnesota OSHA principal safety consultant and a foremost expert on this subject.

This course was designed for public works personnel, water/wastewater personnel,

lineworkers, engineering personnel, contract workers, and anyone else responsible for digging or who spends time in and around excavations.

Thanks to Andy Smoka and also Jordan Fischer, of United Rentals Trench Safety, for helping make the school a success, particularly on the Shoring, Benching and Sloping segment.

MMUA and its partners—the American Public Power Association and Minnesota Rural Electric Association—held the annual Underground School May 14-17, at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall.

Minnesota municipal utilities sent 49 students to the school, with another 11 coming from four South Dakota municipals. In addition, several students came from cooperatives.

The highly-rated school featured something for all level of lineworker. Participants rotated through a variety of hands-on classes. Topics and instructors included:

- Session 1-Locating Underground (URD) Cables: Rob Castillo, Rochester; Dennis Otto, Moorhead, Brian Wiesner, Locators & Supplies, Inc.

- Session 2-Splicing & Terminations: Jim Stephens, 3M; Bill Bumgarner, Austin.

- Session 3-Secondary Troubleshooting: Steve Tiegs, Austin; Brad Olson, Brainerd.

- Session 4-Infrared Technology: Daryl Androli, Missouri River Energy Services.

- Session 5-Exposing Live Underground Cables: Steve Laugen, Rochester; James Monroe, MMUA; Mike Berg, RDO Equipment Vermeer.

- Session 6-Accident Investigation: Curt Freudenberg, Minnesota Rural Electric Assn.

- The Advanced Class—Maintaining Your Underground System—was led by Tom Tylutki, Austin Utilities.

The school started Tuesday afternoon with a general session: Are We All Safety Leaders? MMUA's Marc Machacek led this session devoted to taking ownership of 'near misses' to prevent them from becoming incidents, injuries or fatalities.



Chance Boyd of Plankinton, S.D., participated in a hands-on session.

MMUA's Ryan Mihalak provided another general session—DOT/Worksite Traffic Control—to complete the school Friday morning.

The school included a welcoming pizza reception, rodeo event won by Nate Janssen of Marshall Municipal Utilities and optional evening activities.

MMUA could not have offered this school without the generous contributions of its Regular and Associate Members. Thanks to all who contributed personnel and equipment to the school, and to all the utilities that sent people for the training.

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Electric Power Plant Operator

The Wells Public Utilities of Wells, MN, pop. 2,195, is seeking a qualified applicant for a position in the city's diesel power plant. Duties will also include other related public utility work as assigned. Mechanical experience and power plant operator experience desired. Preference will be given to candidates with water or wastewater experience. This is a full time position with an excellent fringe benefit package. Successful candidate will be required to be on a rotating on-call schedule and must be able to respond within 20 minutes. Salary will be dependent on qualifications and experience. Request an application and send application and resume and references to: Wells Public Utilities, 101 1st St. SE, PO Box 96, Wells, MN 56097, 507-553-3119. Deadline: June 28, 2019. EOE

Executive Director of the Head of the Lakes Natural Gas Group (HOLNGG)

Reports to: HOL NG Group Members. Position Summary: This part-time, hourly contract position will provide support for the operation and marketing of the Head of the Lakes Natural Gas Group (HOLNGG), an organization comprised of natural gas utilities and other industry related companies. The person selected will begin to work for HOLNGG in September or October of 2019. For more information on the organization and the areas the utility members serve, please go to: holnaturalgas.com.

Responsibilities:

The role of the Executive Director includes, but is not limited to, the HOLNGG: Event support: venue, logistics, IT support, marketing and advertising creation and placement. Marketing support: membership and sponsorship mailings, data base work, website and social media updates, general bookkeeping updates & monthly expense reports. Attend and present reports at HOLNGG scheduled meetings. Regulatory compliance when needed. Advertising & Marketing Create marketing plans based on desired demographics, public awareness programs and messages, in compliance with budget availability. Consult & buy media in mar-

Bits: see facing page

kets served by members including newsprint, radio, social media, etc.

Negotiate best rates, receive and reconcile media invoices with quoted rates, authorize payments of media invoices to HOLNGG Treasurer. Receive, copy and mail affidavits and tear sheets monthly to members for PUC fulfillment requirements.

Compose or collaborate, edit and proof ad content, copy and scripts

Create and maintain monthly budget and expense report Order supplies (envelopes, etc) as needed

Inserts, direct mail, printed marketing items:

Works with staff or outside vendor for layouts, copy content, proofs (also provided to members) and places orders

Calculates quantities needed by each utility, secures print bids on 'bulk' quantity, proofs, order, and manage specific shipping instructions.

Additional duties

Facilitate RP1162 Survey (every 4 years) – to be done next in 2022.

Development and completion of surveys from initial gathering of mailing lists to creation, mailing (per utility), return and tally of surveys results.

Requirements:

Ability to effectively manage and prioritize multiple projects at the same time with demonstrated attention to detail and timely service delivery with minimum supervision

Willingness to work independently on tasks assigned

Experience, competence, and sensitivity in working with people

Six Qualifications:

Some college or post high school education preferred

Previous experience in same or similar position preferred

Working knowledge of Microsoft Office desired, specifically Word and Excel

Good communication skills, both verbal and written, to convey accurate, timely, helpful, and supportive information to HOLNGG members

Current computer, printer, relevant up-to-date software and email capabilities

Ability to quickly grasp and execute social media content management and work with web host company for website changes.

Reliable transportation, insurance and valid driver's license.

Position Classification:

The successful candidate is expected to work approximately **250 hours per year**, with seasonal swings in workload. This is a non-exempt; non-benefit contract position. The successful candidate will

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Email cover letter, hourly rate preference, references & resume to: Corey Lubovich, Chair, HOL Natural Gas Group at: coreyl@hpuc.com
Final date to submit application is June 30, 2019. Expected start date to be September or October 2019. No phone calls will be accepted.

Journeyman Lineman

The City of Winner, South Dakota is accepting applications for: Journeyman Lineman. \$35.21 per hour, plus full benefits. Must be at least 18 years old with valid Class A drivers license and must be Journeyman lineman certified. Moving and signing bonus available. To apply: Contact the Winner Job Service

or winnerhr@gwtc.net

Apprentice Lineman

The City of Winner is accepting applications for: Apprentice Journeyman Lineman, Step 1, \$20.43 per hour plus full benefits. Must be at least 18 years old with valid Class A driver's license or able to obtain. Must have 1,000 hours completed. Moving and signing bonus available. To apply: Contact the Winner Job Service or winnerhr@gwtc.net

Journeyman Lineman

St. James Public Utilities is looking for an Electrical Journeyman Line Worker for a position in the electric department. We serve 2,400 residential and commercial customers and maintain and operate an electrical distribution system and a stand-by genera-

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1 www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes499051.htm | 2 www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes499052.htm
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tion plant. Qualifications for the position: High School education and vocational schooling as an electrical lineman with Journeyman License. Must be able to obtain a Class B CDL license. Salary range: \$67,272.28-\$81,409.92. Duties include: Leading the electric department in the construction and maintenance of the city's electrical distribution system, including stringing wire, setting poles, placing transformers, installing meters, and other work as needed. Completed applications along with resume and salary requirements can be filled out online or sent to: Kris Hurley, City Clerk, PO Box 70, St. James, MN 56081. Phone: 507-375-3241.

Applications are available at: www.ci.stjames.mn.us. Applications will be accepted until Noon on Monday, June 24, 2019.

See our Classified listings online

MMUA Regular Members are now able to post, for no charge, classified ads at www.mmua.org

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



Annual Summer Conference

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Monday, August 19

MMUA Board Meeting
Conference Registration Opens at noon
Golf "Best Ball Scramble" at Deacon's Lodge
Paul Bunyan Bike Trail Ride
Resort Check-in 5 p.m.
Welcome Reception, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 20

Welcome and Opening Remarks, Greg French, Virginia Dept. of Public Utilities/MMUA President

Silent Impact: Influence Through Purpose, Persistence and Passion

Joe Schmit, Author and Broadcaster, KSTP-TV

In this high energy, high impact presentation loaded with humor, Joe Schmit inspires and teaches you how to ramp up the profound power of your influence. We make our biggest impressions when we are not trying to be impressive. You can become an "Impact Player" who makes everyone around you better just by being there.



The Utility of the Future: Give the Consumers What They Want Before They Know They Want It

Vern Dosch, National Information Solutions Co-operative (NISC)

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Update from the Division of Energy Resources

Joe Sullivan, Deputy Commissioner of Minnesota DER

Luncheon

The Washington Scene

Michael Nolan, MMUA Washington Rep.

Charging Ahead with Electric Vehicles, A Panel Discussion

Learn what cities across Minnesota are doing to prepare for the Electric Vehicle Revolution.

Trade Show and Reception



Banquet and Awards

Wednesday, August 21

MMUA Business Meeting
(Meeting for Regular & Affiliate Members Only)

Electric Vehicle Rate Considerations and AMI – Things We're Learning

Dave Berg, Dave Berg Consulting

Electric Vehicles (EVs) present opportunities and challenges to electric utilities. Various options for rate considerations for EVs will be discussed. Also, advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) is providing considerable data regarding how our customers use energy. What are we learning and why is it important?

Interconnection Policy and Procedure for Your Utility

Bill Black and Bob Jagusch, MMUA

A brief overview of compliance with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's docket on Distributed Energy Resources. An open discussion forum.

Electric Service Issues: New Developments

Mark Fritsch, Current Compass

State Legislative Developments

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

Issues Round-Up

Jack Kegel, Bob Jagusch and Mike Willetts, MMUA

Conference adjourns

Golf Tournament

You must pre-register. Participants do not need to attend the conference to play in the tournament, but you do need to be a member of MMUA.



Deadline to register is August 3 or until course is filled, whichever comes first.

Bike Ride

Join us for MMUA's annual bike ride on the black-topped Paul Bunyan Trail.

Trade Show

MMUA Associate Members can have an exhibit space at the conference trade show. Space is limited so do not delay. This one fills up fast! For best rates, register before July 12.

Sponsorships available

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

For more information

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

Deadline to register for Summer Conference is August 5.

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