

The RESOURCE

Official Publication of the
Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association



June
2020

Volume 26, No. 6

MMUA
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Plymouth, MN 55447
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Pandemic response roils local governance Citizens, businesses give local policymakers, including in Lakefield, an earful

by Steve Downer

The Lakefield city council Monday, May 4 passed a statement that it would not expend any city resources to enforce Gov. Tim Walz's stay-at-home executive order. It was not an easy decision. The discussion ranged over three hours between two meetings, each of which resulted in a 3-2 vote—one declining to adopt a statement; the other approving a modified statement.

Lakefield's action should be taken in the context of other pressures weighing on the city. A full examination reveals something far from a defiance of authority (which would have been surprising coming from a city council), but a statement that the city was intent upon its duties and without resources to enforce any orders short of law.

Additionally, the local debate serves as a microcosm of similar discussions occurring around the state. A number of other cities adopted similar stances on



Lakefield's city hall, at left, occupies a prominent corner on the city's main commercial corridor. The economic viability of several local businesses have been threatened during the coronavirus pandemic response.

the state's pandemic-response orders. Many others quietly reached the same conclusions.

Usually brisk in its deliberations, the Lakefield council discussed the statement at length, with plenty of time between to ponder, hear from citizens on both sides of the issue, and

await a further statement from the governor.

During the May 4 discussion, most of the businesspeople affected by the governor's orders were in the council chambers or attending 'virtually,' said Lakefield city clerk Kelly Rasche. Part of the reason for the local

debate was to allow these people to be part of the conversation.

At its April 20 meeting, the council discussed the issue for 90 minutes, then defeated a motion to adopt a statement, 3-2. The council also directed Rasche

Lakefield: see page 3 please

Granite Falls reaps benefits of retaining municipal utility

by Steve Downer

There was a time Northern States Power Company (NSP) touted its local presence, during attempts to purchase the Granite Falls Municipal Utilities. The company now doing business as Xcel Energy these days has a much smaller presence in the Minnesota River valley community than it once did, while the municipal utility continues to invest and improve in local electric service.

Xcel was once the largest property tax-payer in the city, largely due to the coal-fired power plant it built in the river valley on the east side of the city, in 1931. The plant was expanded in 1953 and later 'modernized' with boilers capable of also burning natural gas. Eventually the original portion of the plant was closed and only the newer 42-megawatt portion of plant was operated. But it too slid into obsolescence over the decades.

Recent decommissioning of the power plant re-

sulted in an annual property tax reduction to the city of \$112,570. Xcel has retreated from a number of uneconomic power supply arrangements in recent years, resulting in property tax shock to local communities. In each case the state Legislature has played a part in lessening the shock, and it did so again in the Granite Falls case.

Before adjourning from its recent session, the Legislature enacted a bill (codified as Session Law, Chapter 118) to alleviate the loss of property tax, from a creative angle.

Because the city had made up the loss of property tax with transfers from the electric fund, it proposed to the Legislature that the State of Minnesota grant the city \$2,750,000 for the purchase a new hydro turbine to increase the generating capacity of the existing hydroelectric facility. That will provide an increase in revenue

Granite Falls: see page 9



Along with 'social distancing,' the wearing of respiratory masks was a common response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to member demand, MMUA ordered more than 40,000 KN95 masks, the first boxes of which arrived in our Plymouth office May 20, after a long and complicated journey from China. MMUA staffer Joe Schmidt (top) picked up his shipment to deliver. Co-workers Theresa Neddermeyer (above, left) and Rita Kelly repackaged masks for delivery to member cities and utilities. Delivery was typically handled by an MMUA regional safety coordinator—by this time we were again making visits to most member cities.



Delivery was typically handled by an MMUA regional safety coordinator—by this time we were again making visits to most member cities.

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GRE announces coming closure of 1,151-MW Coal Creek electric generating station

Great River Energy (GRE) on May 7 announced plans to retire the 1,151-megawatt (MW) Coal Creek Station, in the second half of 2022.

In that same time frame, GRE said it would:

- Add 1,100 MW of wind energy purchases by the end of 2023;

- Modify the 99-MW, coal and natural gas-based Spiritwood Station power plant to be fueled by natural gas;

- Install a 1-MW, long-duration battery demonstration system;

- Support the repowering of the Blue Flint biorefinery with natural gas.

The announcement fol-

lowed several changes GRE has made in recent years in its power supply portfolio.

Past analysis has led to decisions to exit a contract for half the output of a Wisconsin coal plant in 2015, retire the coal-based Stanton Station power plant in 2017, close the waste-to-energy Elk River Resource Recovery Project in 2019 and purchase the output of several wind energy projects.

GRE predicts the portfolio changes will significantly reduce Great River Energy's member-owner power supply costs. In addition, the cooperative's power supply resources will be more than 95 percent carbon dioxide-free, virtually eliminating carbon risk.

GRE plans to purchase more than 1,100 MW from new wind energy projects. This amounts to a more than \$1.2 billion investment. Great River Energy's renewable capacity is projected to grow from approximately 660 MW in 2020 to more than 1,760

MW by the end of 2023. The Great River Energy board of directors also approved 600 MW of wind energy projects, most of which will be located in Minnesota.

GRE plans to add energy and capacity as needed through upgrades at its fleet of natural gas peaking plants and purchases from the Mid-continent Independent System Operator (MISO) energy market.

Coal Creek Station has been a critical part of Great River Energy's power supply portfolio for decades, but it has lost value compared to other alternatives in recent years. Great River Energy plans to shut down both units of Coal Creek Station during the second half of 2022, although the cooperative is willing to consider opportunities to sell the plant. Coal Creek Station began operations in 1979 in Underwood, North Dakota, and employs 260 people.

"Coal Creek Station is operated efficiently, safely and

with pride by a dedicated and talented staff," said GRE's CEO David Saggau. "We will make every effort to minimize impacts on our employees and the communities through this transition."

To assist local communities during the upcoming transition, Great River Energy plans to make voluntary annual payments of the local government share of the plant's taxes for five years after the plant's closure.

Great River Energy plans to negotiate an agreement to terminate its steam and water supply contract with Blue Flint, an ethanol biorefinery fueled by process steam from Coal Creek Station. Blue Flint's owner, Midwest AgEnergy, is considering using the contract termination payment from Great River Energy to reinvest in an economical alternate source for its process heat, thereby benefiting area farmers by continuing to support the local market for corn.

Located near Jamestown, North Dakota, Spiritwood Station is a combined heat

and power plant fueled by a combination of DryFine™ lignite coal and natural gas. Great River Energy plans to modify the plant to be fueled with natural gas. The plant generates electricity for the regional electric grid and supplies steam to a nearby ethanol biorefinery.

Great River Energy is working with Form Energy, a battery storage technology developer based in Somerville, Massachusetts, on a first-of-its-kind demonstration of Form's unique long-duration storage technology. The battery project will be a 1-MW, grid-connected storage system said to be capable of delivering its rated power continuously for 150 hours, far longer than the four-hour usage period common among lithium ion batteries. Long-duration storage will help maintain grid reliability in the future during extreme conditions, such as a heat wave or polar vortex. The battery system will be located in Cambridge, Minnesota, and be completed in late 2023.

We've moved!

Our former offices demolished to make way for re-development, MMUA has moved across the street to 3131 Fernbrook Lane N., Suite 200, Plymouth, MN 55447-5337. All of our other contact info remains the same.



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Recrimination follows collapse of Michigan dam

The Edenville, Michigan dam failed late afternoon May 19, leading to the failure of a downstream dam and widespread flood damage. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), citing numerous violations dating to 1999, in September 2018 revoked the private operator's license for power generation

at the dam. The dam could not withstand a significant flood, said FERC.

The dam operator told FERC that ongoing permit litigation with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality had precluded its ability to construct the necessary improvements.



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MMUA The Resource USPS #009836. ISSN: 1080-3750 is published Monthly; except combined July/August, by MMUA at 3131 Fernbrook Lane North, Suite 200, Plymouth, MN 55447-5337. Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MMUA The Resource, 3131 Fernbrook Lane North, Suite 200, Plymouth, MN 55447-5337. Annual subscription rates: \$12 per subscription (included in dues), associate members, \$12 (included in dues). 3131 Fernbrook Lane North, Suite 200, Plymouth, MN 55447-5337. Phone 763-551-1230, members 1-800-422-0119. FAX 763-551-0459.

Lakefield: City facing millions of state-mandated infrastructure investment

continued from front page

to put the issue back on the May 4 agenda. That date was significant, as it represented another potential opening date.

Gov. Walz held a media conference that afternoon, where he declined to lift the stay-at-home order. That led to another 90 minutes of local discussion that evening. This time, a statement based on the original document, with some edits, passed 3-2.

The discussion was spirited but never personal, Rasche said.

While the council allowed everybody to have their say, and took the opportunity to express itself, none of the affected businesses had opened by mid-May.

It is uncertain if all will reopen.

Lakefield's four-lane bowling alley had closed. The owner found a buyer and plans are to keep it open. The attached restaurant plans to reopen, when allowed. That is good news—the bowling alley was very active, with leagues

Monday through Thursday.

The local VFW, at the May 4 meeting, stated that if it couldn't open by June 1, it might abandon its building. Others will simply hold on as long as they can.

Making ends meet

Lakefield is a city of approximately 1,700, 16 miles south of Windom and a few miles north of Interstate 90 in southwestern Minnesota. Economic fortunes ebb and flow over the years, but while often good, times are never easy.

Making ends meet for the city while accomplishing what needs to be done is a difficult problem, every day, Rasche said. If the city makes a major cut, it's a person, Rasche said. "We don't have a lot of people to go around."

With an uncertain economy and the painful memory of past mid-budget Local Government Aid cuts from the state, the city isn't planning on spending any more money than necessary. There's plenty of that going on already, including \$20 million in new

water and wastewater related infrastructure projects.

Stringent enforcement

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) issued a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit in 2015, whereby the city agreed to meet more stringent parameters by 2026. Since the city signed off on the permit, including salty parameter limits and compliance schedule, the MPCA admits that certain permit limits were based on "outdated science." But the regulatory agency doesn't allow what it terms "backsliding," so Lakefield is spending to comply with outdated limits.

The initial stay-at-home orders fell in the middle of the comment period for the wastewater treatment plant project.

The upgrade project at the wastewater treatment facility is No. 1 on the Public Facilities Authority's (PFA) project priority list. The city could have sought an MPCA variance, but that would have dropped it from No. 1 on the

PFA's project priority list.

The city has received an approximately \$17 million funding package to update the plant, which is more than 25 years old. Funding sources include a U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development loan of \$8.46 million, state and federal grant dollars of \$6.6 million, with a city contribution of \$1.89 million.

The city will also undertake a street project to replace water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer lines, to address inflow and infiltration issues. This project will span 2021 and 2022.

In a related project, the city is adding a \$2.4 million reverse osmosis process to its drinking water plant. Hard water had led most residents to install water softeners. Discharge of softener salt resulted in the city exceeding wastewater permit chloride limits. The PFA is assisting with a grant of \$1,908,814. An additional \$477,204 will come from the city.

While the grants and

loans are certainly appreciated, the remaining expenses to be borne by the city are still a lot of money for a city of 1,700. The city went into the improvements free of wastewater debt. Annual payments of \$397,000 to pay for the new improvements will begin in 2023.

City leaders hope the water and wastewater plant and permit regulations last for the life of the 40-year loan. History shows, however, that those hopes will likely not be realized.

There are glimmers of good news, however.

The local economy was good, prior to the pandemic response. Kozy Heat, the city's largest employer, taxpayer and electric customer, is expanding.

The local school district has embarked on a \$15 million building project.

Lakefield has seen hard times and good over its 133-year history. City leaders are hoping this transition from hard to good occurs swiftly.

Planning underway as pandemic threatens

MMUA's 89th in-person summer conference

The Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) is no stranger to tough times. With your help, it will prove as resilient going forward as it has been in the past.

MMUA was formed in 1931, in the midst of the Great Depression. In Europe and the Far East, the seeds of the Second World War were being sown.

Before there was an MMUA, municipal electric utilities had been meeting as a committee of what was then known as the League of Minnesota Municipalities. The utilities formed MMUA at a meeting in St. Cloud, in June 1931. The association's first mid-summer conference was held in Red Wing, in 1932. The second meeting was held in Hibbing, June 21-22, 1933.

An introduction to the booklet prepared for the 1933 conference notes "the many ways in which municipal electric utilities of Minnesota have gone to the aid of the tax payer during these stringent times. Many municipal properties have voluntarily reduced their rate for electricity, steam heat and water, others have come to these tax payers with contributions of large sums of money to assist in relieving the tax burden. Many cities do not make any charge whatsoever for street lights, hydrant rental, and so forth."

We see this sort of effort now, from utilities that are financially able to help.

Then as now, along with economics, problems confronting the municipal utilities often boiled down to two things: politics and technical.

Meeting together and talking about these issues with experts, and peers, has been a help to municipal utility people since the utilities have existed. As far as we can tell, MMUA has held an annual meeting every year since it was formed.

To say that this year's in-person meeting is in jeopardy should surprise no one. The State Fair just cancelled for the fifth time in its history (one of those being during the influenza pandemic of 1918). The American Public Power Association also cancelled its in-person annual conference

and will meet 'virtually.'

MMUA is now exploring its various options. One way or another, we will meet to conduct the association's business, as the municipal utility people of Minnesota have done for the last 89 years.

Our purpose remains as true today as it was in 1933:

"We cannot live unto ourselves, many particular problems and experiences are common to us all and the problems or experience of one property if given to another may, in a great many instances, save that property, hundreds of thousands of dollars . . . when these solutions are cited through an organization of this nature, they cannot but be a benefit to a great many of us."

- by Steve Downer

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Lanesboro and Whalan sign agreement to share city clerk office, services

by Steve Downer

The cities of Lanesboro and Whalan have reached an agreement to share a city clerk. It's an unusual, but not unprecedented, development in southeastern Minnesota.

With the signing of a written agreement, Lanesboro City Clerk/Administrator Michele Peterson is also serving as Whalan city clerk.

Both cities operate municipal electric utilities: Lanesboro has a population of 765; Whalan is home to 65—making it the state's smallest municipal electric utility, in terms of population served. The cities are less than five miles apart by road; less by the Root River bike trail.

The communities are close in other ways, including the fact that the Lanesboro school district encompasses Whalan.

Cities in the area discuss efficiencies to be gained by combining certain functions on a fairly regular basis. Along with the usual 'helping out' where needed, more formal agreements are reached and kept in place while situ-

ations warrant. For example, since 2003, Lanesboro has contracted with the City of Preston for police service. The City of Fountain joined that agreement in October 2017. And, a previous Lanesboro city administrator (Steve Sarvi, now Winona city administrator) also briefly doubled as city administrator in Preston, in the 1990s.

"We're pretty small communities," Peterson said. "We have to help each other out."

Being close neighbors, Peterson was aware of the opening in Whalan. Like several other qualified candidates, she applied for the job. In early March, on a temporary basis and with the blessing of Lanesboro Mayor Jason Resseman, she began performing Whalan's clerk duties. Filling in on a temporary basis was just being a good neighbor; taking the Whalan duties on as regular work, however, was another matter.

The Whalan council interviewed several qualified candidates, but it became apparent they had the solution



Lanesboro city staff recently gathered for a photo celebrating the city's 150th anniversary. They included, back row, from left to right: Steve Majerus, Jeff Norby, David Haugen, Ardell Nordgaard, Jerod Wagner, and front row, left to right: Darla Taylor, and Michele Peterson.

already working for them, if the Lanesboro council, and Peterson—a Minnesota Certified Municipal Clerk—were willing and the details could be hammered out.

After discussions with Mayor Resseman and Wha-

lan Mayor Marlys Tuftin, and the agreement of the respective city councils, Peterson agreed to sign the shared services agreement.

As part of the arrangement, it made sense to let Peterson use the Lanesboro office

space. The written agreement stipulates that the city offices of Lanesboro will be treated as the Whalan city offices, and Peterson will use the Lanesboro city offices for official Whalan business and any other duties or tasks required as a consequence of her employment as city clerk with Whalan. This includes shared use of office equipment and supplies. Whalan will pay Lanesboro \$225.00 per month for Peterson's use of Lanesboro's City office and incidentals. This rate is subject to a 5 percent increase for the calendar year 2021. The rate will be reviewed annually and changed upon agreement of the parties in writing.

"We have to work together," Peterson said. "If we utilize all our resources the better off we'll all be. It's not us against them, it's us together."

Reaching an agreement was complicated during the March-April timeframe with the cancellation of meetings and ensuing back-up of business during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 'social distancing' engendered by the pandemic has thrown the question of where the Whalan council meetings will be held into the air—Whalan would like to use its city hall, but it is a small space, ruling out proper distancing.

The Lanesboro-Whalan 'Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer Sharing Agreement' was entered into on May 11.

Peterson will report to the City Council of Whalan and will serve on an as needed basis, to a maximum of eight hours per week.

Peterson will continue full-time employment with Lanesboro with the salary and benefits as previously determined and agreed to by the City Council of Lanesboro, including but not limited to PERA benefits.

The Parties agreed that they will annually review the agreement, to consider changes. The Agreement may be terminated by consent of both Cities without cause.

Signers of the agreement included Peterson and Mayors Tuftin and Resseman. It is a public document. MMUA members interested in the agreement can contact Peterson or Steve Downer at MMUA.



Whalan city hall.

"Servicing everything inside the substation fence"

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photos courtesy of Austin Rieder, Ayres Associates

A long-awaited project is underway in Lanesboro, to rebuild the city's Root River dam. This picture shows caissons which were constructed to relieve pressure on the dam structure. These caissons have since been filled with a dolomite, riprap material. The Lanesboro Dam was constructed in the 1860's, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The project will repair the existing dam to improve its stability and to improve hydropower operations. The red roof of city offices is visible downriver.

Long-awaited project to rebuild Lanesboro Dam, hydropower gates, underway

After more than a decade of planning, lobbying and waiting, work is underway to rebuild the Lanesboro Dam.

The gravity-arch dam is one of only a handful of its design left in the U.S. The dam, and diversion channel, feed the municipal hydroelectric plant, which supplies approximately 10 percent of the city's electric use.

A private company built Lanesboro Power Dam in 1868. The dam was built by craftsmen using massive, dry-stacked limestone blocks. A channel diverted water to power flour mills. In the early 1890s, a different company restructured the channel and built the Lanesboro Electric Power Plant. Electricity started flowing in 1895. The city purchased the plant in 1903 and has been generating electricity from the site since then.

The dam, not surprisingly, had deteriorated over the years. Its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places complicated the process of repair. Rather than remove and replace it, state bonding funds were secured to rebuild the 'high hazard' dam in a historically accurate way.

City officials worked with the Department of Natural Resources, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the state Legislature, led by local Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) and Sen. Jeremy Miller (R-Winona), to obtain state funding to cover the bulk of the \$4 million project costs.

Some of the blocks will be replaced, using limestone from quarries in southeast Minnesota. The hydro plant

diversion channel gates will be replaced and operation automated.

To relieve the hydraulic pressures on the dam, on the upriver side, crews have built caissons which were then filled with a riprap material. When the work is complete these structures will remain, but will be hidden from view under the water level.

The project is scheduled to be complete by the end of October. Perhaps at that time a ceremony can be held to celebrate the achievement. A March 13 groundbreaking ceremony was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



With the normal river flow over the dam stopped, the hydro diversion channel was temporarily breached to allow an outfall for the river.

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Civil unrest relegates COVID-19 to back pages, but pandemic still affects operations

Memorial Day evening, May 25, George Floyd, an unarmed black man, died while being taken into custody by Minneapolis police. The city became the epicenter of protests and rioting, which spread across the country. Gov. Walz called out the National Guard. After four nights of rioting and looting an uneasy calm returned to the Twin Cities area. Demonstrations spread throughout the state. COVID-19 was relegated to the back pages.

Pandemic response continued to affect municipal operations, however.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz's extended 'stay-at-home' executive order expired May 18, and many cities opened their doors to the public, on

or between that date and June 1. Things remained far from what had been considered 'normal,' however.

Re-opening steps taken by municipalities, which by now were commonplace in businesses with regular public contact, included:

- Clear shields placed between the public and front-line staff.
- Sanitizing supplies and facemasks available to staff and public.
- Floor decals to mark proper 'social distancing'.
- Signs with information on distancing, recommendations/requests for people to wear facemasks when entering, encouraging the public to drop bills off at mailbox, etc.
- Facemasks were often made available to members

of the public who enter a building, if they want or need one. Facemasks were also required of workers and office staff, depending on circumstances.

• Temporary closing of doors if more people enter than the building can handle given social distancing guidelines.

Many people continued to work remotely—an arrangement recommended by the state where possible. Meetings, including of staff and public bodies, were often held via Zoom or other electronic means, though various other meetings were resuming in-person (with 'social distancing').

Municipal staff continued with a stringent regimen of cleaning and disinfecting work surfaces, tools, equipment and machinery.

Gov. Walz informed legislative leaders May 13 that he was extending by another 30 days his peacetime emergency declaration. (Gov. Walz first ordered bars and restaurants to close on March 17 and implemented a stay-at-home order on March 27.)

On May 20, Gov. Walz announced the second phase of 'Stay Safe MN.' The new

order would include "a cautious, strategic 'turn of the dial' for outdoor dining at restaurants and bars to start June 1, with safety measures in place and capacity limits." The executive order was signed May 27.

The order allowed people to go get haircuts again, under certain circumstances. Campgrounds and youth sports were addressed.

Worker protections were included.

Churches remained limited to 10 people at indoor and outdoor settings. A federal lawsuit challenged this part of the order. The Minnesota Catholic Conference and several Lutheran synods in Minnesota sent Gov. Walz separate letters May 20, announcing they would resume worship services on Tuesday, May 26.

Gov. Walz on Saturday, May 23 announced he would loosen restrictions on religious services, under certain circumstances: including 25 percent occupancy while continuing to follow public health recommendations like sanitizing and social distancing. These changes were to take place May 27.

A number of cities adopted resolutions noting their lack

of resources to enforce executive orders which, several noted, also infringe on constitutional rights.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison announced May 17 that his office has filed an enforcement action against a Stearns County bar/restaurant owner who had earlier vowed to open despite the executive order restrictions.

The Attorney General sought civil penalties of up to \$25,000 per violation, restitution and/or disgorgement of profits, the Office's costs and fees, and other relief. The owner raised more than \$160,000 through an online fundraising campaign, but eventually relented and kept the businesses closed.

The Attorney General's Office encouraged Minnesotans to report suspected violations of the order that extended the closure of bars' and restaurants' on-site consumption services until June 1, 2020.

Minnesota's unemployment rate spiked to 8.1 percent in April, the highest level in decades.

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Pierz approves loan program to struggling businesses

from the Morrison County Record

The Pierz City Council May 11 approved a loan program to aid businesses harmed by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The city's business assistance program uses local funds that were generated from a Small Cities Development Program federal grant that it received in 2010. The council approved the Program and Local Income Use Plan.

Based on the advice of its attorney, the city added this paragraph: "The Minnesota Governor's Emergency Executive Orders with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in the temporary closure of non-essential businesses within the City of Pierz. Such closures have resulted in economic hardship which may result in permanent closure of such businesses which could lead to the creation of slum and blight conditions . . . In an effort to prevent such slum and blight conditions the City of Pierz has implemented the Pierz COVID-19 Business Assistance Program to assist businesses negatively impacted by the Governor's Emergency Executive Orders with respect to the COVID-19 pan-

demic."

The program gives \$5,000 to the approved business, half of which is a grant and half of which is an interest free loan. The loan portion would be paid back beginning March 15, 2021 at \$250 a month for

10 months. Any portion not repaid by Dec. 31, 2021 would be added to the property tax.

Application deadline was June 1. The local EDA will approve applications and the council will make the final approval.

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Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative files reliability report with state regulators

The Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC) members March 14 filed their 2019 annual reliability report with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC).

The report was filed in compliance with a 2015 MPUC Order.

On July 31, 2015, SMEC—a new organization comprised

of various electric distribution cooperatives—acquired ownership of the Minnesota distribution assets, service territory, and electric accounts from Interstate Power and Light (IPL). In approving IPL's sale of assets, the MPUC required SMEC to annually report reliability information for IPL's former service territory to the Commission for a period of

five years. The SMEC 2018 Reliability Report includes reliability data compiled from SMEC's 12 cooperatives, for the period of January through December 2019.

SMEC states in the introduction to its report that "Many external events occurred in 2019 that resulted in an extraordinary amount of major event days at indi-

vidual SMEC cooperatives. The most notable was the ice storm of April 11-14, 2019, that affected all of southern Minnesota. This event, which was a Major Disaster Declaration, resulting in the SMEC cooperatives need to rebuild over 100 miles of overhead line. The indices shown in this report do exclude these major event outages in the calculations."

SMEC reported that planned outages were similar to previous years as SMEC cooperatives continue distribution projects to upgrade portions of the acquired 4 kV distribution system to enable operation at 12.5 kV. This will allow the acquired distribution system integration with the cooperative's legacy distri-

bution system, improving reliability and power quality.

SMEC measures its reliability using industry standard metrics of System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI), Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI) and System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI), as defined by the standard IEEE 1366 definition.

The standard defines an outage as a service interruption of five minutes or more, and allows the omission of "major events."

SMEC said it has had difficulty defining a major event during the five years of reliability reporting to the Commission. It said it would prefer

SMEC: continued on back page

Elk River EDA approves emergency microloan, grant program

Editor's note: The following contains information from an article in the Elk River Star News.

The Elk River Economic Development Authority has adopted a COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Microloan program.

The program includes microloans of up to \$20,000 for businesses affected by state-wide executive orders to shut down. Businesses must have been in existence when the orders were issued. Lease holders and building owners can apply for either the grant and/or the microloan.

The EDA previously established a \$200,000 fund for the grants and loans intended to help small businesses.

Under the newly approved program, the maximum \$20,000 microloan would be amortized over 10 years with a five-year balloon and an option of a two-year extension. The loan would have a zero percent interest rate, there would be no equity requirement and the application fee would be waived.

The program includes a forgivable grant of up to \$5,000, to be used for 2020 property tax relief.

Grants can not be greater than the businesses' 2020 property taxes.

Businesses applying for either the loan or the grant or both would need to be in good standing with the city and Secretary of State. The funds

will be disbursed on a first-come, first-served basis for qualifying businesses. Funding will be provided until the funds are exhausted and stated limits are reached.

As a condition for receiving funding, all recipients are required to submit a brief report to the EDA within two months after receiving funds, specifying how the funds are used and providing evidence in the form of paid invoices, statements or similar documentation.

Application and the forms will be available online. The applications will go through the EDA's Joint Finance Committee for review and recommendation, then to the EDA for final action.



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Hydroelectric plant has been upgraded numerous times over centuries in Granite Falls

The City of Granite Falls first harnessed hydropower in 1901. A new steel bridge, a new dam and a new power house were constructed in 1911, with a diesel engine installed as back-up. These replaced an old, privately-owned mill dam. The run-of-the-river municipal hydro plant, continually upgraded over the years, has operated since that time.

A 750-kilowatt turbine and new gate structures for electric generation and for flood control were added during a \$1.2 million project in 1984-86 that also included a complete resurfacing of the spillway. The 750-kilowatt turbine joined two 250-kilowatt turbines in the plant.

A 2013 inspection determined the two smaller turbines, which were installed in the 1930s, had reached the end of their useful life. Following an extensive financial analysis, it was determined that it would cost an additional \$200,000 per year to replace the power from these two units. The generators were re-wound and two new turbines were built and



Pelicans flock downstream from the dam that is adjacent to the Granite Falls Municipal Hydroelectric Plant.

placed back in service.

In 2015-16, the city undertook a \$2 million project to upgrade the plant. This

project included upgrades to the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Systems, sandblasting and

painting of the Tainter-design flood gates and engineering, design and construction.

The electronic controls add-

ed at this time apportion the available water level across the turbines. During periods of high flow, the city can generate electricity by running all turbines. At lower flows, because smaller units can operate at a lower flow than the 750-kilowatt unit, the city can continue to produce power, while operating one or two turbines. The turbine to be added in the upcoming round of improvements will include that capability, providing additional flexibility.

The 2016 project produced an approximately 14 percent increase in energy generation, with a significant decrease in maintenance expenses, due to a smoother functioning system.

Following the 2001 flood, a new transmission line from the hydro plant across the river was built. A new flood wall was also built at that time, some river-side homes torn down and businesses and city hall relocated.

Granite Falls also has a three-unit, 6-megawatt reciprocating internal combustion engine plant, constructed in 2003. The city is a member of the Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency and also has an allocation of federal hydropower from the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). NSP serves as the transmission agent for the power, from the farthest east of all WAPA substations, located 1.5 miles north of Granite Falls.

The city has operated a municipal electric utility since 1891. It maintains its own distribution system with a four-person electric crew.



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Granite Falls:

continued from front page

be available for transfer into the city's general fund without drawing down any funds needed for replacing or adding electric utility equipment. The legislation also directs that \$400,000 of the grant money will be used to repair structural damage and erosion that the facility has endured due to repeated flooding.

The new turbine will replace an older, less efficiently designed turbine that has not been operable for nearly three years. Doing so will increase the municipal hydro facility's output to 1.5 megawatts or more, depending on final design and efficiency.

The Granite Falls provision in the bill was carried by Rep. Chris Swedzinski (R-Ghent) and Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls) both of whom represent a portion of Granite Falls. Rep. Tim Miller (R-Prinsburg) and Sen. Andrew Lang (R-Olivia) who also represent a portion of Granite Falls, were co-authors of the provision. Eventually it was included in a larger Energy Bill that was the result of a compromise between Senate Energy Committee Chair Dave Osmek (R-Mound), House Energy Committee Chair Jean Wagenius (DFL-Minneapolis) and Commerce Commissioner Steve Kelley, who represented the Walz administration.

The Granite Falls municipal hydro plant currently meets approximately 10-15 percent of the municipal utility's power supply needs and the ad-



photos by Steve Downer

Xcel Energy's Minnesota Valley Generating Plant facility switchyard remains a valuable transmission hub.

dition of the new turbine will increase that to 20 to 30 percent, depending on flows in the Minnesota River.

When NSP built its power plant in Granite Falls, the company offered to supply electricity to the city over and above what was generated at the municipal hydro facility. That offer sharply divided the city council. The council accepted the NSP offer but

continued to operate their own local facility. The first power purchase from NSP actually came from the Minnesota Falls dam in 1930 (this dam, located three miles downstream from Granite Falls, was originally owned by two local Granite Falls investors who sold it to the Montevideo Electric Light and Power Company, later as Minnesota Valley Power Company before being

bought by NSP. NSP stopped generating electricity there in 1960 and the dam was removed in 2013.)

NSP several times made offers to buy the municipal system. In the late 1960's the city council twice accepted NSP offers but each time the referendum fell short of the two-thirds majority required by the city's charter to sell the municipal electric utility.

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Bonnie Hayes, esteemed MMUA staffer, 72

Bonnie Lou Hayes, age 72, of Annandale passed away peacefully Friday, May 29, 2020 surrounded by her family.

Bonnie is mourned by many associated with the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA). She retired from MMUA in the late summer of 2010, after more than 27 years of service.

She held a number of positions with the association, including office manager and director of education. She will

perhaps be best remembered as the meeting planner.

She loved working with the municipal utility people from around the state. To her co-workers she imparted devotion to the municipal utilities and a strong work ethic.

Bonnie was born January 10, 1948 in St. Cloud, the daughter of Ernest and Helen (Groves) Hendrickson.

She was united in marriage to Bradley Patrick Hayes on January 6, 1968 at the Methodist Church in Monticello. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2018. Their marriage was blessed with their only child, Erin and grandchild, Brady.



Bonnie Hayes, center, held the 1991 'Builder of the State' Award from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. She is flanked by 1990-91 MMUA President DeWayne Rubedor of New Prague (left) and the late Jim Baymler of North Central Technical College - Wadena.

She enjoyed cooking, gardening, sewing and stained glass at which she was very talented. She loved being a grandma. She always had a positive attitude and a smile on her face. She was fortunate to have multiple circles of great friends, especially her 'Twisted Sisters.'

Bonnie is survived by her husband, Bradley Hayes; daughter, Erin (Dave) Enger; grandson, Brady Enger; sisters and other relatives and friends.

Bonnie was preceded in death by her parents and numerous relatives.

A Celebration of Life is pending at a later date.

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Energy consumption from renewables surpasses coal

In 2019, U.S. annual energy consumption from renewable sources exceeded coal consumption for the first time since before 1885, according to an U.S. Energy Information Administration's (EIA) *Monthly Energy Review* released May 28. This result reflects the continued decline in the amount of coal used for electricity generation over the past decade as well as growth in renewable energy, mostly from wind and solar. Compared with 2018, coal consumption in the United States decreased nearly 15 percent, and total renewable energy consumption grew by 1 percent.

Historically, said EIA, wood

Project Tundra carbon capture test wells drilled

Test wells are being drilled near Center in Oliver County, North Dakota, for Project Tundra, an effort to capture the carbon dioxide from Minnkota Power Cooperative's coal-fired Milton R. Young Station. Plans call for captured emissions to be injected underground for permanent storage. Test wells have also been drilled near Richardton adjacent to the Red Trail Energy ethanol plant.

The Richardton test well is 6,900-feet deep.

Rock samples removed in the drilling will be tested to verify if rock layers deep underground will be able to store carbon dioxide. The analysis also will help identify exactly which layers should be targeted.

Labs in Colorado and North Dakota are doing the analysis. Test results could take several months.

was the main source of U.S. energy until the mid-1800s and was the only commercial-scale renewable source of energy in the United States until the first hydropower plants began producing electricity in the 1880s. Coal was used in the early 1800s as fuel for steam-powered boats and trains and making steel, and it was later used to generate electricity in the 1880s.

Although coal was once commonly used in the industrial, transportation, residential, and commercial sectors, today coal is mostly used in the United States to generate electricity. About 90 percent of U.S. coal consumption is in the electric power sector, and nearly all the rest is in the industrial sector.

Renewable energy is more broadly consumed by every sector in the United States.

About 56 percent of commercially delivered U.S. renewable energy is used in the electric power sector, mostly from wind and hydroelectric power, but different types are also consumed in the industrial (22 percent), transportation (12 percent), residential (7 percent), and commercial (2 percent) sectors.

Biomass, which includes wood, biogenic waste, and biofuels, is consumed in every sector. Wood and the losses and co-products from production of biofuels are the main renewable sources used in the industrial sector, and biofuels such as fuel ethanol, biodiesel, and renewable diesel are used in the transportation sector. Wood, waste, solar, and geothermal are among the most common sources used directly in the residential and commercial sectors.

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Princeton Public Utilities pitches in on project to honor local graduates

by Tim Hennagir
Princeton Union Times

Banners honoring each senior from the Princeton High School Class of 2020 were installed in late May on utility light poles located throughout the city.

The community project was spearheaded by this year's committee of volunteer parents who were originally planning a chemical-free all-night party. That effort took a unique turn when the COVID-19 health crisis forced a change in plans.

With the senior party cancelled, the party planning committee took its budget and shifted its focus to everyone in the class, or 253 seniors.

A banner for each senior in the PHS Class of 2020 was hung by Princeton Public Utilities (PPU) crews on the main thoroughfares throughout town, said PPU Electric Department Superintendent Ryan Grant.

The banners cost approximately \$16,000. The city of Princeton and Princeton Public Utilities provided separate \$2,000 donations to support the project.

The Princeton City Council unanimously approved an additional \$1,700 in the form of



Tim Grant of Princeton Public Utilities prepared to install a senior banner on a light pole located on the city's main thoroughfare.

a Princeton Wine and Spirits grant to support the project. An initial \$300 in support was provided earlier as part of city funding that's awarded by the council for worthwhile community events.

Annually, the Princeton City Council budgets liquor store funds for such purposes or projects.

A project account was set up at a local bank, which

reached out immediately with the first donation.

The banner project required coordination with several agencies, namely PPU and the Princeton Public Utilities Commission, Princeton Public Schools, and the city of Princeton.

The effort also received plenty of community financial support.

Princeton Public Utili-

ties General Manager Keith Butcher said he was approached regarding banner project planning and logistics in early May.

"We felt that it was important for us to join with the entire community in celebrating this class especially considering all the challenges that they have faced this year," Butcher said.

PPU immediately began

planning how and where to install more than 250 individual banners around town, Butcher added.

Since a project of this size had not been done before, PPU coordinated with a Princeton-based banner supplier to identify the necessary additional mounting hardware needed for banner installation.

PPU staff also worked with a volunteer from the Senior Party Committee to plan the banner layout.

Recognizing the view of some banners could have been obstructed by nearby trees, PPU contacted Mille Lacs County for permission to do some minor tree trimming along Rum River Drive, Butcher said.

Princeton Public Works provided crews to do required tree trimming earlier this month, said Director Bob Gerold.

PPU, in coordination with the Senior Party Committee, will install and remove all the banners.

Butcher said the Princeton Public Utilities Commission approved its \$2,000 donation to the banner project during its Wednesday, May 27, meeting.

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The Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency reported member sales down 2.2 percent in March from the previous five-year average. The stay-at-home order was in place for all of April, when electric load was down 7.9 percent from the April five-year average.

The Agency said it was developing a deferred payment plan for members.

Kanabec County replaced more than 3,300 light fixtures and lamps with LED lighting in the past two years, spending \$54,000 but

Around the State



saving \$50,000 a year. With a \$25,000 rebate from **Mora Municipal Utilities**, the lighting replacement project will pay for itself in just over six months.

With the state's utilities having suspended disconnections, at least for a time during the governor's pandemic emergency orders, what will happen when that period ends has been on peoples'



photo courtesy of Delano Municipal Utilities

Summer help joins utilities

Delano Municipal Utilities (DMU) is in the midst of modernizing and sprucing up its power plant. That includes paint for certain parts of the plant. Part-time summer help, including Jackie Hanson, have joined in the work. Jackie is the daughter of DMU Senior Lineman Dan Hanson and a recent graduate of Delano High School. Utility work runs in the family and Jackie is reportedly interested in learning more about drinking water operations. She picked a great place to learn!

minds. The **New Ulm Public Utilities Commission** discussed the issue in May and proposed a business deferment program.

As of late May, the New Ulm utility reportedly had a total of approximately \$110,000 in question, with 57 percent of 147 customers two months behind in payments and subject to potential disconnection.

The **City of Buhl** has gone out for bids for a large street reconstruction and infrastructure project, including the replacement of 1,200 feet of storm sewer, 13,500 feet of six- and eight-inch water main, 26 hydrants, 230 water service connections, 8,500 feet of sanitary sewer, 37 manholes and 184 service connections.

The **City of Brainerd and Brainerd Public Utilities** are splitting the \$78,360 cost of a sanitary sewer inflow and infiltration study. The issue is particularly noticeable after significant rainfall, which causes increased load on the wastewater treatment system.

Theresa Slominski is the interim manager at **Elk River Municipal Utilities**. Former General Manager Troy Adams worked his last day at ERMU on May 22, before leaving to take his new position at Manitowoc (Wisc.) municipal utility.

The **Breckenridge City Council** passed a resolution and sent a letter to Gov. Tim Walz stating its belief that businesses need permission

ridge Public Utilities recently conducted an engineering study on the city's electrical infrastructure, which recommended several updates to the system. The Breckenridge City Council was expected to approve of both resolutions at their evening meeting on Monday, May 18.

Little more than a month after Red River Valley flood warnings were issued, **Moorhead Public Service** implemented voluntary watering restrictions effective May 20 through Oct. 1.

Lawn watering and car washing is limited to all customers by odd- or even-numbered street addresses and odd- or even-numbered date. Exemptions were made for gardens, flowers and newly-planted trees, shrubs and lawns.

A Willmar man driving a garbage truck caused damage to **Hutchinson Utilities** equipment when, while making a left turn, a water bottle fell from his dash and got stuck in the steering wheel, causing the truck to leave the road and strike cable and electric infrastructure. There were no injuries and the driver was cited.

Meanwhile, reconstruction of Hwy. 15/Main Street proceeds in Hutchinson. The City of Hutchinson is replacing sanitary and storm sewer and water as part of the project.

Rochester Public Utilities (RPU), along with the city Parks & Recreation

State: see facing page

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continued from facing page

department, and local private partners held a free tree giveaway Thursday, May 21 at a local grocery store.

RPU's Annual Arbor Day Celebration, scheduled for the end of April, was cancelled due to safety concerns for RPU employees, event partners and sponsors, and the public. In preparation for the event, 1,700 Serviceberry trees were already on order and will require planting in the near future. RPU, along with partners planned to give away all 1,700 Serviceberry trees at the drive-through event.

The **City of Fairmont** has hired Cathleen Reynolds as city administrator. She assumed her duties May 20.

Reynolds has a degree from the University of Denver, College of Law, and a bachelor's degree in political science from Colorado State University. She was most recently operations manager of Minnehaha Creek Watershed District in Minnetonka from March 2018 until Feb. 2020.

Other experience includes: court services manager in Escambia, Fla., attorney for the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Marine Corps.

The **City of Aitkin** is studying options to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant. Driving the process are expectations from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regarding future biological oxygen demand and total nitrogen regulations for the facility, which discharges into the Mississippi River.

The existing plant went

into service in 1963. Bringing it up-to-date to meet current and expected future regulations is anticipated to cost \$10-\$13 million.

Among the utilities affected by Great River Energy's decision to close its Coal Creek Station generation plant in 2022 is **Willmar Municipal Utilities**, which buys 20 percent of its power from GRE, under a contract that expires in 2026. GRE expects the move to lower its costs.

The **City of Hibbing** has imposed a hiring freeze for non-essential departments and eliminated summer

employment. The city council is considering a possible referendum question: Are you in favor of the resolution providing the Hibbing Public Utilities Commission may discontinue a portion of its District Heating System from receiving steam as its heat source? The referendum question is caught up with a number of issues, including the possibility of a mailed election.

Le Sueur County Commissioners May 19 approved new setback regulations for solar energy plants producing more than 100 kilowatts of energy in residential and recreational dis-

tricts. Solar energy plants of this size are now required to be 750 feet away from dwellings.

Additional setbacks for large solar farms include: one mile from a scenic byway and two miles from a municipality unless the developer receives written consent.

Adoption of the setback requirement followed a year-long moratorium on solar plant construction.

Smaller solar systems producing less than 100 kilowatts are permissible in all districts without a conditional use permit.

Minnesota receives federal aid to supplement its Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

The Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) announced May 12 that the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services released the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding.

Minnesota's allocation of \$8,998,379 represents about 1 percent of the LIHEAP CARES Act funds, said the DOC, while its typical annual allocation is 3.2 percent of the national appropriation.

Minnesota received the sixth smallest allocation per capita of any state, behind only Hawaii, California, Iowa, Wisconsin, and New York. For the CARES Act LIHEAP funding, pointed out DOC, Minnesota had the second largest change in ranking of per capita funding of any state in the country.

The funds will help the state Energy Assistance Program

serve eligible households. The DOC projects it can serve all households who apply by July 1, including those with Crisis and Energy Related Repair (ERR) requests. The state estimates it can serve up to 7,500 new applications for a total of \$3 million in primary

heat payments, \$13 million in Crisis benefits, and \$1 million in ERR benefits. It expects these amounts will match current program demand.



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Apprentice Lineworker Training

Our experienced instructor—James Monroe—provides on-site instruction.

Call MMUA Director of Training and Safety Mike Willetts at 612-802-8474 for more information.

HELP WANTED

MMUA Job Training & Safety Instructor – Electric and General Industry
Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) is accepting applications for an Electric Job Training & General Industry Safety Instructor.

Responsibilities:

- This position will travel throughout the state of Minnesota, South/North Dakota and Wisconsin instructing apprentice and journeyman lineworkers along with other city departments. As a member of the MMUA Safety Team, the successful candidate will have the opportunity to mold the new workforce and reinforce the journeyman's work habits daily.
- Instructor for MMUA's 4 year On-Site On-Demand Lineworker Apprenticeship Program
- Course instructor at MMUA Training Center, Marshall, MN.

Position Requirements

Applicant must have a strong technical lineworker background (Journeyman Lineworker). Graduate of accredited lineworker college preferred. Applicant must have a strong understanding of safety standards, including OSHA 1910.269 and 1926 Subpart V. Must have strong planning, organizational and time management skills. Must have good communication skills and enjoy public speaking. Applicant must have good computer skills; proficient in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Must have good driving record and be willing to travel.

Salary DOE

EOE

Submit resume, letter demonstrating your qualifications and salary requirements by July 16, 2020. Apply to: Mike Willetts, Director of Training & Safety, MMUA, 3131 Fernbrook Lane North, Suite 200, Plymouth, MN 55447-5337
Email: mwilletts@mmua.org

Director, Engineering & Field Operations

Owatonna Public Utilities, the supplier of electricity, water, and natural gas services in Owatonna, Minnesota, is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Director, Engineering & Field Operations. This new role is an expanded, senior management position that opened because of a promotion. OPU has op-

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erating revenue of \$60M, allowing us to serve 11,300 Electric customers along with water and natural gas. Working with eight direct reports and 25 indirect reports, this is a highly visible and influential position for an engineer seeking to grow their career to include broader management duties. Responsibilities will include Operations for all three utilities, including design, linework, system planning, GIS, facilities, fleet, and maintenance. Owatonna is an inviting, stable and healthy community in south central Minnesota. OPU is a trusted partner with loyal customers, solid community engagement and a healthy internal culture. The ideal candidate will have a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering, and is registered in MN or a reciprocal state as a Professional Engineer. Experience required: Prior management of an Electric Utility Distribution system, proficiency in Electric Engineering Principles, and experience in developing staff. As a senior management role, communication ability is required, paired with interpersonal skill and proven leadership. Five years of Electric Utility experience is required, along with Municipal (or equivalent) experience. We seek at least two years of supervisory experience. This position reports directly to the General Manager. OPU's compensation and benefits are competitive with a target annual salary for the role of \$151,400, dependent upon qualifications and experience.

Operations Superintendent/Electrical System Engineer

Glencoe Light and Power Commission is looking for an Operation Superintendent/Electrical System Engineer. Review of applications will begin May 26, 2020 and will continue until position is filled. Submit resume along with completed application form to: Light and Power Commission, 305 11th Street E., Glencoe, MN 55336, 320-864-5184 or email dave@glen-coelighandpower.com.

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New Member News

Nighthawk has joined MMUA as an Associate Member, and an Annual Sponsor.

According to the company's application, Adaptiv™ Scalable AMI by Nighthawk is the zero-infrastructure smart meter solution designed to deliver exceptional ROI and a seamless user experience. Adaptiv™ is reliable, easy to deploy and maintain, and provides the lowest cost of ownership of any AMI provider. The Nighthawk solution avoids the high overhead cost of private networks by using advanced mesh tech-



nology and robust public cellular communications, putting AMI within reach of any municipal or electric utility.

To learn more about Adaptiv™ call Lisa Fennell, regional sales director, at 612-963-6867 or email lisa.fennell@nighthawkcontrol.com

The company is located at 2304 Tarpley Road, Suite 110B, Carrollton, Texas, 75006.

You can learn more at nighthawkcontrol.com

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1 www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes499051.htm | 2 www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes499052.htm
3 www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes472152.htm



SMEC:

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to follow IEEE 1366 standard to define a major event, however, the calculation cannot be computed as SMEC does not have five years of daily SAIDI data. As an alternative, SMEC noted when major events occur at a specific SMEC cooperative, indicating that customers in the former IPL service territory are most likely affected by the Cooperative's major event.

In the months of January

through December 2019, SMEC's overall reliability indices are as follows:

SAIDI: 74.08

CAIDI: 84.44

SAIFI: 0.88

These reliability indices do not include major events that occurred during 2019, specifically the April 11-14 ice storm in southeastern Minnesota. Other outage events that are included in the reliability indices include outages that occurred in May, June and July relating to severe thunderstorm storms that mainly affected Benco Cooperative, Free-

SMEC reliability indices, by cooperative

	No. of SMEC Members	Members w Outage	Total Outage Minutes	Total Outage Incidents	SAIDI	SAIFI	SAIDI
Brown	529	360	21,780	4	41.17202	60.5	0.6805
BENCO	3,547	1,537	185,509	109	52.30034	120.6957	0.4333
Federated	1,657	3,068	307,120	108	185.347	100.1043	1.8515
Freeborn-Mower	13,630	4,223	327,573	594	24.03324	77.56879	0.3098
MiEnergy	2,679	3,579	331,789	96	123.8481	92.70437	1.3359
Minnesota Valley	3,478	3,462	208,512	67	59.9517	60.22877	0.9954
Nobles	1,605	4,709	148,573	144	92.56885	31.55	2.9340
People's	7,099	7,731	914,891	116	128.876	118.3406	1.0890
Redwood	2,019	5	299	3	0.148093	59.8	0.0025
Sioux Valley	884	1,487	63,338	97	71.64932	42.59449	1.6821
South Central	1,980	2,000	157,517	61	79.55396	78.75843	1.0101
Steele-Waseca	1,556	2,997	225,295	64	144.791	75.17345	1.9261
TOTAL	40,663	35,158	2,892,196	1,463	71.12598	82.26281	0.8646

Upcoming Events

MMUA has been forced to cancel or postpone several events this year, but as of early June we were still planning to hold these events.

Generation School

July 14-16, Multiple Sites
Hutchinson, Delano, Glencoe

Generation School offers valuable classroom and hands-on instruction plus networking opportunities for operators and technicians. Sign-up now!

Substation School

Rescheduled to August 4-6
Anoka

MMUA partners with Minnesota Rural Electric Association on this school. In addition to classroom instruction on a variety of topics, participants will also go behind the scenes and tour two of Anoka Municipal Utilities' substations, plus we will tour Federal Cartridge. Register by July 3 for best rate. Deadline to register is July 13.

Annual Summer Conference

August 24-26
Cragun's Resort, Brainerd

This conference has been moved back one week from its original date! 25. Hotel reservations being accepted.

For up-to-date information, see the 'Events' calendar at www.mmua.org
Cancelled: Minnesota Public Power Walleye Tournament.

Lineworkers Rodeo

September 15

Overhead School

September 15-18

MMUA Training Center, Marshall

Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA), along with our partners Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and American Public Power

Association (APPA), are pleased to offer the 2020 Overhead School. From the Apprentice to the Journeyman this School offers something for everyone.



Underground School

Rescheduled to Oct. 6-9

MMUA Training Center, Marshall

The Underground School offers a hands-on training track with a variety of training sessions and an advanced technical course. We offer this school with our partners MREA and APPA.

born-Mower Cooperative Services, MiEnergy Cooperative, People's Energy Cooperative and Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric.

Many SMEC cooperatives had an increase in planned outages in 2019. These planned outages were mainly related to voltage conversions from 4 kV to 12 kV systems. This distribution modernization is expected to increase reliability and power quality to the southern Minnesota region.

Notes:

1.) Tri-County Electric Cooperative merged with Hawkeye Electric Cooperative as of January 1, 2017. The new name of the cooperative is MiEnergy Cooperative.

SMEC concluded that the reliability indices for the former IPL service territory remained "approximately the same" as previous years since SMEC's cooperatives acquired the distribution system. The SMEC Board has reviewed the 2019 reliability indices of the former IPL service territory and has found the reliability indices to be "similar" to the reliable indices identified by the entire

cooperative membership for 2019. The Board finds the report acceptable and consistent with prior reliability history at the individual SMEC cooperatives.

2.) SMEC had ownership of the former Alliant territory for only five months in 2015. As SMEC's 2015 reliability indices did not include summer months when the majority of weather-related outages occur in Minnesota, evaluating the reliability indices of 2016, 2017 and 2018 against the reliability indices of 2015 is not a fair comparison. The average of the reliability indices includes 2016-2019.

SAIDI = Sum of All Customer Interruption Durations divided by the Total Number of Customers Served.

CAIDI = Sum of All Customer Interruption Durations divided by the Total Number of Customer Interruptions.

SAIFI = Total Number of Customers Interrupted divided by the Total Number of Customers Served.

The filing was made under MPUC Docket No. 14-322.

SMEC Historical Reliability Indices 2015-2019

	SAIDI	SAIFI	CAIDI
2015	15.02	55.75	0.27
2016	71.08	87.06	0.82
2017	62.39	81.20	0.77
2018	61.10	89.45	0.68
2019	71.13	82.26	0.86
Ave.	66.43	84.99	0.78

Pandemic response hits oil and solar sectors of energy industry hard

North Dakota oil production, according to state regulators, fell by approximately a third from mid-April to mid-May.

The coronavirus pandemic response also decimated the solar energy industry, as the Solar Energy Industry Association said it expected a 38

percent reduction of the industry workforce in the first half of 2020.

Since the pandemic began, Minnesota has lost more than 11,000 clean energy jobs—about 18 percent of the sector's workforce in the state, said Clean Energy Economy Minnesota on May 21.

Apprentice Lineworker Training On-site/On-demand Four-Year Career Development Program

This MMUA course allows the municipal utility employee who wants to learn more about the lineworker's trade to receive professional training from experienced instructors, right at the utility site.

Students enjoy cutting-edge academics, extensive hands-on training, along with tuition-free attendance to four MMUA schools.

