

'Madelia Strong'

Community works together to bounce back from devastating downtown blaze

by Steve Downer

Jim Maras got the call at 3:15 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 3. Buildings were on fire on Madelia's main street.

"By the time we got there, it was out of control," said Maras, the general manager of Madelia Municipal Light and Power.

It was a surreal scene, with heavy snow, howling winds and buildings engulfed in flames. The wind spread the flames but the heavy snow (10 inches fell during the storm) protected other nearby roofs.

Had roofs not been covered with snow, "It would have spread across the street," Maras said.

Heat was intense. Explosions drove shards of glass through the window of a bank across the street. The flames could be seen for miles.

The fire destroyed eight buildings, most of the north side of one block. Other buildings, still standing, may need to be torn down.

The main electrical panels in the burning buildings were "going off like fireworks," Maras said. The primary electrical line serving the buildings is on the north side of an alley. The northwest wind blew it away from the overhead electrical lines serving the buildings.

The local line crew cut down the triplex



Madelia's Main Street was quiet Feb. 17, two weeks after a devastating early morning fire that destroyed eight businesses outright and forced the shutdown or relocation of others.

overhead services, to protect the rest of the system and customers. As the flames spread, the crew moved and dropped more services.

As day dawned, rubble smoldered and light snow fell. The electrical crew was back on the scene. A Madelia-owned 69,000 volt

transmission line was buzzing loudly.

Insulators were covered with a quarter inch of ice and soot. Moving quickly to forestall any larger problems, the crew took steps to take the line out of service but keep

Madelia: see page 7 please

'Demand response' payments OK'd federally but not yet in Minnesota

by Steve Downer

The U.S. Supreme Court Jan. 25 ruled the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) acted within its authority to set rates for "demand response" payments to large electricity users that reduced electric use.

In 2009, a coalition of companies, including EnerNOC, asked the FERC to establish market rules that would put the value of demand response on equal footing with compensation for generation. The resulting rules, supporters argued, would encourage

customers to be more engaged in energy markets, promote efficiency, and facilitate the broader adoption of demand response.

In Order 745, issued by FERC in 2011, the commission set forth rules on compensating demand response resources in the energy markets run by regional transmission organizations and independent system operators. FERC said that demand response resources participating in an energy market run by a regional transmission organization (RTO) or independent system operator (ISO) must be compensated at the

full locational marginal price (LMP) as long as the demand-response resource passed a 'net benefits' test. That test will be passed when demand response resources are proven to be a cost-effective alternative to the next highest-bid generation resources, for purposes of balancing the energy market.

The American Public Power Association and a number of other electricity groups told the Supreme Court that FERC lacks jurisdiction under the Federal Power Act to reg-

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National Leaders

Minnesotans continue to play prominent roles on APPA Policy Makers Council

Gary Nansen of Detroit Lakes and Carol Laumer of Willmar have been named to the American Public Power Association (APPA) Policy Makers Council (PMC).

"We are excited to welcome Laumer and Nansen as members to the PMC and look forward to working more closely with them during their tenure," said Forrest Sholars, APPA's Grassroots & PAC Manager. "I am confident that, working together, we can give public power an even stronger voice on Capitol Hill."

Laumer and Nansen were selected to represent our region for a three-year term. Owatonna Mayor Tom Kuntz continues to serve on the PMC and is chair.

The PMC is made up of 40 locally elected and appointed officials from public power communities across the country. Its mission is to assist APPA in moving legislation forward that is important to the public power electric utilities nationwide. The commitment of Laumer and Nansen to public power and

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photo by Steve Downer

Meter School

MMUA held its annual Basic Metering Pre-Conference and Meter School Feb. 16-19 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. The popular school featured a mix of hands-on and classroom training. Here, Aaron Nelson and Steve Hillenbrand of Willmar Municipal Utilities and Lincoln Hooper of St. Peter Municipal Utilities (from left to right) took a break from their training. For more on the school, see page 6.

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Farmers Cooperative subsidiary to provide natural gas service in three cities

by Steve Downer

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Feb. 26 approved a Firm Gas Transportation Agreement between Greater Minnesota Transmission (GMT) and United Natural Gas (UNG), a subsidiary of United Farmers Cooperative (UFC).

GMT will construct approximately 36 miles of new transmission line from its new

proposed town border station located on the Hutchinson Gas Transmission intrastate pipeline, near Lafayette. GMT will construct a mainline to transport gas from its town border station to interconnection points with UNG. UNG will operate a distribution system to provide service to the Lafayette, Klossner, and Courtland areas (near New Ulm).

The pipeline will be constructed with mostly 4-inch and some 6-inch high-density polyethylene ("HDPE") pipe. All of the HDPE pipe for the project is designed and will be tested and installed to operate at 100 psi. The pipeline will initially operate at 90 psi.

UNG will procure its own gas supply and construction facilities to make retail service available. UNG proposes to purchase its natural gas supply at the Northern Border Pipeline/Hutchinson interconnection. In addition to paying GMT's transportation rates, UNG will pay Hutchinson's transportation rates.

Terms of the agreement are substantially similar to those in previously-approved contracts for transport near Twin Valley/Mahnomen, Cannon Falls, Prairie Island, Barnesville, and Ulen, as well as to the proposed contracts for transport to the Beltrami/Fertile area and to Red Lake Falls.

The financial terms reflect

pricing based on the estimated cost to complete the new construction to transport gas to the new interconnects with UNG, with costs being recovered through both demand charges and commodity charges. UNG is solely responsible for the costs associated with the project.

Pursuant to state law, GMT had to obtain the Commission's approval of any contract establishing the rates, terms, and conditions of service and facilities being provided by an intrastate pipeline in order for such a contract to be effective.

If UNG wishes to be not regulated by the MPUC, it must file a request for a small natural gas utility franchise exemption. Each participating municipality must issue the utility franchise license for UNG to provide natural gas services in its community.

UNG plans to provide service to a number of industrial customers that constitute approximately 53 percent of the project load. Of that percentage, approximately 37 percent is from customers that are outside municipal borders.

UNG is a wholly-owned subsidiary of UFC. The Minnesota Department of Energy Resources and the MPUC noted they had a level of familiarity with UNG due to its operation of the Brownston Natural Gas Pipeline. UFC has served the Lafayette, Klossner, and Courtland areas, as well as other communities, with a number of services for 100 years. The cooperative said it seeks to enhance the economic stability of the target communities by providing another source of affordable energy.



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Chief Justice Roberts denies request to 'stay' Mercury and Air Toxics Standards

While the U.S. Supreme Court's 'stay' on the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Clean Power Plan' has grabbed most of the industry headlines, other issues are also in play. Among those issues is the EPA's Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule.

A group of 20 states on Feb. 24 petitioned the Supreme Court to stay implementation of the MATS rule. The following day, Chief Justice John Roberts asked the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide a response to

the states' petition by March 2. Chief Justice Roberts then, on March 3, denied the request to block enforcement of the MATS rule.

On June 29, 2015, the Supreme Court had determined that EPA had acted unreasonably when it deemed costs irrelevant in making the "appropriate and necessary" finding supporting the rule.

The death of Justice Antonin Scalia earlier this month, observers had noted, could hurt the states' chances of getting a stay.

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Gov. Dayton among those signing energy pact

Editor's note: Seventeen governors, including Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton, Feb. 16 signed what was titled the Governors' Energy Accord. Much of this accord deals with electric issues. A shortened version of this accord is included here:

American prosperity has always depended on embracing new ideas and technologies. By deploying renewable, cleaner and more efficient energy solutions, we can make our national economy more productive and resilient. These technologies help to diversify energy sources that power our economy and reduce dependence on foreign energy sources while securing abundant, domestically produced electricity. Embracing new energy solutions modernizes our infrastructure and transportation systems, decreases air pollution, and supports the growth of innovative American companies.

Current challenges also demand these new energy solutions. Extreme weather events, such as floods,

droughts, wildfires and sea-level rise, can negatively impact electric reliability and the economy. New energy solutions can provide more durable and resilient infrastructure, and enable economic growth, while protecting the health of our communities and natural resources. These improvements will help secure a safe and prosperous future for our country.

We recognize that now is the time to embrace a bold vision of the nation's energy future. And to do so, states are once again poised to lead. We join together, despite unique opportunities and challenges in each state, to embrace a shared vision of this future.

Our states will diversify energy generation and expand clean energy sources.

Expanding energy efficiency and renewable energy in a cost-effective way strengthens our states' economic productivity, reduces air pollution and avoids energy waste. Integrating more of these clean energy sources into our elec-

tricity grids can also improve the flexibility and stability of these grids. Promoting energy savings through efficiency and conservation programs is the fastest, most reliable and often cheapest way to meet our energy needs. Technologies that capture solar, wind, hydroelectric and geothermal power have become viable and cost-effective to integrate into our states' energy portfolios. These technologies are already providing energy to millions of Americans while reducing energy waste and air pollution. Amidst decreasing costs of renewable energy, and rapid advances in efficiency throughout entire energy systems, our states will diversify our energy portfolios for economic, health and environmental benefits.

Our states will modernize energy infrastructure.

Modern distribution and transmission grids are required to give consumers more control over their own energy use, increase electricity reliability, and integrate more renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies into our energy systems.

Our states will encourage clean transportation options. Hundreds of thousands of electric vehicles, and tens of millions of vehicles using alternative fuels, are driving on American roads, and fuels such as natural gas, biofuels and hydrogen are increasingly available to power vehicles. By supporting needed infrastructure development, incentives and policies when appropriate, our states will encourage expanded use of these new technologies.

The governors also pledged that their states will: plan for this energy transition; work together to make these transformational policy changes; and help secure a stronger national energy future.

The governors also said federal agencies must work closely with states to tailor technical support, funding and research and avoid presupposing the best types of assistance.

APPA supports Supreme Court decision to 'stay' EPA's Clean Power Plan

The American Public Power Association (APPA) Feb. 10 said it supported the U.S. Supreme Court's Feb. 9 decision to allow the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to review the legal challenges to the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan (CPP) prior to its implementation.

The 5-4 order was issued without explanation. The CPP is now on hold until the Supreme Court hears the case and issues a final decision, or denies a request to hear an appeal. A final resolution might not come until 2017. The appeals court is scheduled to take up arguments on the case in June.

Many observers have noted that the court's action was unusual, indicating it has doubts about the CPP's legality.

Regardless of their position on the issues, said APPA, almost all parties agree that implementation of the CPP will result in

broad and transformative changes to the electricity industry. Thus, resolving these highly controversial issues will significantly reduce the uncertainty of the program and, ultimately, the costs to consumers. APPA looks forward to a meticulous review and consideration of these matters by the court.

In the interim, noted APPA, public power utilities will continue their substantial progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through greater use of renewable, nuclear, and other low- and non-emitting sources of electricity generation, and the implementation of energy efficiency and conservation programs.

The Clean Power Plan, aimed at fossil-fueled generation, sets carbon dioxide limits for each state to achieve an overall emissions reduction of 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. The compliance period was to begin in 2022.

MMUA, members travel to tell public power story in Washington

MMUA staff and member representatives advanced the public power agenda at the American Public Power Association (APPA) Legislative Rally, held March 7-9 in Washington, D.C.

Meetings with senators and congressional staff highlighted the meeting (more on this in next month's edition). Our main issues include the EPA's Clean Power Plan, Community Solar, Distributed Generation, Energy Capacity Markets and Tax-Exempt Financing. If you would like to find out more about MMUA's positions on these issues, go to our website.

Our 'Day on the Hill' was March 9, when we hosted our senators and House staff. MMUA staff explained generally to our delegation mem-

bers how certain laws and regulations affect utilities in Minnesota. Then the members themselves shared their stories of how these issues affect municipal utilities.

Prior to meeting with our elected representatives, on March 8, MMUA government relations staff held an issues briefing, to review the issues to be discussed. MMUA thanks its members who were willing to step up and share stories of how these national issues have a real-life impact back home.

Earlier in the day March 8, the APPA Legislative and Resolutions Committee considered eight resolutions. MMUA and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) jointly sponsored a resolution in support of Legislation to Address the Technical Flaws in the Source Energy Methodology Used by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency.

MRES is also among the sponsors of a resolution in support of Improving the Hydropower Licensing Process.

The time in Washington also included leadership meetings, seminars and a welcome reception.

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customers or aggregators for curtailing electric consumption, because Congress reserved that authority to state and local regulators who are responsible for retail matters.

APPA joined in the brief with the Electric Power Supply Association, the Edison Electric Institute, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and various other groups.

A number of hurdles remain for demand response advocates, however.

FERC limited its rule on allowing outside aggrega-

tors from soliciting customers of utilities that distribute less than 4 million megawatt hours annually. And, as far as those utilities are concerned, FERC allows the state or local regulating agency to determine whether it will allow outside aggregators. (In response to this, many city councils and utilities commissions in municipal utility cities have adopted ordinances prohibiting demand response aggregating on their utility systems.)

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) has ruled on the issue several times. In 2010, it prohibited bidding of demand response

into organized electric markets by aggregators of retail customers (ARCs). On Aug. 31, 2012, it allowed expansion of “cost-effective” demand response investments by state-regulated utilities, including permission to work with aggregators of retail customers (ARCs) “when doing so can expand demand response participation, cost-effectiveness, or both.”

Arguing to allow the aggregation of demand response in Minnesota were EnerNOC, U.S. Energy Services and the Large Industrial Group. Various environmental groups also filed comments, as did the investor-owned utilities.

In joint comments, the utilities noted that “limited information exists regarding the effects of ARCs on prices, reliability, nonparticipating customers, utility operations, and utility-administered demand response programs.” ARC participation is most commonly found in states with deregulated retail electricity markets, noted the utilities, who said Minnesota already has “very robust levels of utility demand response participation . . .” Because of this, the utilities said, allowing ARCs into Minnesota markets must be carefully considered “because additional demand response benefits are uncertain but implementation costs are virtually guaranteed.”

The environmental groups asked for comments from the utilities concerning the ability

Demand response incorporated into MISO wholesale markets

While the prospects for demand response remain somewhat murky in Minnesota, the Mid-Continent Independent System Operator (MISO) has been working to incorporate demand response into wholesale electric markets.

MISO provides open-access transmission service and monitors the high voltage transmission system throughout the Midwest and South and in Manitoba, Canada, and operates one of the world’s largest real-time energy markets.

MISO said it has, over the past five years, been working through the ‘Demand Response Working Group’ to incorporate Demand Response Resources (DRR) into its markets. “DRRs participate in our market every day,” said MISO, “lowering the cost of energy for all consumers.” DRRs can qualify as planning resources to be used to meet a Market Participant’s Planning Reserve Margin (PRM) requirements.

MISO notes on its website that with Order 745, “the FERC set out a rationale describing the market conditions under which reductions in load provide net benefits to the energy market.” Pursuant to that Order, MISO developed a methodology to determine the required monthly price threshold.

Among MISO states, it noted, only Illinois permits aggregators of retail customers (ARCs) to participate.

for demand response to play a role in integrating renewable generation by contributing to ancillary services. These groups, along with EnerNOC, argued that demand response resources could play a larger role in balancing the intermittent nature of renewable energy generation.

The MPUC said it “would not modify its prohibition against ARCs from bidding demand response resources into MISO at this time. The uncertainty surrounding possible negative effects of ARC market participation remains, and there is not yet a

concrete proposal that would permit the Commission and the interested parties to observe and evaluate the effects in a controlled scenario.”

However, additional comments were sought, particularly on the issue of the potential for demand response to aid the integration of renewable generation. The MPUC in an April 16, 2013 order, accepted the utilities’ comments and declined the requests of EnerNOC and the Large Industrial Group to relax its prohibition on ARCs operating autonomously in Minnesota.

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Xcel granted variances from state billing error rules

Editor’s note: Xcel Energy has recently requested and received permission for variances from state billing error regulations. The state’s investor-owned utilities have done this routinely in recent years. While the billing error regulations apply only to state-regulated utilities, municipal utilities may want to consider the regulations and developments in this area when considering their own policies. In addition, the circumstances around the particular errors may be instructive for other utilities to consider.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Feb. 12 approved two variances.

In the first case, ‘Customer A’ contacted the company, Aug. 14, 2015, after discovering they were not receiving a credit for their (load management) Saver’s Switch. The customer requested a Saver’s Switch in May 2007, but the installation was canceled by the third party electrician because the customer’s gate was

locked and the electrician could not access the property. The customer later granted access to the electrician the Saver’s Switch was installed in July 2007.

The Saver’s Switch order was canceled in the company’s system, but completed in the field by the third party electrician. No paperwork was provided to the company confirming the installation; therefore, Xcel was unaware that a Saver’s Switch had been installed. The error was corrected on October 9, 2015, and Xcel requested to credit the customer back to July 3, 2007, the date the Saver’s Switch was installed.

The second case also involved a mix-up with load management switches. In October, 2015, it was discovered that a third party electrician must have erred in 2010 when he concluded that two switches had been removed from the Company’s system.

The error was corrected and the company requested to credit the customer back to June 1, 2010—the start

of the Saver’s Switch control season, and the first bill cycle that was affected by the removal of the Saver’s Switches from the company’s system.

Because the period over which these errors occurred exceeded the three-year timeframe identified in Xcel’s Electric Rate Book and the MPUC’s Billing Errors Rule, a onetime variance to the rules and tariff provisions was required to provide an additional credit to the affected customers.

In October 2015, the company applied for a variance in three cases. One credit variance totaled over \$4,000, another over \$2,400 and for a third over \$13,000.

In each case, discovery of the error followed a high bill complaint.

In the most unusual case, after receiving a complaint, the company exchanged meters and discovered that ‘Customer C’ and another customer located in another city were being charged for each

Variance: see facing page

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their experience with the political process will be a great asset to the PMC, said APPA.

Laumer is Vice President of the Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission and Business Development Director at Rice Home Medical. She is also President of Willmar Downtown Development (formerly the Willmar Design Center, the first nationally accredited Main Street program in Minnesota). She is also active in a number of other groups and causes locally.

Nansen is a Professional Civil Engineer with diversified experience in engineering and municipal consulting, serving as the appointed Detroit Lakes City Engineer since 1992. He has more than 32 years of experience in planning, design, management and supervision of municipal projects. He was principle

Variance:

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other's usage due to their meter numbers being switched in the billing system. The meters were corrected in the system which lowered Customer C's consumption substantially, due to the fact that the customer located in the other city owns a hot tub and heated pool. The other customer was back-billed for the allowable one-year period.

In the other two cases, customers were overcharged due to an incorrect application of a rate schedule.

Minn. R. 7820.3800 governs errors related to electric bills, and provides in part:

When a customer has been overcharged . . . as a result of incorrect reading of the meter, incorrect application of rate schedule, incorrect connection of the meter, application of an incorrect multiplier or constant or other similar reasons, the amount of the overcharge shall be refunded to the customer... the utility shall calculate the difference between the amount collected for service rendered and the amount the utility should have collected for service rendered, plus interest, for the period beginning three years before the date of discovery... If the date the error occurred can be fixed with reasonable certainty, the remedy shall be calculated on the basis of payments for service rendered after that date, but in no event for a period beginning more than three years before the discovery of an overcharge...

owner of Larson-Peterson & Associates prior to the acquisition of the company by Ulteig Engineers and served as the Ulteig Office Manager and Vice President for the Municipal Services in the Detroit Lakes office. Currently, he is an instructor at the Civil Engineering Technology Program at MSCTC-Detroit Lakes. He has served as a Detroit Lakes Public Utilities Commissioner since 2011.

Members of the PMC are expected to attend two APPA-hosted annual events:



Carol Laumer



Gary Nansen

the Legislative Rally and the PMC Summer Meeting. The Legislative Rally was held at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, D.C., on March 7-9.

The PMC met during the Legislative Rally on Monday, March 7 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the Grand Hyatt.

PMC members are also asked to participate in a monthly 30-minute legislative briefing call and respond to action alerts to contact legislators as needed.

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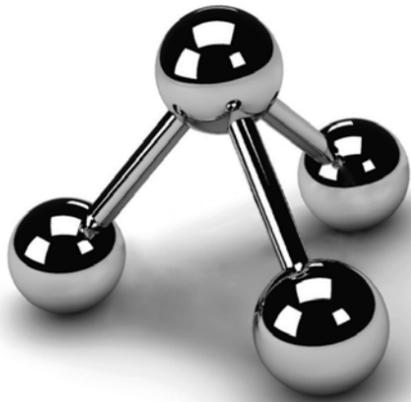
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Meter School features variety of training

MMUA held its annual Basic and Advanced Meter Schools at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. The Basic Meter Pre-Conference was held Feb. 16-17 and the Meter School Feb. 17-19. A total of 44 students attend the Pre-Conference and 60 the Meter School. Thirty-four

Minnesota municipal utilities and one South Dakota municipal participated, along with 10 electric cooperatives.

The Basic Pre-Conference was aimed at personnel with little metering experience. Topics included Single Phase Meters, Meter Safety, Mounting Meter Sockets, Single



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A.J. Childs of Blue Earth, left, and Tommy Lee of Elbow Lake worked together at the metering wall.

Phase Socket Wiring, Troubleshooting and Power Theft.

The Meter School used a combination of self-corrected exams, interactive classroom and hands-on training to present and reinforce the instruction.

A favorite of the school is a troubleshooting challenge, where instructors create problems or re-create problem scenarios encountered by the utility and students work through issues to solve the problem. Questions and answers were an ongoing part of the school.

Flexibility was also built in, to allow students to progress at a pace that fit their abilities.

Instructors included Larry Chapman of Chapman Metering, along with a number of his staff people. They were joined by Scott Murfield, who



Pictured above: Enjoying the training were Jake Sell, Elias Constans and Cody Hansen of electric cooperatives and Luke Wilhelmi of MREA, from left to right. At right: classroom training.



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has 30 years in the electric utility business and holds certifications for Journeyman Lineman, Journeyman Electrician and Loss Control Professional. Most recently, he was Regional Safety Coordinator for MMUA until his retirement.

The class included an evening Metering Product Show at a Marshall hotel, and a variety of classroom and hands-on training.

Stray voltage ruling stands

The Minnesota Court of Appeals Feb. 22 affirmed a jury decision in a lawsuit over stray voltage that awarded Pine River dairy farmers \$6.3 million in damages.

The appeal was filed by Crow Wing Power, which was found negligent in October 2014.

The damages awarded to the complainants makes theirs the largest verdict in a stray voltage case in Minnesota history.

Madelia:

continued from front page

the lights on. Two electrical generators were started in the power plant (less than a half block from the fire site) and put online. A few blocks away, other electrical crew members opened the transmission line switch, taking it out of service. The lights didn't even blink.

Linemen scrubbed the insulators clean on several poles, including one directly behind the power plant.

With the insulators cleaned and ready to work properly, the line was placed back into service and the generators taken off line. This drill occurred twice during the days following the fire.

"Nobody in town knows we did that," Maras said.

Maras expects the disaster to reduce the utility electrical sales by approximately \$2,500 a month. His main concern is rebuilding Main Street.

"As Madelians, Main Street is our bragging point," he said. The brick-faced storefronts were full, some with second- or third-generation businesses. Many buildings had quality apartments on a second level.

"There is no doubt in my mind it will be rebuilt, better



A sign in the Madelia Times-Messenger window sums up the determination of citizens and businesses to rebuild main street. The newspaper office is located across the street from the fire scene.

than ever," Maras said.

Most of the main street businesses displaced by the fire are back in business, from other locations. The main concern is finding a place for a popular restaurant, so it can re-open quickly.

"The city and other business owners are working together like you wouldn't believe," Maras said. Most of that work by the business people is actually to help other businesses, he noted.



MMUA file photo

Main street in Madelia as it appeared in happier times, April 15, 2015. The appearance of its main thoroughfare, with not one empty storefront, has been a point of pride for Madelians.

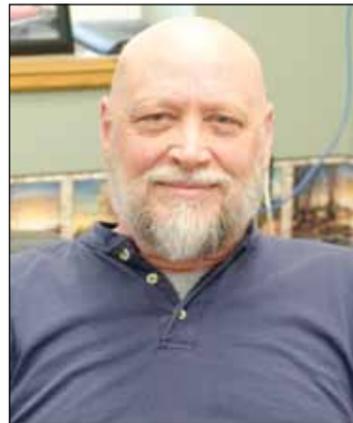
Clean-up costs will be shared based on square footage.

There were no deaths or injuries. Cause of the fire had not been determined as of this writing.

Along with Madelia Fire Department personnel, crews were on the scene from Butterfield, Hanska, Lake Crystal, La Salle, Lewisville and St. James.

Relief effort underway

The Madelia Chamber of Commerce noted that there "has been an overwhelming outpouring of support" in the wake of the fire. Several organizations are involved. Madelia Strong, a local non-profit, has formed and is working with Region 9 Area, Inc. and the Southern Minnesota Ini-



Madelia Municipal Light & Power General Manager Jim Maras.

tiative Foundation (SMIF). Region Nine Development Commission received \$30,000 from Blandin Foundation and will be using these funds to help the City of Madelia throughout the rebuilding

process and to put together a comprehensive plan. As of this writing, SMIF and its partners have raised over \$200,000 for the Disaster Recovery Fund for businesses and building owners affected by the fire.

Links and more information can be found on the Madelia Chamber of Commerce website.

"We are overwhelmed and touched by the generous donations made to our community," said Madelia City Administrator Jane Pieggras. "We want to sincerely express our gratitude to those who have contributed and to SMIF for setting up this fund. The donations will help our business people devastated by our recent fire."

Emergency generators must report to EPA

The American Public Power Association (APPA) March 3 reminded its members that owners of emergency generators used in emergency demand response programs, or operated to respond to local reliability, electrical grid voltage, or deviation issues, are required to submit an electronic report to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by March 31, 2016.

On May 1, 2015, the D.C. Circuit vacated provisions of the reciprocating internal combustion engine (RICE) rule allowing RICE engines to operate for up to 50 hours per year to mitigate local transmission and/or distribution limitations in a local area or region. The DC Circuit subsequently granted EPA's request for a voluntary remand of these provisions to EPA. APPA Regulatory Affairs and Engineering Services staff continues to work with stakeholders to explore approaches that would allow limited emergency operations for reliability reasons, as EPA moves toward issuing a new proposed rulemaking. We anticipate EPA will issue a draft rule in the Spring of 2016. APPA plans to comment on the proposed rule once it is issued.

The report form can be accessed through EPA's Central

Data Exchange at <https://www.epa.gov/cdx>. The annual report must cover 2015 operations. For more information, go to: <http://www3.epa.gov/ttn/atw/icengines/>

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The New Ulm Public Utilities Commission has recommended to the City Council a change in the City Code to allow for gas utility sales outside the city's corporate boundary.

The Public Utilities currently cannot sell utilities outside of the city limits. This code was established to create an incentive for properties to be annexed and be included on the tax rolls. Considerations for the policy change include possible encroachment from other utilities, which could hinder future growth potential. In

**Around
the State**



addition, the change could become a revenue source.

Because gas utilities were the service most likely to face encroachment, according to local press reports, the motion was limited to this single service. The PUC would have full discretion on whether to grant a gas hookup. The PUC could refuse a gas hookup if it were not cost effective to the department. In addition the PUC could pass on

Austin Utilities effectively tells customers about logo

Austin Utilities is preparing to move into a modern new facility located in Austin's industrial park just north of I-90. The utility has also unveiled a new logo. The old logo was around as long as anybody could remember. Even veteran staff members aren't sure how it originated. The utility is excited about its new building, new logo and its new tagline – Connections for Better Living.

"As a municipal utility, we believe this is at the heart of our business," said an article in a utility newsletter. "Not only making connections though our electric, natural gas and water services, but also



The new Austin Utilities logo (above) and the old logo, below.

making connections in the community through the various organizations Austin Utilities and its staff are involved with. We live and work in this community and we want it to be a great place to be – just like you do. We hope you enjoy our new look as we continue to make Connections for Better Living."




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

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

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connection charges to the customer.

Growing demand in **Rochester** is spurring a \$44 million, 13.1 mile expansion of Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation (MERC) natural gas pipelines. The improvement will meet an increase in demand created in part by the \$6 billion Destination Medical Center plans. The project is designed to meet an almost 20 percent increase in demand during the next 10 years.

The proposed route mostly follows existing roads and pipeline. MERC has applied for route permit and cost recovery with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

The project is also expected to trigger a \$55 million to \$60 million expansion of the Northern Natural Gas Pipeline.

A 46-megawatt, natural gas-fueled power plant is planned for **Shakopee**. The plant will be located on a six-acre parcel sold to the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency by Canterbury Park. The project is expected to be built this year. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has issued an air permit and the city has issued a conditional use permit. The power plant will be interconnected with the Shakopee Public Utilities system.

Rates are increasing in Shakopee for residential sanitary sewer, storm water drainage and electricity. The wastewater increase is due to an increase in treatment costs. The residential electric increase involves the monthly service rate increasing from \$8 to \$9 per month. Commercial and industrial electric customers will see a

monthly increase, which will vary depending on customer class.

The **City of Windom Municipal Utility Commission** has approved an electric rate increase of 3.5 percent. The rate change followed receipt of an electric rate study. Among the reasons for the change: loss of a large customer, increased wholesale power costs and capital expenditures, including a substation improvement project.

The **Brainerd Public Utilities Commission** has approved an economic development rate, which gives large users a rate discount during their first five years as BPU customers. The rate applies to general service demand and large light and power class customers. The costs of the discount will be divided among the other customers in the specific rate classes. The rate discount is expected to benefit BPU by bringing in new customers and improving load factor.

The **Jackson City Council** has approved a new rate class for electric customers whose peak demand exceeds 40 kilowatts, but whose usage is for sports facilities at which lighting is only used after 6 p.m. (off-peak hours). The rate was set at \$0.17 per kilowatt-hour with a \$24 monthly service charge. The new rate class was recommended by the local public utilities commission.

The **Nashwauk Public Utilities Commission** has approved an amendment to the master development



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Contact person is Chris Bollinger, Manager of Alliance Development, Central.

He can be reached at Cell: 816-806-8537 Email: chris.bollinger@anixter.com

The company is located at: 4600 Kansas Ave Kansas City, Kansas 66106 Branch 3442 Office: 913-202-6945

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City of Wessington Springs Electric Dept.

101 Wallace Ave South Box 443 Wessington Springs, SD 57382 Phone: 605-539-1691 / Fax: 605-539-0249 Contact: Roger Larson, Electric Superintendent wessprsd@heartlandpower.org

City of Parker

290 North Main PO Box 265 Parker, SD 57053 Phone: 605-297-4453 / Fax: 605-297-2149 www.parkersd.org Contact: Adam Jans, Finance Officer financeofficer@parkersd.org

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vfindley@aepes.com The company is located at 155 W Nationwide Blvd, Suite 500, Columbus, OH 43215 Phone: 614-583-6406 / Fax: 614-583-1611

Around:

continued from facing page

agreement with Essar Steel and the city council. The agreement allows Essar to split a \$300,000 service fee that it owes the city annually into quarterly payments.

The Austin City Council has selected the contractor to install an 80-kilowatt photovoltaic system at a local nature center interpretive building.

The cities of Keewatin and Nashwauk and Lone Pine Township are seeking a United States Department of Agriculture grant for a joint wastewater treatment proj-

ect. The local governments are holding regular meetings to push the project forward and are also seeking state bonding funds.

The Grand Marais Public Utilities Commission has approved replacing a number of street lights along Hwy. 61 with light emitting diode lights, which are expected to last longer and use less electricity.

Adrian Public Utilities is among the utilities that communicates regularly with its customers. In a recent newspaper article, finances and improvement projects were discussed. The article also pointed out that in the

decade between 2005-2014, purchased power costs increased 113 percent.

No local rate increase is planned for 2016, but it appears the same cannot be said for 2017.

The Mahanomen city council held a special workshop session Feb. 16 at which Otter Tail Power Company made a presentation regarding its request for renewal of the city's electric distribution franchise. City officials have met with representatives from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation to discuss a grant application to conduct a feasibility study for a municipally-owned electric utility.

The Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians has signed an agreement with the Winkelman Building Corp., Innovative Power Systems Inc. and the Olson Energy Corp., for a three-phase solar development.

According to information from Red Lake officials, the first phase consists of developing between \$20-\$30 million in solar energy installations on various buildings, including Seven Clans Casinos in Red Lake, Thief River Falls and Warroad, as well numerous other facilities.

Phase two of the project will focus on the development of solar energy farms on ceded lands, equating to 40-100 acres of solar panels.

Also envisioned is solar energy training for a future workforce, and a plan to develop a plant, which will produce solar equipment for industry while providing jobs for the Red Lake Nation.

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If Lineworker safety and training is your passion and you want to take your skills to the next level, here is your opportunity. The Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association is accepting applications for Training Center Coordinator. The MMUA training center is located in Marshall, MN with the primary focus of high voltage lineworker and natural gas technical training. Responsibilities are to supervise day to day operations, plan and organize training activities, work with committees, vendors and suppliers. The training center coordinator may be asked to travel to electric utilities located in the northwestern and south central parts of Minnesota to facilitate technical electrical training. Applicants must possess a strong background in power linework, OSHA compliance and possess strong teaching skills. Applicant must have strong technical lineworker and organizational skills. Salary DOE. Application deadline March 11. Apply to: Mike Willetts, MMUA, 3025 Harbor Lane N., Suite 400, Plymouth, MN 55447

City Administrator
City of Rushford (1,786), located in Southeastern Minnesota, is accepting applications for the position of City Administrator. Full service community: airport, ambulance, fire, police, library, EDA, electric, water and sewer utilities. Responsibilities include serving as chief administrative officer, economic development and carrying out the directives of the City Council. Collaborative, consensus building management style for communication between the City Council, department heads and boards, commissions and contractors. Minimum qualifications: bachelor's degree with coursework in public administration, planning, community development, business, finance or a related field and five years of professional public sector experience in administration, planning, community development or a related field. Master's degree in one of the above fields may substitute for two years' experience. Salary range \$59,881 to \$90,324. DOQ, plus benefits. Contact Rushford City Hall, PO Box 430, Rushford, MN 55971 at 507-864-2444 for application and/

see next page please

or information on selection process. Application and supporting documentation also available at www.rushford.govoffice.com. Application deadline is March 25, 2016.

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Business Manager-Utilities

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of New Ulm, MN (pop. 13,500) is currently seeking a full-time Business Manager – Utilities who will be responsible to plan, organize, and direct the operations of our five utility divisions: water/steam, wastewater treatment, electric production, electric distribution, and natural gas. Our utility, with an annual budget of 42M, requires demonstrated leadership, organizational, communication, and personnel management skills, as well familiarity with the technologies associated with the utilities industry. A Bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, engineering, or a closely related field and extensive supervisory and managerial background in government or public or private sector utility environment are required. This position provides a compensation range of \$113,089.60 to \$118,705.60 and a competitive benefit program. New Ulm, the "City of Charm and Tradition," is nestled just 90 miles southwest of the Twin Cities in the heart of the scenic Minnesota River Valley. New Ulm is the county seat of Brown County. Residents enjoy a sound economy with

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a variety of industries and a solid agricultural base. The City is remarkable for its excellent public and parochial schools, a private college, a vibrant retail presence, comprehensive medical care, and numerous recreational opportunities. Major employers in New Ulm include Kraft Foods, 3M, New Ulm Medical Center (Allina Health), Independent School District 88, J & R Schugel Trucking, and the Department of Natural Resources. Other prominent companies include ILPEA Industries, Associated Milk Producers, Hy-Vee, and MRCI Vocational Rehabilitation. Submit resume and completed application to: Human Resources Office, 100 N. Broadway, New Ulm, MN 56073 or email personnel@ci.new-ulm.mn.us. To learn more, download an application, and for the full job description visit us at www.ci.new-ulm.mn.us or call 507-359-8236. Application deadline is 4:30 PM on March 11th. EOE

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

National APPA E&O Technical Conference in Minneapolis features local flavor

The American Public Power Association (APPA) will hold its Engineering & Operations Technical Conference April 3 – 6 at the Minneapolis Hyatt Regency on Nicollet Mall.

The national meeting will have a decidedly local flavor.

Former Rochester Public Utilities General Manager John Miner, will present on several topics, including Maintenance of High Voltage Electrical Distribution Systems. Miner is currently president of Collaborative

Learning, Inc.

MMUA's Bob Jagusch and Larry Koshire, retired General Manager, Rochester Public Utilities, will speak on Environmental Then and Now: It's Not Your Parents' Power Company. You are invited to join this discussion of current and future regulations and how they impact the evolution of our industry.

You will also have an opportunity to shape one of public power's most critical resources: The APPA Safety Manual. Engage in robust dialogue with members of the Safety Manual "SMRT Force" committee, including Mike Willetts, MMUA Director of Job Training & Safety. Your ideas will help inform the update of the 16th edition of the APPA Safety Manual.

No current meeting would be complete without a look

at the Clean Power Plan and how it might change the way utilities do business. Doug Scott of Minneapolis, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, Great Plains Institute, will be among those discussing the implications of the CPP with experts and colleagues. Get up to speed on federal and state implementation plans. Hear how other states and regions are preparing for the new performance standards.

Public power utilities continue to see employees they've trained—with much effort and cost—leave for higher paying jobs in other sectors of the industry. How can you stop the exodus? Get some ideas during a session on Best Practices in Workforce Development and Retention, led by Troy Adams, General

Manager, Elk River Municipal Utilities. Discover how other utilities are managing workforce issues and trying out new ideas to retain valuable staff.

Big renewable generation projects by larger utilities often make the news, but that doesn't mean they're the only players in the game. Public power's record of innovation and responsiveness to community needs has inspired many small-scale renewable projects across the country. This session will include presentations by Scott Magnuson, Superintendent, Brainerd Public Utilities and Ray Wahle, PE, Director, Power Supply & Operations, Missouri River Energy Services.

For a complete program and information, see the APPA website.

Substation School — April 19-21

MMUA is pleased to be partnering with the American Public Power Association (APPA), Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) and Shakopee Public Utilities to present and host the 2016 Substation School. This school is designed to be beneficial to the substation technician as well as the lineworker that is learning more about substations.

Tuesday, April 19

Substation Inspections & Maintenance
by Jeff Kranz, Rochester Public Utilities

Shakopee Substation Tour
by SPU staff

Wednesday, April 20

Fundamentals of Substation Equipment and Control Systems
by Andrew Kachmarksy, Power Systems Engineering

The 'Ins and Outs' of Substations,
by Dave Thom, East Central Energy

The School will begin at 1 p.m. Tuesday and end at noon Thursday. It will be held at Shakopee Fire Station No. 1. If you have questions regarding the program and its content, contact Mike Willetts at mwilletts@mmua.org or 612-802-8474. Participants earn hours for attendance and a certificate of achievement will be available online.

Thursday, April 21

LTC and Regulator Theory, Proper Settings and Operations
by David Aldrich, Beckwith Electric Company

Substation Demo and Replacement,
by Joe Adams, Shakopee Public Utilities

Closing Comments and Wrap-Up

For more information, see the 'Events/Calendar' section at www.mmua.org and click on the Substation School event.

Lineworkers Rodeo comes to Canterbury Park April 2

The Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo will be held Saturday, April 2 at Canterbury Park in Shakopee. The event, which is being held in conjunction with the APPA E&O Technical Conference, is free and open to the public.

The opening ceremony begins at 8 a.m. The competition set to begin at 8:30 a.m., and is expected to be complete by mid-afternoon.

Hundreds of participants are expected at the event, which concludes with a well-attended evening banquet.

Journeyman lineworkers



Public power lineworkers compete at the rodeo for professional recognition. Journeymen and apprentices each compete in five events.

will compete in five events, all which involve climbing utility poles. The most interesting event to the casual observer is probably the 'Hurtman Rescue,' where teams safely lower a lifesize mannequin from the top of a pole to the ground.

Apprentices also have five events, including a written test and obstacle course.

The event was established by the American Public Power Association event in 2001

and is the foremost showcase of public power lineworker skill and knowledge. A number of events will be held in conjunction with the competition. An on-site vendor expo will be held under a circus-like 'big top' tent.

There will also be public power displays, a children's area with a number of activities, rest areas and a variety of food vendors.

MMUA and Shakopee Public Utilities are hosts.

Legislative Rally — Tuesday, April 19

MMUA's Legislative Rally is the municipal utility industry's big opportunity to inform and influence state lawmakers. The 2016 Legislative Session will be unique in many ways. The State Capitol (without running water and restrooms) is closed to the public; the only legislative activities that will take place in the Capitol building are House floor sessions. It is also the first session when the new Minnesota Senate Building will be open—Senate floor sessions will be held in a temporary chamber in the new building.

With the disarray of construction, new facilities, and a short session, it's especially important that MMUA make an impact. A strong turnout will ensure that our message is heard.

Given the unique nature of this session, and to acknowledge the time many members are already committing to the APPA Lineworkers Rodeo, MMUA has switched our typical three-day legislative conference to a one-day legislative rally. The day will begin with a briefing and lunch at the Embassy Suites in downtown St. Paul. From there, members will spend the afternoon visiting legislators.



We'll cap the day with a reception, providing MMUA members the opportunity to visit with lawmakers in a relaxed atmosphere.

Hotel Information

Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at 651.224.5400 or call toll free 1.800.HILTONS. Ask for group rate for MMUA 2016 Legislative Conference. You can also make reservations online. Questions? Please contact Rita Kelly at MMUA, 763.746.0707 or email rkelly@mmua.org.

Also Upcoming

Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo

April 2
Canterbury Park, Shakopee

APPA Engineering & Operations Technical Conference

April 3 - 6
Minneapolis

Substation School

April 19-21

Underground School

May 17-20