Climate Smart Cities

Four MMUA members, including Warren, picked for international exchange program

by Steve Downer

Municipal utilities and the generally small, rural cities they typically serve are often thought of as slow to adapt to change. That may be an ill-conceived notion—municipal utilities often prove to be leaders in the wise use of energy.

Take Elk River, Rochester, Duluth and Warren for instance. They are four of the five Minnesota cities selected to participate in ‘Climate Smart Municipalities,’ an international ideas and technology exchange program. Each of those cities is an MMUA member. Rochester and Elk River each operate a city-owned electric utility. Warren operates both electric and natural gas utilities, while Duluth operates a gas utility.

The fifth city selected—Morris—is a university town with well-known sustainable energy movement.

The Minnesota cities are each partnered with a German city. Having four of roughly 125 MMUA members selected for the international program is especially remarkable, when you consider every city in the state received an email invitation to submit a “concept and renewable and energy efficiency vision” grant proposal.

The University of Minnesota’s Institute on the Environment is facilitating the grants through a partnership, between the state of Minnesota and the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), which in 2013 signed an agreement to cooperate on renewable energy and energy efficiency. The goal is to strategize how best to achieve Minnesota’s goal of 25 percent renewable energy by 2025, one city at a time.

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Utilities band together to fund generation maintenance position

from Heartland Consumers Power District

Madelia Municipal Light & Power (MMLP) has developed an innovative independent contractor agreement with Truman Public Utilities and Lake Crystal Municipal Utilities, for maintenance of the municipal power plants in each of the respective cities.

It appears to be the first agreement of its kind directly between municipal utilities, with no third party involvement.

MMLP General Manager Jim Maras likens generating plant maintenance to a maintenance staff and attended meetings in Truman and Lake Crystal. The utilities have discussed a variety of possible partnerships in the past and have often helped each other over the years, but the new agreement provides a formal arrangement.

Maintenance: see page 7 please

Largest solar plant in South Dakota generates electricity for MRES

from WAPA

The largest solar plant in South Dakota began producing electricity for Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). The solar photovoltaic project, a joint effort by MRES, the city of Pierre and Geronimo Energy of Edina, covers nine acres and will generate enough electricity, at maximum output, to power 200 homes.

MRES CEO Tom Heller acknowledged that while the facility was significant for the state, it was nevertheless intended only as a demonstration project. “It’s not large. It’s the first one we’ve done. We just want to see what it will do,” Heller said in an interview with a local newspaper.

That does not mean that bringing the project to completion was a simple task, however. “It doesn’t matter if the project is 1 megawatt (MW) or 100 MW, you have the same number of parts from planning perspective,” explained Jeff Peters, MRES director of federal and distributed power programs. “The sheer number of stakeholders need to be engaged makes the process daunting.”

Peters ticked off a list that included environmental groups, Native American tribes, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), city and state regulators and the transmission provider (Western Area Power System).
Editor’s note: This article first appeared in the ‘Breaking News’ section of the MMUA website: www.mmua.org

MPUC directs telecom provider to comply with right-of-way requirements

No, according to a recent proceeding at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC). The MPUC Nov. 3 granted a certificate of authority to provide local niche services to Mobilitie Management LLC, with conditions. Those conditions include: 1.) Mobilitie must file a detailed company policy regarding access to ROW; and acknowledge that Mobilitie is subject to permitting authority of local government units with respect to facilities they seek to put in public ROW. Mobilitie Management, LLC is an affiliate of Mobilitie, LLC, which already held a certificate of authority to provide local niche services in Minnesota. Mobilitie has applied to cities for right of way placement of poles, towers (some apparently up to 120-feet tall) and other equipment within the ROW. Representatives of Mobilitie, in discussions with local government units, were apparently claiming that the company was not subject to right-of-way regulation. In response to numerous calls from Minnesota municipalities, the state Department of Commerce sent a letter to Mobilitie, LLC, informing the company that, irrespective of its certification, the company is still subject to municipal ordinances and requirements concerning rights of way. The MPUC and DOC staff met with company representatives to discuss the company’s position on compliance with municipal right-of-way ordinances. The DOC, in regulatory documents, noted it “continues to work with Mobilitie, LLC to reduce confusion on the authority of a municipal to enforce its right-of-way ordinances . . .” The DOC wrote that it “has consulted with MPUC staff and we are aware of nothing in Minnesota statutes or rules that excepts an MPUC certified carrier from the requirements of a local government unit concerning rights-of-way . . . The DOC requests that Mobilitie cease from asserting that PUC authority has exempted it from the regulatory requirements of local government units. If such communications continue, the DOC will pursue whatever remedies it may have available to it under Minnesota law.

Thirty-one cities, banded together as the Suburban Rate Authority (SRA), participated in the proceeding and Nov. 3 MPUC meeting. SRA noted that it was aware of no federal preemption under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 or Minnesota law that precludes the ROW manage-
NERC said to make progress on reliability and distributed generation

by Paul Ciampoli
American Public Power Association

It has been just over 10 years since the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) was certified by federal energy regulators as the North American electric reliability organization and in an interview with the American Public Power Association, NERC President and CEO Gerry Cauley detailed several accomplishments that the reliability group has been able to achieve since that milestone event.

And while NERC is "moving the needle on reliability," as Cauley noted, it is also addressing a wide variety of emerging issues including distributed energy resources. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission certified NERC as the ERO for North America in July 2006. As the ERO, NERC is responsible for developing and enforcing mandatory electric reliability standards under FERC's oversight.

"We didn't have a mandatory set of standards and the oversight. We didn't have a mandatory electric reliability standards under FERC's mandatory electric reliability prior to the legislation," Cauley said.

The idea is to "come up with a way to regulate in a smart manner that says, we want to get everybody to focus on risks and potential failure points and not invest equally in everything, but invest in the most important things," he noted.

"With that, I think we're seeing performance numbers -- if you look at our state of reliability report published in May -- we're actually seeing improvements in performance of the grid because of this, where we're having less frequent transmission outages and when we do have outages, they're less impactful in terms of customer outages and how big the event is, so I think we actually see the results finally in the data that says we're actually moving the needle on reliability," Cauley said.

Distributed energy resources
Cauley said that another "big area of progress and success is really getting an understanding of power outages being a complex, technical matter." NERC has been able to collect "a lot of data around events analysis, root cause analysis, and understand the performance of the grid so that we can focus our efforts and the efforts of industry on fixing particular issues that are most likely to have an impact on customers," Cauley said.

The areas that NERC is looking at, which were discussion topics at the NERC DER workshop, is "how do we ensure that the system operator has an awareness of what's going on in the distributed resources, has information about forecasting and has modeling information from the distributed resources so that we can integrate into the operations and planning of the distributed resources and their role," Cauley said.

Among the things that NERC is taking a closer look at these days is how can distributed energy resources participate in markets in a way that respects reliability rules, Cauley said.

NERC sees a future in which distributed energy resources will be larger and more significant and have more impact on the grid and be a resource that can be used by the grid, Cauley said.

"But when you think along those lines then we have to say, well, how do the reliability rules come into play, are they going to have to follow some of the reliability rules, will there be impacts upward into the grid from these resources? So all of our work is kind of that in this direction.

Participants in the workshop included "people who are facing this already in their systems," sharing their experiences have been "and we're going to pull that together and the task force is going to produce a report," Cauley noted.

"A lot of moving parts"The U.S. generation mix has "a lot of moving parts," the NERC president and CEO said.

"I think the concern we had early on was that there would be a rush to retirements of "central dispatch" power plants, coal plants and so on, that they would retire too quickly and then not be available," raising the specer of possible shortages. But, Cauley said, "I think we're less worried about that at the moment.

When NERC first looked at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Mercury and Air Toxics rule and then examined the EPA's initial proposal around the Clean Power Plan (CPP), the reliability organization was "potentially concerned that there might be accelerated retirements," Cauley said.

The concern was that accelerated retirements could lead to capacity shortages, where there would not be sufficient time to build out new replacement generation and gas pipelines to support the new gas plants, he noted.

While there have been plant retirements, they have not come as quickly as they might have, he said, adding, "I think part of that is just the slippage in the timetable with the implementation of the EPA Clean Power Plan, so there's some uncertainty around that," the NERC president and CEO said.

On Feb. 9, the Supreme Court issued a stay of the CPP pending resolution of court cases challenging the EPA plan. Oral arguments in the case occurred on Sept. 27 before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The CPP aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants.

From NERC's vantage point, there remains a sufficient amount of capacity from coal plants and nuclear plants "to kind of hold their own," as new variable energy industry players have started to move "fairly aggressively toward bringing on new resources, whether it's a shift to gas or whether it's a shift to increased renewables," Cauley noted.

"So right now we're actually in a bit of a sweet spot," he said, adding that resources are now, in general, "plentiful across the U.S. for the next few years. So it may come back to be an issue, but right now the issue for us is making sure that the resources are all distributed in a way that maintains reliability."
time.

Of the cities participating, the inclusion of Warren is perhaps the most surprising.

Warren, population 1,600, is located on the table-flat, rich farmland of the Red River Valley in northwestern Minnesota. The Warren electric utility buys power at wholesale from the Northern Municipal Power Agency.

Warren heard about the grant opportunity via email, which came from the University of Minnesota Crookston extension office.

Warren councilmember Cam Fanfulik, who is on the Northwest Regional Development Commission, suggested that city staff apply for the grant. Warren City Administrator Shannon Mortenson and journeyman lineman Brent McMillan kicked ideas around for a few weeks, and submitted the application in March.

“Lo and behold, somehow we got picked,” McMillan said.

While it seems unusual for a lineman to be involved in writing grants, McMillan said he has been writing grants for years, mostly in the winter time. That is one benefit of working for a smaller utility, he noted.

Then again, McMillan is an unusual lineman. He has an electrical engineering degree from the University of Minnesota. He did engineering work for a time, but, as he put it, “Got sick of being in a cubicle.”

The vision submitted by Warren centered around one of the most unglamorous of resources: garbage.

Warren runs a municipal garbage collection and haulage operation. The landfill is in Hallock, a 100-mile round trip in the municipal garbage truck. What if Warren could burn the garbage locally in a combined heat and power plant? The grant allowed the idea to be studied.

Warren is the Marshall County seat. After extensive study, it was found that Marshall, along with other counties in northwest Minnesota not already under contract, do not produce enough garbage to economically fuel a waste-to-energy facility.

(In Fosston—75 miles from Warren—Polk County operates a resource recovery facility, which accepts mixed municipal solid waste from the counties of Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahnomen, Norman and Polk. Processed waste is incinerated, and steam generated sold to local businesses.)

Fortunately, Climate Smart Municipalities is a three-year program, so the people in Warren, their German counterparts, and the various experts involved in the program have time to investigate other ideas.

An unbelievable experience

The Minnesota delegation went to Germany from July 1-10 and visited their partner cities. The city of Warren paid air fare for its participants. Grants from Germany paid living expenses.

“It was a most unbelievable experience,” said Mortenson. The Germans, she said, are “very forward thinking.” Cities and energy providers work together, she said. “They are always sharing.”

Germany is far ahead of Minnesota with renewables, said McMillan. Of course, he noted, with electricity selling at 29 cents per kilowatt-hour, not already under contract, all options are considered. Some of that doesn’t seem to transfer to Warren, however, due in part to its location in a sparsely-populated area.

“Everybody’s got their own issue,” he noted.

The grant will allow a variety of ideas to be studied further, however.

The German delegation was in Minnesota the week of Oct. 9-15. The large group met Monday, Oct. 10 at the U of M. A delegation from Arnberg, Germany visited Warren from Wednesday through Friday, Oct. 12-14. Arnberg does not have one signature project, but has worked to become a ‘sustainable community,’ encompassing everything from water and food to recreation, wellness, and more.

That may well be the path Warren pursues as well. The Minnesotans will travel back to their German partner cities in June 2017.

Climate Smart continued from front page

Warren, located in northwest Minnesota’s Red River Valley, will be considering a number of different ideas as part of the Climate Smart grant program.

**FEMA funds freed finally**

Members of Minnesota’s congressional delegation recently announced $2.1 million in federal funding for Nobles Cooperative Electric and Federated Rural Electric Association, to rebuild infrastructure damaged in an April 2013 ice storm. The provision of assistance was delayed as certification of the pre-disaster condition and capacity of the conductor was an issue. The Federal Emergency Management Administration initially found the project ineligible as the applicants did not identify a code or standard for conductor replacement that complied with regulations.
MRES continued from front page

Administration. “You have to make sure you identify all of the interested parties and keep them updated on your progress.”

The distribution provider—Pierre Municipal Utilities—was on board with the project from the beginning. “Overall, the community was very much in favor of the project and excited to be hosting the largest solar facility in the state,” said Utilities Director Brad Palmer.

Geronimo Energy, developer and owner of “Pierre Solar LLC,” was another piece of the puzzle. MRES has a relationship with the company that includes power purchase agreements for the output of two wind energy facilities in Minnesota. The innovative 25-year contract Geronimo structured reduced costs for MRES versus a more traditional deal. The entire output of the solar project will become part of MRES’s wholesale power supply for the benefit of its 60 member communities.

Building easier, not easy

After conducting a solar feasibility study with Geronimo in 2015, MRES chose Pierre for its first solar project.

As a solar site, the Pierre Regional Airport offered many advantages, including a surprisingly high number of sun days and its status as a brownfield. “MRES didn’t want to use any cropland for the demonstration, or property that had residential or commercial potential,” explained Joni Livingston, MRES director of communications and member services.

The proposed site also boasted a southward slope with no obstructions and no need to build transmission. “This was a ‘behind the meter’ installation,” said Peters.

Palmer noted that the location was about as close to a subdivision as you can get, making it easy to tie into the city’s distribution system. The biggest challenge, he added, came in the form of paperwork.

“The FAA had several requirements, including a ‘glint and glare’ study,” Palmer noted. “Another wrinkle is that the Department of Defense was the previous owner of the airport. There were some strings attached when they deeded it to the city, so that added to the authorizations we needed. Eventually, everyone signed off, so it wasn’t so much a barrier as it was just a matter of lengthy application process.”

Up, running

Now that the Pierre Solar LLC has been operational for a few weeks, MRES is just beginning the learning phase of its demonstration. “We are hoping to learn more about interconnecting with the local distribution system, and the array’s effect on the community’s power quality and reliability,” Livingston said.

“We will be watching to see how much electricity it produces and at what time of day and how that relates to peak demand. Once we have that information, it may lead to more solar installations.”

Palmer pointed out that there is room at the Pierre Regional Airport for the solar array to expand. He likes the idea of utility-scale and community solar as a way of giving consumers more clean energy. “From the utility standpoint, it is easier to integrate and safer for our workers,” Palmer acknowledged.

“The economy of scale also makes it more cost effective for the consumers.”

For Peters, the lessons so far are holistic rather than technical. “Each project is different, so you will learn something new with each one,” he said. “The planning process can always improve.”
Phelps receives Heartland Distinguished Service Award

Phelps is this year’s recipient of Heartland Consumers Power District’s Distinguished Service Award, created to recognize exceptional employees at Heartland customer utilities. Phelps serves as electric utility superintendent for Lake Crystal Municipal Utilities and has been employed with the city four years. Phelps was nominated by City Administrator Taylor Gronau for his leadership, professionalism and dedication to both the utility and the community.

“Mathias is an outstanding professional and colleague,” said Gronau. “He is respected greatly by his co-workers, as well as the elected leaders and residents of Lake Crystal for his service to the utility and the numerous contributions and improvements he has made to the utility.”

Phelps has maintained efficient and effective operations of the utility as well as developing and managing the utility’s electric load management program. He also manages the utility’s electrical mapping efforts and has been instrumental in increasing the prevalence and importance of workplace safety. He also actively promotes a responsive customer service atmosphere.

Phelps is a journeyman lineman and before being employed with Lake Crystal Municipal Utilities, served as a lineman on a road crew. He and his wife Jessica have two children, ages two and five. In his spare time he enjoys hunting around Lake Crystal.

“Mathias is dedicated to the improvement and betterment of the Lake Crystal community,” added Gronau. “He cares greatly about the residents and is constantly looking to build partnerships with community stakeholders. He goes above and beyond his traditional role as electric superintendent and most importantly, is dedicated to his family and is a role model to the community.”

Heartland established the Distinguished Service Award in conjunction with Public Power Week, celebrated October 2-8, an annual opportunity for public power utilities to remind customers and stakeholders about the distinct advantages public power offers.

“What better way to mark the occasion than to recognize individuals who make public power exceptional,” said Heartland Communications Manager Ann Hyland. “This annual award showcases employees who often go above and beyond and have made outstanding contributions to their municipality, community and other organizations.”

Any employee of a municipal system served by Heartland involved in the electric utility was eligible to receive the award, including but not limited to finance officers, line workers and electric superintendents. Any city employee or official can nominate someone for the award.

Heartland Consumers Power District is a non-profit, public power utility located in Madison, S.D. Heartland provides reliable power as well as energy services and community development programs to communities, state agencies and organizations in South Dakota, Kansas, Iowa and Minnesota, including Lake Crystal Municipal Utilities.

ERMU’s Ninow receives AWWA Meritorious Award

Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) Water Operator Dave Ninow, Oct. 11 received the American Water Works Association (AWWA) 2016 Meritorious Service Award.

The award is to recognize an individual in the water field who has demonstrated consistent and outstanding contributions to plant operations and/or maintenance to the distribution system and/or special acts not directly related to water treatment, but which demonstrate dedication to the public beyond normal operating responsibilities.

ERMU Water Superintendent Eric Volk said “Dave is very deserving. With his extensive knowledge and ability he is a true multiplier. He is a standout among his peers, a leader without a title.”

Ninow received his award at the annual AWWA Conference held in Duluth. He was also recognized by the ERMU Commission at an Oct. 11 commission meeting.

Tony Belden, AWWA Section Chair; Jim Sadler, AWWA Section Past Chair; Bert Tracy, AWWA Awards Committee Co-Chair; and Carol Blommel-Johnson, AWWA Awards Committee Co-Chair were also present, and shared a list of Dave’s accomplishments which ultimately led to him receiving the award.

Municipals lead the way in electric system reliability, reports EIA

In 2015, compared to other utilities, municipal utility customers “experienced the lowest instances of power outages in both frequency and duration, averaging one outage and about two hours of interrupted service,” the Energy Information Administration (EIA) said Sept. 12 in its Energy reports ‘Today in Energy.’

 Interruptions in electricity service “vary by frequency and duration throughout the country across the many electric distribution systems that serve roughly 145 million customers in the United States,” the EIA noted in the Sept. 12 report, EIA Data Show Aver-

age Frequency and Duration of Electric Power Outages. The reliability of electricity supply systems is typically measured by considering the duration, frequency, and scale of service interruptions, developed by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the EIA said.
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A Nov. 8 referendum to abolish the North Branch Municipal Water & Light Commission was defeated 3,528 to 1,412, or by over 71 percent of the voters in that city.

An active citizens’ group advocated on behalf of the utilities commission in the days leading up to the election.

Candidates supportive of the utility were also elected.

The Spring Valley city council Oct. 5 approved a recommendation by the Spring Valley Public Utilities Commission to approve sale of a $6 million electric revenue bond. The money will be used for a new substation, voltage upgrade and other utility improvements.

Delano Municipal Utilities is moving forward with a plan to purchase catalytic converter systems for its cooperating internal combustion engine generator-sets.

The city of Duluth recently increased the franchise fee it charges Minnesota Power from 1 percent to 3 percent starting next year. A proposal to cap the fee for large customers has been proposed, however.

The Jackson city council Oct. 24 increased electric rates by approximately 5 percent in each rate class. The increase will take effect Jan. 1, 2017. The increase was necessary to pay for upcoming system improvements. The council action followed a recommendation from the utilities commission.

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MMUA Regular Members provide a variety of services to the cities they serve

Editor's note: A small number of municipal electric and gas utilities are not currently members of MMUA and are not listed here. Most municipal electric/gas utilities also provide water and may provide other services as well. Names in black signify electric utilities; blue electric and natural gas; red natural gas; brown water only.

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MMUA celebrates 85 years of service

MMUA was formed in 1931, during a meeting of the state’s municipal electric utilities in St. Cloud. Prior to that time, the utilities organization existed as a committee of the League of Minnesota Municipalities.

MMUA’s mission statement is to unify, support and serve as a common voice for municipal utilities.

MMUA is a 501(c)(6) organization.

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- Manitoba Hydro
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- McFarland Cascade
- McGregor Shea Carnval
- Straugh & Lamb
- Metering & Technology Solutions
- Midcontinent Independent
- System Operator, Inc.
- Minnesota Power
- Minnoka Power Coop.
- Minnoka Sales, Div. of Lee Noonan
- MIRATECH Corporation
- Moomon
- MP Nexlevel
- MP Technologies
- MP4er Innovations
- NESCO Rentals
- NextEra Energy Power Mktg.
- Northland Securities, Inc.
- NorthStar Utilities Solutions
- Northwest Lineman College
- NHC Reliability Solutions
- Okinite Company, The
- Power Product Services
- Power System Engineering
- Premier Line Services
- Premier Truck Rental
- Primus Marketing Associates
- Pro-Tech Power Sales, Inc.
- Professional Computer Systems, Co.
- Project Resources Corp.
- Public Power Energy Services, LLC
- Push Incorporated
- Q3 Contracting, Inc.
- Rauenhorst Recruiting
- Resco
- RRC Power and Energy
- SATEC, Inc.
- Sheehan’s Gas Company
- Short Elliott Hendrickson
- SL-serco Inc.

**MMUA urges Associate Members to consider benefits of Annual Sponsorship**

MMUA is asking its Associate Members to consider the benefits of becoming an MMUA Annual Sponsor. Sponsorship benefits for 2017 include:

- **Recognition as an MMUA Annual Sponsor at**
  - www.mmua.org
- **Recognition as an Annual Sponsor** on banners at MMUA events
- **Recognition as an Annual Sponsor in**
  - MMUA publications
- **One 2-column by 5-inch Resource newsletter ad, in color.**
- **Free, color, business-card sized ad in the Professional Services Directory**
- **Sponsors can also** sign-up as an MMUA Annual Sponsor, go to the 'Sponsors' tab at our website, www.mmua.org
- **For more information on sponsorships or advertising, contact Steve Downer at sdowner@mmua.org or 763-746-0702. Questions in regards to meetings should be directed to Rita Kelly at rkelly@mmua.org or call 763-746-0707.**

Thank you for your consideration and we hope to hear from you soon!
[Text content from the page is not visible in the image.]
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Generation Services and Equipment

Minnesota Power (MP) announced Oct. 11 that it had agreed on a five-year deal to supply electricity to U.S. Steel. The agreement runs through December 2021. The agreement came within a month of the MPUC approving a new rate plan for MP, which lowered electric rates for 11 mining and forest products companies. The plan goes into effect when the MPUC decides how MP will recover revenue lost from the industrial customers. The agreement came within a month of the MPUC approving a new rate plan for MP, which lowered electric rates for 11 mining and forest products companies. The plan goes into effect when the MPUC decides how MP will recover revenue lost from the industrial customers.

Bits & Pieces

The company proposed a nine percent overall increase, which includes increases for commercial, industrial and large power users.

According to local press reports, work could begin in early December on the Great Northern electric transmission line. The 500-kV line would carry electricity from Manitoba Hydro to a substation near Grand Rapids. The work is expected to be complete by 2020.

The MPUC Oct. 13 approved Xcel Energy’s Integrated Resource Plan. Xcel proposed to double the amount of wind and solar on its system and retire Sherco units 1 and 2 in the mid-2020s. The PUC approved: Retirement of Sherco 2 and 1 in 2023 and 2026, respectively, and a process to identify approximately 750 MW of intermediate capacity replacement resources for 2026 that considers existing location and grid reliability needs; • Add at least 1,000 MW of wind resources by 2019; • Add at least 650 MW of solar by 2021;

Save no less than 400 MW through demand response; • Meet Minnesota’s goal of 1.5% annual energy savings through 2030. In its next resource plan, due Feb. 1, 2019, the company agreed to explore options for the retirement of its coal and nuclear fleet, including Sherco, King, Monticello and Prairie Island. If implemented, the plan would result in Xcel delivering nearly 63 percent of the energy it sells using carbon-free sources.

It recently came to MMUA’s attention that David M. Martin, a former president of the association, passed away on Monday, August 15, peacefully at his home in Prior Lake. He was 78 years old.

The nation’s first new nuclear generation in 20 years has officially entered commercial operation after the Tennessee Valley Authority’s (TVA) Watts Bar Unit 2 successfully completed an extensive series of power ascension tests and reliably operated at full power for more than three weeks, TVA reported on Oct. 19. Watts Bar Unit 2, like Watts Bar Unit 1, produces electricity using controlled nuclear fusion to generate heat, which is used to produce steam to turn turbines and a single, large generator. Watts Bar Unit 2 will provide up to 1,350 megawatts of electricity to the Tennessee Valley.

David Martin, 78

It was instrumental in providing electrical power to parts of Indiana, Iowa, and Nebraska. He later spent 16 years as general manager of Owatonna Public Utilities and was one of the founders of the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency. He had many other accomplishments and interests. He was married to Arlene Kay Vargis and they were blessed with three children, and later a number of grandchildren. He will be missed.

Art Gatchell, MMUA JTS & Apprenticeship Instructor
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• Utilities Supervisor - St. Peter
• Lead lineman - Elk River
• Safety director - CapX2020, Fargo-St. Cloud Line
for more information, contact Mike Willetts at 612.802.8474

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MMUA Leadership Academy opening doors

The MMUA Leadership Academy is opening its doors. The Academy is a two-year program designed for both current and future senior leaders. Class size will be limited to 25 students. Topics include:

- Year One Sessions
  - Building Great Teams
  - Financial Leadership and Stewardship
  - Seeing the Big Picture - Strategic Planning
  - Current and future senior leadership
  - Colorado Springs - Presiding Officer
  - New Mexico - President Pro Tempore
  - Speaking for the Academy - Kent Myers, Managing Partner of VISION Companies

- Year Two Sessions
  - Character - Mind of a Leader - Frank S. Shields
  - Behaviors of a Leader - Organization and Administration
  - Empowerment Culture
  - Creating an Energy Vision - Don Blankenship

- Communication
  - How to get people to change...without fighting back
  - Impacts of A Leader - Harrietnapshot, Mahika

- Technical and Operations Conference

Along with a number of useful breakout sessions, this year’s conference features an inspirational safety message and two high-quality leadership speakers:

- Technical and Operations Conference

New Location! Best Western Plus Kelly Inn, St. Cloud Dec. 6-8

Manager Track: Advancing Your Safety Culture/Critical Thinking
Jim Walters, Power of Learning

Reliability Best Practices
Bob Jagusch, MMUA

Cyber Security
Speaker: TBD

Cold Weather Rule
Tracy M.B. Smetana, Consumer Affairs Office, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Crew Leader/Foreman Track

Meaningful Job Briefings: Safety & Compliance in Harmony
Joe Schmidt, MMUA

Electric Maintenance
Dave Woot, Ziegler Power Systems

Arc Rated Clothing & PPE
Rick Hawthorne, Carhartt FR Clothing

Fall Protection & Improvements
Jason Giefer, DBI, MN

Trade Show & Reception
This is a great place to see what is new and make new connections.

Thursday, December 8

MMUA Mutual Aid Framework & Development
Mike Willetts, MMUA

MMUA Update

Upcoming MMUA Events

Transformer School

MMUA, along with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association and American Public Power Association, is pleased to offer the 2016 Transformer School. The pre-conference covers Basic Single-Phase Transformer Connection & Theory and leads into the Three-Phase Transformer Connections School. Scott Meinecke, an instructor from Northwest Iowa Community College, will again be the instructor for this course. Hurry! Registration fees increase Nov. 24.

2017 Legislative Rally
January 1-February 2

MMUA’s Legislative Conference is the municipal utility community’s primary opportunity to inform and influence state lawmakers. Day One will include briefings and lunch at the Embassy Suites in downtown St. Paul. The afternoon will be spent visiting legislators. We’ll cap off the day with a reception at the Embassy Suites, providing MMUA members the opportunity to visit with additional lawmakers. Day Two will provide timely and useful conference sessions.

NESC Regional Workshops - Jan. 2017

The National Electric Safety Code (NESC) was recently updated and the 2017 Edition is being released. This event is intended for anyone on your team who needs to be aware of and understand the changes. Learn about code changes to ensure compliance and safety of employees and the public you serve.

Presented at six convenient locations:

January 12 - Marshall
January 11 - New Ulm
January 17 - Rochester
January 24 - Alexandria
January 26 - Grand Rapids
January 31 - Plymouth

Attend the workshop and purchase the 2017 NESC book at a 20 percent discount.

Meter School

The Basic Metering Pre-Conference will use a combination of interactive classroom and hands-on training to present and reinforce the instruction. The pre-conference will provide a good foundation for those interested in continuing on with the Basic/Intermediate class.

The Advanced class will use a combination of self-cor rected meter exam, interactive classroom and hands-on training to present and reinforce the instruction.

Instructors will include Larry Chapman and staff from Chapman Metering. Also instructing will be Scott Murfield. He has spent 30 years in the electric utility industry.

Registration and additional information can be found at www.mmua.org. Go to Events/Calendar at the proper date for each event.