MPUC approves Warroad-North Star service territory transfer

Questions linger—municipals and co-ops differ with MPUC on extent of authority

by Steve Downer

In a unique case, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Oct. 11 approved a joint request by the City of Warroad and North Star Electric Cooperative to change their electric utility service boundaries. The request was opposed, however, by the Red Lake Band of Chippewa and the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC).

A major case large and small were on the table, including:
• the limits of the Commission’s authority over municipal and cooperative utilities and
• does a service territory transfer occur when the parties sign an agreement, or when the MPUC issues an order?

While the territory transfer is now recognized by state regulators, resolution of the larger issues is less clear.

The case resulted from the most innocent of mistakes—the inadvertent mis-filing of a territory agreement between the municipal and the cooperative. The apparent error was discovered, four years later, as part of the MPUC’s effort to update and digitize service territory maps.

After discovering the mishap, North Star in February 2017 filed the agreement for approval by the MPUC. A month later, the Red Lake Bank objected to the transfer, alleging that it was not party to the negotiations between North Star and Warroad, and was now being required to pay Warroad’s cost of the service territory buy-out.

The DOC said the territory transfer was not “consistent with the public interest” and urged the MPUC to deny the transfer. Also joining the case were North Star, Warroad, the Red Lake Band, MMUA and the Minnesota Rural Electric Association.

Beginnings of controversy

The Red Lake Band, in 2010, started planning for a new casino to replace its Seven Clans Casino in Warroad. In 2012, the Band contacted the City of Warroad to inquire about receiving city services at the new casino location. In early 2013 and upon being petitioned by the Red Lake Band, Warroad annexed the parcel of land where the new casino would be located.

On September 9, 2013, Warroad and North Star entered into a service territory agreement to transfer the electric service rights for the area from the Cooperative to the City. Warroad agreed to make a one-time payment of $600,000 to North Star. It planned to charge that cost back to the customer over time.

(The Band has been paying part of its bill, but not the surcharge designed to recover, over time, the $600,000 acquisition cost. For perspective, the Band’s website said that, as of Oct. 23, its three casinos had paid out over $306 million in winnings.)

Warroad said that, in face-to-face meetings, it had communicated the surcharge to the Band on multiple occasions, with no objection. It filed written affidavits to support its assertion.

The DOC, however, chose to rely solely on written documentation in developing its record of the case. The DOC said that, based on the written record, the Warroad: see next page please

The Resource

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FERC hands partial victory to municipals in transmission case

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on Oct. 18 issued an order reducing ITC Holdings’ Corp., ‘transco adder’ by 25 basis points. (A basis point is one hundredth of one percent.) The adder was reduced because, FERC found, ITC was less independent than when the transco adder was first approved.

FERC was responding to complaints received from a number of municipalities and cooperatives claiming that the ITC adder was overcharged.

Complaints included the Midwest Municipal Transmission Group, of which MMUA was a founding member, MMUA affiliates members Missouri River Energy Services and Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, as well as Consumers Energy Company, Interstate Power and Light and WPPI Energy.

The ITC Companies were previously allowed to collect a .50 percent adder to their rates of return on equity as an “incentive” for being an independent, stand-alone transmission company or ‘transco.’

However, ITC then merged

FERC see page 3 please

Wadena utility breathes easier at its new location

Wadena Electric & Water used to occupy one of the most visible locations of any Minnesota municipal electric utility— in the shadow of its 500,000 gallon water tower, which stands at the intersection of U.S. Hwys. 10 and 71.

Everybody at the utility is happy, however, at their new location on the northeast side of the city, at 1200 Sunnybrook Road.

At its old site, the utility operation was hemmed in. The utility has been in business since 1897, and the stout, but inefficient building dated back to the early days. The local recycling service operated out of the same area, hampering vehicle movement. Trucks had to be backed out of the garage. People looking for the municipal liquor store occasionally wandered in.

The welcome move was made necessary by MnDOT plans to rebuild a one-mile stretch of Hwy. 10 through the city. The old office building was one of seven structures acquired by MnDOT, for removal. As part of the project, the city will install new water and sewer mains, storm sewers and new LED street lighting.

The $8.8 million highway project is scheduled for 2019-20.

As buildings are removed, soil remediation is also underway.

The utility operation shifted to its new location at the end of June. It is not quite fully moved in, but with winter coming there will be more time to move materials and set up the interior spaces.

The new facility has an air source heat pump system, somewhat unique in that each room has its own coil. It’s a newer technology, one that Superintendent David Evans saw a couple of year earlier at

Wadena: see page 8 please

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Warroad: continued from front page

Band “was not informed of either the negotiations about the service territory transfer nor that it would be required to pay the cost.”

North Star noted that the Band, even with the imposition of the acquisition cost, would save money and have more reliable service from the City.

Warroad said the municipal utility’s rates were outside of the MPUC’s jurisdiction. If it did not recover the acquisition costs from the customer, it said, the city’s remaining customers would be forced to subsidize the customer in the annexed area. Warroad noted that it, and the cooperative, had only requested the state update the official state maps.

MMUA said state law does not give the MPUC the authority to review or approve agreements. Its role was to reflect the locally-negotiated agreements. Its role was to approve the agreement in an updated service territory map.

MPUC deliberations

During deliberation, Commissioner John Tuma stressed that the MPUC insists that customers receive notice of any impending territory change. The Band’s representative said it did receive notice, that it did request the territory change, but that it was “left out of” the compensation discussion between the city and the cooperative.

The Band said that it objected to being “hit with the total cost” of the acquisition. The Band said if there was a bill for “labor and materials,” it should be able to see it, since it was paying for it. “We want to own it.”

Acting Chair Dan Lipschultz said that if the City was a state-regulated utility, the MPUC could order a contested case in front of an administrative law judge. Its inability to do so “troubles me,” he said, “but I don’t think it’s our call.”

The Band’s representative said the possibility of disconnection for non-payment loomed over the Casino, and the MPUC should intervene because it was “a public policy issue.” (The city noted that a disconnect notice is generated automatically when a bill was overdue; that the non-payment had been ongoing for a year and a half; and that it had no plans to disconnect the customer.) While the dominant opinion of the Commission seemed to be that it did not have the authority to order action beyond approval of the agreement, it discussed not acting on the petition, and extracted from the city a pledge that it would not disconnect the customer for its refusal to pay the surcharge related to the territory acquisition.

Chair Lipschultz said that if the MPUC did not note, in its order, the city’s commitment not to disconnect as a result of the dispute that is pending, “it might not make a decision today.” Municipals and cooperatives could always, in any future case, argue the limits of MPUC authority, he said.

After some discussion he said, “I don’t think this purchase has been in effect, until we issue an order approving it.” Commissioner Tuma said it was “very clear” that the “change doesn’t occur until we say so.”

Kaela Brennan, representing the city, respectfully disagreed, taking the position that the transfer took effect upon the signing of the agreement.

While that issue was not resolved, the state will update the official service territory map to reflect the city’s service to the New Casino.

As of this writing, the

Seven Clans New Casino in Warroad, from the Band’s website.

Warroad city hall is located in a refurbished old railroad depot.

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Public power’s pole attachment exemption threatened by FCC order

The FCC solution to state services. "At issue is a Sept. 26 decision from the FCC in which the Commission explains the FCC ruling and order issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that the ITC Companies no longer provide Americans with next-generation technology and outlines the Commission’s interpretation of Section 332, a provision that, among other things, prohibits states and localities from discriminating among providers of wireless service or prohibiting the provision of wireless services. The Commission noted that Section 253 provides that “[n]o state or local statute or regulation, or other state or local legal requirement, may prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting the ability of any entity to provide any intrastate or intrastate telecommunications service.” It also discussed Section 332, a provision that, among other things, prohibits states and localities from making arrangements “between a state or local government and a party engaged in wireless facility deployment.” The Commission also states that Section 253 can be applied equally to charges imposed via contracts and other arrangements “between a state or local government and a party engaged in wireless facility deployment.”

Association filed comments

Prior to the late September decision from the FCC, the American Public Power Association filed comments and reply comments with the FCC noting the existence of the public power exemption from FCC regulation what [the Senate bill] would do legislatively.”

Commenting on the Sept. 26 FCC order, Waterhouse said, “This is something that is hugely problematic and would impact all of our members.” She added, “[w]e have a good prospect of getting this reversed, but it is going to be a huge fight.”

FERC: ITC directed to refund, submit revised tariff

with Fortis, Inc. ITC Holdings, GIC (Ventures) Pte. Ltd (GIC), and their subsidiaries. Complainants said that, beyond the changes in the ITC Companies’ ownership, the ITC Companies no longer possessed the full independence that was the basis for the adders, stating that the current ownership situation of the ITC Companies compromised their independence. ITC argued contrary, stating that Fortis’ control over ITC was minimal and that its generation, purchases and sales of electricity are diversified from the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO).

FERC said, “Because the merger has reduced, but not eliminated, the ITC Companies’ level of independence, we find that a 25 basis point Transco Adder appropriately encourages the Transco business model in these circumstances and promotes corresponding consumer benefits.” FERC directed ITC to submit a revised MISO Tariff “to reflect a 25 basis point Transco Adder, effective April 20, 2018, the date of the complaint, and to make associated refunds for the period from April 20, 2018 through the date of this order.”

The case was Consumers Energy Company v. International Transmission Company. Parties may request rehearing until Nov. 19.

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Washington Report

The order highlights state and local siting laws and agreements that effectively and efficiently facilitate the deployment of 5G and other next-gen infrastructure. It then focuses on those “outliers” where cities and states “impede” build-out. None of the examples listed include a public utility power. The Commission makes a sweeping determination that state and local governments’ terms for “use of or attachment to government-owned property within . . . ROW, such as new, existing and replacement . . . utility poles” are not made as “market participants.” The Commission said that Sections 253 and 323 make no distinction between a state or locality’s regulatory or proprietary conduct, and that in the case of broadband deployment where access to ROW or public infrastructure is required, states and localities are “fulfilling regulatory objectives.”

The Commission also states that Section 253 can be applied equally to charges imposed via contracts and other arrangements “between a state or local government and a party engaged in wireless facility deployment.”

FERC: ITC directed to refund, submit revised tariff

continued from front page

The FCC conflates publicly-owned ROW and facilities, which may or may not be appropriately covered by Sections 253 and 323, with publicly-owned electric utility poles located in public ROW that are covered under Section 224. For example, the Commission continuously referred to “utility poles” when discussing “publicly-owned infrastructure, which the Commission said in its ruling and order is subject to preemption under Sections 253 or 323. The FCC also alluded to Section 224 when discussing “reasonable fees,” and it used actions that are proprietary versus those that are regulatory in nature – such as pole attachment decisions made by public power utilities. The Commission ultimately ignored the argument in its order regarding the public power exemption from pole attachment regulation, and it failed to provide any meaningful analysis of how Sections 253 and 323 are impacted by Section 224.

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Keewatin observes centennial of electric service

Three municipal utilities celebrated their centennials this year: Aitkin, Sauk Centre and Keewatin. While dates for the first two utilities are clear, the Keewatin utility may have been in operation prior to 1918, possibly as early as 1911.

A city centennial book, published in 2006, notes that “Early records of the public utilities are not available. In 1910 the Water and Light Commission proposed a light plant. In 1911, electric lights were installed. Keewatin generated its own electricity. Exhaust steam was used as a source of heat for homes and businesses.”

Bound volumes of the Keewatin *Chronical* are available at city hall. The volumes date to 1918.

The City Council, according to the Feb. 2, 1918 edition, adopted Heat Ordinance No. 61, relating to the Central Station Steam Heating Plant and System of the Village of Keewatin. The article notes that “The members of the village council have labored long and earnestly in the preparation and passing of this ordinance, in order that they might complete the work of the extension of the heating system in the village.”

World War I was raging. Coal use was curtailed to aid the war effort.

The State Fuel Administration found the county had enough wood to supplement all coal use. Coal shipments to many places in the area were banned.

A federal fuel administration bureau representative came to town to get the facts and file a detailed report to the bureau of Conservation – and enable the federal authorities to ascertain which municipalities were running their plants on an economical basis and which need to be curbed in their activities. The same man visited Nashwauk and Hibbing.

At 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, the guns fell silent. The “war to end all wars” was over. On Dec. 15, 1918, the ban on burning coal was lifted.

In the late 1920s electrical generation was discontinued and electricity for redistribution was bought from the Minnesota Power and Light. The local PUC was dissolved at the end of 1967 and the council assumed the responsibilities of all public utilities.

On Nov. 1, 1975, the city closed the steam plant operation and the remaining 80 consumers converted to natural gas energy sources.

**Earliest days**

The city filed for incorporation in December 1905 and this filing was ratified with an election to adopt the incorporation in July 1906.

The city’s first minutes—from Jan. 28, 1907—are displayed in the city council chambers. The walls are covered with framed pictures of marching bands, sports teams, mines and equipment, and other community scenes.

An early concern of the City Council that first year was to find a warm place to meet. The first 24 ordinances adopted gave a glimpse into life in the early mining camps—most dealt with behavior. A sewage system was installed with a water system in 1910. Life got better.

**The modern era**

Today, city hall is staffed by Clerk Tawnya Maras and Deputy Clerk/Utilities Clerk Susan Thronson. The City of Keewatin provides essential services, such as municipal electric, sewer, and water service and police and fire protection. Population has steadied at 1,068 at the 2010 census, down from a high of 1,950 in 1940.

Keewatin Utilities serves over 500 customers.

Funding municipal operations is a challenge. The median income in the city is well below the state average; median age is above. Crime rate is very low.

The wastewater plant needs to comply with stricter regulations from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Keewatin is working with the City of Nashwauk and Lone Pine and Greenway Townships on a joint effort to update the Nashwauk pond system to serve the communities. The Legislature last session appropriated $850,000 for design and engineering.

The high iron content of the water is hard on meters, and the city doesn’t currently...
Students give consistently high marks to MMUA annual Cross Training School

MMUA held its Cross Training School, Oct. 16-18 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall.

Students at this school are typically non-lineworker employees who may be called into service to work alongside a qualified lineworker after hours, during an outage or in other emergency situations. It is crucial that these people be sufficiently trained.

The school was led by MMUA safety instructors Cody Raveling and James Monroe. It featured a 6:1 student-teacher ratio, and received consistently high marks from students.

“Real world instructors that have real world experience,” said one feedback form. “Great training.” “Very informative” and “very useful” were among the comments. Another student said, “Great class—lots of useful information. Very well put together.”

Among the topics covered were basic power concepts, terminology, fault locating, transformers, tools and bucket truck operation.

Keewatin:

Keewatin: continued from facing page

meter water service. A rate study was done recently, and the city charges $25 a month for water service, $35 a month for sewer. The electric rate is 10 cents per kWh.

The city buys its power at wholesale from Minnesota Power, and MP also maintains the distribution system. Keewatin has a large electric service area, which reflects its early extension of service to mines and camps. Now, however, another utility serves some large customers within the city limits, depriving the city of much-needed revenues.

Keewatin today is an active bedroom community of Hibbing. Keewatin Taconite, to the north of the city, is enjoying a busy year of mining. The population has been stable, notes the city history, even though the business area is quite diminished. Keewatin people are supportive of their community, which looks forward to many years of good living.

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November 2018 The Resource/5
Heartland seeks rate stability, sells its 51-MW share of Laramie River Station

Heartland Consumers Power District (HCPD) has sold its 51 megawatt (MW) share of the Missouri Basin Power Project’s Laramie River Station.

According to Heartland CEO Russell Olson, the sale provides numerous benefits, including rate stability for customers.

“Divesting of LRS achieves many of the long-terms goals we set forth in our strategic plan,” Olson said. “Most importantly, it gives customers steady rates and more certainty about the future.”

Goals outlined in Heartland’s strategic plan included stabilizing rates, enhancing customer relations and maintaining sound financial health. A resource divestiture was identified early on as the best way to achieve Heartland’s goals.

Heartland was previously looking at excess capacity of 30 percent after the year 2020, which would have to be sold in the market, presumably at a loss. “This sale brings us into balance, with our load more equally matching our generation and reducing our reliance on the market.”

MPUC accepts SMMPA IRP

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Sept. 27 accepted the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency’s (SMMPA) 2018-2032 integrated resource plan (IRP). The IRP outlines a utility’s plan to meet its electrical energy and capacity needs. While the IRP filing is required by state law, MPUC orders to a municipal agency are merely advisory. SMMPA’s 2017 load forecast shows the energy need increasing by only 0.5 percent well into the future and demand slightly decreasing over the 15 years by 0.1 percent per year. This demonstrates no need for new generation resources well into the future.

SMMPA’s short term or five-year plan is to continue to operate and maintain the agency’s existing fleet of generation resources while offering demand-side management and conservation programs.

According to the regulatory filing, the most significant change in the long-range plan is the expiration of the Agency’s power sales contracts with Austin Utilities and Rochester Public Utilities on March 31, 2030. This will cut the agency’s load by more than 50 percent.

Aside from the option of adding new members, SMMPA’s need for future generation declines significantly after 2030. SMMPA plans to manage this load loss by selling surplus capacity bilaterally or in the MISO capacity market. If the needs of the capacity market are insufficient to absorb enough of the Agency’s surplus capacity, strategic termination of generation contracts with SMMPA members could be implemented. These terminations can be done in small increments.

The Agency’s next IRP filing was set for Dec. 1, 2021.
Last-minute variation in noise standards clears path for ‘wind farm’ site permit

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission continues to routinely approve the permitting of large wind energy developments, with little or no public opposition. But some proposals are meeting increasingly stiff resistance.

In what is reportedly the first ‘contested case’ involving a Minnesota wind energy development, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Sept. 20 overturned the recommendation of an administrative law judge and permitted, with amendments, the Freeborn Wind Farm.

A site permit for the Large Wind Energy Conversion System was sought by Invenergy for the 84-megawatt development in Freeborn County. An administrative law judge (ALJ) recommended denial of the site permit, because it exceeded Minnesota Pollution Control Agency noise standards. The ALJ found that the state’s wind-farm noise limit applies to turbine noise, including background noise. The site permit request, at one point, had been pulled from the Sept. 20 agenda meeting.

In a Sept. 19 filing, however, experts proposed “special conditions” to “ensure the Project will not cause or significantly contribute to an exceedance of the MPCA Noise Standards.”

These special conditions, according to regulatory documents, are “supported by expert testimony” stating that three decibels is “the generally recognized minimum detectable change in environmental noise levels.”

The Freeborn Wind docket was preceded by a request from Goodhue Wind Truth to undertake a rulemaking to amend Minnesota Rules Chapter 7854 (Site Permit, Large Wind Energy System). The request was denied, as premature given certain other rulemakings currently under way.

The developer also proposed to work with the Department of Commerce (DOC) to develop a plan to minimize and mitigate turbine-only noise impacts if post-construction Noise Studies document “an exceedance” of the permitted standard.

The MPCA, in a Sept. 12 filing, supported an effort by the DOC to allow a 1-decibel sound increase above the current standard. The DOC cited experts that said a 1-decibel increase was insignificant. The MPUC written order had not been released as of this writing. It was to include the permit amendments and “further staff refinements to ALJ report for consistency.”

The permit was vociferously opposed by neighbors organized as the Association of Freeborn County Landowners.

The Freeborn Wind site is at www.onnowdigital.com.

Dodge County wind project moves forward

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Oct. 4 found the Dodge County Wind site permit and transmission line route permit applications were substantially complete.

Dodge County Wind plans a 200 megawatt “wind farm” in Dodge County. The project will be connected to the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency Byron Substation by an approximately 17-mile 345-kilovolt (“kV”) transmission line.

The Department of Commerce said the 345-kV is the largest interconnection line proposed for a wind farm in Minnesota.

A group known as Dodge County Concerned Citizens has raised a number of concerns in the docket.

The request was denied, as premature given certain other rulemakings currently under way.

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• The company is located at 141 Broad Blvd., Suite 206, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221. Phone is 330-942-0474. Web site is at www.onnowdigital.com.

• Primary contact is Mary Jo Nye. She is headquartered in Minneapolis and can be reached at 612-859-1821 or Maryjo@onnowdigital.com.

The request was denied, as premature given certain other rulemakings currently under way.
Wadena:
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Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) Tech Days. The facility also has in floor electric heat that is used when it is too cold to operate the heat pump system. The floor heat is the same system in use at Detroit Lakes Public Utility, and Moorhead colleges.

The utility is doing well financially. One of its power suppliers—the federal Western Area Power Administration—this year has no rate increase planned. There is one more year of a four year planned rate increase of 1.5 percent for City customers and after that Evans expects electric rates to be stable for a handful of years.

The water utility completed a three-year rate increase last year, which is helping to restore reserve levels. The Water Treatment Plant, built in 2003, will be paid off in four years. Some maintenance will be coming up, however, and the water tower needs to be refurbished. Water mains are being replaced, as called for.

Two-thirds of the electrical distribution system is new, since 1999. That process was hastened by a June 2010 tornado. The tornado, with winds of 170 miles per hour, was a mile wide and on the ground for 10 miles. The community center and the high school were damaged beyond repair and replaced with new buildings, that are on the west side of the city and visible from Hwy. 10.

While outside funds helped replace the buildings, local taxpayers are now carrying the operating costs. The utility transfers 4.4 mills per kWh sold to the general fund, and also provides street lights at no charge, a substantial benefit to the city and its taxpayers.

There is some growth, as a new residential development—22 duplexes—is under construction. An assisted living center was built last year.

Evans has been with the utility for 25 years, and superintendent for the last 10. Long-time City Administrator Brad Swenson retired in June. New administrator Janette Bower came from Menagha, where she worked since 2016. Prior to that, she worked in several positions for the Alaska cities of Palmer and Bethel for 16 years. She has family in the Wadena area.
Austin Utilities (AU) held a Winter Readiness Event 3-7 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 10. The event was held in conjunction with Public Power and Public Natural Gas Week and included a Utility EXPO. The open house allowed customers to visit with utility staff and vendors to learn how to prepare for upcoming winter heating bills. Among other things, attendees signed-up for budget payments, learned about high bill culprits, talked to a home energy auditor, and qualified for local heating assistance. Participating vendors included a hardware store, energy auditor, Salvation Army, and community action agency. At the utility EXPO, utility workers were available at a hands-on display of utility vehicles and equipment including line trucks and heavy construction equipment. Hot dog meals and cookies were available for a freewill donation to the Salvation Army HeatShare program. Attendees received a free LED for attending and had the chance to win one of four $50 bill credits being awarded to AU customers.

This was the second year Austin Utilities hosted the Winter Readiness event, which earned runner up in the Marketing and Sales award category from the American Public Gas Association.

Austin Utilities holds Winter Readiness, Utility Expo events

The Sauk Centre Public Utilities Commission celebrated its centennial with a beef sandwich lunch Sept. 28 from in the PUC warehouse. The Sauk Centre Water, Light and Power Commission was created in 1918 when a City Charter was adopted. The vote came March 8, 1918, with 130 residents voting for the Charter, 23 against. The first appointments to the Commission were made by the Stearns County District Court.

The city has had a water system since 1884 and a sewerage system since 1889. It operated a local power plant years ago. In 1922, the city entered into a contract with the St. Cloud Public Service Company to purchase power at a price of 2.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. In 1925, the commission entered into a power supply contract with Northern States Power. Today, the commission purchases electricity from the Western Area Power Administration and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). Power is transmitted over an Xcel Energy 69,000 volt transmission line and received at a municipal substation. WAPA supplies power from federal dams on the Missouri River. MRES supplies supplemental power from the Laramie River Station near Wheatland, Wyo.

The utility also provides water and wastewater service. Debbie Boyer is Office Manager and Shannon Ellering is lead lineman. Councilmember Dave Thomas is Commission president. Ted Spanier is vice president and Roy Walz, Mark Roberg and Jeff Bromansenhenk round out the Commission.

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Associate Members signing-up for 2019 MMUA Annual Sponsorships

MMUA Associate Members are signing up now for 2019 MMUA Annual Sponsorships. The total value of the Resource ad, trade show table and meeting registrations for 2019 stands at approximately $3,675. The $1,750 sponsorship package is a real value for the involved associate member! We keep our sponsors in mind as we go through the year, and add value whenever and wherever we can. You can plan on the following benefits:

• Recognition as an MMUA Annual Sponsor at www.mmuoa.org;
• Recognition as an Annual Sponsor on banners at MMUA events;
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• One 2-column by 5-inch Resource newsletter ad, in color. This includes a free, color, business card-sized ad in the Professional Services Directory (on pages 11-12 of the newsletter). Sponsors can also upgrade to a larger ad for an additional fee.
• One trade show table (including power) and two attendees at either the Summer Conference or Technical and Operations (T&O) Conference;
• Two meeting registrations at either the Summer Conference or T&O Conference.

We urge Associate Members to be seen on our website, at our meetings, and in our publications. To sign-up as an MMUA Annual Sponsor, go to the ‘Sponsors’ tab on the MMUA website, or contact Steve Downer at sdowner@mmua.org or 763-746-0702 or Rita Kelly at rkelly@mmua.org or 763-746-0707.

Thank you for your consideration and we hope to hear from you soon!
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The Technical & Operations Conference (T&O) is the MMUA conference geared for utility managers, superintendents, crew leaders, foremen and other interested utility personnel. The T & O features an exceptional educational program covering timely topics. The meeting is Dec. 4-6 at the Best Western Plus Kelly Inn, St. Cloud.

The program begins the afternoon of Dec. 4 with a life-and-death look at ‘Safety after Life: Lessons & Changes Made by the Cooperative’ and many others great. Presenters from the Minnesota Rural Electric Association will share, through video, their experience of an accident in June 2017. We will then explore the nine resulting changes made by the cooperative.

Other Wednesday afternoon sessions include: ‘Cybersecurity: Understanding the Risks & Threats,’ and a look at the APWA eReliability Tracker System. A general session starts Wednesday; ‘Making the Utility Industry Great AGAIN with Organizational Culture,’ led by Cindy Beresh-Bryant, Continuum Education + Training.

This session will reveal how to create a rewarding and fulfilling work experience that connects with younger employees, using principles that made Southwest Airlines, Chick-fil-A, Disney, Google, and many others great.

Prior to lunch, Mike Willetts, MMUA and Don Harbuck, Northwest Lineman College will present Apprentice Lineworker & Rodeo Recognitions.

The afternoon program is divided into two tracks.

Crew Leader/Foreman Track includes:

• Suspension Trauma
  Jared Oescarson, Ready Responders.

• How a Pole is Made—It’s All in the Details, Jim Davis, Bell Lumber & Pole Company.

• APWA Safety Smart Video Project, Mike Willetts, MMUA.

Manager track includes:


Panel Discussion—Creating a Roadmap for Competitive Lineworker Wages, including Troy Adams, Elk River Municipal Utilities; Dale Narlock, Thief River Falls Municipal Utilities; Mark Nibaur, Austin Utilities; and Steve Johnson, Marshall Municipal Utilities.

• Electric Service Issues: Analysis and Developments, with Mark Prisch, Owatonna Public Utilities and Steve Downer, MMUA.

Both tracks end with a roadway panel.

The evening event is the Trade Show & Reception.

The event’s final morning includes sessions on:

• Fire at the Power Plant—Now What?, with Paul Twite, Delano Municipal Utilities and Tom Ewert, MMUA.

• Cold Weather Rule, by Sally Anne McShane, Minnesota Rural Electric Association.

• MMUA Update, by your ever-popular MMUA Staff.

For more information, see the ‘Events’ section of the MMUA website, or call Rita Kelly at 763.746.0707.

We work for your community with your needs and best interest in mind.