

VPU equal to the task of massive highway project utility work

by Steve Downer

A massive highway re-construction project is underway on the Iron Range, and in the middle of it is the Virginia Department of Public Utilities (VPU).

The project to relocate U.S. Hwy. 53 in Virginia began in late 2015, and is expected to be complete by November 2017. The highway will include the highest bridge in Minnesota, rising 250 feet above an abandoned, water-filled mine pit. The span is 1,132 feet.

The highway is being moved because of an expanding taconite mine. Under a 1960 agreement, the state had to move the highway if Cliffs Natural Resources—owner of the minerals under the land—gave seven-years notice.

That happened in 2010, leaving little time for a project of

this magnitude.

To expedite the project, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) used the Construction Manager/General Contractor process (CM/GC). Perhaps not surprisingly, bids came in high. State money earmarked for the project fell short.

During the past three legislative sessions, city of Virginia representatives, including VPU General Manager Greg French, St. Louis County officials, and others, testified about local burdens in regards to the project in front of both House and Senate committees. Funds to meet Virginia's expenses were included in legislation, but with no bonding or transportation bills from the last legislative session and no special session in the interim, there is a funding gap.



photo courtesy of MnDOT

The new bridge spanning an abandoned mine pit in Virginia will be the highest bridge in Minnesota, when complete.

The city of Virginia, to the tune of more than \$3.4 million, is among the entities stepping up to fill the gap. The hope on

the East Range is that future legislatures will reimburse local

Virginia: see next page please

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Lineworkers flock to Training Center for annual Overhead School

MMUA held its annual Overhead School Sept. 13-16 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. A total of 55 electric line workers from nearly 30 municipalities and one cooperative participated. Most hailed from Minnesota, with some coming from South Dakota and as far away as Maryland.

"It was another successful hands-on and advanced training," said MMUA Director of Training and Safety Mike Willetts.

"The different techniques that I picked up really help," said one participant.

The school started Tuesday afternoon with a safety video



The Overhead School featured realistic, hands-on training.

discussion. It closed Friday morning with a look at key changes to the National Electrical Safety Code, changes to the upcoming APPA Safety Manual and a discussion of the 2016 National Lineworkers Rodeo and a look forward to a state rodeo in 2017.

Sandwiched between the general sessions were two days of hands-on training in the field. There were four hands-on training sessions.

Todd Keach and Matt Tupper of Rochester Public Utilities led a session on trouble shooting and pole replacement. This was

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Austin Utilities unveils new headquarters building with open house

Austin Utilities (AU) hosted a public open house at their new Service and Operations Center from 2-7 p.m. on Wednesday Oct. 5. Customers could tour the 105,000 square-foot facility, visit with staff and enjoy refreshments.

The date coincided with both Public Power and Public Natural Gas weeks. Both events celebrate the benefits of being served by a municipal utility. Tracing its roots back to 1887, Austin Utilities is one of the largest combined municipal utilities in Minnesota, serving approximately 12,300 electric, 10,300 natural gas, and 9,000 water customers. It employs 79 full-time and seven part-time staff.

Austin Utilities began considering its facility needs in September 2009, when it purchased 23 acres of property on 14th Street NE in Austin's industrial park just south

Austin: see back page please



photos by Steve Downer

Austin Chamber of Commerce ambassadors, Austin Utilities Commissioners and utility staff watched as General Manager Mark Nibaur cut the ribbon at the new utility headquarters.

Virginia

continued from front page

entities.

MnDOT held over a week of unit-price negotiation meetings with their CM/GC as part of the contracting process. Virginia, with approximately \$16 million at stake, was considered a small player in the \$230 million project. Local officials were never asked to participate until the contracts were signed.

Choosing the route was a process in itself. It brought the cities of Virginia, Eveleth, Gilbert and Mountain Iron, Fayal Township and other agencies and groups, including trail interests and others, into the discussion.

The city of Virginia may have had the most to lose. It is surrounded by mines, abandoned mine pits and a landfill. None of those were going to move. Seeking to preserve its highway access and economic viability, the city didn't want Hwy. 53, which carries up to 23,500 vehicles per day, to bypass the city. The eventual route—one of several consid-



VPU General Manager Greg French in his office.

ered—should help preserve the city's economic viability. The city is considering what it can do with development parcels it owns all along the new route.

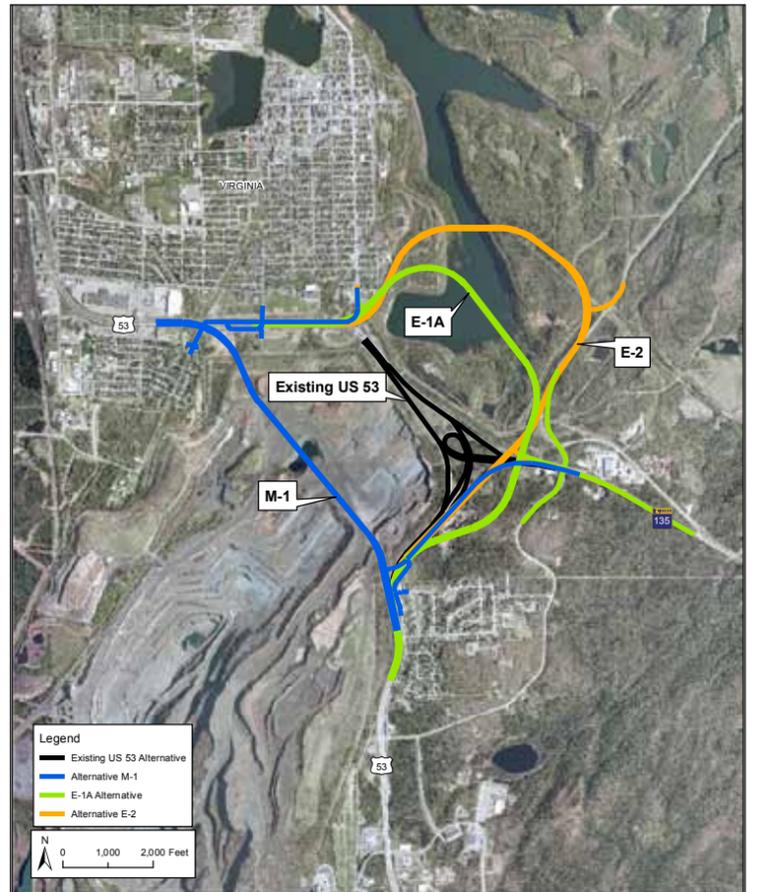
Once the alignment was known, VPU knew it had to move electric, water, wastewater and gas lines within the project limits.

Virginia is largely located on the west side of the bridge. One neighborhood—known as Midway—is on the east side. It was crucial that Virginia retain service to Midway, in part because it recently completed a \$16 million wastewa-

ter improvement project, and those 300 customers are part of the revenue stream.

VPU and the city successfully negotiated the shortest route to Midway for their water and wastewater lines. The new lines will be hung under the bridge, and insulated with heat tape to prevent freezing. They can be shut off at either end of the bridge and monitored remotely. The water line also serves as an emergency connection with Fayal Township and the cities of Eveleth and Gilbert.

MnDOT would not permit gas lines on the bridge.



This MnDOT map shows how Virginia is situated and the routes considered. The eventual choice was E-2. The Midway neighborhood is visible in the lower center of the picture.

Following negotiations with Minnesota Energy Resources Corp., a VPU-owned gas line will be brought to Midway from the south, via Eveleth.

Virginia has also paid Minnesota Power to build a new electrical substation in the Midway area. That substa-

tion is in place and owned by VPU.

Work revolving around the Hwy. 53 project is a huge undertaking for a municipal utility serving a city of 8,700. But VPU, as it has been throughout its 104-year history, is up to the task.



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Powering the World Forward

Federal appeals court hears arguments in pivotal Clean Power Plan case

by Paul Ciampoli
News Director, American Public Power Association

Marking the latest chapter in legal wrangling over the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan, a federal appeals court in late September heard oral arguments in a court case that challenges the Clean Power Plan, the EPA's final rule that seeks to curb carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants.

Hundreds of people lined up at sunrise on Sept. 27 at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in Washington, D.C., to witness the oral arguments, which got under way at 9:30 a.m. and lasted for just under seven hours.

The case, *State of West Virginia, et al., v. Environmental Protection Agency*, was heard "en banc," or by the full bench of active judges that serve on the D.C. Circuit court, rather than by the usual panel of three judges. Ten judges heard the oral arguments.

The chief judge, Merrick Garland, recused himself and did not take part. Garland was nominated by President Obama earlier this year to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court left by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Once the Clean Power Plan case makes its way through the D.C. Circuit court, the losing side is expected to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Washington Report

More than two dozen states taking part in litigation

More than two dozen states, led by West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, are taking part in the litigation against the EPA's Clean Power Plan.

In early February, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 to grant motions filed by 27 states and various industry groups — including the American Public Power Association — that sought to put the EPA's final rule on hold while the D.C. Circuit court hears legal challenges to it.

The states and industry groups challenging the EPA rule have argued that the agency's power to regulate applies only "within the fence line" of coal-fired power plants, and does not include the authority to require utilities to switch from one type of generation to another.

Those challenging the EPA rule also have argued that because the EPA already regulates electric utilities under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act under the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard, it cannot also regulate utilities under Section 111, the section of law that the EPA cited in writing its rule on CO₂.

EPA rule is creating 'a new energy economy'

During the Sept. 27 oral arguments, West Virginia Solicitor General Elbert Lin told the court that, in the Clean Power Plan, the EPA is going beyond its authority to regulate pollutants and is, in effect, "requiring the restructuring of the electricity industry."

"Your honors, the EPA has invoked a little-used provision of the Clean Air Act that concerns performance standards for existing sources, and used it for the creation of a new energy economy," Lin said, referring to Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act — the provision the EPA cited in drafting its final rule on CO₂ emissions from power plants.

"This rule is not about improving the performance of existing fossil fuel power plants," he said. "It is about shutting them down and replacing them with newly constructed renewable generation."

In West Virginia, "We get 96 percent of our power from coal," Lin pointed out. Under the Clean Power Plan, he asserted, "coal plants have two options: shut down, or buy credits from renewable plants that haven't been built yet."

By setting emissions standards for CO₂ that cannot be met without shifting generation to lower-carbon forms of producing electricity, the Clean Power Plan usurps states' rights, Lin

and other lawyers for the petitioners argued. They described the EPA rule as "transformative" and therefore a matter that should have been taken up by Congress. The rule asserts a "novel and vast authority over the states' energy grid without clear congressional authorization," as one attorney put it.

DOJ attorney says rule is not transformative

Speaking for the EPA, Department of Justice lawyer Eric Hostetler argued that the rule was not transformative. Rather, he said, the Clean Power Plan's requirements reflect what is already going on in the electricity industry.

Demand for coal has plunged as utilities shift to cleaner-burning natural gas, which has become plentiful and inexpensive in the U.S. because of hydraulic fracturing, Hostetler said, and utilities also are using more wind and solar power as the cost of these methods of generating electricity has declined.

He said the Clean Power Plan "addresses the key environmental challenge of our time" — global warming — "and does so cost effectively."

"The only thing that seems transformative here is that [the EPA Clean Power Plan] is regulating CO₂ for the first time," said Judge David Tatel.

He cited the Supreme Court's 2007 ruling, in *Massachusetts v. EPA*, that found that the EPA has the authority to regulate carbon as a pollutant and also has the obligation to do so.

The arguments were divided into five segments. The first segment focused on whether the EPA exceeded its authority under the Clean Air Act by requiring generation shifting, while the second segment focused on the question of whether the existing regulation of electric generating units under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act precludes EPA regulation of these units under Section 111(d).

The third segment focused on constitutional questions, including whether the EPA rule infringes on the constitutional authority of the states. The fourth segment focused on whether the rule was properly noticed, given the major changes made to it that were not raised when the rule was proposed.

The fifth segment focused on the questions of whether the rule's "best system of emissions reduction," or BSER, was "adequately demonstrated" and whether its emissions guidelines are achievable.

A decision from the court is not expected until 2017, most likely in the March-April 2017 timeframe.

Boulder continues quest to acquire Xcel's system

The city of Boulder, Colorado on Sept. 28 filed a supplemental application with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission asking for ap-

proval to transfer the electric system assets necessary to operate a municipal electric utility. These assets are currently owned by Public Ser-

vice Company of Colorado, an investor-owned utility that operates in Boulder as Xcel Energy.

Boulder has been pursuing the municipal option as one way to achieve a set of renewable energy goals set by the community in 2010, when the city was deciding whether to renew its 20-year franchise with Xcel Energy.

Boulder "seeks to acquire only the facilities necessary to deliver electricity to customers within the city limits, achieve the community's energy goals and meet the requirements added to the City Charter by Boulder voters in 2011 and 2013," the city said. "Boulder is not seeking to transfer any generation (power plants) or transmission assets that serve the city, nor is it seeking to acquire any assets used exclusively to serve Xcel customers."

Boulder proposed a "separation plan," which will let the city provide electric service to all customers within city limits while maintaining Xcel Energy's ability to serve customers in unincorporated areas.

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MMUA Leadership Academy sets meeting dates for first two years of operation

MMUA is now accepting applications for the first session of the MMUA Leadership Academy.

The Academy is a locally-based and affordable, high-level executive leadership development course, focused on meeting the needs of Minnesota's municipal utilities. The curriculum was developed and tailored based on feedback from current and recently retired municipal utility leaders at a series of focus groups. The Academy is designed to instill the key skills, awareness, and perspective that 21st Century municipal utility leaders need.

The Leadership Academy curriculum directly addresses the needs identified by municipal utility leaders around the state.

Jerry Williams, Academy focus group facilitator

Two-year program

The Leadership Academy is a two-year program designed for both current and future senior leaders. Four two-day sessions per year will be held at the MMUA office, with an allowance for travel time on both days. The first day of each session will feature a networking dinner and focused discussion. Class size will be limited to 25 students.

What you will study

The curriculum will consist primarily of various articles and materials provided electronically. Typically, a book on leadership will be assigned for reading prior to each session. Students will go through an assessment between the first and second course sessions to help the instructor and the students understand their styles, strengths, and potential deficiencies in key competencies. Students will have tasks to work on between sessions and will be expected to do some journaling.

Each Academy session is an important building block

APPA Safety Manual to be released soon

The 16th Edition of the APPA Safety Manual is scheduled for an early 2017 release. It will incorporate recent amendments to federal regulations 29 CFR 1910.137 and 29 CFR 1910.269. Information on how to order is expected to be released soon.

Leadership Academy meeting dates

2017	2018
Feb. 8-9	Feb. 7-8
May 23-24	May 22-23
Sept. 13-14	Sept. 12-13
Nov. 29-30	Nov. 28-29

in developing the skills, awareness, and perspective of a true leader.

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- Political Intelligence and Conflict—Navigating the Minefields
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- Building the Toolbox of Leadership

Year Two Sessions

- Character—Mind of a Leader and Human Resource Strategies
- Behaviors of a Leader—Organization and Administration
- Financial Leadership and Stewardship
- Seeing the Big Picture—Strategic Planning

Instructors

The primary instructor for the Academy is Kent Myers, Managing Partner of VISION Companies. Kent has over 25 years of experience providing strategic visioning, operational effectiveness, and technology alignment consulting services to global companies. He has a decade of experience



Kent Myers

in working with Minnesota municipal utilities on leadership and culture development and strategic visioning. In addition to his extensive consulting practice, Kent is an adjunct professor at the Harvard Business School.

Additional instructors will include Dr. Wes Feltner, PHD, Leadership Development; and Bruce Moyer, prior CFO and COO, United HealthCare.

Some sessions will feature guest speakers who have been through their own journey of adversity and triumph and have expertise in that session's leadership topic.

Price and scholarships

Each session is priced at \$600, which includes books and materials as well as the cost of the group dinner. The annual cost is \$2,400.

MMUA will offer three partial scholarships to applicants from member utilities

serving 2,500 customers or less. Each scholarship will reduce the cost of the program by \$150 per session, or \$600 per year, for the full two-year term of the course. Scholarships will be awarded to eligible students on a first-come, first-served basis. A member utility will be entitled to a scholarship for only one student at a time.

Lodging and certificate

The cost of lodging is not

included in the course fee. MMUA has made arrangements for discounted lodging with the Comfort Inn located at 3000 Harbor Lane in Plymouth. Call 763.559.1222 for reservations and ask for MMUA's corporate rate.

Students who fulfill all course requirements will be awarded a credential or diploma that attests to the various competencies they have demonstrated.

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SMMPA, RPU celebrate multiple benefits of new CapX2020 transmission line

From CapX2020

Transforming the energy grid was a key theme when CapX2020 partners began studying necessary improvements to the region's transmission system more than a decade ago. That transformation was made a reality with the recent energizing of the Hampton-Rochester-La-Crosse 345/161-kilovolt transmission lines, a new 156-mile link that was celebrated Sept. 26 by project partners, local officials and renewable energy advocates.

The CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse Project is jointly owned by Xcel Energy, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Rochester Public Utilities and WPPI Energy.

CapX2020 has now invested \$1.85 billion in completing four high voltage transmission line projects totaling nearly 725 miles across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. A fifth project in eastern South Dakota is scheduled for completion in 2017. The transmission infrastructure projects are addressing local reliability needs and opening up new paths for solar and wind energy across the upper Midwest, helping to meet state renewable energy standards, including Minnesota's 25 percent by 2025 mandate (30 percent by 2020 for Xcel Energy).

"The electric grid is more important than ever as society goes through a resource evolution," said Teresa Mogensen, Xcel Energy Senior Vice President of Transmission. "With increasing proportions of variable generation sources like wind and solar

reshaping the resource profile, the transmission system is at the center of making it all work together."

"Delivering renewable energy, maintaining reliability and keeping electric costs low are the key benefits of the regional grid," said Priti Patel, executive director of Midcontinent Independent System Operator's North Region. "We congratulate the CapX2020 partners on the completion of this critical link."

"We're pleased the line is complete and grateful to our project partners," said Dave Geschwind, SMMPA Executive Director & CEO. "Since the Minnesota portion of the project is double-circuit capable, this investment in reliability and greater access to renewable energy will benefit our members far into the future."

"We are very proud to be part of the CapX2020 project and what it means to the region, and to Rochester," said Mark Kotschevar, Rochester Public Utilities General Manager. "It serves as a wonderful example of what can be accomplished when multiple utilities come together with a common goal."

On Sept. 16, the final phase of the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse project was energized. The transmission line runs between the Hampton substation near Hampton, the North Rochester substation north of Pine Island, and the Briggs Road Substation north



submitted photo

Pictured Sept. 26 at the Hampton substation are, from left to right: RPU General Manager Mark Kotschevar, SMMPA General Manager Dave Geschwind, Teresa Mogenson of Xcel, Chris Kunkel of Wind on the Wires, Ben Porath of Dairyland Power Cooperative, Priti Patel of MISO and Tim Noeldner of WPPI.

of La Crosse, Wisc.

At the dedication event, Xcel Energy officials demonstrated new drone technology that is being tested to inspect transmission lines and other utility infrastructure. These unmanned aerial systems have the potential to help utilities more efficiently inspect transmission lines. A vendor's team demonstrated flights, including the high-definition views the systems can provide.

About CapX2020

CapX2020 is a joint initiative of 11 transmission-owning utilities in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Da-

kota and Wisconsin formed to upgrade and expand the electric transmission grid to ensure continued reliable and affordable service. The projects include four 345-kilovolt transmission lines and

a 230-kilovolt line. It is the largest development of new transmission in the upper Midwest in 40 years. The projects are projected to cost nearly \$2 billion and cover a distance of nearly 800 miles.



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Duluth council triples electrical franchise fee

People living and doing business in Duluth will see increased electric bills, thanks to an ordinance passed by city councilors at a special meeting Sept. 23.

By a 7-2 vote, the Duluth City Council decided to triple the franchise fee it charges Minnesota Power and its customers, boosting it from 1 percent to 3 percent of revenues. For the average Minnesota Power residential customer paying about \$79 per month, that would increase the average monthly franchise fee surcharge from the current 79 cents to \$2.37. But the increase could hit some of the utility's large customers harder. Verso Paper Co. in West Duluth would pay an extra \$540,000 per year on franchise fees.

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A small crowd gathered Oct. 4 in Moorhead for a ribbon-cutting at the second phase of the Moorhead Public Service (MPS) community solar garden. Above: MPS Energy Services Manager Dennis Eisenbraun discusses a few high points of the project, as those gathered sought shelter from the wind and rain in the lee of the phase 1 solar arrays. At left: Western Area Power Administration Administrator Mark Gabriel, MPS General Manager Bill Schwandt and Congressman Collin Peterson visit prior to the ceremony.

Top photo: Steve Downer, MMUA
 Photo at left: Courtesy of Ruchi Joshi, MPS



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Moorhead celebrates Public Power Week with events

Moorhead Public Service (MPS) invited its customers to attend a variety of events on Tuesday, October 4, as part of Public Power Week.

The first event was a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the second phase of MPS' Capture The Sun® Community Solar Project. Rain hastened the ceremony but did little to dampen the spirits of those attending.

That ceremony was followed by an open house/cook-out at the recently-completed High Service Pumping Station (HSPS).

The HSPS project replaced four existing 1950s-era distribution pumps with four new variable frequency drive (VFD) pumps. The new HSPS is capable of 20 million-gallons-per-day (MGD) output and seamless pump changes—a major improvement from the previous pumps. The project also included a 1.3 megawatt (MW) natural gas generator with an automatic switchover to provide emergency backup power supply for the HSPS, Water Treatment Plant (WTP), and Dispatch/Operations Center, in addition to performing curtailment during load management.

The HSPS Project included creation of a partial 24-inch pipe loop around the new

HSPS and WTP, which has effectively reduced maximum day head losses to below American Water Works Association's recommended standard for peak-day flows. Construction on the project took approximately two years to complete and the pumping station began operation in

February 2016.

MPS General Manager Bill Schwandt said, "Our service is reliable and safe and we take pride in serving our friends and neighbors. Moorhead Public Service is proud to have served Moorhead for over 120 years."



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City administrator Mark Vahlsing talked with a customer during the open house.



Kenyon Operations Superintendent Randy Eggert, left, visited with Joe Kopp. Kopp now runs engines removed from the Kenyon plant at the Little Log House Antique Power Show, located south of Hastings on Highway 61.



CMPAS
CENTRAL MUNICIPAL POWER
AGENCY/SERVICES

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.

CMPASgroup.org

Please visit our website for in-depth project information, details about agency membership, non-member affiliate services, and access to customer rebates and other resources.

Central Municipal Power Agency/Services
459 South Grove Street
Blue Earth, MN 56013
507-526-2193
info@CMPASgroup.org
CMPASgroup.org
Municipal Compass to Power

Kenyon holds Public Power Week open house

Kenyon Municipal Utilities (KMU) held a Public Power Week open house Wednesday, Oct. 5, from 4 to 8 p.m.

Utility staff and policymakers served ham sandwiches with chips, cookies and a drink. The meal was held in the spic-and-span municipal electric generating plant. Staff gave tours throughout the event.

Bucket truck rides were also available for the brave at heart.

Each customer household attending received one free LED light bulb, and there was a door prize drawing for KMU customers. Gifts included a 'smartstrip' surge protector and a 'Kill A Watt' electricity usage monitor.

As part of the event, there was a one-hour 'Getting Started on Your Home Energy Audit' presentation, by KMU and Minnesota Energy Resources. Those attending became eligible for a home energy audit.

Kenyon Municipal Utilities has served its community since 1932. Electricity first flowed from the plant on July 29, 1932. Prior to this, the city was served by Federal Public Service Corp., of Chicago.

The utility has paid five percent of its gross earnings to the city since 1958, and has made many other contributions as well.

The Kenyon municipal utilities commission signed an agreement with Northern States Power in 1961, which allowed the municipal to buy economy energy when and if it desires.

In 1995, KMU joined the Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (now CMPAS), and buys its power wholesale through the agency.

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Mora Municipal Utilities invited community members to participate in a variety of Public Power Week events on Thursday and Friday, Oct. 6 and 7.

Activities included a light bulb exchange, where customers could trade a compact fluorescent or incandescent light bulb and receive a free LED light bulb.

Pollinator information and seed packets were given out, and tours of the power plant were offered, twice a day.

Also available were free popcorn and magnetic chip clips (while supplies lasted).

Around the State



Customers could also register for a gift basket.

In a media release, Mora Municipal Utilities noted it has 14 employees and operates two power plants as well as the municipal water system and wastewater systems. It serves 1,658 residential and 279 commercial and industrial customers.

Detroit Lakes Public Utilities announced Sept. 16

via twitter that it is moving forward with a community solar garden.

A community meeting was held Thursday, Sept. 22 at city hall. The cost of each 410 watt panel will be \$975 and estimated electrical production is 450-500 kWh per year (\$45-\$55 per year in credits). The utility is looking for 70 customers, to proceed. Initial indications were good, and investors are being limited to purchasing no more than six panels per customer.

Grand Rapids Public Utilities has mailed more than 7,000 surveys to its customers, in an effort to gauge interest in purchasing electricity from a "community solar garden" and/or a forest-derived biomass facility. The utility planned an Oct. 25 open house to unveil the survey results. At the event, customers can learn more and provide input on some of the different ways that renewable energy programs could be structured and operated.

Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) recently held a ribbon cutting for the new Well #41 and placed it in-service as RPU's newest water supply facility. The new 470-foot deep Jordan Aquifer well and well house cost approximately \$850,000. RPU serves more than 39,000 water customers.

Marshall Municipal Utilities conducts a rate study every three years. The most recent projection predicts that electric costs could go down 14 percent, due to a partial change in wholesale power supply.

Brainerd Public Utilities has expanded its budget billing program, and now offers the program to all customers. Customers can enroll in March. The billing amount is determined by using the previous 12 months of billing history and dividing the amount by 12.

The utility commission also recently approved a cost of service and rate design study. The utility conducts a cost of service study approximately every five years. Major changes in that time include the shuttering of a major customer and utility purchase of a hydro powerhouse and dam.

Madelia Municipal Light and Power has continued to upgrade street lights to LED technology. Aiding the project was a grant from Heartland Consumers Power District. A to-

tal of 67 lights were replaced this year. Payback on the light changeout is expected to be four years.

Grand Marais Public Utilities recently installed new squirrel protection in its substation, along with installing a new breaker.

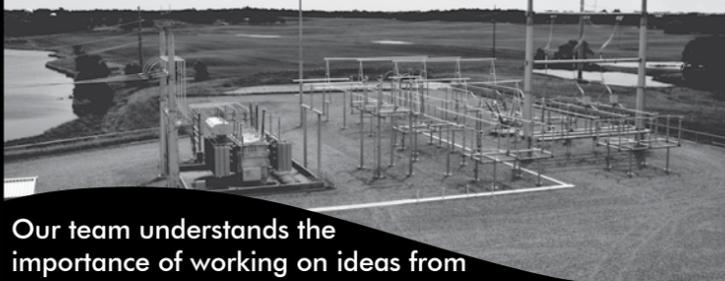
Greater **Moorhead Days** was held Sept. 8-14, and featured the grand opening of the Heritage Garden and Amphitheater. The Heritage Garden pays homage to the Moorhead Power Plant, acknowledging the important

role it played in the development of Moorhead.

The **Hibbing** city council Sept. 7 unanimously approved a resolution to increase the number of local Public Utilities Commission members from three to five. The resolution followed legislative approval, given in the 2016 session.

A recent audit of the city of **Ely's** utility funds shows all three—water, sewer and electric—with revenues exceeding expenses, even with depreciation factored in.

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The MMUA Training Center in Marshall was the scene of intense training activity Sept. 13-16, during the MMUA Overhead School. In the picture above: Todd Keach of RPU discusses the finer points of pole replacement. At right: Two linemen positioned their bucket to accomplish a task. Below: MMUA Job Training and Safety and Apprenticeship Instructor Art Gatchell, (left foreground), talks linework with a participant at the school. MMUA thanks all of the instructors at the school, for sharing their years of experience, knowledge and passion for linework.



photos by Steve Downer

School

continued from front page

a challenging class which included trouble shooting, removing a pole and placing a new one in the same hole—all performed while working under ‘energized’ conditions.

A municipal utility’s bread and butter—Overhead Maintenance—was another class offered. Instructors were Roger Moltzan of Detroit Lakes Public Utilities and Darren Weber of Elk River Municipal Utilities. Different trouble shooting techniques were practiced.

A session on Advanced Rubber Gloving was led by Miles Heide and Wade Williams of Fairmont Public Utilities and Colten Berghuis of Austin Utilities. This advanced class focused on ‘working it hot.’ Participants developed a safe strategy to approach installing a new pole within an energized three phase line.

MMUA’s Al Czczok led a class on Rigging for Lineworkers. This class started with the basics and worked into more complicated knots and rigging useful for the lineworker.

An Advanced Class—Moving Up the Leadership Ladder—was led by Steve Johnson of Marshall Municipal Utilities, Dave Hunstad of Hutchinson Utilities, Joyce Hottinger of the League of Minnesota Cities and MMUA’s Mike Willetts.

A lineworker Obstacle Course Challenge was held Thursday. During the challenge, participants climbed up, through and over cross-arms, positioning to a new position at a different level. At each level, there was a task to perform.

Thanks to instructors and those that provided equipment!

MMUA Training Center Coordinator Cody Raveling extended his thanks to the instructors and the following utilities/companies that provided equipment/materials:

- ABM Equipment
- Altec Industries
- Austin Utilities
- Detroit Lakes Public Utility
- Fairmont Public Utilities
- Marshall Municipal Utilities
- New Ulm Public Utilities
- Owatonna Public Utilities
- RDO Equipment
- Rochester Public Utilities
- Shakopee Public Utilities
- Titan Machinery
- Truck Utilities, Inc.

Altec and Titan also sponsored a pizza reception.



Equipment played an important role at the school. Thanks to those who brought the equipment needed to make the school a success.

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Wastewater Operator II
 City of New Prague (pop. 7,378) is seeking applications for the position of Wastewater Operator. The Wastewater Operator position performs work at a Class A Biological Aerated Filter Wastewater Treatment Plant, lift stations, and swimming pool. This includes operations, repairs, and maintenance; collecting samples and performing tests; evaluating, calibrating, and troubleshooting equipment; preparing and maintaining operation records; and participation in an on-call rotation with 20 minute response time. Minimum qualifications include graduation from high school or a GED; MPCA Class D WW Operator License and the ability to attain a MPCA Class C WW Operator License within 36 months; possession of a valid MN Class D Driver's License and ability to attain a MN Class A CDL with tanker and air-brake endorsements within 6 months; Certified Pool and Spa Operator certification or ability to attain within 12 months; and computer / SCADA skills. Starting pay range \$25.19 to \$31.29 DOQ. Application and supplemental questionnaire are available on-line at www.ci.new-prague.mn.us and are due by 4:30 pm on November 4, 2016. Submit application and supplemental questionnaire to City of New Prague, ATTN: Glen Sticha, Public Works Director, 118 Central Ave. N., New Prague, MN 56071. The City of New Prague is an equal opportunity employer.

Journeyman Lineman
 The City of Mountain Iron has an immediate opening for one (1) full-time lineman position in the Public Utilities Department. This position reports to the Director of Public Works. Minimum qualifications include five (5) years of experience, journeyman lineman's license, a High School Education or equivalent, with advanced education/training in electrical distribution systems and related subjects preferred and a class "B" commercial drivers license. Starting salary is \$25.88 per hour plus benefits. Applications will be accepted until 4:00 p.m., Friday, November 4th, 2016. Applications are available at www.mtniron.com or by call-

ing 218-748-7570. Send applications, resume and other completed materials to Craig J. Wainio, City Administrator, City of Mountain Iron, 8586 Enterprise Drive South, Mountain Iron, MN 55768.

Line Worker

Austin Utilities (Austin MN) is seeking a talented and self-driven Line Worker to join our Electric Distribution team. The successful candidates will perform construction and maintenance work on de-energized and energized 13,800 volt underground and overhead distribution system in a progressive community, serving approximately 12,300 customers. Please visit our website at www.austinutilities.com for additional information regarding this position and to download the application package (application, supplemental questionnaire, and job description). Please forward your application package and resume to: E-mail: kimd@austinutilities.com or Mail: Austin Utilities, Attn: Human Resources, 1908 14th Street NE, Austin MN 55912. EEO

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

Bits &

Pieces

The last load of coal was delivered, by the *James R. Barker*, at Taconite Harbor in Schroder at 8:48 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 5. A small crew of Minnesota Power employees remain at the plant, mothballing it for potential future use.

State and Xcel Energy officials announced a 20-year deal to use electricity from North Star Solar Project in Chisago County and Odell Wind Warm in Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin, and Watonwan counties, to supply energy to the state capitol. Before the deal takes effect, it must be approved by the state Commerce Department and the Public Utilities Commission. State officials say the support is expected early in 2017.

American Electric Power on Sept. 14 said that it has signed an agreement to sell four competitive power plants totaling approximately 5,200 megawatts for approximately \$2.17 bil-

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lion to a newly formed joint venture of Blackstone and ArcLight Capital Partners LLC. The sale is expected to close in the first quarter of 2017. AEP expects to net approximately \$1.2 billion in cash after taxes, repayment of debt associated with these assets and transaction fees.

Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS) has taken a step forward in the possible deployment of up to 12 small modular reactors. One of its partners on the project is NuScale Power, a developer of the small modular reactors, or SMRs.

UAMPS expects to make a decision in the first quarter of next year as to whether to start the application process with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a combined construction and operating license for the SMR project. Each reactor would be rated at 50 megawatts.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Sept. 7 released its final Cross-State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) Update rule for the 2008 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS).

The Dickinson Solar Project, a collaborative effort between Wright-Hennepin and Great River Energy, one of its wholesale electric power providers, has brought 2.25 megawatts of renewable energy onto the grid.

A dedication event to recognize the project's completion was held Friday, Sept. 16, at the solar array's location south of Buffalo.

The project consists of

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8,352 panels on a 13-acre site in Buffalo already owned by Great River Energy, so construction did not affect or harm any farmland or

wooded areas. Construction began in March 2016, and the project became operational in August.

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1 Mailed Outside-County Subscriptions	1894	1897
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Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail	0	0
Total Paid Distribution	1981	1985
Free or Nominal Rate Outside County Copies	0	0
Free or Nominal Rate Inside County Copies	0	0
Etc	0	0
Total Distribution:	1981	1985
Copies Not Distributed	52	52
Total	2033	2037
Percent Paid	100%	100%



Austin Utilities' Mark Nibaur talked with a reporter following the ribbon-cutting event.

Austin

continued from front page

of Todd Park. The immediate need was to relocate gas and water construction staff and equipment out of a flood zone area, but the intention at that time was to also find a piece of property that allowed for growth to meet future needs. At the time, the utility was spread between seven differ-



Open house attendees visited in the lobby before a tour.

ent locations.

A thorough campaign was launched in December 2013, to inform the community about the utility's facilities planning and how it could impact customers.

In October 2014, at a special board meeting, the AU

Board of Commissioners voted to approve the construction of a new central facility, with a not to exceed cost of \$18,677,000. Approvals were based on a schematic design by TKDA, an architectural firm based out of St. Paul. Joseph Company, located in



An electronic message board welcomed visitors to the Open House.

Austin, was selected to work with TKDA as Construction Manager to determine the guaranteed maximum price. Ground was broken in April 2015. The building was completed and opened to the public in July 2016.

The building is located at 1908 14th St NE

The Austin Utilities mission is to offer utility products and services in a safe, reliable and responsible manner in order to enhance the quality of life in its community.

Technical and Operations Conference

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

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

Tuesday, December 6

Quality Management Debra Englund, HRExpertiseBP

The skills that made you an amazing leader or contributor yesterday will likely not have the same positive impact moving forward. Expertise is not enough. Leadership skills and the 'leadership team' are the foundation of an organization's success.

- What is a quality leader?
- What are the fundamentals of quality leadership?
- What tools do you need?
- How to engage employees in the world of Baby Boomers, Millennials . . .
- It's all about behavior and expectations: How do you effectively promote strong performance?
- Communicate
- Set Expectations
- Measure the right things the right way
- Maintain accountability and standards
- Reward excellence
- Improve, through exercises, by understanding the different social and communication styles of others.

Wednesday, December 7

Creating an Empowerment Culture Kit Welchlin, Welchlin Communications



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An empowerment culture will lead to a more effective work force and efficient organization. No matter what your position or title, you can support the creation of a work environment that is empowering.

- Demonstrate appreciation for unique personal and professional value.
- Invite coworkers in on planning, ask for input, and consider their suggestions.
- Mission statements, value statements, and codes of conduct—Just slogans or important guidelines?
- Communication is a two-way street—if we have questions about expectations, we should be free to ask, without ridicule or humiliation.
- Share all available information so co-workers can make thoughtful decisions and have successful outcomes.
- Recognize hard work, attention to quality, and team spirit.

Highline Heroes—A Family's Perspective Tracy Moore Highline Hero Foundation

The afternoon offers two tracks:

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 Wood, Ziegler Power Systems

Arc Rated Clothing & PPE Improvements 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

Pre-Conference, Dec. 13-14. Transformer School Dec. 14-16

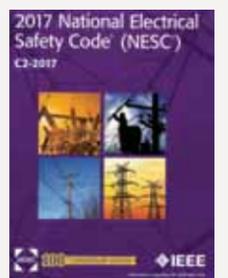
MMUA, along with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association and American Public Power Association, is pleased to offer the 2016 Transformer School. The pre-conference covers Basic Single-Phase Transformer Connection & Theory and leads into the Three-Phase Transformer Connections School.



Scott Meinecke, an instructor from Northwest Iowa Community College, will again be the instructor for this course. Through a combination of classroom and hands-on learning opportunities, participants will be exposed to situations that are as "real world" as possible, without the real world risk/danger.

NESC Regional Workshops - Jan. 2017

The National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) is the application standard for safety in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of an electric utility system. In August 2016, the Code was updated and the National Electrical Safety Code - Edition 2017 was released.



Some major change areas include:

- Grounding methods
- Overhead line clearances
- Underground line strength and loading
- Work rules
- Who should attend?

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