Training Up the Next Generation

MMUA held its annual Overhead School at our Training Center in Marshall, Sept. 11-14. The school featured a number of educational opportunities, with the emphasis on hands-on field training. Most students rotated through four different three-hour training sessions. There was a good mix of experienced lineworkers, students and apprentices. ‘Skip’ Ferguson of Austin Utilities, at left in this picture, was among those sharing knowledge and experience. For more on the school, see page 10.

Warroad benefits from municipal electric service

by Steve Downer

Reliable, affordable electric service is a modern-day necessity. That is especially true if you are a big business, or live in a cold climate.

Both of those factors apply in Warroad, which is one reason why industry and citizens are fortunate to be served by the City of Warroad Utilities Department. The utility provides electric, water, sewer and street services to the city of approximately 1,800 people.

One of those customers has considerably more employees than the city’s population—Marvin Windows and Doors, with approximately 2,500 local employees. The Warroad campus is six miles from the Canadian border and spans 2.2 million square feet.

Overall, the family-owned Marvin companies reportedly have 6,000 employees at 12 facilities in the United States and Canada. The benevolent company has been more than good to the community and the family is well thought of—Bob Marvin is mayor. Other family members are involved with various local boards.

Owned by the citizens, the City of Warroad Utilities is committed to providing all its customers with dependable power, clean drinking water, high quality service and fair rates. Utility Superintendent Dan Trosen is responsible for streets and the water, wastewater, stormwater and electric utilities. He is relatively new to the city, having come a year ago from Carrington, N.D., where he was public works director and water superintendent. Water is important everywhere, but especially when you live on the shores of Lake of the Woods, an international boundary and famous fishing lake.

Along with his local duties, Trosen is on the Lake of the Woods One Watershed One Permit policy committee. It is an important assignment: Warroad’s wastewater pond system is operating as designed, but new phosphorus regulations have Warroad, along with many other cities, concerned about future permit levels and regulatory costs.

Trosen said he felt confident taking the Warroad job because of the good, experienced city crews that were already in place. The electric utility, for instance, has two journeyman linemen and a second-year apprentice. Between the three, they have well over 30-years of experience with the utility.

The electric crew consists of trained linemen, but the city isn’t that big. Trosen pointed out the Warroad job better fits his career goals as an experienced linemen.

Warroad: see page 5 please

September storms activate municipal mutual aid network

Minnesota municipal electric utilities weren’t called upon to help restore service in the wake of Hurricane Florence, but they did respond to a September emergency closer to home.

According to the National Weather Service, tornadoes and other severe wind gusts caused damage across southern Minnesota on Thursday, Sept. 20. Some of the heaviest hit areas included Owatonna, Medford and West Concord. Other areas hard hit were Faribault, Warsaw, Cannon Falls, Waterville and Northfield. Damage from a few of those communities was attributed to tornadoes.

Wind gusts of 60-70 mph were observed. Owatonna Public Utilities (OPU) called MMUA late Thursday night, to put the mutual aid process into motion. While MMUA contacted nearby utilities, OPU staff completed a damage assessment.

First thing in the morning the following crews and equipment met at OPU: two bucket trucks and four line-
State regulatory agency considers dockets that might interest municipals

While rulings of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) often do not apply to locally-regulated municipal utilities, they may often be interesting, and instructive. The MPUC has recently addressed a number of dockets that may be of interest to municipal utilities. These include:

- **Updating Generic Standards for Utility Tariffs for Interconnection and Operation of Distributed Generation Facilities**
  - The issue was broached in a related docket, the MPUC Aug. 6 issued an order denying reconsideration in the matter of a complaint by Red Lake Falls Community Hybrid LLC Regarding Potential Purchased Power Agreement Terms and Pricing with Otter Tail Power Company (OTP).
  - Red Lake late in 2016 filed a request for a Commission to resolve a dispute with OTP. Among its findings, the MPUC Aug. 2 found that the purchase price for energy per MWh is equal to an estimate of avoided costs based on the utility’s small power production tariff. It also found that the contract length for the project was 20 years and set a start date. The Commission also denied a Red Lake request to award attorney’s fees.

- **Time-of-Day (TOD) Rate**
  - The project was approved in 2012. The TOD Rate Pilot was unique for Minnesota, including an on- and off-peak rate, along with additional peak pricing (CPP) component for summer and winter. “Events” could be called at times of highest demand and customers were charged an additional 77 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to reflect high wholesale market prices or power system constraints.
  - In March 2016, MP requested the MPUC approve a rate adjustment to assume only 24 hours of CPP instead of 100 and adjust the on-peak adder to 4.87 cents per kWh instead of 1.415 cents per kWh. The adjustment was requested due to a large under-recovery of revenue.

  More recently, MP in May requested to remove the CPP component and sought to discontinue ongoing evaluation of the TOD Rate Pilot.

- **Gas Utility Competition**
  - In March 2016, MP requested reconsideration of a precedent-setting decision.
  - The project was approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MP, expansion of the TOD Rate Pilot.

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**The Resource**

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EPA proposes to replace ‘Clean Power Plan’ with new rule—dispute starts anew

by Paul Ciampoli, News Director, American Public Power Association and Ethan Howland, Contributing Writer

The Environmental Protection Agency in August proposed to replace the Clean Power Plan with a new rule that would let states decide how to make existing coal-fired power plants more efficient to lower their greenhouse gas emissions. The Obama administration’s Clean Power Plan exceeded the EPA’s legal authority and would in some areas lead to double digit rate hikes, according to an analysis sent to reporters in a conference call after the proposal was unveiled.

The Clean Power Plan aimed to cut greenhouse gas emissions from the U.S. power plant fleet by 25 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. The plan, which was stayed by the U.S. Supreme Court while litigation was ongoing, would have required states to meet emissions reduction targets using various options such as energy efficiency, renewable resources, and carbon dioxide trading programs. The EPA contends its proposed rule will roughly lower greenhouse gas emissions as much as the Clean Power Plan would have, partly because the power sector has been shifting away from coal-fired generation towards low and non-emitting generation resources since the Clean Power Plan was drafted, according to Bill Wehrum, EPA assistant administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, U.S. energy-related CO2 emissions have declined in seven of the past 10 years, and they are now 14 percent lower than in 2005.

The EPA is proposing that rate improvement measures are the “best system of emission reduction” (BSER) for the roughly 600 existing coal-fired units that will be affected by the rule.

“EPA believes that a BSER focused on making these plants as efficient as possible is the best way to ensure GHG emission reductions regardless of other factors such as technology changes for other types of generation, changes in fuel price, changes in electricity demand, or changes in energy policy that neither environmental regulators nor power companies have the power to control,” the agency said in the draft rule.

Under the proposed Affordable Clean Energy rule, states will have three years to develop state plans. States would have flexibility in determining which rate improvement measures and regulations they choose to use to lower their emissions. States would be able to include switching a coal-fired power plant to natural gas as a BSER, according to the EPA.

The EPA is also proposing to allow states to set performance standards for generating electricity—unlike the Clean Power Plan—which would in some cases lead to higher costs for utilities. The EPA said it was aiming to make the Affordable Clean Energy rule less burdensome and to make it easier for states to comply with the regulation.

The EPA is proposing to allow states to include natural gas as a BSER, and the agency said it would hold a public meeting to receive comments on the proposal.

The EPA said it would take comment on the proposal for 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register.

On Sept. 10, the EPA said that it would hold a public hearing in Chicago on the Affordable Clean Energy proposal.

The proposed rule will likely face court challenges.

FCC wireless broadband order nixes local control

The Federal Communications Commission Sept. 27 released its Declaratory Ruling and Third Report and Order in the Matter of Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers and Local Authority on Poles and Rights-of-Ways. As of this writing, the American Public Power Association was studying the Ruling and Order for its possible implications.
One key to the great service municipal utilities are known for is that they often employ a significant number of electric personnel per customer, compared to other utilities.

The City of Warroad electric department, for instance, isn’t one of the biggest in Minnesota, but there isn’t one better situated to serve its customers.

A back-of-the-napkin analysis shows that, although Warroad has only three linenmen, its lineman-to-customer ratio is higher than larger utilities.

Otter Tail Power (OTP) is the nearest investor-owned utility to Warroad. It provides electricity to 422 communities, including Badger and Greenbush to the west of Warroad, and to rural areas in western Minnesota, northeastern South Dakota, and the eastern two-thirds of North Dakota.

In its most recent reliability report to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, OTP notes that while it serves three cities with populations of over 10,000 (Fergus Falls, Bemidji and Jamestown, No. Dak.) the average population of the cities it serves is approximately 630. Over one-half of the cities it serves have populations of fewer than 200.

In other words, OTP’s cities look sort of like municipally-served cities, except for a couple of things:

- OTP operates nine Customer Service Centers (CSC) for its 422 communities. Every municipal electric utility has a customer service center, which is either a utilities service center or something commonly known as city hall.

- Otter Tail has an approximately 70,000 square-mile service territory—roughly the size of Wisconsin.

Municipal territories sometimes reach outside of city limits (a reflection of service provided years ago through their municipal power plants), but most are confined to the city limits.

OTP’s report on staffing levels at its work center noted 148 full-time equivalent positions held by field employees responsible for responding to trouble and for the operation and maintenance of distribution lines.

The company’s EIA data for the time shows 61,482 customers, or roughly 415 customers per employee. This does not include 11,688 South Dakota customers and 58,769 in North Dakota, for which the Dakota service centers also respond.

Comparable Xcel Energy statistics show 475 field employees (including 54 in Fargo and Sioux Falls) and 1,269,408 customers, or 2,672 customers per field worker.

Warroad data from the same time period shows 914 customers and three linemen, or 304 customers per lineman. The municipal utility’s field staff also live in or in close proximity to the customers, ensuring a more rapid response time. They also are very familiar with their electric distribution system, and have built much of it with their own hands.

Three municipal utilities—Duluth Lakes, Buffalo and Waseca—recently were involved in joint requests to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) to modify electric service territory boundaries. In each case, the MPUC agreed to order an updated electric service area map to reflect the change.

The MPUC Sent. 13 dealt with the Detroit Lakes-Wild Rice Electric Cooperative request, which included areas within city limits but formerly within the electric service territory assigned to the cooperative. The agreement covers three areas on the north and west sides of Long Lake. The municipal will assume service to one area this year, one in 2020 and the third in 2022.

The joint request contained a map and legal description but no terms of agreement. The two transfer areas encompass 378 acres and have approximately 75 residential and 20 small commercial customers. The cooperative will continue to serve transfer areas on a service-by-exception basis until the transfer of service is arranged.

The parties submitted customer notice letters, identifying the proceeding before the MPUC. The Commission acted on two requests to update electric service territory records on Aug. 16.

The City of Buffalo and Wright-Henepin Electric Cooperative Association joint request covered seven acres at the intersection of two county roads and zero customers.

The Waseca-Xcel Energy filing involved an area annexed into the city in 1993 and served by the city since that time, under a service by exception agreement. The area is known as the Market Place Addition and includes one customer on six acres. The unoccupied portion of the land is vacant and owned by the city, according to regulatory documents.

The city agreed to pay the investor-owned utility one cent times each kilowatt hour of electric energy sold to each customer in the affected area, with such payment not to exceed a maximum payment of $2,500 per customer. The loss-of-revenue payment commenced on the transfer date (the date of the MPUC action) and was to continue for 10 years, unless the maximum usage of 250,000 kWh is first satisfied.

The loss of revenue payments do not apply to facilities owned or operated by the city for providing city services, including, but not limited to, streetlights.

No other payments, including for integration or other factors, are due.

Solar ‘garden’ ruling

The MPUC has also recently approved a joint request from Xcel Energy and East Central Energy (ECE) to amend their service territory boundaries. The petition was the result of a ‘community solar garden’ docket in which the Commission found that “A community solar garden must be located entirely within the service territory of the utility administering the solar-garden program.”

The area is in Chisago County, near Center City. There were no existing customers.

Initially, the developer was not willing to modify the project location, and ECE was not willing to cede a portion of this territory to Xcel. Citing local community interest, the parties reached an agreement. The transfer will allow the solar plant to be entirely within Xcel territory. No compensation was involved.
out that he supervises seven people, which is the largest city labor force. When a water main breaks or snow needs to be plowed, the linemen pitch in to help.

Currently, a big downtown street project is underway, and the crew is busy locating and moving its electric infrastructure in the area. Lines in the project area will be placed underground, as part of an ongoing project to underground the electric distribution system.

The push to place the 7,200-volt electric system underground gained steam about five years ago. A little over half of the system is underground now—hopes are that the job will be complete in a couple years.

“It’s more reliable, and looks better,” Trosen said. It also eliminates a lot of tree-trimming issues. And when strong winds do come up, they are glad electric lines are being put underground.

Along with competitive rates and enviable reliability, the local crew takes pride in the electric system and promises quick response when their electric system and power lines are being put underground.

Commission oversees utility

The men have good equipment. The utility is overseen by a five-member commission (including two council members), with overall authority resting with the city council. Warroad is supplied at wholesale by the Northern Municipal Power Agency.

It is likely the northernmost municipal electric crew in Minnesota, if not the country.

City Administrator Kathy Lovelace has been with Warroad 20 years, and has served as administrator since 2003.

Warroad Utilities Department occupies an unassuming building near the Warroad River.

The city also operates a liquor store, airport, campground, and library along with parks, police, fire and ambulance services.

Warroad’s famous hockey rinks are owned and operated by a local arena association with a separate board.

Lovelace definitely sees the value of the municipal electric utility. It is locally-owned, operated and maintained, she said, with quicker, faster service if there is an issue. Of similar importance is the payment in lieu of tax the electric fund makes to the general fund. In Warroad, that has been set at $270,000 a year, which saves local taxpayers a similar amount.

The local utilities commission is sensible to keep rates as low as they can, said Lovelace, and are intent to keep them that way. The transfer is set to reflect a balance between the legitimate financial interests of the city, its taxpayers and the ratepayers.

Warroad City Hall on National Register of Historic Places

Warroad City Hall is located in the former Canadian National (CN) depot, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The railway train stopped in Warroad for the first time in 1900. In 1914 embers from a coal burning engine ignited the original depot and it was destroyed by fire. The depot is the first one in built in the U.S. by a foreign (Canadian) corporation. It was negotiated by a special treaty between Canada and the United States.

Until the 1930’s, immigration offices were housed in the corner of the depot’s waiting room.

In 1977, CN ended its passenger service and in September 1978 the depot was closed, by signed orders from the Minnesota Dept of Transportation.

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He most recently was the Director of Distribution Operations in response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. He was stationed in Puerto Rico during that time. Prior to that he was at South Norwalk Electric Works in Connecticut and was the Director of Electric Operations.

Rodney Marshall is the new general manager of New Ulm Public Utilities. He has over 30 years experience in electric distribution, transmission, substation, federal energy regulatory issues, and project management experience.

The Hibbing Public Utilities Commission is studying the future of its steam electric generating plant, which also supplies a district heating system. The utility will receive $71 million between now and 2023, due to the termination of Laurentian Energy Authority (of which it was a member) and Xcel Energy power purchase agreement.

Hibbing is working with the local community college to transition from steam to natural gas. The college is the utility’s third largest steam customer. The utility is also upgrading its natural gas town border station.

The City of Benson has received a $4 million payment, with more to come, for the cancellation of the power purchase agreement between Xcel and Benson Power, a private company located in Benson. The city, due to local economic dislocation, expects to receive a total of $20 million over four years. As part of the deal, enabled by recent legislation, Xcel plans to level the plant to four feet below grade. A group of city officials, however, traveled to California to meet with executives of biogas energy companies, who appear interested in the facility.

With the first payment in hand, the city is gearing up its economic development efforts for the area.

Barnesville Municipal Electric has sent its customers information on a local solar garden. The utility currently has two arrays of 40 panels. Potential exists for an additional 40-panel array. Customers have the opportunity to invest $750 in a 330-watt panel, if they so choose, with an expected 85% annual credit on their bill. Customers can buy more than one panel, and the ownership contract is for 20 years.

Barnesville currently provides 54 percent renewable energy, including hydro.

The Hutchinson city council recently approved rate changes recommended by the Hutchinson Utilities Commission. The two-year rate restructuring is revenue neutral. Customers will pay higher fixed charges and lower charges for consumption.

The City of Hawley and the Hawley Public Utilities Commission have received the results of an electric cost of service study. All seven customer service classes were studied and small kWh increases were enacted for three rate classes: residential and commercial off-peak and generator. Commercial and large commercial rate classes received slight kWh decreases.

Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMM-PA) held an open house Aug. 8 at its new 38.8 megawatt power plant in Owatonna. The $40 million plant houses four large natural gas-burning engine generator sets. The engines allow multiple fast starts a day, valuable in an era of increased wind and solar energy. The plant is patterned after a similar SMMPA plant in Fairmont.

Construction is underway at the 39-unit, 101-mega-watt Stoneray wind energy conversion development in western Murray County. The project developer expects units to be producing by the end of the year. Power will be sold on the open market until 2020, when a power purchase agreement with SMMPA commences.

Truman Public Utilities Commission is struggling.

State: see next page please
September 17, 2018 – Fitch Ratings and Moody’s Investors Service have each upgraded their bond ratings for the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA). The rating increases support the Agency’s long-term goals and strengthen MMPA’s position for the future.

MMPA provides wholesale electricity to its member communities, which in turn deliver and sell that electricity to residential and business customers in their communities. Fitch upgraded MMPA’s bond rating from “A” to “A+.”

Fitch cited MMPA’s strong financial performance, effective management, and competitive rates in upgrading its rating.

Moody’s upgraded MMPA’s bond rating from “A2” to “A1.” This upgrade represents the second time in four years that Moody’s has upgraded MMPA’s bond rating.

Contributing to the ratings upgrades was MMPA’s retirement of more than $32 million of debt in 2017, including the prepayment of $22 million of its Series 2007 bonds. By extinguishing this debt, the Agency avoided paying nearly $8 million in interest expense over the next 20 years, resulting in lower rates to members.


ERMU takes service
Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) became the Agency’s 12th member in 2013 and on Oct. 1 began receiving its electric power from MMPA. Its power supply agreement with MMPA runs through 2050.

“We’ve been looking forward to this day for years,” said ERMU’s General Manager, Troy Adams. “We’re excited to join a great group of like-minded municipalities, who share a similar vision of public power and pride in the power of their hometowns,” he said.

ERMU spent years looking at potential power supply partners. Major factors in the utility’s decision included MMPA’s long history of competitive rates, the fact that each MMPA member has a seat on the MMPA board of directors, and MMPA’s balanced and efficient power supply portfolio.

MMPA’s management partner is Avant Energy, a Minneapolis-based energy management company and an innovative supplier of energy project development, management, trading, consulting and utility operations services.
Tyler Meiners of Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) won the overall journeyman competition and Tyler Hanson of Shakopee Public Utilities (SPU) was the overall apprentice winner, at the second annual Minnesota Lineworkers’ Rodeo, held Sept. 11 at the MMUA Training Field in Marshall.

Meiners scored a perfect 100 in each of the three events: Obstacle Course, Rope Toss and Hurtman Rescue. He also recorded the fastest time in the Obstacle Course, but finished fourth in the Rope Toss and second in the Hurtman Rescue, due to time. Meiners was the only journeyman with a perfect score of 300.

Hanson paced the apprentices with a score of 298. Three men finished at 296: SPU’s Matt Kahle, and Nathan Roeder and Justin Varpness of Marshall Municipal Utilities (MMU). Hanson finished second in the Hurtman Rescue, fifth in the Rope Toss and first in the Obstacle Course.

Eighteen linemen from six utilities participated. The event preceded the MMUA Overhead School.

The top three finishers overall and in each event were:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Apprentice</th>
<th>Rope Toss Apprentice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tyler Hanson, SPU</td>
<td>Hunter Gleason, RPU</td>
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<td>Matt Kahle, SPU</td>
<td>Matt Kahle, SPU</td>
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<td>Nathan Roeder, MMU</td>
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<th>Journeyman</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tyler Meiners, RPU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Enright, SPU</td>
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<td>Tommy Flores, MMU</td>
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<tr>
<th>Hurtman Rescue Apprentice</th>
<th>Obstacle Course Apprentice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hunter Gleason, RPU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Enright, SPU</td>
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<td>Jamie VonBank, SPU</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The event came off without a hitch, and it couldn’t have happened without a small army of volunteers and generous support from event sponsors. MMUA thanks all the contestants, the utilities that sent them, our many judges, volunteers and event sponsors.


MMUA’s Cody Raveling participated in the opening ceremonies.

Among those attending were 25 students from Minnesota West Community and Technical College.
Tyler Hanson (above) won the Apprentice competition. The opportunity to talk to, and learn from, judges and other linemen is a big benefit of participating in or attending the rodeo. For more photos on the event, see the MMUA Facebook page.

Each event required several judges—22 in all for the three events. Hurtman judges included Chief Judge Larry Lamote of MMU, and event judges Jeff Beethold of Missouri River Energy Services, Brad Olson of Brainerd, Wade Williams of Fairmont, Dale Narlock of Thief River Falls, Dave Hunstad of Hutchinson, Kent Sanders and Greg Drent of Shakopee, and Tom Ewert of MMUA.

Rope Toss judges included chief judge Todd Keach of Rochester, and event judges Trent Hawkinson of Brainerd, Scott Thoreson of Elk River, Jim Griebel of Delano and Steve Johnson of MMU.

Obstacle Course judges included Chief Judge Steve Tiegs of Austin, and event judges Larry Bottin of New Ulm, Eric John of Moorhead, Brendan Olson of Hutchinson, Dan Hanson of Delano and Roger Hennen of Shakopee.

Cody Raveling of MMUA was master judge. Bucket truck operators were James Monroe of MMUA and Jeff Martinson of Austin.

Flag climbers included Lamote, Keach, Tiegs, Raveling, and Tony Mead of MMU. There were many additional volunteers, who filled a number of roles.

Mike Enright of SPU won the Hurtman Competition and finished second overall in the Journeyman class.

A judge kept a close eye on a contestant in the Rope Toss competition, which included a number of tasks, including proper knot tying.
Overhead School brings together 40 lineworkers from 21 Midwestern utilities

MMUA, along with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association and American Public Power Association, held the 2018 Overhead Lineworker School Sept. 11-14 at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall. The school drew nearly 40 lineworkers from more than 20 municipal utilities and one electric cooperative. In addition, first and second year lineman students from Minnesota West Community & Technical College in Jackson came to observe the Multi-Session Class.

In a new twist, students rotated through four different three-hour training sessions (except for the Advanced Class). This allowed participants to take advantage of all hands-on training sessions, learn about a variety of topics and hone practical skills for efficiency and safety. Along with the hands-on training sessions, a number of general sessions were held. They included:

- **Personal Lineman’s Safety Testimonies**
  - Larry Botten of New Ulm Public Utilities and Jim Griebel of Delano Municipal Utilities talked about their experiences and personal commitment to safety.
- **Drone Operation**
  - Instructors were Al Ebbinga of Alex Air Apparatus and MMUA’s Chris Trembley.
- **2018 Rodeo Recap**
  - Minnesota was again well-represented at the national Rodeo in April with five teams and six apprentices competing. Participants shared their experiences and how they plan to prepare for next year’s rodeo, which will be held in Colorado Springs. We also recapped this year’s Minnesota Rodeo.
- **Primary Double Dead-End**
  - This session covered all the proper steps needed to change a wood tangent inline arm into a double dead-end fiberglass arm. The class was led and instructed by Todd Keach and Chad Peterson, Rochester Public Utilities and Steve Tiegs and Jeff Martinson, Austin Utilities.
- **3-Phase Transformer Bank Troubleshooting**
  - This session went through different scenarios to help better understand troubleshooting issues. Instructors were Trent Hawkinson and Brad Olson, Brainerd Public Utilities and Eric John, Moorhead Public Service.
- **Rigging and Knots**
  - This session covered knots and rigging used in all aspects of line construction and maintenance. Instructor was James Monroe, MMUA.
- **Troubleshooting**
  - Participants practiced different troubleshooting techniques including testing, grounding and proper rubber cover up. Different scenarios were presented that participants were instructed to repair.
  - Instructors were Wade Williams of Fairmont Public Utilities; Tyler Meiners of Rochester Public Utilities; Scott Thoreson of Elk River Municipal Utilities and Larry Lamote, Marshall Municipal Utilities (MMU).

**Advanced Class**
- This class covered Budgeting and Finance 101. This class was designed to help the transition from line crew to management. Some of the topics discussed included: safety, work management, budget planning, mutual aid/emergency preparedness, and finances. Instructors were Steve Johnson, MMU; Dave Hunstad, Hutchinson Utilities and Greg Drent, Shakopee Public Utilities.

**Equipment providers:**
- ABM Equipment
- Altec
- Austin
- Brainerd
- Elk River
- Moorhead
- Rochester
- Watertown, So. Dak.

Lineworkers from the various utilities get to compare notes throughout the school.

Safe work practices are stressed throughout the school and in each session.

All tasks at the Overhead School are taught by seasoned linemen and watched closely by instructors in the air and on the ground.

Troubleshooting
- This session went through different scenarios to help better understand troubleshooting issues. Instructors were Trent Hawkinson and Brad Olson, Brainerd Public Utilities and Eric John, Moorhead Public Service.

Trent Hawkinson of Brainerd discussed a real-world scenario with a group that focused on troubleshooting.

The Training Field was used to the maximum during the school.
workers from Rochester Public Utilities, one bucket truck, one digger derrick and four lineworkers from Austin Utilities, and one bucket truck and two lineworkers from St. James. The St. James crew was replaced by one from Blooming Prairie for a day, and Shakopee Public Utilities assisted starting Sunday. The utilities are veterans of mutual aid events, ranging from localized damage to hurricane restoration in the eastern U.S.

By Tuesday morning, a few services still needed to be reconnected. In some cases, an electrician needed to fix service point damage at the residence before power could be reconnected. The utility posted regular updates on its Facebook page.

An unconfirmed tornado also caused damage in and around Fairmont. At one point, approximately half of Fairmont was without power. Fairmont Public Utilities quickly restored power to most of its customers. Four poles were damaged and needed to be replaced.

Municipal utilities have a long history of helping each other out, both locally and nationally

Editor's note: The following article appeared in the Owatonna Public Utilities newsletter, following the recent mutual aid event.

Local and state governments share the responsibility for protecting their citizens from disasters, and helping them recover when disaster strikes. In some cases, damage is such that a local government needs help to quickly restore essential services.

Municipal utilities have a long history of helping each other recover from natural disasters. Minnesota municipal utilities responded heroically to help St. Peter recover from a devastating tornado and East Grand Forks from an overwhelming flood. When other Minnesota municipals were hit with ice storms or tornadoes, these utilities were first in line to return the help.

This willingness to help another utility in need became more formalized in the year 2000, when the Federal Emergency Management Agency ceased to reimburse aiding utilities following declaration of a disaster, unless the utilities had existing mutual aid agreements in place.

In response, municipal electric and rural cooperative utilities across the country signed identical mutual aid agreements. The agreement does not obligate a utility to respond. But if it does, it makes it eligible for federal disaster assistance funds, and sets up a framework to cover a host of issues.

Utilities, however, respond before any disaster declaration. That is simply what they do.

Public Power nationally has responded quickly and efficiently to several high-profile disasters. Minnesota municipal crews earned high praise for their work in the wake of hurricanes Sandy and Irma. (Regional utilities were able to handle the damage from Florence.)

Municipal utilities are generally small compared to other utilities, but with 2,000 locally-owned Public Power utilities across the country, we form a strong network. Public power personnel are tied in to FEMA and state emergency command centers, and are in close communication on a state and local basis.

When disaster strikes, Public Power responds quickly, and with a clear purpose. We extend our heartfelt thanks to those utilities that responded so well and so recently in Owatonna.

GRE proposes upgrade to serve Enbridge Line 3

Great River Energy has proposed a 34.5-kV transmission project in Becker and Hubbard counties, along with a substation upgrade and two miles of 115-kV line. The 115-kV section of line is designed to serve pumping stations for the proposed Enbridge Line 3 oil pipeline.
The Technical & Operations Conference (T&O) is the gateway for utility Managers, Superintendents, Crew Leaders, Foreman and other interested utility personnel.

The T & O features an exceptional educational program covering timely topics. Plus there will be plenty of opportunities to meet with old and new friends during the conference sessions and at the ever-popular Trade Show & Reception.

Schedule
Tuesday, December 4
1 pm Welcome & Opening Remarks

Safety First, Restoration Second
Minnesota Rural Electric Association

We hear it all the time. “How long will it take to get the power back on?” And we know accidents happen when we rush. Hear the personal stories of two lineworkers in Minnesota, shared through video, that experienced an accident in June 2017. We will then explore the nine changes made by the cooperative as we answer, “Could this accident have happened at my place?” With this exercise, you will walk away with actions for making sure it doesn’t.

Cybersecurity: Understanding the Risks & Threats / APPA eReliability Tracker System
Nathan Mitchell, APPA

This session will help you better understand cybersecurity challenges and give you concrete ideas to help mitigate your cyber risk.

You will also learn the complete details about APPA’s eReliability Tracker program and how it could benefit your utility. MMUA members are eligible to purchase an eReliability Tracker subscription at a reduced rate thanks to a subsidy APPA has secured from the Department of Energy. This is a limited time/quantity offer.

Wednesday, December 5

Making the Utility Industry Great Again with Organizational Culture
Cindy Beresh-Bryant, Continua Education + Training

Traditionally, the utility industry could count on high wages, great benefits and lifelong employment to attract and retain the best employees. But, what worked in the past is less attractive to today’s workforce. Learn how to create a rewarding and fulfilling work experience that connects with employees using principles that made Southwest Airlines, Chick-fil-A, Disney, Google, and many others great. Among the things that you will learn:

- What makes Organizational Culture your ONLY competitive advantage with today’s workforce.
- How you can apply similar principles to continue to be an employer of choice in your industry.

Apprentice Lineworker & Rodeo Recognitions
Mike Willetts, MMUA and Don Harbach, Northwestern Lineman College

Luncheon
The afternoon program is divided into two tracks.

Crew Leader/Foreman Track

Suspension Trauma
Jared Oecarson, Ready Responders

Being ejected from a truck bucket while wearing a properly fitting full body harness greatly improves your odds of survival when compared to being in a “body belt” but you are still in grave danger if left suspended for any length of time. Join us to learn how to keep from being injured by your safety equipment.

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

During this interesting presentation you will learn how a pole is made—the journey from forest to customer.

APPA Safety Smart Video Project
Mike Willetts, MMUA

MMUA, with the support of an APPA DEED grant, has been given the opportunity to redevelop the APPA Safety Smart Video series into a more modern format. MMUA was involved in the original project when it was initiated more than 20 years ago. Participants will see previews of several videos, with an explanation of the concept and delivery behind each topic.

Winner: Danup Lumber, Thief River Falls

Vendor Showcase
This session will give you a rapid-fire look at the latest in goods and services for the utility industry. This is a great opportunity to learn about new products and services. Vendors must be an Associate member of MMUA.

Manager Track

Achieving Your Business Strategy Through Organizational Capability, Hiring and Onboarding
Cindy Beresh-Bryant, Continua Education + Training

During this break-out session we will unlock the secrets to attract and retain top employees who are willing and prepared as an asset to help you achieve your business strategy.

Location: Best Western Plus Kelly Inn, St. Cloud
Questions? Contact Rita Kelly at 763.746.0707 or rkelly@mmua.org.
Deadline to register is November 20, 2018.
MEMA is saddened to report that a 33-year-old electric lineworker was killed this summer while working to restore an outage near Orr. The cause has been under investigation. The utility had suffered more than 7,500 outages after severe thunderstorms blew through the area. Our condolences to family, friends and co-workers.

California law now requires the state to obtain 60 percent of its energy from renewable resources by 2030 and 100 percent of its energy from renewable resources by 2045, and (up from the state’s previous 50 percent by 2030 goal).

Hydroelectricity represented the largest share of renewable generation in 19 states in 2017, according to a report published by the Energy Information Administration (EIA). Hydroelectricity provided seven percent of the national total. EIA projects that by 2019, wind generation will surpass hydro as the most prevalent source of renewable generation nationwide—wind was already the most prevalent renewable source in 16 states in 2017. EIA also reports that solar was the most prevalent renewable generation source in seven states. Solar generation’s share was highest in California, where it provided 16 percent of the state’s 2017 total, behind natural gas (41 percent) and hydroelectricity (20 percent).

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) on Sept. 12 said that they have launched a joint inquiry to assess the extreme cold weather event that occurred in the Midwest and part of the South Central U.S. in January.

On Jan. 17, 2018, regional operators in the Midwest and South Central U.S. issued public appeals for consumers to voluntarily reduce their electricity use due to abnormally cold temperatures and higher than forecast electricity demand. There were reports of multiple forced generation outages, voltage deviations and near-overloads during peak operations, FERC and NERC noted. The inquiry will focus on

continued on facing page:
identifying the causes of, and any contributing factors to, the event, and will identify any appropriate recommendations for improving operations under similar conditions.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission has ordered investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities to return $200 million to consumers, due to lower corporate tax rates following enactment of the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act. Xcel Energy will refund $136 million, which will appear as about a $45 credit on one month’s bill. Minnesota Power will return $28.7 million.

A solar and wind electric generating project has been proposed for west of Erhard (north of Fergus Falls), by Lake Region Electric Cooperative. A similar proposal in a nearby area was shelved due to neighbor concerns. The new proposed area is more rural in nature.

A federal appeals court ruled in mid-August that Minnesota owes North Dakota $1.3 million in attorney fees after losing a lawsuit over Minnesota’s Next Generation Energy Act. North Dakota argued the law violates the U.S. Constitution’s commerce clause by restricting electricity imports that would increase carbon dioxide emissions.

Chicago-based Invenergy is reportedly finalizing landowner leases to construct a 125-megawatt solar energy plant on 900 acres near Brewster, in southwestern Minnesota.

Journey or 2nd or 3rd Year Apprentice Lineworker

Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) has an opening for a Journey or 2nd/3rd Apprentice Lineworker. We are looking for a highly motivated individual to join our team providing electric distribution maintenance services to the City of Benson. Journey and Apprentice Journey Lineman Requirements:

- **Education:** 1 year Power Line (minimum)
- **Active Driver’s License**
- **Ability to Obtain a CDL**
- **CPR Certified**
- **Reside within 15 minutes of Benson, MN**

Additional Journey Line Worker Requirements:

- **Journey Line Worker Designation:** 4 years of experience in the operation, construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of electrical distribution systems and associated equipment.
- **Lineman:** An organization of 61 member municipalities that own and operate their own electrical distribution systems. We are dedicated to supplying our member municipalities with reliable, cost effective, long term energy and energy services in a fiscally responsible and environmentally sensitive manner. We provide very competitive wages, a comprehensive/low cost benefit package, and an outstanding work environment that promotes a long-lasting career. For consideration, send your resume and cover letter describing your qualifications for the position to hr@mrenergy.com. Position closes October 12, 2018. MRES is an Equal Opportunity Employer. For consideration, send your resume and cover letter describing your qualifications for the position to hr@mrenergy.com. Position closes October 12, 2018, EOE.

Electric Foreman

The City of Saint Peter, Minnesota is currently accepting applications for the position of Electric Foreman in the Department of Public Works. Responsibilities include but are not limited to implementation and organization of work, providing general supervision of crews and participation in construction, operation, control, maintenance, testing, and cleaning of electrical distribution system. Minimum qualifications: high school diploma and satisfactory completion of a technical school program for lineman electricians and completion of a recognized apprenticeship in electrical line work, including five years of responsible experience in electrical distribution systems. An additional five years of experience may be substituted for technical training. Possession of, or ability to obtain, a State of Minnesota Lineman License issued by the State Board of Electricity within six months of employment with the City. Possession of a valid State of Minnesota Class A Driver’s License with air brake endorsement or ability to obtain within six months of the date of employment with the City. Possession of American Heart Association Certification as a Basic Rescuer for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiac care or obtain within six months of the date of employment with the City. Notice. The successful candidate must complete and pass a pre-employment drug test and is subject to post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, return to duty, and follow-up drug and alcohol testing. Starting salary $34.24 per hour.

Applicants must complete a City application form available in the City Administrator’s Office, 227 South Front Street, Saint Peter, Minnesota 56082-2538 or by calling (507) 931-0663. Completed applications will be accepted until 5:00 pm, Thursday, November 1, 2018. Faxed, e-mailed, or late application will not be accepted.

We are an A/A EEO Employer

**Principal Engineering Assistant**

This position stores, retrieves and duplicates engineering and construction records for Facilities Management and other University of Minnesota customers. Performs routine field investigations and bureau utilities marking services through Gopher State One Call. Collects data for use in updating engineering records using Trimble (or equivalent) survey equipment in support of GIS initiatives. Utilizes computer-aided design (CAD) to update and maintain University engineering and construction drawings. Assists Engineers and/or Architects in locating drawings, performing basic drafting and design, and conducting inspections. Minimum Qualifications: Three years of engineering coursework, or a combination of engineering/technical trade school training in surveying, utility locating, record keeping and related work experience to total three years is required. Previous work experience in surveying and locating techniques is essential. A working knowledge in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is strongly preferred. For more information and how to apply, please go to the following site: https://z.umn.edu/PrincipalEngineeringAsst

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MMUA Leadership Academy adjusts schedule
Program revamped to one-year schedule to meet member needs

MMUA has successfully launched the first two groups participating in the MMUA Leadership Academy. The program has received high marks, but we have been listening and seek to make The Academy even more member-friendly.

To that end, we have tweaked the schedule for 2019 sessions, set for a new group of students. Rather than scheduling two partial-days per session, covering two years, the 2019 group will tackle two full-days per session and complete the program in one year. The first day of each session will feature a networking dinner and focused discussion. Class size will be limited to 25 students.

This new schedule will provide the same amount of class time, but reduce the amount of travel and time away from work. Session dates for 2019 are:

February 6-7
May 1-2
September 11-12
November 20-21

The Academy

The MMUA Leadership 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 to your needs based on feedback from current and recently retired municipal utility leaders. The Leadership Academy is designed to maximize true change in behavior and ability in its participants. From many years of experience as executives, trainers and coaches, we have learned that having multiple mutually reinforcing activities in a leadership development program makes the difference in behavior change.

The Academy is designed that way—it’s a multi-session, intensive, progressive series of individual and group activities that surface, confront and support leaders to become aware of their executive leadership limitations, and actualize a pathway to become better.

Curriculum

The curriculum will consist primarily of various articles and materials provided electronically. Some sessions will have assigned reading prior to meeting; typically, a book on leadership. Students will go through an assessment to help the instructor and 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 session is a crucial building block in developing the skills, awareness, and perspective of a true leader.

Sessions include:

- Collaboration (Getting the Most out of Your Team) and Conflict (Working Through Difficult times)
- Communication (Presence of a Leader) and Character (The Mind of a Leader: Lens)
- Change (How a Leader Navigates Change) and Mastering Accountability (Understanding and Equipping for this Critical Topic)
- Failing Versus Failure (Understanding the Differences Between These Two Terms and How They Create Positive and Negative Change in a Group) and Practicing Leadership

Primary Instructor

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 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

- Dr. Wes Feltner, PhD, Leadership Development
- Bruce Moyer, prior CFO and COO, United HealthCare

Executive Guest Speakers

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.

Scholarship Opportunity

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 $1,200. Scholarships will be awarded to eligible students on a first-come, first-served basis. A member utility will be eligible for a scholarship for only one student at a time. Students are expected to complete the full program.

Registration information

To register, contact Rita Kelly at 763-746-0707 or email rkelly@mmua.org

For best rate, register by November 11.
Deadline to register is November 21.

For more information, see the ‘Events’ calendar at www.mmua.org or contact Theresa Neddermeyer at tneddermeyer@mmua.org or phone 763.551.1230.

Upcoming training events — Transformer School and School Pre-Conference

We are very happy to announced Scott Meinecke will again instruct this program. With Scott’s background as a lineworker and more than 25 years experience as an instructor, he ‘brings the training to life’ with miniature transformers. The miniature transformers are fused, able to be wired in many configurations, tested and energized and will blow a fuse if something is wired incorrectly!

The class will start with the basics of transformers—turns ratios, polarities, calculations, connections and troubleshooting–then will progress to the basics of three-phase systems with basic phasor diagrams and explanation of the relationship of the phases to the transformer.

Participants will gain valuable hands-on transformer experience.

Upon completion of the School, participants should have a good understanding of:

- Basic Three-Phase Connections
- Delta Connection
- Wye Connection
- Open Delta Connection, and
- Three-Phase Troubleshooting.

The Pre-Conference is a basic or refresher course on single-phase transformer connections and theory. Classroom and hands-on instruction will cover safe work practices, theory, basic calculations, connections, sizing, and troubleshooting.