

## MMUA holds annual meeting

Gathering of municipal utility people held in time of uncertainty, industry change

Minnesota municipal electric and natural gas utilities have been meeting annually since 1931, to conduct the association's annual business: electing board members, approving budgets, and hearing from a variety of experts. This year's MMUA Annual Summer Conference was held Aug. 17-19 at Breezy Point Resort.

The event has evolved over the years. Popular features now include a trade show and a pre-meeting golf tournament, but business remains the meeting's reason for being.

Troy Adams of Elk River Municipal Utilities was elected president, taking the reins at the conclusion of the meeting from Brainerd Public Utilities Commissioner Bill Wroolie. Bob Elston of the City of Sleepy Eye/Sleepy Eye Public Utilities was elected president-elect.

In the hours leading up to the

Conference: see page 6 please



Blooming Prairie Mayor H. Peterson, APPA President and CEO Sue Kelly, APPA Policymakers Council chair and Owatonna Mayor Tom Kuntz, MMUA Executive Director Jack Kegel and Willmar Municipal Utilities Commissioner Carol Laumer visited during a break at the MMUA annual conference.

## Elk River celebrates centennial with open house

*Editor's note: The following is a heavily-edited version of an article by Joni Astrup that first appeared in the Elk River Star News on Aug. 20.*

One hundred years ago, electricity came to Elk River.

Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) marked this milestone event Aug. 27 at the Sherburne County Fairgrounds in Elk River. An estimated 1,300 people attended the event.

As part of the centennial celebration, the utility served pulled pork sandwiches and hot dogs along with a variety of side dishes, drinks and treats. The Elk River Lions had additional food available from their concession stand.

A local band provided music. Community Education sponsored a variety of kids' activities. The electric department performed a number of safety demonstrations, including pole top and bucket rescue. Equipment was displayed and demonstrated. Tours of the historical power plant were also given. Customers were asked to reserve a tour spot in advance and bus transportation to the nearby plant was provided.

Exhibitors included the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, representatives from Elk River's Energy City, and Waste Management, which operates an Elk River landfill gas-fired electric



This pre-centennial celebration photo shows the Elk River Municipal Utilities staff in the historic municipal power plant.

generating plant, along with the ERMU electric, water, conservation and security systems departments. A number of local businesses contributed as sponsors.

John Dietz, Elk River's mayor and chairman of the Elk River Utilities Commission, said there have been a lot of ups and downs and big decisions over the years.

"It's a pretty big asset for the community," Dietz said of ERMU. "We're public power. We're not in this to make money, we're in this to provide good service to our citizens. We answer only to the ratepayers, most of whom are citizens of Elk River."

*Lighting the town*

In June 1915, Fred Waterman

incorporated the Elk River Power and Light Company, and in January 1916, he brought electricity to Elk River. Waterman built a new power plant and dam to supply power to Elk River. The power plant has been demolished but the dam remains.

By 1922, the utility had 386 customers in Elk River, 60 in Zimmerman and 390 in Princeton, according to a utility history.

Waterman, meanwhile, sold the dam and power plant to his son-in-law, and in 1924, the utility was sold to Chicago-based William A. Baehr Organization.

Almost immediately, the company connected the village with

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## MPUC-People's solar tariff fray fallout affects municipal utilities

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Aug. 13 took up the complaint of a People's Electric Cooperative customer, who challenged the \$5 per month charge imposed by People's to pay for fixed costs associated with the customer's 10 kilowatt (kw) interconnected wind turbine.

By a vote of 4-0 the commission resolved the dispute in favor of the customer, ruling that People's failed to demonstrate that the fee meets the criteria of Minnesota Statutes Section 216B.164. It also found People's to be in violation of Minnesota Rules Parts 7835.0300 and 7835.0400 for failing to file the proposed fee changes in 2014.

In addition, the Commission ordered PUC staff to open a docket and ask all investor-owned, cooperative and municipal electric utilities serving in the state whether they apply a charge to recover fixed costs from generating customers and, if they do, in

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which docket the commission approved the charge. MPUC staff may also ask for other related information it deems appropriate.

Provisions of the Commission's order relating to a separate generic docket to analyze all fixed cost charges were developed by commissioners in response to People's' conten-

tion that all investor-owned utilities charge for fixed costs, and that the commission has not objected since they began doing so in 2010.

Attorney Harold LeVander, representing People's, stated that if the Commission is satisfied with the IOUs' fees, it should also allow the People's fee to stand. In her original proposed order provision for a generic docket, Commission Chair Beverley Jones

Heydinger suggested that all IOUs and co-ops should file information to allow staff to determine whether or not they apply charges to net metered customers that do not apply to other customers.

A spokesperson for the Alliance for Solar Choice asked the commissioners to make the same requirement of all municipal utilities as well, and newest Commissioner John Tuma echoed the sentiment.

Bill Black, representing MMUA, explained to the Commission that few, if any,

municipal utilities charge such fees and suggested that the order could call for only utilities who do have such fees to file them. He also said that municipal utilities whose governing bodies have adopted similar, consistent rules are not required to file with the state PUC the type of tariffs in question.

The final rule will allow utilities that do not charge extra fixed cost fees to generating customers to simply state as much, said Black. However, municipal utilities may still be required to file

answers to PUC questions seeking additional related information.

Those addressing the Commission also included the complainant, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, the "Clean Energy Organization" (Fresh Energy, Environmental Law and Policy Center, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, and Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy), the Minnesota Solar Industry Association and Dairyland Power Cooperative.

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## North Dakota court issues injunction against EPA 'waters' rule

A federal district court judge in North Dakota issued a preliminary injunction Aug. 27 against implementation of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule.

The North Dakota court granted a motion sought by 13 states, headed by North Dakota, to prevent the rule from taking effect Aug. 28.

The injunction will temporarily block the rule until the Court formally hears the case

and issues a final decision on the merits.

The Court found that there was either a substantial likelihood of success on the merits or fair chance of success. That means the States are likely to succeed on their claim because (1) it appears likely that the EPA has violated its Congressional grant of authority in its promulgation of the Rule at issue, and (2) it appears likely the EPA failed to comply with Administrative Procedures Act requirements when promulgating the Rule.

In its decision, the North Dakota court specifically analyzed Clean Water Act § 509(b) (which gives the

courts of appeals original jurisdiction over specified EPA actions), explaining why jurisdiction to review the rule resides in the district courts.

The order does not specify whether it applies nationwide, and EPA issued a statement late in the day Aug. 27 that the rule will take effect as scheduled in the 37 states (including Minnesota) not covered by the injunction.

The day before the ruling from North Dakota, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia and U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia denied the motions for lack of jurisdiction.



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## EPA releases 'Clean Power Plan' final rule; APPA issues its initial reaction

from APPA

A little more than a year after it first proposed its plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in early August unveiled the final version of what it refers to as the Clean Power Plan.

President Obama on Aug. 3 used a speech at the White House to roll out the final rule on the Clean Power Plan. The EPA initially proposed its rule to regulate CO2 emissions from existing sources under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act in June 2014.

One of the key differences between the Clean Power Plan as initially proposed and the final rule is that the final rule calls for CO2 emissions from existing power plants to be 32 percent below 2005 levels when the Clean Power Plan is fully in place in 2030. When EPA first unveiled the Clean Power Plan, the proposal required states to cut CO2 emissions from existing power plants from 2005 levels by 30 percent by 2030.

### Washington Report



The final rule allows for additional time for compliance with the rule's interim deadline. The final rule also establishes an eight-year interim compliance period that begins in 2022 with a 'glide path' for meeting interim CO2 emission performance rates separated into three steps: 2022-2024, 2025-2027, and 2028-2029.

When it released the proposed Clean Power Plan in 2014, the EPA said a mix of four "building blocks" make up the best system of CO2 emission reductions under the Clean Air Act, one of which related to energy efficiency.

But the EPA said that under the final rule, there will be three building blocks, not four, with the one related to efficiency going by the wayside.

The revised "best system of emissions reduction"

(BSER) definition and building block computations result in substantially narrowing the disparity between state goals, which means that some states benefitted and some got tougher targets.

The agency said that the BSER focuses on supply-side measures that reduce emissions from power plants, and does not rely on demand-side energy efficiency as a building block.

"EPA nonetheless anticipates that, due to its low costs and potential in every state," demand-side energy efficiency will be a significant component of state plans under the Clean Power Plan.

Another key change from the proposed rule to the final rule relates to the treatment of nuclear generating units under construction and existing renewable energy sources.

The EPA said that the final BSER analysis does not include existing or under-construction nuclear power or existing utility-scale renewable energy generation as part of building block 3.

The analysis does include more use of new renewable energy based on up-to-date information clearly demonstrating the lower cost and greater availability of clean generation than was evident at proposal, the agency added. "It takes into account recent reductions in the cost of clean energy technology, as well as projections of continuing cost reductions."

Generation from under-construction nuclear facilities and nuclear plant uprates can still be incorporated into state plans and count towards compliance, the EPA said. "In fact, nuclear power competes well under a mass-based plan, as increased nuclear generation can mean that fossil fuel units are operating less and emitting fewer tons of CO2."

*APPA sees improvements, but notes more stringent targets for some states*

In its initial reaction to the final rule, the American Public Power Association on Aug. 4 said that it "appears at first blush that EPA has made

substantial improvements over the proposed rule."

At the same time, APPA said in an Aug. 4 news release that it is "concerned about unrealistic targets set for some states that will impose substantial additional costs on consumers."

The final rule incorporates a more rational approach to setting a uniform national standard for emission rates for coal and natural gas plants," APPA said. "Other positive changes in the final rule include: an extended interim deadline, more time for states to develop compliance plans, fairer treatment of renewables and nuclear generating units under construction, and the inclusion of a reliability safety valve. The addition of a program for renewable energy credits and guidance for interstate trading will give utilities more flexibility. Compliance targets are now more achievable for some states, including Arizona, Florida, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.

However, APPA said that the final rule has substantially raised CO2 reduction targets for other states (including Illinois, Kentucky, Nebraska, West Virginia, and Wisconsin), making their compliance burdens more difficult and expensive, and raising the possibility of significant rate increases for consumers.

"While there are also adjustments to the building block assumptions, calculations and compliance options that offer a more realistic approach to CO2 emission reductions, many of the fundamental problems with the EPA's unprecedented and sweeping interpretation of the Best System of Emission Reduction regime in the proposed rule persist in the final rule," the public power association said.

A key area of focus for APPA as it continues to review the final rule is in the interstate trading portion of the rule, which is a key component of the overall workability of the final rule.

While APPA sees several positive elements to the interstate trading approach adopted by the EPA in the final rule, the association wants to make sure that the related trading mechanisms are not problematic for members.

APPA is also taking a closer look at how calculations are made under building block three and related potential cost concerns.



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Scott Hautala is the new general manager of **Hibbing Public Utilities**, effective Aug. 31. Hautala was formerly a senior project manager at Lakehead Constructors, Inc., in Mountain Iron. Hautala has also previously worked for Minnesota Power, including as operations manager at the Boswell Unit 3 generating station. He also worked at Hibbing Taconite for 10 years as a senior environmental engineer.

The Hibbing Public Utilities Commission has approved a \$1.07 million project to install a natural gas burner in boiler No. 3, which is currently a coal-fired boiler. The work is expected to take place in the next six months. The project is being undertaken to comply with federal environmental regulations.

Paul Hoeschen is the new superintendent of **Sauk Centre Public Utilities**. Hoeschen has most recently been public works director at the City of Cold Spring, and was previously the city's wastewater superintendent.

Hoeschen takes over from the recently-retired Marty Sunderman, who worked for the utility 34 years, the past 15 as superintendent.

The **Rochester Public Utility Board** June 30 accepted a 2015 Update of the RPU Infrastructure Plan that serves as the model for investments and strategies related to Rochester's electric supply. The Board was presented several options to meet current demand and future growth through 2035.

The plan update was driven by increased coal plant retirements in the region, environmental stewardship and changes in the Midcontinent Independent System Operation market.

Meanwhile, the **Rochester City Council** Aug. 17 heard a proposal from Alcatel-Lucent to deploy 500 miles of fiber for approximately \$42 million.

According to *Rochester Post Bulletin*, the city recently surveyed 1,200 Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) customers and found that more than 75 percent supported the idea of investigating internet access from RPU.

The idea of publicly-owned fiber infrastructure has been raised in the past. Earlier this year, Rochester City Council members studied developing a municipal fiber network. The Council took no action. The proposal is expected to be discussed by RPU officials.

## AROUND THE STATE



**Austin Utilities** held a ribbon event Aug. 5 to celebrate its new Solar Electric Vehicle Charging station. It was installed with the assistance of the Riverland Community College students. The project was made possible with the help of grants from the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) and

the Hormel Foundation.

The **RS Fiber Cooperative** fiber optic broadband initiative is under construction. The RS Fiber Cooperative will operate a fiber optic network for most of Sibley County and portions of Renville, Nicollet and McLeod Counties.

A local group painted 80 of 156 fire hydrants in **Springfield** on a recent Saturday. The volunteers scraped old paint, washed the hydrants with a paint thinner and re-

painted those hydrants most in need of care. The Springfield Public Utilities Commission contributed.

The **Jackson city council** has approved a \$780,000 project to place the municipal electric distribution system underground.

**Princeton Public Utilities** electric crews continue to upgrade distribution system voltage from 4,160

to 12,470 volts and place the system underground.

**Willmar Municipal Utilities** has undertaken a project to replace its drive-by electric metering system with automated metering infrastructure (AMI) 'smart' meters. Plans call for all residential customers to have the new meters by the end of 2016. Commercial and industrial customers will receive smart meters at a later date.



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The linefield at the APPA Lineworker's Rodeo in Edmond, Okla. A similar field, with 150 pole structures, needs to be constructed for the 2016 event, to be held at Canterbury Park in Shakopee.

## National Lineworkers Rodeo grounds to be constructed October 13-15 in Shakopee

Minnesota municipal utilities will be gathering in October to build the rodeo grounds for the 2016 APPA National Lineworkers Rodeo.

All MMUA member lineworkers are invited to participate in the construction, Oct. 13-15 at Canterbury Park in Shakopee.

All volunteers must be registered and must complete an Emergency Contact Infor-

mation Form (read on for details).

The 2016 Rodeo will be the 16th annual event for APPA, but the first national rodeo held in Minnesota. This "once in a lifetime" event is a big deal: the area of the rodeo grounds will be approximately nine acres (roughly the size of eight football fields), set with 150 pole structures for the competition.

"We anticipate that this event will be a real source of pride for our entire association," said Mike Willetts, MMUA Director of Training & Safety. "MMUA invites all municipal utilities to be as involved as they are interested or able."

Each year the Rodeo attracts thousands of attendees from all across the U.S. and abroad. The 2016 event will be held April 2, 2016.

At the Rodeo, journeyman and apprentice lineworkers practice essential skills in a safe environment while competing for professional recognition, attend training courses and network with other attendees.

Twelve teams and a number of individuals from Minnesota competed at the 2015 National Rodeo in Sacramento—our largest turnout ever.

If interested in the Rodeo grounds construction, please register through the MMUA website. There are several ways to do this, including through the 'Rodeo Grounds Construction' link on the events calendar.

To register for an event on the MMUA website, you must have set up an account. If you have any difficulties, contact Theresa Neddermeyer at [tneddermeyer@mmua.org](mailto:tneddermeyer@mmua.org)

Another way to show your support is to make a monetary donation to help off-set event expenses. Please email your pledge to Rita Kelly at [rkelly@mmua.org](mailto:rkelly@mmua.org) (you do not need to send any money at this time).

Closer to the 2016 event we will be working with APPA and soliciting for volunteers to work the event and participants to compete.

If you have any questions, please call Willetts at 612-802-8474.

### Heartland Consumers Power District launches cybersecurity initiative

Heartland Consumers Power District has launched a new program to help customers protect valuable data.

Heartland has partnered with a private firm to offer services in five phases, starting with the fundamentals and building towards a full security management package.

Heartland will provide a 50 percent cost share, up to \$5,000 per utility, for implementing Phase 1. A cost share will also be provided for subsequent phases of the program.

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## Conference:

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meeting, the board elected Shakopee Public Utilities Manager John Crooks as its secretary/treasurer.

MMUA's budget remains at roughly \$4.6 million and the Regular (utility) Members approved an overall increase in the amount of Regular Member dues revenue of 1.5 percent. Actual dues levels will vary, depending largely on 2013 sales. Dues rates for Associate and Affiliate members remain the same.

For the nearly 290 attendees, events began Monday afternoon, with a bike ride and golf tournament. On Monday evening, a welcome reception and barbecue were held on the marina deck.

MMUA President Bill Woolie of Brainerd Public Utilities opened the meeting Monday morning, with a welcome and opening remarks. Sue Kelly, president and CEO of the American Public Power Association, set the tone for the meeting with an address on Public Power Forward: Public Power in the 21st Century.

That was followed with another big picture presenta-



Xcel Energy Regional Vice President Laura McCarten, Marshall Municipal Utilities General Manager Brad Roos and Larry Koshire of Rochester Public Utilities discussed utility issues during a break.

tion—Meeting the Challenge: The New Energy Landscape, from Xcel Energy Regional Vice President Laura McCarten.

MMUA Director of Engineering and Policy Analysis Bob Jagusch then addressed the issue that is on everybody's



Bob Elston of Sleepy Eye was elected MMUA's president-elect.



MMUA Washington Representative Michael Nolan (foreground) and Elk River General Manager Troy Adams listened in at the Aug. 16 MMUA board meeting. In the background are MMUA staffers Theresa Neddermeyer and Rita Kelly. Adams assumed the MMUA president's role at the conclusion of the meeting.

minds—the EPA's Clean Power Plan rulemaking. That was followed with an interesting look at Reliable and Secure Operation of the Bulk Power System by Dan Skaar, president and CEO of the Midwest Reliability Organization.

Following lunch, MMUA Washington Representative Michael Nolan gave an entertaining look at The Washington Scene. Shannon Lotthammer of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency discussed Wild Rice Water Quality Standards. Water was the subject of the next presentation as well—The Power of Partnership: A Unique and Effective Approach to Wellhead Protection, by Scott Hain, general manager of Worthington Public Utilities.

Topics then shifted gears to a look at RS Fiber: A Network of Opportunities, presented by MMUA board member of Winthrop EDA Director Mark Erickson.

Members then enjoyed a trade show and reception. The day's official activities were capped off with the banquet and awards ceremony.

Dave Berg, of Dave Berg Consulting, started Wednesday morning's program with a riveting talk on Managing the Rate Impacts of Distributed Generation. Berg's analysis

may well serve as the underpinning of MMUA positions on this issue going forward.

That important presentation was followed by the MMUA Solar-Distributed Generation Task Force report. Elk River Municipal Utilities general manager and MMUA president-to-be Troy Adams



Terry Joos paused for a picture at the trade show along with Dee Joos, left, and Deb Amundson. Terry Joos and Amundson are Shakopee Public Utilities commissioners.

introduced the topic, and MMUA staffers Jack Kegel, Steve Downer, Bob Jagusch, Bill Black and Amanda Duerr all spoke to their specific areas of task force work.

Along with its solar work, the biggest thing on MMUA's calendar for the next year or so is Preparing for the 2016 APPA Lineworkers Rodeo. Mike Willetts, MMUA director of training and safety, talked about this work.

Black and Duerr, along with Doug Carnival of the McGrann Shea firm, talked about State Legislative Developments. The program ended with an Issues Roundup by Kegel, Jagusch and Willetts.

MMUA thanks meeting attendees and the utilities and cities that sent them, our speakers, sponsors and trade show participants. For more on the meeting, look at our online pictorial review, which can be found in the 'Breaking News' section of the MMUA website.

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Golf tournament winners included Sean Dunham of ElectroTech, Dave Hunstad of Hutchinson Utilities, Mike Leshovsky of Border States Electric and Greg Drent of Le Sueur Municipal Utilities, from left to right.



Owatonna Public Utilities was presented an MMUA System Innovation Award for its re-purposed downtown power plant. Accepting the award from MMUA President Bill Woolie (left), were OPU General Manager Mark Fritsch, Mayor Tom Kuntz, Director of Financial and Administrative Services Beth Fondell and Director of Field Operations, Energy Management and External Relations Roger Warehime, from left to right.



Brainerd Public Utilities was presented an MMUA System Innovation Award for its acquisition of a Mississippi River hydroelectric facility. Accepting the award from Woolie were Mayor James Wallin, Superintendent Scott Magnuson, City Councilor and BPU Commissioner Dolly Matten, Electric Supervisor Troy Hawkinson, Councilor Lucy Nesheim and Finance Director Todd Wicklund.



Josh and Lisa King, Lois and John Harren, from left to right. Harren is Willmar Municipal Utilities Director of Operations. King is daughter of the Harrens, a SMMPA employee and recipient of an MMUA Rising Star Award.



SMMPA attendees and family: Diane and Larry Johnston, Chris Schoenherr, Mark and Mary Mitchell, Diane Schoenherr and John Winter, from left to right. Johnston received an MMUA Honorary Lifetime Membership.

## Award winners named

The MMUA Nominating and Awards Committee recommended and the membership approved a slate of award winners. These included:

*Rising Star*  
Lisa King, SMMPA  
Mike Langer, Elk River Municipal Utilities

Trent Hawkinson, Brainerd Public Utilities

*Community Service*  
Tom Koeritz  
Marty Sunderman  
Scott Gravseth

*Distinguished Service*  
Todd Wicklund, Brainerd Public Utilities

*System Innovation*  
Brainerd Public Utilities  
Owatonna Public Utilities

*Honorary Lifetime Membership*

Hal Becker, Delano Municipal Utilities

Rick Kittelson, Blooming Prairie Public Utilities

Larry Johnston, SMMPA

MMUA thanks all these people for their service to the state's municipal utilities.

MMUA also presented three Public Service Awards. See the back page for these.

*For more on the 2015 MMUA Annual Summer Conference, go to the 'News' section at [www.mmua.org](http://www.mmua.org)*

## Annual Conference sponsors thanked!

MMUA extends its thanks to sponsors of this year's Annual Summer conference:

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MMUA's highest award, the President's Award, went from Woolie to East Grand Forks Water & Light General Manager Dan Boyce.



Hal Becker of Delano Municipal Utilities received an MMUA Honorary Lifetime Membership.



Bill Woolie presented an MMUA Community Service Award to Marty Sunderman of Sauk Centre Public Utilities (above) Scott Gravseth of East Grand Forks Water & Light (directly below) and Tom Koeritz of Fairmont Public Utilities (below).



Mike Langer of Elk River Municipal Utilities was named an MMUA Rising Star.

## MMUA Training Center in Marshall receives upgrade with addition of second substation

A second substation has been added to the MMUA Training Center in Marshall, built by students in the MMUA apprenticeship program.

The substation equipment has been donated by East Grand Forks Water & Light. It had become obsolete following the flood of 1997 and

subsequent building of a dike around the city. MMUA extends its thanks to the East Grand Forks Water & Light Commission and staff for their assistance in making the equipment available.

The substation will be used as part of MMUA's training program. The substation will not be energized, but will of-

ten be worked in and around as if it were.

All those who helped construct the substation at the Training Center are in the MMUA Apprentice Program.

"Building the substation was actual, hands-on from cement work to steel work to putting the busbar all together," said MMUA Job Training and Safety Instructor Gary Greenwald. "These two working substations will allow future students at upcoming schools to further their hands-on skills of working in and around substations."

Plans call for the second substation to be fully completed at the upcoming Overhead School.

MMUA extends a big 'Thank You' to all the member utilities that helped make this tremendous addition to the Training Center possible.



Helping construct the second substation at the MMUA Training Center in Marshall were, from left to right: Gary Greenwald, MMUA; Justin Gifferson, Lake Crystal; Joel Grejtek, Fairfax; Chad Davidson, Moose Lake; Zach Mickelson, Springfield; Chris Trembley, MMUA; in the bucket: Israel Wacek, Blooming Prairie; Doug Walton, Springfield. Not pictured: Nick Fast, Springfield; Pete Wyffels, MMUA.

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## Eight earn NLC certificates

Eight municipal utility employees July 17 graduated from the Northwest Lineman College (NLC) Lineworker

Certification Program.

They are Warren Willcox of Glencoe Light & Power, Matthew Schwartz and Zachary Johnson of Elk River Municipal Utilities, Justin Hinnenkamp of Sauk Centre Public Utilities, Shane Simonson, Tim Howard and Matthew Jacobson of Spring Valley Public Utilities and Darwin Anderson of Redwood Falls Public Utilities.

The NLC's Lineworker Certification Program (LCP) is for individuals already working in the trade who want to earn their lineman certification. Individuals must be enrolled and sponsored by their employer.

Called apprenticeship by some, and lineman certification by others, successful completion of the LCP can earn the lineworker journeyman status.

Northwest Lineman College is one of the largest training institutions in the United States, with over 1,600 power delivery employees currently enrolled in the Lineworker Certification Program. The Lineworker Certification Program is designed to serve the training needs of the power delivery industry—from an entry-level to a seasoned lineworker, the program curriculum is flexible and customizable.

The LCP administers up-to-date, comprehensive subject matter. The LCP is a correspondence-based educational model with companies choosing a three- or four-year format.

Tests can be facilitated by a designated city/utility staff member. Some MMUA members have tests facilitated by a staff member and/or MMUA staff. MMUA staff also helps students through the program in various ways, as determined by the member utility.



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Several businesses recently joined MMUA as associate members. They include:

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The Coalition for a Secure Energy Future is dedicated to enhancing, preserving, and protecting our diverse set of energy resources, including coal-based electricity, to ensure continued affordable and reliable energy supply for families and businesses in Minnesota and North Dakota—now and into the future.

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Vinton Municipal Electric Utility (VMEU) is seeking a qualified individual to fill the full time position of General Manager. The General Manager reports directly to a five person Utility Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is seeking a qualified individual with a minimum of 5 years utility leadership experience with important competencies that include the following: A very strong dedication to municipal utility principles; Direct working knowledge of and experience with electric generation plants and electric distribution systems; Competency in governance and public policy; Infrastructure management of generation and distribution systems; People and communications skills; Finance management and budgeting; Strategic and business planning; Human resources and workforce relations; Customer assistance; Creating and enforcing policies and regulations established by the Board of Trustees. The applicant must live within the city limits. VMEU was created in 1895 and serves approximately 2,600 customers in the city of Vinton, Iowa. Vinton is located 35 miles northwest of Cedar Rapids, Iowa with a population around 5,300. VMEU revenues are around \$5,000,000 annually with a current workforce of 7 fulltime employees and one part time employee. Fulltime employees are part of IBEW Local 55 union. VMEU offers excellent benefits, a competitive salary and an excellent community to live in. VMEU will be accepting applications until November 30, 2015; however, individual screening and interviewing will begin as qualified applications are received. Candidates

wishing to be considered for the General Manager position must submit a cover letter, resume, salary history, and a minimum of 4 professional references to GeneralManager@vmeu.org

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The City of Caledonia Municipal Light Department is seeking a Technical School Graduate Lineworker, this is an apprenticeship program. Applicants are required to have a Class "B" Minnesota Commercial Drivers License, or able to obtain such license within two months after reporting for duty. Work includes, but not limited to installation, maintenance, operation and inspection of underground and overhead 2400/4160 grdy and 7200/12470 grdy voltage systems and components, locating of underground lines, meter readings, snow removal, mowing, weed eating and all other duties assigned. Position requires callouts and inclement weather work. Starting wage will be depending on qualifications and experience. Excellent benefits package includes health insurance, life insurance, short term disability, Holiday pay, PERA, paid sick and vacation time. Caledonia, Wild Turkey Capital of Minnesota, is a rural community of approximately 3,000, located in Houston County, 12 miles from the Mississippi River, surrounded by streams and woodlands offering bountiful fishing and hunting. Applicants must submit a completed Employment Application and a resume if available. Application forms and a Position Description may be obtained at the City Clerk's Office, 231 East Main Street, PO Box 232, Caledonia, MN 55921 or call (507) 725-3450 or FAX (507) 725-5258. The submittal packet must include a copy of the Technical School Degree for lineworker courses. This position will remain open until a successful candidate is hired.

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For a complete and up-to-date listing, including For Sale and Wanted items, see the 'Classifieds' section at [www.mmua.org](http://www.mmua.org)

## Three legislators receive MMUA Public Service Awards

Three members of the Minnesota Legislature received MMUA Public Service awards at the Annual Summer Conference, Aug. 17-19 at Breezy Point Resort. They are Reps. Dan Fabian and Pat Garofalo and Sen. David Tomassoni.

This award is given to a local, state, or federal elected or appointed official who has been a strong supporter of MMUA and its members. Each recipient has demonstrated a commitment to the values and principles supported by MMUA and its member utilities.

During the 2015 legislative session, Rep. Fabian of Roseau served as the chief House author on several priority bills for MMUA. His strong leadership held shepherd 'net metering' and water quality standards 'cost analysis' bills into law.

Rep. Fabian sought out the positions of MMUA and the Northern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency to ensure there would not be unintended

negative consequences for municipal utilities. He is a tremendous ally to have in the Minnesota House.

Rep. Garofalo of Farmington is chair of the House Job Growth and Energy Affordability Committee. Rep. Garofalo opposed the Administration's request for additional assessments on utilities. His bill also included numerous policy provisions seeking to promote cleaner and cheaper energy, including the net metering reforms supported by MREA and MMUA.

Rep. Garofalo tirelessly dispelled myths about the net metering reforms and worked with MMUA and MREA to demonstrate bipartisan support for these changes.

During end of session and Special Session negotiations, Chair Garofalo fought hard for the inclusion of net metering reform in the final bill, and he was successful. As chair, Rep. Garofalo is a strong advocate for municipal utilities.

Sen. Tomassoni of Chisholm is chair of the Senate Environment, Economic Development, and Agriculture Budget Division. His bill of most interest to MMUA limited the application of the Minnesota Pollution control Agency's wild rice water quality standards, required a cost analysis of proposed water quality standards, and required an independent peer review of proposed water quality standards.

Sen. Tomassoni also refused the Administration's request for additional utility assessments and controversial increases of the Renewable Energy Standard and CIP. He worked with MMUA and MREA to accept net metering reform language in end of session negotiations. Sen. Tomassoni's strong positions allowed much of this helpful policy to pass into law during Special Session.

MMUA and its members were glad to express their ap-



Sen David Tomassoni said a few words after receiving his award. Listening is MMUA President Bill Woolie.



Also being honored were Rep. Garofalo, above left, and Rep. Dan Fabian, above right.



preciation for the support of these three diligent, effective legislators. Brief comments

by each of the three legislators were met with warm rounds of applause.

## Elk River: Local control allowed citizens to continually improve utility service

*continued from front page*

a line that was fed by a power plant in St. Cloud. These facilities were later taken over by Northern States Power.

Rates became an issue.

By 1940, the Rural Cooperative Power Association had opened a new generating facility in Maple Lake, and power was purchased through the Anoka County Cooperative. The Elk River utility's absentee owners were the target of "vociferous complaints" by local consumers who found the quality of service low despite comparatively high rates.



Kids enjoyed the ERMU centennial celebration.

pal Utilities in about 1949.

Demand for electricity increased as Elk River grew and as per capita use of electricity increased. By the mid-1970s, new power plants had come on line in the region. Because power could be bought more cheaply than it could be produced on a smaller scale, Elk River's plant was maintained only for auxiliary purposes.

Today, the plant is under contract with Great River Energy for emergency power. The last time it was called into service was in 2006.

*Looking forward*

Big decisions made years ago have positioned ERMU as a leading utility provider today.

ERMU recently joined Minnesota Municipal Power Agency and will begin purchasing power from them in 2018.

Additionally, earlier this year ERMU and Connexus Energy completed an agreement to transfer the remaining 7,680 acres of Connexus electric service territory with-

in Elk River to ERMU over five years. ERMU currently provides power to 9,500 customers in not just Elk River but parts of Otsego, Dayton and Big Lake Township.

Dietz summed it up in a foreword he wrote in the ERMU history book. "The most important part of ERMU is the local control that it provides to its customers. Public power is very important to many cities in this country. Profit is not the main factor for public power entities; providing safe, reliable power is."

*City buys utility*

A turning point for municipal ownership of the utility came in 1944, when Elk River held a special referendum to authorize issuance of \$70,000 in bonds to either purchase the existing generating system or construct a new facility. The measure passed and in 1945, the Baehr Organization agreed to accept \$50,000 for the "total physical inventory of the Elk River Power and Light Company . . ."

The city council christened its new business the Elk River Public Utilities. In 1947 a commission was formed to be in charge of the public utilities.

That same year, the city opened bids for a new diesel power plant to be located across the road from the dam. For the first time in nearly 30 years, Elk River supplied its own power. The name was changed to Elk River Municipal

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