

In changing utility world, municipal utility gathering endures

by Steve Downer

Some things change, in the electric utility industry, some endure.

One enduring aspect is the MMUA Annual Summer Conference, which occurred for the 88th consecutive year, Aug. 19-21 at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria.

This long-running gathering reflects the fact that 67 percent of Minnesota's 124 municipal electric utilities have been in business for more than 100 years. That's a remarkable record of successful service.

Municipal utilities are generally considered stable, but history shows steady change, and occasional upheaval. The industry is again in the midst of a 'sea change.'

Part of that change—an embrace of non-fossil fuels—has led to massive investment in transmission lines needed to carry electricity from new electric generating sources (and an decommissioning of old resources). This change has also led to potential new growth for

utilities in the form of powering electric vehicles and other forms of electrification, now deemed 'green' due to the growth of renewable generation.

This year's conference program reflected this movement.

Topics broke down into two main inter-related tracks: politics and electrification.

The event started pleasantly enough, with a Monday evening reception and dinner on the Marina Deck.

The next morning, MMUA President and Virginia Department of Public Utilities General Manager Greg French welcomed attendees to the meeting program.

One of the conference's best inspirational speakers in memory kicked-off the program. Joe Schmit, author and KSTP-TV sportscaster, gave an insightful, poignant and humorous talk titled Silent Impact: Influence Through Purpose, Persistence and Passion. Schmit wove a tapestry of tales proving how "we make our biggest impressions when we are not trying to be im-



Greg French of the Virginia Department of Public Utilities (left) passed the MMUA president's gavel to Vernell Roberts of the Detroit Lakes Public Utility, at the Annual Summer Conference banquet.

pressive."

That uplifting talk was followed by a utility-centric dive into The Utility of the Future by Vern Dosch, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC). With technology rapidly changing and consumers demanding more avenues to in-

teract with utilities, Dosch noted, it is imperative we empower consumers, and offer programs that enable us to leverage our data, communication avenues and solutions.

Meeting: see page 6 please

Planning, investing for the future helped Spring Valley turn problem into improvement

by Steve Downer

With the need to meet growing electrical demand due to an industrial park expansion on the city's north side, Spring Valley Public Utilities (SVPU) knew the time was coming for substation improvements.

That planning accelerated when the utility's main substation transformer suddenly failed in April 2015.

With the city plunged into darkness, utility staff quickly responded. The municipal power plant went into action. Within 25 minutes electrical service was restored. While life continued as normal for its customers, the following weeks were a time of intense activity for utility staff.

The power plant operated non-stop for six days. Within a week, a 2,400 volt substation transformer—identical to the one that had failed—was located, shipped and installed in the substation adjacent to the municipal power plant. This transformer served as



Chris Rolli and Kristin Beck are part of the eight-person Spring Valley Public Utilities staff.

a temporary stopgap, while engineers and utility staff put their heads together over a configuration that would serve the municipality's needs for the foreseeable future.

Much substation and voltage upgrade planning had already been done. Plans for a new substation on the north side of town were put on hold. The utility moved ahead with upgraded infrastructure at the existing

substation.

A new 10-kva, 69-kV to 12.5-kV transformer replaced the temporary transformer. Along with various related substation improvements, a control house was constructed to house relaying, measurement and control equipment.

A series of rate increases had been put in place to pay for substation upgrades, so

Spring Valley: see back page

RPU charting, by 2030, renewable energy future

From RPU—The Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) Utility Board selected two Resource Plan scenarios that include 100 percent renewable energy by 2030, at the July 23 board meeting.

After a presentation of scenario options and costs of varying renewable energy levels and resources, the RPU Utility Board voted unanimously to direct staff to further pursue two 100 percent renewable scenarios, one including a peaking generator and one involving battery storage.

This historic vote comes after significant engagement with Rochester citizens, along with many hours of work and research by RPU staff.

"RPU prides itself on its commitment to work with the Rochester community and to be good stewards of resources. Today's decision to go to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 is a testament to the commitment by RPU Board, RPU staff, and Rochester citizens working together to find the best outcome for all," said RPU General Manager Mark Kotschevar.

Rochester joins the cities of St. Paul, Minneapolis, and St. Louis Park as Minnesota cities committed to 100 percent renewable energy.

The Resource Plan scenarios selected

RPU: see page 4 please

Periodicals
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Inside
Stories

New MMUA
Board Members,
Officers Elected
pages 2-3



Zumbro Dam
Centennial
Celebrated
page 5



Hurricane Dorian
sets Mutual Aid
Into Action
page 12



MMUA business includes election of new board members and officers

Along with a variety of learning and social opportunities at the MMUA Annual Summer Conference, membership delegates attended to association business.

Don Martodam of Hawley, Julie Kennedy of Grand Rapids and Scott Magnuson of Brainerd were elected to the MMUA board.

Julie Kennedy is the General Manager of Grand Rapids Public Utilities, a position she has held since October 2016.

Originally from Anoka, she earned her engineering degree from the University of Minnesota, then worked as

a consulting engineer in the Grand Rapids area, mostly on rural wastewater projects. She also taught Engineering, Professional Development and Ethics at Itasca Community College.

In 2013, she accepted the position of Grand Rapids city engineer, before moving to lead the utility.

Kennedy has been active and involved with MMUA in a number of areas, including mutual aid and government relations efforts.

Grand Rapids Public Utilities has more than 7,300 electric customers and also provides water and wastewater



Scott Magnuson of Brainerd Public Utilities and Julie Kennedy of Grand Rapids Public Utilities were elected to the MMUA board of directors at the annual conference.

services to Grand Rapids and nearby areas.

Scott Magnuson is the Superintendent of Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU).

He oversees the construction, operation, maintenance and repair of the BPU utilities systems, including electric distribution and hydro generation, water treatment and distribution, and wastewater treatment facilities.

He works alongside the BPU Finance Director to plan, organize, and ensure that the goals and objectives established by the BPU Commission are met, and prepares the capital budget each year for new and ongoing projects within the utility.

Magnuson maintains a good working relationship with all the necessary government and consulting agencies to ensure that the utility is in compliance with applicable state and federal rules and guidelines.

He was recently elected vice-chair of the Northeastern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (NEMMPA). Magnuson has attended numerous MMUA and APPA conferences and seminars, most recently graduating with the first MMUA Leadership Academy cohort.

BPU has more than 8,000 electric customers and also provides water and wastewater services.

Don Martodam had been serving the unexpired term of a departed board member, and was elected to his initial full, three-year term on the board. He is a Hawley Public Utilities commissioner and takes one of two seats dedicated to policymakers.

He has served on the Hawley Commission for more than 30 years. He is also on the Northern Municipal Power Agency board.

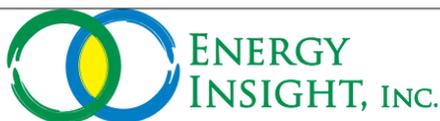
Martodam was born and raised in Perham, the oldest of 10 children. He graduated from Perham High School. He has a degree in soil science and crop production from the University of Minnesota.

He was a respiratory therapist at St. Luke's Hospital for two years and farmed for five years. He sold the farm and bought the John Deere dealership in Hawley, and ran that for 25 years. He was involved in a manufacturing business in the Philippines for four years.

He currently manages Martodam Holdings. He serves on the parish council and with the Hawley Lions. He is past president of the West Central Initiative board in Fergus Falls. He has served on the Rural Minnesota CEP (Concentrated Employment Program) board for over 30 years, is currently vice president and was president for 12 years. He is a Clean Energy Resource Team board member and a past president of the Minnesota Workforce Board.

Hawley Public Utilities has

Board: see facing page



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Board:

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approximately 1,200 electric customers and also provides natural gas, water and wastewater services.

Nibaur new president-elect

Mark Nibaur, General Manager of Austin Utilities, was elected president-elect.

In 2010, Nibaur accepted the Austin position. He was previously employed, for 23 years, by MidAmerican Energy in Sioux City, Iowa as Operations Manager.

He received his MBA from the University of South Dakota-Vermillion.

Nibaur is involved with a number of local organizations, including serving as a board officer for the Development Corporation of Austin, an economic development organization.

Nibaur is a past president and member of the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency board of directors. He is also a member of the American Public Gas Association's board of directors (APGA). APGA is a national, not-for-profit association representing the nation's publicly-owned natural gas distribution systems.

Austin Utilities serves more than 12,000 electric and approximately 10,000 natural gas customers. The utility officially opened its new, energy-efficient 105,000-square foot Service and Operation Center in 2016.

Board selects (Hazelton) Palmer as new officer

The Board at its meeting elected Jenny Hazelton of Winthrop secretary-treasurer. Hazelton, the Winthrop city administrator/EDA director, was appointed to the Board last year, to fill the remainder of a retiring Board members' term.

Following the meeting, Hazelton was married and took her husband's surname—she is now Jenny Palmer. Congratulations, Jenny and Brad!

Palmer has been with Winthrop over 21 years and in her present position for four years. She was previously clerk/treasurer, an accounting clerk and started as utility billing clerk/receptionist.

Palmer also serves as a commissioner on a multi-city cable commission and on several boards. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and several professional certifications, including a municipal clerk certification from the Minnesota Clerks and Finance Officers Association.



Jenny (Hazelton) Palmer



Mark Nibaur



Bob Elston

Three honored as they leave their board service

Three people, at the conclusion of two, three-year board terms, were honored for their leadership during the award banquet, including:

Bob Elston, Sleepy Eye Public Utilities; Greg French, Virginia Public Utilities; H. Peterson, Blooming Prairie Public Utilities.

Dues approved

The membership approved an overall 4.5 percent regular member dues increase. Dues for individual regular members will vary, depending on population and sales. Affiliate and Associate member dues remain unchanged.

The largest driver of the dues hike is an increase in health insurance costs, along with the need to add a second full-time safety coordinator working with League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust regional safety groups.



'H' Peterson of Blooming Prairie (right) was honored with an MMUA Honorary Lifetime Membership (see page 10). Presenting the award was Greg French. Both are outgoing board members.

Palmer is a Winthrop native and knows how cities operate. Her mother was the city librarian. Her grandfather was water/wastewater superintendent. After retiring, he served on the city council.

Now a resident of Fairfax, when nobody there filed for a city council seat, the administrator asked her to run. She did and was elected in 2015, and served through 2017.

Palmer is also a graduate of the MMUA Leadership Academy.

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Truman voters Aug. 13 approved a referendum question that calls for the abolishment of the local Public Utilities Commission.

There were 125 votes for and 40 votes against.

The city council will now govern the utility.

A joint petition from **North Branch Water and Light Commission** and East Central Energy to update service territory records was approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

The area was somewhat less than 13 acres and contained 18 residential customers in a subdivision previously split between the utilities, and a city lift station.

Aitkin was among four Minnesota municipalities approved for loan and grant funding for water infrastructure projects, according to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority. Aitkin will receive \$1.9 million, for water and sanitary sewer improvements.

Willmar Municipal Utilities, following discussions with the city council, last fall

Around the State



agreed to pay for all water main replacements as well as street repairs caused by water main breaks, starting in 2021. Water treatment plant improvements will also need to be paid for.

Based on a rate study, water rates need to increase more than 59 percent in the next four years to keep the water utility in the black. Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission directed staff to write an ordinance for the rate increases. That ordinance will need to be approved by the Commission and the Council.

Water rates have been increasing since 2018.

There have been a number of developments regarding electric service in **Rushford**.

Area contractors have been busy and declined to bid on a project to place a couple blocks of overhead line underground. A larger project may be bid out next year.

The transmission line



Roger Moltzan (center) recently retired from Detroit Lakes Public Utility. Moltzan was heavily involved in various MMUA training efforts, often serving as an instructor at various schools.

providing an outside electric source to the municipal utility has been sold by ITC to Dairyland.

Roger Moltzan has retired after 39 years of service. The Detroit Lakes Public Utility held an open house potluck in his honor on July 26. The utility's electric supervisor, Moltzan was a great help to MMUA over the years and will be greatly missed.

Local business leaders and representatives from the developer and **Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency** gathered near Pipestone July 16 to dedicate the 101-megawatt Stoneray Wind Project. The development includes 39 wind turbines.

Energy generated is currently being sold into the wholesale power market. In January 2020 SMMPA will

buy the full output of the development. It boosts the agency's non-coal resources to 54 percent of its total. SMMPA also contracts for energy generated by the 100.5 megawatt Wapsipicon Wind Project in Mower County.

The **Grand Rapids City Council** has approved site design and related engineering for the Grand Rapids Public Utilities solar garden project, to be located near the Itasca County/Grand Rapids Airport. The utility will pay for the engineering.

The Federal Aviation Administration completed a glare analysis, and found no issues and granted preliminary approval to installed solar panels in the 'B Zone' of the airport flight area. Property zoning allows the proposed use.

The privately-owned **Fibrominn/Benson Power** electric generating plant is being razed. Explosives were used to demolish part of the plant Aug. 10, with additional blasting work on Aug. 14.

The plant, which burned turkey manure, wood chips and other biomass, was built in 2007 to supply renewable power to Xcel Energy. The high cost of the power, however, led to the plant's demise.

Elk River was recently showcased in the Eco Experience building at the Minnesota State Fair. Elk River featured a solar array at city hall, electric vehicles and charging stations and a landfill-gas electric generating station.

RPU:

continued from front page

call for RPU to meet all of its energy needs through 100 percent renewable energy sources and remaining capacity requirements with either a new 220-megawatt natural gas powered facility or battery storage.

The Resource Plan presentation is available on the RPU website at www.rpu.org.

As the municipal utility of Rochester, for more than 110 years, RPU provides high-quality and reliable electricity to over 55,000 customers. Water customers number more than 40,000. RPU continually investigates innovative technologies to help customers realize the best value from the services they receive. Current initiatives include photovoltaic offerings, wind energy, energy and water efficient equipment, and electric vehicle charging.



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Electricity has been produced for a century at the Rochester Public Utilities Lake Zumbro Dam and powerhouse. The utility celebrated the centennial with public tours.

RPU celebrates Lake Zumbro hydropower centennial with public tours

Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) celebrated the centennial of its Lake Zumbro Dam hydroelectric plant with open public tours Friday and Saturday, Aug. 9-10.

The 100-year-old facility took two years to construct and was placed into service on Nov. 7, 1919. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Tours included learning about the dam and turbines, the history of the facility, the output of the turbines, and all of the safety procedures and inspections that are required to operate the dam.

The power house includes two turbines, which use water to create electricity. Approximately 600 cubic feet of water passes through both turbines each second when they are operating at full capacity. Tours included a look at water moving through the underside of the turbines, which generate about 12.5 thousand megawatt hours per year—enough to power 1,500 homes.

The tour ended at the top of the dam with a view of the 440-foot long spillway.

The Zumbro River Dam spans 440 feet and is 55 feet deep. Its impoundment creates the only lake in Olmsted County. The Minnesota DNR regulates the dam as run-of-the-river—what flows in, flows out, with minimum lake level fluctuations.

Far from being obsolete, the facility produced a record 17,566 megawatt hours in 2018.

Power from the facility is transmitted 15 miles south to Rochester.



photos by Steve Downer

Visitors entered the tour through an entryway into the turbine hall.



Displays informed visitors throughout the tour. The two turbines are visible at the top right of this photo.



Parts of the tour offered panoramic views. Throughout the facility, RPU staff visited with customers and other interested people, and even posed for photos.



Meeting:

continued from front page

The afternoon was devoted to a panel discussion titled Charging Ahead with Electric Vehicles. Panelists included leading lights: Diana McKeown, Great Plains Institute/CERTs; Brendan Jordan, Great Plains Institute; Mike Nelson, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; Marcus Grubbs, Minnesota Department of Administration; Steve Sanders, University of Minnesota; Brian Ross, Great Plains Institute. They took a penetrating look at what cities across Minnesota are doing to prepare for the 'electric vehicle revolution.'

As a real-world follow-up to the electric vehicle panel, and with time to think about it and discuss it with other attendees, rates consultant Dave Berg, on Wednesday morning gave his well-considered thoughts on Electric Vehicle Rate Considerations and Advanced Metering Infrastructure.

Our political speakers were brought in to provide some insight on where the changing power-supply ferment might all be leading.

Joe Sullivan, Deputy Com-

continued on facing page



Two award winners were among those pictured here, from left to right: Jamie Stahulak and Matt Zuehls of HDR, Sen. Dave Osmek, Kent Sulem of MMUA, Dr. Ed Evans of Anoka and Doug Carnival of the McGrann Shea Carnival et al., law firm. Sen. Osmek was awarded a well-earned Public Service Award. Dr. Evans also received a Public Service Award, for his service on the local utility board.



Greg French completed his term as president at the conclusion of the meeting. Here, he visited after the awards banquet.



Golf tournament winners were, from left to right: Mike Leshovsky of Border States Electric, Hutchinson's Dave Hunstad, Shakopee's Greg Drent and Jordan Rykal of EMS Partners.

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missioner of Minnesota Division of Energy Resources, provided a look at the agency's thinking.

MMUA Washington Representative Michael Nolan gave an illuminating look at 'The Washington Scene.'

The popular Trade Show and Reception commenced Tuesday evening activities, followed by the Banquet and Awards program.

The meeting's final morning began Wednesday with the MMUA Business Meeting.

Mark Fritsch of Current Compass consulting provided inside information on new developments in Electric Service Issues.

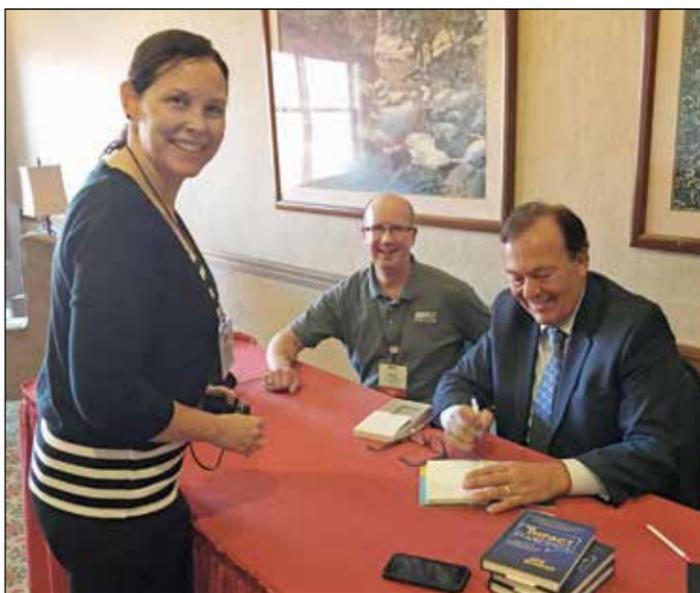
With the state's deadline to adopt a Distributed Generation interconnection policy recently in place, Bill Black and Bob Jagusch of MMUA discussed the Interconnection Policy and Procedure for Your Utility. This included an open discussion forum.

MMUA staff took the meeting to the finish line, with a look at State Legislative Developments by Kent Sulem and Bill Black, MMUA; (and Doug Carnival, McGrann Shea), while an Issues Round-Up was provided by Jack Kegel, Bob Jagusch and Mike Willetts.

Pre-conference afternoon activities included the popular 'best ball' scramble golf tournament at Deacon's Lodge and a group bike ride on the Paul Bunyan trail.



Left: The Core and Main table at the trade show was a bit of a family affair, with Bob Meyer, Kirk Peterson, Adam and Pete Moulton, Dan Moore and Ron McCabe, from left to right. All are Core and Main employees except for Pete Moulton, Adam's dad, who is the St. Peter public works director. Bottom left: RPU Board Member Melissa Graner Johnson bought an autographed copy of Joe Schmit's most recent book, while MMUA's Larry Pederson kept track of the money. Below: Heartland Consumer Power District's Casey Crabtree (left) and Madelia's Chris Trembley.



MMUA thanks all the attendees, and the cities and utilities that sent them. We also thank all our meeting sponsors and the associate members that help make the event both fun and informative.



It may never be as big as the golf tournament, but the group bike ride continues to prove popular. Thanks to Scott Dietz of Alexandria (fifth from left) for being the unofficial leader of this group.



MMUA staffers Theresa Neddermeyer (left) and Rita Kelly made sure everything was in order prior to the Awards Banquet.

Moody's affirms WMMPA Aa3 financial rating

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – Moody's Investors Service has affirmed its Aa3 rating with a stable outlook for the Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (WMMPA). WMMPA provides financing for and is the owner of electric generation, transmission, and other facilities that are used by Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) to serve its 61 member municipal electric systems in the states of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

WMMPA also holds a rating of AA- from Fitch Ratings, making it one of just a few joint-action agencies from across the country to earn ratings in the double-A category from both Moody's and Fitch.



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Popular awards program highlights our Annual Summer Conference banquet

Doing a good job locally is in a day's work, so sometimes it takes somebody a little further removed to recognize and honor outstanding contri-

butions to local utilities, and Public Power in Minnesota.

MMUA's awards program recognizes municipal utility colleagues, public officials,

and utilities for leadership and innovation and providing a good example for others to follow.

The Nominations and Awards Committee makes the determinations on the awards, which were presented Aug. 20 at the Summer Conference banquet. Unless covered elsewhere, our award winners this year included:

Rising Star

This year's award was claimed by Nic Jenson, Journeyman Lineman, Anoka Municipal Utilities.

Municipal utility people often wear multiple hats and do whatever is needed. Jenson is one of those people. A lineman, Jenson stepped up to help with the purchases and technology implementation and also provided training.

This has lowered costs. More importantly, it has helped with a paradigm shift in how utility employees see themselves and the possibilities open to them. Engaged employees now talk about how to improve and take on added responsibilities, including additional training in substation controls, power quality, metering, and safety.



MMUA President Greg French (left) presented a System Innovation Award to RPU General Manager Mark Kotschevar.

A lot of this results from Nic talking with the others and getting their buy-in, and that is what makes him a Rising Star.

Community Service

The first recipient was *Edward (Doc) Evans, Commissioner, Anoka Municipal Utilities.*

Evans was appointed to the Anoka Planning Commission in 1972. He was appointed to the Anoka Utility Board in 1991 and has been a mem-

ber ever since. He has been Anoka's MMUA Representative since 1991 and its Power Agency Representative since 2003.

He has regularly attended MMUA summer and legislative meetings. When funds were cut, Ed either paid his own way to meetings or secured donations to attend.

His dedication to the local utility has provided continuity and direction. Anoka

Awards: see facing page

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ERMU's Adams receives MMUA's highest individual honor—the President's Award

President Greg French bestowed MMUA's highest individual honor—the President's Award—on Troy Adams, General Manager, Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU).

Adams is a licensed professional electric engineer and Elk River's General Manager for more than 10 years.

In his remarks, French said he considered many people. As a utility general manager for a decade and working with the MMUA board for six years, there were a lot of very credible honorable mentions, said French.

But there was one person who continually came to his mind, "mostly because of the passion he always portrays not only to his utility, but also to public power utilities,

MMUA, APPA, and his family."

Adams is one of a select group of individuals who has served as both President of MMUA and Chair of the MMUA Government Relations Committee, and has also been the recipient of the MMUA Distinguished Service Award.

Adams led Elk River through the process of achieving APPA's Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) status, sits on the RP3 Review Panel, and represents Minnesota on the APPA Board.

He was very instrumental in developing the MMUA Leadership Academy, is a strong advocate of the value of public power, and has been a leader and a strong voice in the issue of lineworker com-



Elk River Municipal Utilities Commissioners Mary Stewart and Al Nadeau, Commissioner and Mayor John Dietz, General Manager Troy Adams and Commissioner Paul Bell (left to right) after Adams received the MMUA President's Award.

petitive pay scales.

In his tenure with Elk River Municipal Utilities, Adams has had numerous successes including (but definitely not limited to): service territory acquisition, investment in transmission lines, being a leader among Minnesota public power communities in supporting and encouraging the electrification of our transportation sector, and has led his utility in changing wholesale power providers to help lower customer electric rates.

Adams has also been a frequent presenter in meetings with state legislators and our congressional delegation and is a confident presenter at numerous MMUA and APPA conferences.

Awards:

continued from facing page

Utility Director Greg Geiger said Ed has saved him hours of research into why things were done a certain way, and has prevented him from falling into potential pitfalls. His leadership and knowledge has allowed management to steer a new direction for the utility, and his knowledge and friendship are greatly appreciated.

Gary Nansen, Commissioner, Detroit Lakes Public Utilities

Also honored with this award was Gary Nansen, President of the Detroit Lakes Public Utilities Commission. He was the principle owner of a civil engineering firm and served as the Detroit Lakes City Engineer. When he retired, he agreed to serve on the local Public Utilities



Nansen



Jenson



Wangen



Teicher

Commission.

He also works as a Civil Engineering technology instructor at the technical college in Detroit Lakes.

When Gary became Commission President in early 2016 he became a member of the APPA Policy Makers Council. Gary has always been an excellent advocate of Public Power and has worked hard at the national and state levels to protect the interest of Municipal power.

Connie Wangen, General Manager (Retired), Princeton Public Utilities

Connie Wangen started at

Princeton Public Utilities as a secretary in 1985—She retired in May of this year as the utility's general manager. Over those 34 years, she held a number of different positions, and was named general manager in December 2012.

Connie was dedicated to her customers throughout her career, implemented important programs and made her community a little greener.

Her voice is soft, but her actions and dedication to her community and public power spoke loudly. When the municipal utility's value was questioned, Connie rallied utility supporters and devel-

oped an educational program to help citizens understand just what a valuable asset they have in Princeton Public Utilities.

She has been involved in many MMUA activities and was an active participant at SMMPPA board meetings and working groups.

Connie is an outstanding example of a person giving much of their working life to a municipal utility, and MMUA was pleased to honor her.

Paul Teicher, Public Works Director, City of St. Francis

Paul Teicher has been the City of St. Francis public works director for 11 years.

Paul runs an efficient department, works well with other departments and the city council and plays an im-

portant role in planning the future of growing city utility system.

Paul helped plan and design a new Public Works Facility and works in conjunction with the MMUA to create a safe work environment.

St. Francis Mayor Steve Feldman said the city could not ask for a better Public Works Director than Teicher (who was unable to attend the meeting).

Distinguished Service Award

Carol Laumer, a Willmar Municipal Utilities commissioner, earned this year's Distinguished Service Award.

Since 2012, Carol has served as President, Vice

Awards: see next page please

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Peterson, Tveitbakk awarded prestigious MMUA Honorary Lifetime Memberships

This prestigious award symbolizes a long professional life dedicated not only to the advancement of municipal utilities locally, but also for the betterment of our industry on a statewide basis. Two people received this award:

Darryl Tveitbakk, Northern Municipal Power Agency

Darryl Tveitbakk started in the municipal utility industry as a city of Thief River Falls technician, where he worked for 17 years. He left to teach electronics before being hired to do a marketing study for Northern Municipal Power Agency (NMPA). Following three years as a consultant, the Agency hired Tveitbakk as Director of Customer Service in 1995. He was promoted to General Manager in 1999, where he served for almost 20 years, until his retirement in November 2018.

Darryl provided support to many small communities in a variety of areas, while impressing the value of public power to the communities served. He presented many utility-specific topics to local service clubs, which provided



From left to right: NMPA General Manager Jasper Schneider, Deborah and Darryl Tveitbakk, Dalene Monsebroten and Yvonne Bergerson of NMPA, and Don Martodam of Hawley helped celebrate Darryl's recognition. Martodam is an NMPA and MMUA board member.

another valuable opportunity to reach people about electric utility issues, and their impact on the local utility and public power.

Darryl was also a key person on political issues. State and federal elected officials often sought his input on bills and were appreciative of his knowledge and insight.

Darryl was involved on many MMUA task forces and

committees over the years. He testified whenever requested. He also encouraged and gained the participation of others at the state and federal level.

Darryl was also a great resource in the development of the 'M' State lineworker program in Northern Minnesota.

Darryl continues to serve as a Pennington County commissioner. He has al-

ways been a strong advocate for public power and will no doubt continue to provide direction to the industry. Darryl's 40 years of service and dedication places him firmly the ranks of those well-respected, hard-working public power advocates who have earned an MMUA Honorary Lifetime Membership.

Harold 'H' Peterson, Blooming Prairie Public Utilities

Peterson (pictured on page 3) has been a model advocate for public power on the state and national level.

'H' moved to Blooming Prairie after college to become an art teacher. He found a great place to live and raise a family and worked tirelessly to make it a wonderful small city. He has retired from teaching but remains active with local governance and civics.

'H' was a fixture at MMUA and APPA legislative rallies. As mayor, he could relate to elected officials while advocating for our state and federal legislative priorities. His friendly nature and quick wit made him a favorite in any legislative visit, and being an elected official from a small town added great credence to the message he delivered.

He served on the MMUA board from 2016-2018 and also chaired the Minnesota Mayors Association board.

For his dedication to bettering our industry on a state and national level, we are pleased to honor 'H' Peterson.



The Willmar contingent included, from left to right: Bruce DeBlicek, John Harren, Distinguished Service Award winner Carol Laumer and Michelle Marotzke.

Awards:

continued from facing page

President and Secretary for the Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) Commission. She has chaired the WMU Labor Committee and has served as an Alternate for the Planning Committee.

Carol has been a long-time supporter of MMUA and local

utilities. She has spent countless hours working with local community leaders and staff, state legislators and national officials to advocate for policies that benefit public power.

Outside of her APPA, MMUA and WMU service, Carol has been involved in many national, state and local organizations including Willmar Downtown Development, Inc., which she served

as president. She also served as a local chamber board member and is an MMUA board member.

System Innovation Award

This year the award went to Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) and its Douglas Trail Substation.

A large medical records company asked RPU to construct a dedicated substation

to provide service to a data center. This presented a number of challenges, including a very condensed schedule for a project within a small, oddly shaped parcel.

RPU partnered with its long-time engineering firm to successfully complete the new substation within time and space constraints, and won a 2018 Engineering Excellence Award for the project.

Together, the utility and its consulting engineer created

plans that were sensitive to a neighboring DNR trail, was sited on a small triangle of land, and managed customer design objectives on a tight timeline. RPU and its partner have a successful history of more than 35 years, and also won an engineering award in 2016 for another substation project.

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Groups Forming Now for Leadership Academy 2020

The MMUA Leadership Academy is a high-level executive leadership development course, focused on meeting the needs of MMUA members. Curriculum was developed and tailored based on feedback from well-respected municipal utility leaders. The Academy is designed to instill the key skills, awareness, and perspective needed by today's leaders.



The primary instructor for the Academy is Kent Myers, who provides strategic visioning, operational effectiveness, and technology alignment consulting services to global companies.

The journey addresses key challenges that leaders must master in four intense, two-day sessions over the course of a year.

Sessions for 2020 include: • March 4-5 • May 27-28 • September 23-24 • December 2-3

For more information, contact Rita Kelly at rkelly@mmua.org or 763.746.0707.

State Sen. Osmek and Breckenridge duo recognized with Public Service Awards

The MMUA Public Service Award is given to a local, state, or federal elected or appointed official who has been a strong supporter of MMUA and its members. MMUA had a clear winner of this award in 2019.

Senator Dave Osmek, Chairperson of the Minnesota Senate Energy and Utilities Committee, represents the western part of Hennepin County. His district does not include a municipal electric utility. Still, Sen. Osmek has proven to be a loyal friend to municipal utilities and the recently completed 2019 legislative session shows why Sen. Osmek is a worthy recipient of MMUA's Public Service Award.

MMUA worked with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association to develop legislation that would modernize and improve the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP).

In the House, the energy committee chair wouldn't give our bill a hearing.

In the Senate, however, Chair Osmek requested a member of his committee to be the chief author while he signed on as a co-author. Sen. Osmek promptly gave the bill a thorough hearing, even indulging a short "time-out" while an amendment was worked out to address concerns of some opponents. The Sen. also included the amended CIP language in his Omnibus Energy bill. Then he went to work trying to obtain final adoption of the desired reform, including blocking an attempt to strip the language from the omnibus bill, and pushing back strongly when special interest groups that had not previously testified on the bill waited until the last minute to attack it.

Unfortunately the House's insistence that CIP be traded for support of their 100 percent carbon free mandate and equally unacceptable provisions of a Clean Energy First bill doomed any CIP reform for 2019.

It would have been easy for Sen. Osmek to have cut a deal with the House and secure a 'green' vote for members of his party. Instead, he stuck by to his mantra of "Don't reward bad behavior" and would not be bullied into accepting language that would have subjected utilities, including municipals, to expensive and extremely challenging mandates.

Sen. David Osmek has well-earned MMUA's Public Service Award for his efforts to help push CIP reform while guarding against troubling



Sen. Dave Osmek, chair of the Senate Energy and Utilities Committee (right), received his well-earned award from Greg French.



In a presentation made locally, Glen Rakow (left) and Gordon Martinson (right) received their awards from MMUA's Steve Downer. (photo courtesy of Carrie McDermott, Wahpeton Daily News.)

new mandates. MMUA looks forward to with the Sen. in 2020 and hopefully beyond.

We also had two local policymakers honored this year: *Gordon Martinson and Glen Rakow*, both Breckenridge Public Utilities commissioners.

You don't really do anything by yourself in this in-

dustry, and with this award it seemed right to honor two people together. While doing this, the awards committee was also mindful of the Breckenridge Public Utilities Commission's unwavering and long-standing support of MMUA and public power.

Martinson has served on the Breckenridge Public Utilities Commission since 1981

and is currently vice president. Prior to that, he served on the city council from 1968-1980.

Glen Rakow has served on the Commission since 1995.

Together, Martinson and Rakow have served on the Breckenridge Commission for 62 years, an amazing record of public service.

They have attended just about every MMUA Annual Meeting in that time, as well being active with other public power entities, local organizations and activities.

They are great commissioners, said Breckenridge Director of Public Service Neil

Crocker. They are active, fully-engaged and well-prepared for meetings and making important decisions. They don't spend much time looking back, but are committed to moving Breckenridge forward and keeping it a good place to live and work, for future generations.

These gentlemen are outstanding role models for the public power policymaker. For their positive outlook, and long-standing support for Breckenridge Public Utilities and public power in Minnesota, we honor Glen Rakow and Gordon Martinson.



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Municipal utilities respond to call for ‘mutual aid’ coming from Hurricane Dorian

Minnesota municipal electric utility crews dispatched to provide ‘mutual aid’ in anticipation of Hurricane Dorian departed from Rochester on Saturday Aug. 31, and left Florida to return home in the early morning hours of Wednesday, Sept. 4.

The hurricane devastated the Bahamas but only brushed Florida with tropical storm conditions, leaving no damage for the Minnesota crews to repair.

The MMUA-organized crews were ‘pre-staged’ in Kissimmee, Florida, in anticipation of assisting the

Kissimmee Utility Authority (KUA). As it turned out, KUA suffered no outages from the storm. The move to pre-stage crews was developed following previous events, where crews had difficulty getting into hurricane-damaged areas.

“We at Kissimmee Utility Authority are extremely grateful to the lineworkers and public power utilities of Minnesota who once again came to our aid in a time of peril,” said Chris Gent, KUA Director of Corporate Communications. “After being significantly impacted



photo courtesy of RPU

The MMUA-organized mutual aid crew took time for a quick picture Saturday, Aug. 31, before departing for Florida.

by Hurricane Irma in 2017, we prepared for the worst with Dorian . . . and we were thrilled to have your member utilities as part of our restoration team. We haven’t forgotten about your help after Irma, and we thank you for your support again this week. Together, we are public power strong.”

That the hurricane struck only a glancing blow “is great news for the KUA and the other surrounding utilities,”

said MMUA Director of Training and Safety Mike Willetts. South and North Carolina municipal utilities had hundreds of crews already pre-staged to help repair damage there, so no re-deployment was necessary.

The Minnesota group deployed from Rochester Public Utilities on Saturday at 10:45 a.m. The caravan of 24 utility vehicles received a fire/law enforcement escort out of

RPU and the city.

Participating utilities include: Alexandria, Anoka, Blooming Prairie, Austin, Brainerd, Elk River, Glencoe, Grand Rapids, Marshall, Owatonna, Rochester, Saint James, Shakopee, Sleepy Eye, Willmar and Missouri River Energy Services.

Serving as leads for Minnesota on the ground were Cody Raveling and James Monroe from MMUA.

The United States saw a surge in new wind capacity in the first half of 2019 with a record amount under construction, according to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA).

Wind developers brought online 1,577 megawatts in the first six months, up 53 percent from the year-ago period, AWEA said in an Aug 1 report.

Texas added 734 MW in the first half of this year and Iowa installed 536 MW, the trade group said. AWEA expects wind additions to grow in the near-term, with a record 20,900 MW under construction at the end of the second quarter and the same amount in advanced stages of development, up 10 percent from the first half of last year.

In the midst of extremely hot and humid weather, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas on Aug. 13 issued an energy emergency alert, a call for conservation that hadn’t been declared since January 2014.

On the afternoon of Aug. 13, ERCOT’s average real-time market energy price hit the \$9,000 per megawatt-hour offer cap.

A July 18 joint staff report released by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the North American Electric Reliability

Bits & Pieces

Corporation offered recommendations and identified sound practices for power industry participants to consider related to cold weather events.

On Jan. 17, 2018, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and

Southwest Power Pool called for voluntary reductions in electricity use due to abnormally cold temperatures and higher than forecast demand.

The report found that, despite prior guidance from FERC and NERC, cold weather events continue to result in unplanned outages that imperil reliable system operations.

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The City of Sleepy Eye and Sleepy Eye Public Utilities are seeking a Director of Public Works.

Position Summary
Performs highly responsible management, administrative, and professional duties as the Director of Public Works of the City and Public Utilities. The employee is expected to exercise a high degree of independence, initiative, and professional expertise in the administration and day-to-day management of the Public Utilities and Public Works departments in accordance with policy established by Public Utilities Commission, the City Council, the City Charter, and City, State, and Federal laws, regulations, and guidelines. Overall responsibility for Electric, Water, Wastewater, Street and Parks departments by providing visionary, innovative leadership, supervision, and general direction for the department leaders to coordinate their efforts toward achieving their departmental objectives. Directs the development and administration of the Public Utilities budget and capital program, provides input to the development of the Street department budget and capital program, and oversees development, planning, and implementation of a strategic plan, goals and objectives to meet the operational needs of the City and Public Utility.

Job Duties or Essential Functions

Administers and enforces the City Charter as it relates to Public Utilities and is responsible for the operations of the Public Utilities. Manages and supervises the operations of all Utility and Public Works departments. Directs the financial activities of the Public Utility pursuant to Chapter 11 of the City Charter. Performs communications activities. Attends all PUC meetings, City Council meetings and other public meetings as necessary. Performs other duties as assigned or apparent.

Minimum Qualifications

To perform this position successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential function satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the formal education, experience, and training required.

Education

Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or univer-

Classified Ads: see facing page

sity, preferably in Public or Business Administration or Finance, or equivalent work experience.

Experience

Five (5) plus years of progressively responsible experience in municipal government as a Utility Manager/Administrator, Department Manager or similar.

Possess a valid Minnesota Driver's License or ability to obtain within 1 month of hire. For more information, please contact the City of Sleepy Eye at 507-794-3731. Please submit application and resume to:

Or email to:
City of Sleepy Eye
BEIston@sleepyeye-mn.com
200 Main Street East Sleepy Eye MN 56085
Deadline for applications is October 11, 2019.

Water/Waste Water Operator

Detroit Lakes is a thriving and vibrant community with excellent amenities. An outdoor enthusiast's paradise! Work- Play- Live- in Detroit Lakes! Detroit Lakes Public Utility is seeking a Water/Waste Water Operator. You will perform skilled operation and maintenance work involving the water and wastewater operations of a Class A MBR Facility along with lift stations and equipment for the City of Detroit Lakes. Education and Experience Requirements: Associate's Degree in Environmental Science or formal training or equivalent and four years' experience maintaining water and wastewater facilities. Vocational technical training in water and wastewater systems may substitute for the required experience. Municipal experience is preferred. License Requirements:

- Minnesota Class C Wastewater License.
- Minnesota Class C Water License

- Valid Class B CDL License.

Many benefits are included in this position: health insurance, H.S.A. contribution, life insurance, vacation leave, sick leave, paid holidays and a Public Pension Fund (PERA). Salary range \$24.73 to \$31.31. Job description and employment application can be found at www.cityofdetroitlakes.com. Cover letter, resume, employment application, copies of licenses and certifications will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 4, 2019.

Employment requires a successful background investigation. The City of Detroit Lakes is an equal opportunity employer.

For more, see the News > Classifieds at www.mmua.org

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1 www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes499051.htm | 2 www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes499052.htm
3 www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes47152.htm

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Mailed Outside-County Subscriptions	1891	1936
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Total Distribution:	1962	2013
Copies Not Distributed	56	51
Total	2018	2064
Percent Paid	100%	100%

Spring Valley: continued from front page

some of the funds to help pay for the improvements were already being collected. Rate studies continue along with future bonding plans.

With the substation work complete, the utility built underground, heavy feeder lines to the industrial park, which continues to expand. It also replaced all of the old overhead 'delta' voltage, in this area, with a new 12.5-kV system, underground, in the entire north half of the city. A couple of south feeders, including downtown, await the upgrade from 2,400 volts.

On July 8, 2019, the city received a \$609,000 business development infrastructure grant for the industrial park project from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Spring Valley Public Utilities contributed about \$200,000 to the project. The remaining \$500,000 will come from city funds — \$320,000 is in an industrial park fund while the rest was set aside last year, pending the state grant.

The utility is now well-positioned to handle anticipated growth for the foreseeable future. The growing city of 2,500 a half-hour south of Rochester has recorded a peak electrical demand of 5.4 megawatts. The substation has 10 MW capacity and the power plant can generate up to seven MW.

The power plant proved its worth again during the early February 'polar vortex.' With natural gas in short supply, SVPU was among the utilities responding to run local generation on diesel fuel. The generators ran 30 hours straight. The 'dual fuel' units typically burn mostly natural

gas in warmer months.

While many other types of electrical generation, including wind turbines, wouldn't work in the 30-below temps, the Spring Valley crew responded to the challenge and kept their plant online throughout the emergency.

If necessary, "We can live off the grid pretty comfortably," Smith said.

The plant houses four engines: a Fairbanks Morse opposed-piston vintage workhorse, a 2-megawatt Cooper and two new Caterpillars. Fuel is either diesel, a bio-diesel blend or natural gas. The engines meet current federal emissions regulations.

When Smith started at the utility in 1971, it generated all of its own power locally, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Spring Valley now buys its power at wholesale and is a member of the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA). Wholesale power rates are stable.

Along with generation, the utility boasts a robust local distribution system. A 2019 ice storm knocked out power in the surrounding areas, but there was "not a spot of trouble in town," Smith pointed out.

Dedicated, qualified staff

The utility does it all with eight people: two in the office and five on the generating/line crew. They are overseen by Smith, a Spring Valley native who has worked two stints at the utility, the second starting in 1993.

Each member of the line crew worked their way through the MMUA Apprenticeship Training Program to achieve journeyman status. Each is also a proficient power plant operator. The utility also provides water service.



The Spring Valley Public Utilities power plant is located across the street from the original privately-owned plant that served the city, and next to a trout stream – Spring Valley Creek. The creek is a tributary of Bear Creek, which feeds into the Root River and enters the Mississippi at Hokah.



Morning light illuminates a Cooper-Bessemer engine.



The main control panel in the power plant has been upgraded over the years. A clipboard for record-keeping remains, as a back-up to computerized methods.

"Everybody does everything," is how Smith put it.

Early electric service

Electric power and water-works came to the city in 1893.

The first electric provider was the Spring Valley Electric Light and Investment Company, which generated power from a now-demolished plant located across the street from

the current municipal plant. The local investor-owned utility eventually merged with a larger company, and Spring Valley municipalized electric service in 1936.

Rodeo and Overhead School Registration Re-Opened!

Municipal electric crews responded to the call for mutual aid in advance of Hurricane Dorian. To answer the call MMUA postponed the September Lineworkers Rodeo and Overhead School.

If you previously considered attending but the September dates didn't work, we hope these new dates will:



Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo - Tuesday, Oct. 15

Overhead School - Tuesday to Friday, Oct. 15-18

Registration is open through Thursday, Sept. 19.

Schedules and programs are unchanged.

Cross Training School held with the Overhead School.

For more, see the 'Events' calendar at www.mmua.org or contact Theresa Neddermeyer at 763.551.1230 or tneddermeyer@mmua.org

Upcoming **MMUA** Events

Transformer School Pre-Conference	Dec. 10-11	Marshall
Transformer School	Dec. 11-13	Marshall

Scott Meinecke brings more than 25 years of instruction experience. Meinecke was a technical school instructor and now works for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. This school offers the ultimate combination of classroom and hands-on instruction. The Pre-Conference covers single-phase connections and theory. Register now!

Technical and Operations Conference	Dec. 3-5	St. Cloud
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Watch your email for information on this popular conference for managers, crew leaders, lineworkers and other interested Public Power professionals.

Save these 2020 dates:

Jan. 21-22.....Overhead and Underground Line Design Workshop - Plymouth
 Feb. 11-14Meter School and Pre-Conference, Marshall
 Feb. 26-27Lineworker Rodeo Clinic, Marshall
 March 17-18.....PCB/Spill Cleanup Workshop, Plymouth
 March 24-26.....Substation School, location TBD
 March 31/April 1.....Legislative Conference, St. Paul
 April 21-23.....Generation School, Hutchinson
 May 12-15Underground School, Marshall
 May 30MN 'Public Power' Walleye Fishing Tournament, Ottertail