

Together again

After 90 years, municipals elect first female president; second to follow shortly

Once taken for granted as an annual event, MMUA held its first in-person Summer Conference in two years Aug. 16-18 at Cragun's Resort near Brainerd. The event came on MMUA's 90th anniversary.

Jenny Palmer took the gavel as MMUA's first female president. Palmer worked for the City of Winthrop for many years and is currently finance director at the City of Excelsior. She is also the first MMUA president to come from a city with a water utility but not a municipally-owned gas or electric utility.

It won't be long before MMUA has its second female president, if the typical succession process stays in place: the MMUA Board of Directors at a pre-conference meeting Aug. 15 elected Julie Kennedy of Grand Rapids Public Utilities as its secretary-treasurer. MMUA's secretary-treasurer traditionally moves into the role of president-elect.



Jenny Palmer presented a commemorative clock to Mark Nibaur, at the MMUA awards banquet Aug. 17. Palmer assumed the MMUA president's role from Nibaur the next day at the conclusion of the meeting.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Don Martodam, a Hawley Public Utilities commissioner, moved into the president-elect role.

Another historic development occurred with the farewell of MMUA Chief Executive Officer Jack Kegel, who is stepping down at the end of September

after 28 years as MMUA CEO and unparalleled association growth.

Incoming CEO Karleen Kos attended the final morning session Aug. 18. She made a favorable impression on meeting attendees with a few brief comments, and expressed her eagerness to meet MMUA members, hear and understand their concerns and desires, and harness public power in Minnesota's energy to better municipal utilities and the lives of those they serve.

Prior to Kos' remarks, the assembled member delegates approved a five percent dues increase for the coming year. The increases follow a zero percent dues increase in covid-racked 2020. Individual dues increases (or decreases) will vary, depending on sales for 2019 (the most

Meeting: see page 8 please

Karleen Kos named new MMUA CEO; starts September 27

The MMUA board of directors is pleased to welcome Karleen Kos as the Association's Chief Executive Officer, effective Sept. 27.

Kos brings to MMUA a rich background in association work and management.

She comes to MMUA from her role as executive director of the Portable Sanitation Association International based in Bloomington, a position she has held from

2014.

Prior to that, she was vice president of the International Society for Pharmaceutical Engineering of Tampa, Fla., from 2008-2014; director of field operations and program planning for the Alzheimer's Association National Office of Chicago from 2004-2008; and vice president of Metropolitan Ministries of Tampa from 1999-2004.

Kos served as executive director of the be-

havioral health-focused Archdeacon Gilfillan Center of Bemidji, which she led from 1995-1999. She started working with non-profit organizations in 1985.

MMUA President Mark Nibaur noted the MMUA Board of Directors fully embraced the important CEO search process and was engaged and professional throughout. He thanked the Board Search Committee and the full Board



Karleen Kos

for patience, trust, engagement and diligence

throughout the process. He also thanked Debra Englund, of MMUA Associate Member HRExpertiseBP, for leading and managing the search process.

Nibaur, general manager of Austin Utilities, expressed his confidence that "Karleen's leadership and visionary skills will help lead our association into the future."

Kos has focused her

Kos: see page 3 please

State regulatory move may hobble locally-operated municipal power plants

Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) and three municipal 'joint action' power agencies recently filed mutually-supporting comments to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on its proposed 'Air Quality Modelling Practices Manual,' for modelling the dispersion of nitrogen dioxide and other emissions from power plants and other sources.

MMUA strongly encouraged the MPCA to amend the proposed nitrogen dioxide modeling practices and exempt from modeling any generator that operates fewer than 500 hours per year. The municipal generators that would be affected under the proposed modeling process, noted MMUA, are small, used sporadically, and play an integral part in ensuring electric grid reliability.

MMUA supported and joined in the comments submitted by Central Minneso-



The Adrian Public Utilities power plant has provided valuable service in recent ice storms.

ta Power Agency and Services (CMPAS), Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), and Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMMPA). The joint action agencies represent 37 municipal utilities in

Minnesota with generators that would be subject to modeling under the proposed practices.

Both emergency and non-emergency generators, as defined by EPA, help keep the lights on during extreme weather conditions. For example, in February, during the widespread polar vortex which crippled Texas, municipally-owned generators helped support our power grid. Six MRES member-owned generators operated to keep the lights on in their communities and throughout the region. These generators were required to operate to meet regional capacity and energy requirements, despite being classified as non-emergency generators under EPA's RICE rules.

MRES said there is substantial risk to electric system reliability if non-emergen-

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Grabe, Meyer, Palmer re-elected to MMUA board; Martodam president-elect

Following recommendations made by the Nominations and Awards Committee, Scott Grabe of Staples, Glencoe's Dave Meyer, and the City of Excelsior's Jenny Palmer were each nominated for a second three-year term on the board.

The committee also recommended that Commissioner Don Martodam of Hawley Public Utilities be nominated as president-elect.

The three board nominees were unanimously re-elected at the Summer Conference, and Martodam was elected as president-elect.

Jenny Palmer

The Committee nominated Jenny Palmer to continue her service on the board. Palmer, formerly the Winthrop city administrator/EDA director and now Excelsior's finance director, was appointed to the MMUA board in 2018, to fill the remainder of a retiring board members' term.

Palmer (formerly Hazelton) had been with Winthrop 25

years including eight years as administrator. Before that, she served as Winthrop clerk/treasurer, 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.

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. As 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 a graduate of the MMUA Leadership Academy. She assumed the presi-

dent's duties at the conclusion of the meeting.

Scott Grabe

Scott Grabe serves as City of Staples public works director, where he oversees the electric, street, water and wastewater divisions.

Previous to joining Staples, Grabe served as Utilities Superintendent for the City of Henning, where he was responsible for the electric, natural gas, and water and sewer utilities. He also managed the public works department and the municipal airport.

Grabe also volunteers for the Henning Fire Department and the city-owned am-



Grabe



Meyer



Palmer

balance service.

Along with his MMUA activities, Grabe regularly is involved with Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). He is a graduate of the MMUA Leadership Academy.

Dave Meyer

Meyer is general manager of Glencoe Light and Power and a Central Minnesota Power Agency Services (CMPAS) board member. He regularly represents and advocates for public power, traveling to Washington D.C. for the APPA legislative rally and St. Paul for the MMUA legislative rally.

He is always monitoring proposed legislation and evaluating it for possible effects on the local utilities.

Meyer is also formerly the superintendent at Halstad Utilities, where he was responsible for decommissioning an old power plant and building a new one.

Meyer puts municipal utilities first in every aspect, noted his nomination. Every decision that he has to react to or make he does so with the best interest of the utilities and its customers as his guide. He has been an advocate in all aspects of the utility industry.

Don Martodam

Martodam was appointed to the board in 2018 to fill an unexpired term of a departed board member, and in 2019 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 Public Utilities Commission for more than 30 years. He has also served on the Northern Municipal Power Agency board for several years.

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



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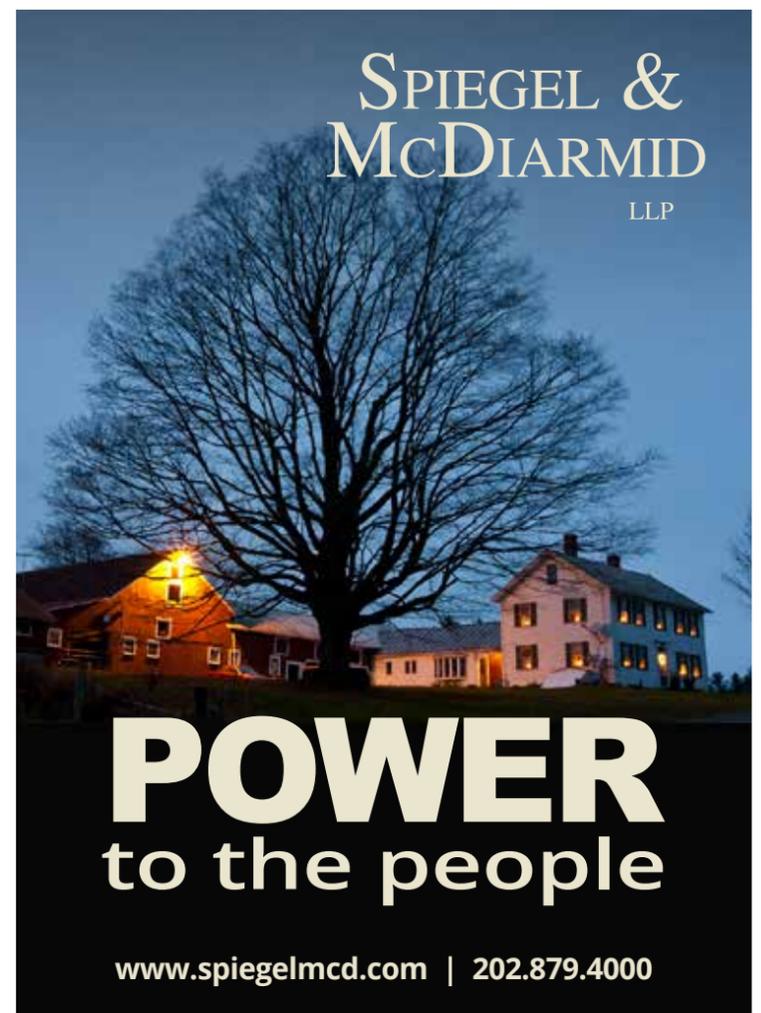
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Incoming CEO Kos greets MMUA members, looks forward to next era

Dear MMUA Community,

I couldn't be more pleased at being named MMUA's new CEO. To serve as the staff leader of any association brings both responsibility and possibility—and that is especially true at this moment in MMUA's history. With Jack Kegel, MMUA has experienced growth and success. I look forward to this next era, collaborating with you to translate ideas into strategies, and to taking actions that transform MMUA's energies into new levels of influence and member value.

I've been working with non-profit organizations my entire life. I've served as a volunteer, board member, officer, staff member, and staff leader for groups focusing on a single community and associations serving a global industry.

That doesn't mean I know it all. What those experiences have brought me is the opportunity to have talked with, listened to, and achieved results with members, directors, employees, and community stakeholders dedicated to a wide range of missions, all pulling for important causes that make lives better. Each organization has increased my enthusiasm for the power of working together and achieving results none of us imagined before we began.

One thing I know for sure is that I will need your wisdom. You are the experts in the public utilities sector, and I am eager to learn all that I can from you about how it works, what things concern you, and what you think MMUA should be focusing on. Just as I've been privileged in the past to work with associations that led me to deep involvement in the strategic and operational priorities of

Kos:

continued from front page

career on working with others to achieve results for organizations with a wide range of missions, all pulling for important causes that make lives better.

In a welcome letter to the members (see above), she said, "Each organization has increased my enthusiasm for the power of working together and achieving results none of us imagined before we began. I am eager to learn all that I can from you about how it works, what things concern you, and what you think MMUA should be focusing on."

Kos hails originally from Myrtle (pop. 48), southwest of Austin in Freeborn County.



MMUA board officers and the association's outgoing and incoming chief executive officers, from left to right: Secretary-Treasurer Julie Kennedy, outgoing CEO Jack Kegel, President Jenny Palmer, incoming CEO Karleen Kos, President-Elect Don Martodam.

curing Alzheimer's disease, manufacturing better pharmaceuticals, providing sanitation solutions, and dealing with wastewater, I am curious and excited to delve deeply into the topics that will help me serve you well.

As a trade association, MMUA's purpose can be summed up like this:

We exist to promote the municipal utilities industry and to solve its problems. Activities like advocating policy, educating and certifying workers, raising public awareness, and helping mem-

bers run better business operations are all worthwhile pursuits. Over time, though, the mix, model, and prioritization of tactics that support this purpose can vary widely and must evolve as circumstances change. Two years ago, who would have imagined some of the realities we face today? Relevance is the coin of the realm, and I am keen to work with all of you to help MMUA progress into a new level of significance—both practical and inspirational—for those we serve.

When I come on board in

late September, I will be developing a plan to meet each of you. I am interested to hear your thoughts and perspectives on the municipal utilities industry and to understand what you think MMUA can do to add value for members, potential members, and the communities you serve. It will take time to get settled and to connect with the many people who can help paint this picture. Beginning on day one I will do my best to communicate frequently and

clearly about what is happening and what you can expect. Please do not hesitate to let me know what you think about how that is going. I also welcome any suggestions regarding people I should meet, sights I should see, material I should read, and other actions I should take to learn the things that will help me quickly become an asset to the MMUA membership. I know it will be a process, and I can't wait to get started.

— Karleen Kos

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Comments:

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cy generators that operate less than 500 hours per year and on a random schedule are forced out of service due to difficulties in attempting to demonstrate attainment with short-term ambient air quality standards.

Modeling emissions from all these units will result in expenditure of municipal time and dollars, said MMUA, and divert MPCA resources away from other efforts that would likely have a far greater impact on Minnesota's air quality.

Vital, but little used

The intermittent nature of these generation units presents challenges for demonstrating compliance with short-term ambient air quality standards, noted the municipals. These units do not have a set schedule to operate and only operate short periods of time. Assuming continuous operations in modeling for these units with intermittent emissions and minimal actual operating hours significantly overestimates the actual impacts to short-term ambient air quality.

The MPCA's proposed practice to address the treatment of sources with intermittent



photos by Steve Downer

This interior view of the Mountain Lake Municipal Utilities power plant shows reciprocating internal combustion engines sharing space with a customer's flowers. Mountain Lake is a member of Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency Services (CMPAS).

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emissions, pointed out MRES, is primarily dependent on whether the source is considered an "emergency" or "non-emergency" generator. This approach places too high an emphasis on the defined purpose of the source and not on the hours of operation, which is more consistent with EPA modeling guidance.

"There is no technical or policy reason that warrants the disparate treatment of these two types of units," said CMPAS. "Each operates less than 500 hours per year and on a random schedule making them both subject to the same gross over-estimations inherent in dispersion modeling analyses."

"Intermittent Use" should

be determined solely based on the number of hours a generator runs in a year, said the municipals, and not on the type of use.

SMMPA noted that the amount of emissions from intermittently used but non-emergency generators is infinitesimal as a percentage of all emissions.

Over the past five years, none of the SMMPA-contracted units operated more than 100 hours per year and were often well below that number. The municipals supplied data that shows, over the past five years, none of the utilities has approached 500 hours of annual use.

These units helped maintain electric reliability during

the 2019 polar vortex event. They were also called to run in February during Winter Storm Uri.

"We cannot over emphasize the important role these units played in both of those cold weather events in protecting human life, health, and safety," SMMPA said.

Timeline

Comments were due July 23. MPCA staff said the final draft of its proposed Air Quality Modelling Practices Manual would be published shortly after Labor Day. It is expected MPCA staff will explain what changes were incorporated into the final version in January.

GRE agrees to sell Coal Creek Station

Great River Energy reached an agreement to sell the Coal Creek Station power plant to Rainbow Energy Center, LLC. The sale of Coal Creek Station will avert the plant's closure, which was scheduled for the second half of 2022.

Rainbow Energy Center will purchase and operate the 1,151-megawatt (MW) power plant. The company also plans to develop carbon capture and storage capabilities at Coal Creek Station.

Nexus Line, LLC has agreed to purchase from Great River Energy the high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission system that connects central North Dakota to the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. Great River Energy will continue to operate and maintain the HVDC system under a 10-year contract with Nexus Line.

The sales are expected to close later this year.

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Local municipal generation fosters renewable growth and ensures reliability

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) coordinates and controls the electrical power system across 15 states (including Minnesota) and the Canadian province of Manitoba. Every load-serving generation unit within MISO has some form of capacity obligation, so that MISO can ensure safe, stable, and efficient operation of the regional electric grid.

This electric generating capacity is needed intermittently during emergency conditions as defined by MISO, for local emergencies involving transmission and distribution outages, during weather outages and to facilitate grid decarbonization efforts when renewable energy resources (wind and solar) become non-dispatchable or unavailable

altogether.

MISO dispatches generation units based on costs, and small diesel generating units are the most expensive to operate in the queue, so they run only when needed and not primarily as a source of revenue.

MISO requires all load-serving utilities to maintain a reserve margin of generating capacity to be available in the event of a shortage of available generation.

Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) contracts with 15 members for 152.8 megawatts of diesel, which provide capacity and energy during emergency events and ensure reliability of the power grid. MRES relies on this generation to meet its capacity obligations in both MISO and the



When the Southwest Power Pool called for rolling power outages the morning of Feb. 16, the temperature in Moorhead was 8 degree below zero Fahrenheit, with a wind chill ranging to 40 degrees below. Moorhead Public Service (MPS) was given 30 minutes notice to shed 20 megawatts of load. MPS placed its local power plant into service. Pictured in the plant are, from left to right: Matt Marks, Mike Wilmer, Aaron Van Beek and Travis Schmidt.

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Southwest Power Pool (SPP), two regional transmission organizations.

Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMM-PA) contracts with 12 SMM-PA members for 130 megawatts of municipal natural gas and diesel generation capacity and energy during emergency events and to ensure reliability power grid. SMM-PA relies on this generation to meet its capacity obligations in MISO.

Central Municipal Power Agency/Services (CMPAS) serves 12 public power utilities (11 with local power plants) in Central Minnesota. It pointed out, in comments to the MPCA, that MISO system emergency procedures require all approved generation capacity to be available during critical times. This capacity avoids the type of loss experienced within the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) Region in February. ERCOT was 4 minutes

and 37 seconds from a complete grid collapse that could have taken months to restore, noted CMPAS. Municipal generation units mitigate the potential for this type of situation in MISO states.

Capacity payments help cover the cost of having the generator available and operational, said the municipals. Whether the operation of a generator, or even its mere availability, results in revenue for the utility is also immaterial as to the environmental impact of the generator.

The regional grid operators generally dictate when these

units operate, which is extremely infrequent and limited compared to other types of electric generation.

Small member-owned generation, noted SMM-PA, allows it to incorporate increasing levels of intermittent renewable generation (like wind and solar) while maintaining reliability and meeting its capacity obligations in MISO. The ability to use these plants to meet capacity requirements, noted SMM-PA, is fundamental to the planned transformation of its generation portfolio to 80 percent carbon-free in 2030.

Austin Utilities auctions Northeast plant items

Austin Utilities held a virtual auction June 23 for equipment, tools, and additional items from its decommissioned Northeast Power Plant.

The 30-megawatt power coal-fired plant was dedicated in 1971 at an event touting it as the Power for the Future. The total cost to build the plant was \$7.5 million dollars. The Northeast Power Plant was decommissioned in 2016 due to outdated and inefficient technology. There are no future plans for the site at this time.

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Storm pummels Grand Rapids; municipal mutual aid network speedily responds

'Supercell' thunderstorms the night of Monday, July 26 produced three confirmed tornadoes, very large hail, and damaged swaths of northern Minnesota.

In Grand Rapids, 89-mph winds resulted in widespread tree damage. More than 5,000 Grand Rapids Public Utilities (GRPU) electric customers, 68 percent of the utility's to-



Following the mutual aid event, Grand Rapids Public Utilities (GRPU) prepared 'thank you' plaques for the utilities that provided assistance. Julie Kennedy (right), general manager of GRPU took the opportunity to make an in-person presentation at the MMUA Summer Conference to Elk River Municipal Utilities representatives. They include, from left to right: Commissioners Mary Stewart and Paul Bell, General Manager Theresa Slominski and Mayor John Dietz.

utilities responded as damage was assessed and restoration efforts coordinated. In total, nine different utilities and 17 crews helped restore service. Crews worked 16-hour days. Work was completed Thursday evening.

The night of the storm brought a terrible feeling for many, but led to a renewed sense of community optimism and appreciation.

GRPU enjoyed "unbelievable community support," said General Manager Julie Kennedy. "I still get choked up," she said. "It was good to watch the community, and MMUA, come together."

Utilities responding to the event with crews and equipment included:

- Brainerd Public Utilities
- Detroit Lakes Public Utilities
- Elk River Municipal Utilities
- Hibbing Public Utilities
- Melrose Public Utilities
- Shakopee Public Utilities
- Virginia Department of Public Utilities
- City of Wadena Utilities Department
- Minnesota Power also responded with four crews and equipment.



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tal, plunged into darkness.

Two of the municipal utility's four main electrical feeder lines were down. Secondary services were strewn and tangled throughout the city. Both the water treatment and wastewater treatment plants were out of service.

GRPU crews responded within minutes. It was soon apparent that the widespread damage dwarfed the ability of local crews to speedily restore service. GRPU General Manager Julie Kennedy called MMUA Director of Job Training and Safety Mike Willetts,

and the MMUA Mutual Aid effort went into action.

James Monroe, MMUA Job Training and Safety/Apprenticeship Instructor was already in Virginia. He stepped right in to aid with the service restoration effort.

GRPU crews worked through the night on Monday, clearing downed lines in roadways and restoring power to the municipal water treatment and wastewater collection systems.

At 6 a.m. the next morning, crews from five different municipal utilities arrived. More

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MMUA honors retiring CEO Jack Kegel for his contributions to public power

MMUA's 90th anniversary conference was historic in a number of ways, including the send-off of the association's second full-time chief executive officer—Jack Kegel.

Kegel is retiring in late September, and has served as MMUA's Executive Director and CEO for 28 years. In presenting Kegel both the MMUA Honorary Lifetime Membership and President's awards, President Mark Nibaur noted that Kegel built an organization with a staff of five and a budget of less than \$700,000 into today's MMUA with 28 staff members and a budget of \$5.3 million.

Government relations, accounting, engineering, and safety and training staff have been added under Kegel's leadership.

He oversaw development of the 17-acre MMUA Training Center in 1999 and the purchase of the training center land in 2019-20.

MMUA, a nationally-recognized leader in safety and training, has trained students from around the country. The training facility is one of three in the entire country operated by a municipal state association.

Kegel developed the Midwest Consortium of Municipal



Gov. Tim Walz welcomed MMUA staff to a July 27 signing of the ECO Act of 2021. Pictured are, from left to right: MMUA Government Relations Director Kent Sulem, Gov. Walz, Jack Kegel and MMUA Government Relations Attorney Bill Black. Many consider the strengthening of MMUA's government relations program Kegel's greatest achievement at MMUA's helm.

Utilities and the Midwest Municipal Gas Agency. He is a cofounder and former chair of both Midwest Municipal Utilities and the Midwest Municipal Transmission Group.

Kegel chaired the APPA Advisory Committee and served on the APPA Board of Directors from 1997-2000 and has been an active member of the Advisory Committee and L&R Committee throughout his tenure.

Kegel was recently honored with APPA's James D. Donovan Individual Achievement Award, for his substantial contribution to the electric utility industry and public power.

Along with his APPA involvement, he also served on the American Public Gas Association's Legislative and Regulatory Committee, and on the Executive Committee of the Transmission Access Policy Study Group (TAPS).

Kegel started his public power career in 1988, with the Iowa Association of Municipal

Utilities. Kegel joined the Iowa association after a number of years representing consumers in energy matters and served as its general counsel.

"I have enjoyed working with Jack through a COVID-challenged year with a major focus on reaching out to our members through 16 virtual tour meetings," Nibaur said. "Through those beneficial meetings, we received many service ideas and needs for the association to work on in the coming years. I have gained an appreciation for his insight and dedication as we chart a path forward for MMUA."

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Meeting:

continued from front page

recent year for which Energy Information Administration sales data is available).

Affiliate Member (power agency) dues were increased \$500 apiece and Associate Member dues were raised \$20.

The largest driver of the dues hike is an increase in health insurance costs.

Sandwiched around business were information sessions and an awards banquet. (For a full rundown on the various awards and people honored, see accompanying articles in this newsletter.)

Program provided insight

Among the pre-conference events were Monday afternoon 'scramble' golf tournament and a bike ride. The conference officially opened with a lakeside reception Monday evening.

The opportunity to visit with friends and make new ones and talk with peers and experts is an undeniable draw of the meeting. We also try and offer an interesting and informative program.

Programming started Mon-

day morning with a Welcome and Opening Remarks, by Mark Nibaur, Austin Utilities general manager and MMUA president.

A motivational opening was provided by former Detroit Lakes Police Chief Tim Eggebraaten, now a nationally-active entertainer. Eggebraaten mixed music, humor and poignant real-life examples in a presentation titled Finding Your Beat, the Rhythm of Life.

Other Monday morning presentations included:

- Looking Ahead – A National Perspective, where Alex Hofmann of the American Public Power Association discussed the future of the grid, a changing generation mix and what is required to meet President Biden's Climate Goals, and the role that additional generation like RICE or other energy resources will likely play.

- A Transmission Vision for the Upper Midwest was presented by one of our own, Mark Mitchell of the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency.

- Michael Nolan, MMUA Washington representative, gave an up-tempo after-lunch



Chris Schoenherr of SMMPA (center) served as master of ceremonies for the golf tournament awards, handed out at the Welcome Banquet. Accepting the award for first place were Phil Misialek of Irby Utilities (left) and Mark Reuter of Ziegler Power Systems (right).



Mark Nibaur, left, presented an MMUA Honorary Lifetime Membership award to Jack Kegel. Nibaur presided over the Awards Banquet and also presented Kegel with the President's Award.



Lowell Veum, left, and Dave Larson attended the meeting from the City of Fosston. Veum served many years on the city council and is now a Utilities Commissioner. Veum worked for Minnkota Power Cooperative until retirement.

talk on The Washington Scene.

- The subject matter moved from political to technical, as Bob Jagusch and Bill Black of MMUA explored the interconnection of customer generation with utility distribution systems, in a presentation on Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (DER) Technical Spec Manual. Black and Jagusch walked through a template developed to help municipal and cooperative utilities adopt utility-specific manuals.

- Jim de Lambert of Carlson McCain and Nicole Blasing of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency discussed challenges presented by Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).

The early evening featured our popular Trade Show and Reception followed by the awards banquet.

Following a Wednesday morning business meeting, MMUA CEO Jack Kegel offered Reflections on 28 Years at the Helm.

Paul Gardner, Clean Water Council administrator presented a look at Minnesota's Clean Water Fund and Municipalities.

Presenting Updates from the Department of Commerce were Jon Brown of the Office of Energy Assistance and Jessica Burdette, Division of Energy Resources.

Kent Sulem, MMUA, presented further State Legislative Developments.

The meeting concluded with an Issues Round-Up presented by Jagusch and the final meeting comments by Kegel.

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Conference includes change of leadership, recognition of achievement

Along with business and education sessions, the state's municipal utilities take time at the MMUA annual meeting to recognize significant achievements.

The MMUA Nominating and Awards Committee selected a number of nominations for 2021 awards. They included:



Keith Butcher

Rising Star Award

Keith Butcher

Butcher joined Princeton Public Utilities Commission as general manager in 2019. He was soon faced with a November 2020 ballot referendum to abolish the Commission. The question was defeated with 71 percent voting to maintain the commission, and public power, in Princeton.

Throughout the debate, Butcher helped improve communication and PPU's presence in the community through an updated web presence and contemporary online offerings that educate and inform.

Princeton Public Utilities (PPU) now livestreams commission meetings, which are archived on its website along with meeting minutes, financial reports and regulatory updates. Videos about the past, present and the future of Princeton Public Utilities have been very well received.

Butcher is mindful that every commission decision impacts ratepayers and the community it serves. Public input, transparency and open discussion are hallmarks of his tenure in Princeton.

Community Service Award

John DeCramer, Marshall Municipal Utilities Commission

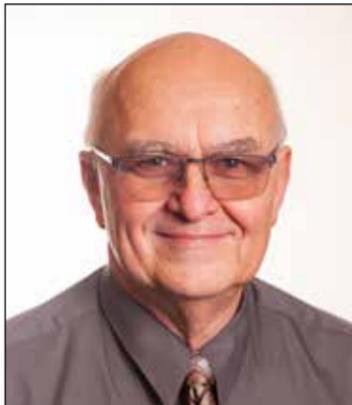
DeCramer is a model public servant and has benefitted the Marshall community in many ways.

He has served on the Marshall city council from 2009 until the present and on the Marshall Municipal Utilities (MMU) commission from 1996-2006.

He is part of a strong part-



Jenny Palmer, MMUA's new president, participated in the Awards Banquet with past president Mark Nibaur.



John DeCramer

nership between the two entities.

John's engineering background, experience and expertise has greatly benefitted MMU. He has helped recruit top-notch general managers, and his gentle, humble leadership has helped the utility serve the residents of Marshall with low rates and efficient service.

He is very involved with numerous community organizations.

His dedication has benefitted the residents of Marshall in many ways and deserves recognition.

Scott Deitz, ALP Utilities
Deitz recently retired as Operations Manager at ALP Utilities after 46 years. He has a heart of service, which epitomizes the best of municipal

utilities.

Dietz was an integral part of planning electric and water growth in the community. The length of noteworthy projects is long in the city he served.

He also invested time in numerous youth and community activities and was a proud municipal utility employee who answered questions on the radio, at the local tech school, at senior groups and service organizations.

He was very involved and supportive of MMUA

Distinguished Service

Eloise Thorson of Central Lakes College

Eloise Thorson has had an influence on many municipal utility leaders through MMUA's FirstLine Supervision program. She joined the program in 1997 and eventually became sole instructor.

This program has trained hundreds of municipal utility supervisors. MMUA honored and thanked Eloise for all that she has done for MMUA and its members.

Bob Weiss, Sleepy Eye Public Utilities Commission

Bob Weiss has been a member of the Sleepy Eye Public Utilities Commission since 1993 and Chairman since



Scott Dietz

2001. He has overseen many large projects

Bob has participated in MMUA meetings and conferences for 25 years and encouraged others to participate. As a result, Sleepy Eye has been an attendance leader year after year at MMUA and APPA



Eloise Thorson

meetings and rallies. Bob testified many times at federal and state legislative rallies. He has benefitted Sleepy Eye and statewide municipal utility customers alike. He is always willing to do whatever is asked of him, with a smile and sincerity.

Awards: see next page please



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Awards:

continued from previous page

Weiss was active locally in a number of roles. After his service in the U.S. Army, he spent his professional career working in the telecommunications industry.

Bob has been a pleasure for city staff to work with, and he taught them many things along the way. The result has been widespread community support for the the City and Utility.

Honorary Lifetime Memberships

Troy Adams

Troy, now serving as general manager of Manitowoc (Wisconsin) Public Utilities, served both as MMUA Presi-

dent and MMUA Government Relations Committee Chair.

At Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU), he negotiated one of the largest service area acquisitions in state history; led efforts to expand the commission from three to five members; and changed wholesale power providers.

ERMU became an early leader among the Minnesota public power community in promoting and working with electric vehicles and was a key member of the working group that developed the MMUA Leadership Academy.

Troy was honored for his contributions to Public Power in Minnesota.



Sleepy Eye always sends a strong contingent to MMUA meetings. This year's group included: Public Works Director Mike Hardin, Public Utility Commissioner Wayne Novotny, Chairman PUC Bob Weiss, Commissioner Briar Braulick, PUC Vice-Chair Paul Theisen, and City Manager Bob Elston.

Joe Steffel

Joe Steffel retired as City of Buffalo utilities director in May, after a storied 43-year career with Public Power. Joe started his career in the utility industry with Northern States Power, at the Riverside Power Plant. In 1978, Joe went to work for the City of Chaska, as a laborer. He worked his way up to journeyman lineman, general foreman and eventually assistant superintendent in 1987.

In 1998 Joe accepted the position of Utilities Director for the City of Buffalo and served in that position until his retirement. He tirelessly gave of himself to municipal utilities in Minnesota.

Joe was always very active in MMUA. He often served as a spokesperson at rallies. He served on the MMUA Board of Directors from 2008-2013 and also served on the board of the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, and as Agency Treasurer.

Bill Wroolie

Bill is a Brainerd native and proudly served our country in the U.S. Army from August 1966 through February 1976. Bill went back to Brainerd and pursued a successful career in the utility/construction business.

When he completes his service in December, Bill will have been a Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) commissioner for 17 ½ years.

Bill served two terms on the MMUA board and eventually as president, rare for a policymaker. He participated in APPA and MMUA events and genuinely enjoyed cruis-



Joe Steffel (left) and Troy Adams with their Honorary Lifetime Membership awards.

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Honorees: see facing page

Honorees:

continued from facing page

ing the halls of the Capitol complex, both in St Paul and Washington.

Bill has been instrumental in making Brainerd a better community by his leadership and involvement with many significant developments.

Bill has always found time to learn the issues affecting the operation of the BPU. Bill is respected by all employees at BPU for his dedication and hard work and the utility has thrived during his time.



Bill Woolie



Accepting the System Innovation award from MMUA President Mark Nibaur were Jeremy Goodell (center) and Tom Stanley of Grand Rapids Public Utilities.

System Innovation Award

Grand Rapids Public Utilities was successful in working with others to develop a community solar garden. The project shows that diverse entities and a committed citizens group can work together to reap the benefits of renewable energy.

The project is a collaboration between the municipal utility, the local Itasca Clean Energy Team, the City of Grand Rapids, Minnesota Power, and US Solar.

US Solar is developing the 2-Megawatt solar array and energy storage battery on city-owned land near the

Grand Rapids/Itasca County Airport. Energy stored in the battery will be used during times of high demand or when the sun is not shining.

The \$6 million in private investment will support over 25 construction jobs. Over the course of the project term, it will generate over \$465,000 in local tax revenue and land lease payments that will benefit Grand Rapids and its residents.

The project is expected to be producing clean energy for Grand Rapids Public Utilities customers by the end of this year.

Public Service Award

Jason Rarick, Minnesota State Senator

Senator Rarick was instrumental in the passage of the Energy Conservation and Optimization ACT (ECO) of 2021, one of MMUA's top legislative proposals.

Sen. Rarick mediated between advocates and opponents and carefully crafted amendments.

Sen. Rarick then helped negotiate a workable compromise with the House, gaining an overwhelming final passage.

In addition, Sen. Rarick refused to author or co-author bills of concern to MMUA.

Jessica Burdette

Since joining the Dept. of Commerce and in her current role as the Energy Regulation and Planning Manager, Jessica has offered a assistance to MMUA's members, and has continuously reached out and worked with MMUA.

She is the state's top expert on the Conservation Improvement Program, and has helped negotiate and advocate for one of MMUA's top legislative priorities, CIP reform and the Energy Conservation and Optimization Act of 2021.

Jessica has a long history of helping members understand their CIP obligations and how to meet them. Her willingness to work with MMUA and members to make things move as effec-



Jessica Burdette

tively and efficiently as possible is greatly appreciated. Her fair-minded, collegial but professional approach to things is also greatly appreciated by MMUA staff and

members alike.

Her dedication to striving for sound, constructive public policy is an admirable trait that is too often missing in today's political battles.

Employee Recognitions

- Cody Raveling, Training Center Coordinator – 5 years
- Tom Ewert, Regional Safety Coordinator – 5 years
- Bill Black, Government Relations Attorney – 15 years
- Mike Willetts, Director of Training and Safety, – 25 years
- Rita Kelly, Director of Administration – 35 years.



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The **City of Excelsior** has joined MMUA as a Regular Member. City offices are located at 339 Third Street, Excelsior, MN 55331.

Contact person is Jenny Palmer, finance director. She can be reached at 952-653-3677 or jpalm@excelsior-mn.org

MMUA has several new Associate Members. They include:

Otter Tail Power Company. The company is located at 215 South Cascade Street, Fergus Falls, MN 56538. Primary contact is Chris Waltz, manager of sales and imple-

Member News



mentation. He can be reached at 218-739-8492 or cwaltz@otpc.com

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Main contact is Tracy Ekola, VP/Midwest Senior Director. Ekola can be contacted at tekola@brwnncald.com or 651.468.2034.

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Main contact is Jesse Zahn, vice president. Zahn can be contacted through email at jessez@conductorpower.com or 218.316.7801.

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MPUC approves three territory agreements between municipals and Xcel Energy

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission July 15 acted on three joint petitions to adjust electric service territory boundaries. The petitions involved Xcel Energy and the City of Brownton, Delano Mu-

nicipal Utilities and City of Waseca municipal utilities.

Unlike most boundary adjustment petitions filed in recent years, the municipal-Xcel filings included details of the agreements. While each

agreement contained common elements, there were also some notable details unique to each situation.

Brownton

This transfer involves 2.3 acres of land on the city's south side, north of U.S. Hwy. 212, which is the site of a proposed Dollar General store.

The city agreed to annually pay Xcel loss-of-revenues for each service within the transfer area for a 10-year period. The loss of revenue compensation is \$0.02064 (20.64 mills) times the kilowatt hours (kWh) consumed by customers at each individual service location within the transfer area.

The area will transfer to the city "on a date to be mutually agreed upon in writing . . . following Commission approval of the joint petition."

The city will also pay any integration or re-feed costs.

The agreement was signed Feb. 17.

Delano

The Xcel-Delano agreement includes one existing customer with Xcel facilities and also 45.64 acres of the newly-developing Delano West Metro Business Park

Second Addition, located south of U.S. Hwy. 12 on the west side of Delano.

Delano agreed to pay \$3,184 as loss-of-revenues for the existing customer, located outside of the business park. The municipal will also compensate Xcel for its existing facilities that have an un-depreciated value of \$2,807.02. Xcel will continue to serve this customer until Delano can construct facilities to serve the customer. Should any additional services be installed in the transfer area before the transfer date, Delano will contact Xcel and the parties will negotiate a mutually-agreeable loss-of-revenues amount for the additional service(s).

For 10 years beginning when the first meter is set and spinning at an individual premise located within the transfer Area (other than the existing customer described above), Delano shall pay Xcel annually a sum equal to \$0.01990 (19.90 mills) times the kilowatt hours (kWh) consumed by the customer(s) located at each individual service location within the area. The consumption for the customers in the area will be determined using municipal

metering records.

Delano will document consumption for the customers in the area annually, and as reasonably requested by Xcel. The annual consumption data will be determined every year until 10 years after the first meter was set and spinning in the Transfer Area.

Payments will be due annually to Xcel.

Delano will also pay the net book value (original cost depreciated) of service facilities in the area, loss of revenues and any integration or re-feed costs that may be necessary. The net book value will be calculated using the average property unit cost, net of customer contributions, and the year the unit of the property was initially purchased.

The effective date of the Delano agreement was the day of signing. Delano Municipal Utilities had been granted interim service rights to the area.

Waseca

This agreement permanently transfers 1.02 acres of land adjacent to residential areas on the northwest side of the city from Xcel to the

Territory: see page 15 please

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#10-1224 (2016-12)

Director, IT and Metering (CIO)

Owatonna Public Utilities (elec, water, and gas), is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Director, Information Technology. This senior mgmt role is responsible for communications and computing infrastructure to link admin and operational systems throughout the organization. OPU has operating revenue of \$60M, serving 11,300 customers.

Working with four direct reports and 12 indirect reports, this highly visible, influential position is a great next step for an IT professional seeking to grow their career. Responsibilities will include planning and organization of the Meter Services team, to ensure maximization of the AMS system, network security, workstations, databases and networked IT systems for all critical utility infrastructure, and planning for disaster contingency and recovery. Requirements: The ideal candidate will have a BS or MS degree in a computer related field: CSci, Computer Eng, CIS, MIS, or similar, and practical skill with Microsoft's OS, troubleshooting and repair of PC systems. Experience required: Five (5) years of demonstrated administrative and supervisory experience directly related to computer network admin, including resource allocation, staff evals, selection, training and discipline, planning, and project scheduling. Experience in building and maintaining a secure network is essential. Project mgmt experience required, as is experience in staff dev. As a senior manager, clear communication ability is required, paired with interpersonal skill. The utility will rely on this person for aptitude and experience with necessary software apps, and for recommendations and integration of new applications. Utility experience is beneficial but not required. Desired Skills: NISC Financial, Customer and Service Order Management systems, or similar. EMC or similar Storage Area Networks. Enterprise-level virtualization. Desired Certs and Licenses: Certified Government Chief Information Officer (CG-CIO); Cisco (CCENT, CCNA, CCNP); CompTIA (Server+, Network+, Security+, A+); Microsoft (Azure AD). Cy-

see facing page please

bersecurity (CISO, CISSP/ISSMP, GSLC). Valid State of Minnesota Class "D" Driver's license.

This position reports directly to the GM. OPU's comp & benefits are highly competitive with a target annual salary for the role of \$130,000. For a complete job description, or to submit a recommendation or confidential resume, contact the search hotline and OPU's search partner, Tom Jackson, of IdeaBuilder Search at (612) 474-4343 or at IBSearch2020@gmail.com.

Finance Clerk

The City of Kenyon/Kenyon Municipal Utilities, is accepting applications for the position of Finance Clerk. Kenyon is located 40 miles south of the Twin Cities and 40 miles north of Rochester, MN. Performs specialized, financial, and administrative functions with primary responsibility for accounting, and related financial reporting, record keeping and payroll. 2021 Salary Range: \$23.10 - \$30.22 per hour (non-exempt) (negotiable depending on experience) plus excellent benefits. Minimum Qualifications: A.A Degree and/or College course work in accounting, finance, business, and at least three years of experience in a position with similar responsibilities. Desired: Municipal Experience. A.A. or B.S. degree in accounting, finance, public administration, business or related field. Application materials including a job description are available at Kenyon City Hall, online at <http://www.cityofkenyon.com> or by calling 507-789-6415. Application materials will be accepted until the position is filled. Submit application materials to info@cityofkenyon.com, in person or by mail 709 2nd St. Kenyon, MN 55946.

Territory:

continued from page 13

City of Waseca. There is one customer in the transfer area. Waseca was already serving this customer, per an interim service agreement.

Waseca agreed to pay Xcel loss of revenues of \$2,787 per lot/house. Should any additional services be installed in the transfer area on or before the transfer date, the municipal will contact Xcel and the parties will negotiate a mutually agreeable loss-of-revenues amount for the additional services.

Waseca has a history of congenial negotiations with NSP/Xcel over the decades. Xcel had facilities in the transfer area, but there was

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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/oes472152.htm

The **Arlington City Council** waived water and sewer access connection charges for two new homes. The council assumed the access charge waiver program from the Arlington Economic Development Authority late last year.

Since the program was implemented about two and a half years ago, nearly 25 new homes have been built.

Elk River Municipal Utilities brought out a bucket truck and electric vehicle for the community's Night to Unite celebration. The vehicles escorted the mayor and four council members from block party to block party.

The **North Branch** city council, according to reports, approved memorandums of understanding with some utility employees and a contractor toward a "wind down" of North Branch Water & Light. It was noted that this is a first step in a process that would lead to a referendum on the abolition of the North Branch Water & Light Commission.

A house explosion July 22 in **Princeton** claimed the life of one person and injured two. A gas leak was the suspected cause and an investigation was ongoing. Princeton Public Utilities cut

Around the State



electric service to the site and a number of city and local agencies and departments responded.

Lightning struck an **Aitkin Public Utilities** substation 1:30 p.m., Saturday, July 24, interrupting electric supply to the utility's 1,800 customers. Service was restored at 3:45 p.m.

Willmar Municipal Utilities has started an \$8.3 million project to upgrade a substation voltage from 69-kV to 230-kV. It is also expanding the 161-kV infrastructure at another substation. Both upgrades are expected to be complete by next spring.

A new power plant substation downtown is pegged at \$5.3 million. A new substation on the south side of the city is in the planning stages.

On the water side, WMU is planning a \$21 million water treatment plant project, including new biological filtering to remove contaminants including ammonia, iron and manganese. The project could also help meet stricter requirements regarding salt in wastewater discharge.

The world has been chang-

ing, and municipal utility communities are not immune.

More evidence of that occurred July 15, when an **Austin Utilities** (AU) pickup truck was stolen, while a utility person was working on a gravel road on the outskirts of the city.

On Aug. 5, a driver struck an AU electric distribution transformer just after 10 a.m.. The hit-and-run accident caused a power outage. Austin Utilities crews restored service. The driver was later apprehended.

Rick Almich is the new **Winthrop** interim city administrator. Almich is formerly the long-time Le Seuer city administrator.

Jason Meusburger is the new **City of Buffalo** utilities director. Meusburger is formerly Technology System Director of the Brookings, South Dakota municipal.

MMUA also congratulates Greg Drent, recently named general manager of **Shakopee Public Utilities** (SPU). Drent was previously the utility's electric superintendent.

SPU and the **City of Shakopee** have both purchased their first electric vehicles: a 2021 Ford Mach-E. The purchases were made to test vehicle range and normalize

EV use in the community. Seven charging stations will be installed in Shakopee this year: three by the city; three by SPU; one from the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency.

Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) and the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport are partnering on a solar plant. Plans call for construction

to begin in the fall and be complete by next summer.

Benson and Madison, will receive Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development grants as part of the federal CARES Act.

Benson received \$678,000 for retrofitting buildings; Madison \$2,560,000 for broadband improvements.

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Upcoming Events

Cross Training School

August 16-18, MMUA Training Center, Marshall

Cross Training is intended for the non-lineworker employee who may, at times, be called into service to work alongside a qualified lineworker.

Cross Training provides fundamental "basic training" for utility personnel. Participants can increase their knowledge of line-worker tools/equipment, broaden their understanding of electricity and the hazards, and increase confidence in their ability to assist.

Our qualified instructor, Cody Raveling from MMUA, will incorporate safety and best practices into the hands-on-training, which simulates commonly experienced situations. Additionally, we make every effort to ensure this program is applicable to the diverse group of participants, so that each leaves with a solid foundation to build upon.

Registration deadline is Sept. 24



Tree Trimming Workshop

October 20-21, Brainerd Public Utilities

Tree care and electric reliability often go hand-in-hand. This workshop is intended for lineworkers and will include classroom and hands-on instruction in the field.

It's vital that crews are properly trained and comply with applicable Safety Standards, including OSHA 29 CFR Part 1910.268, 1910.269 and 1910.333, and ANSI Z133.1-2000.

This workshop offers lineworkers a thorough overview of electrical line tree trimming. We will stress the importance of the job briefing and planning for the job. Safety hazards will be identified and the precautions to take will be covered.

James Monroe, MMUA's Job Training & Safety and Apprenticeship Instructor will lead the instruction. James worked for Carr's Tree Service as a Climber doing tree trimming/clearing/removal for more than four years prior to joining MMUA.

Additional Instructors: Mark Hottel, Certified Safety Professional and Raoul Blackman, Certified Arborist

Deadline to register is September 30 or when registration sold out (maximum 50).



Watch your email for information on these events:

T&O Conference, Dec. 7-9 • T&O Conference Trade Show, Dec. 8 • Transformer School, Dec. 15-17 • Transformer School Pre-Conference, Dec. 14-15