

## Closing out a busy and successful year...

As the accounting department works to close the books on fiscal year 2016-17 at NMPP Energy, it's a good opportunity to share some of the year's accomplishments of the four NMPP Energy organizations:

**From the Executive Director**



By Bob Poehling

### Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska

- Completed the refinancing its 2016 Series A Bonds in the fall of

2016, resulting in an estimated cash-flow savings of \$18.1 million over the remaining life of the bonds.

- Began execution of MEAN's three-year strategic plan, which was developed last fiscal year. This plan also includes establishing MEAN's long-term Integrated Resource Plan.
- Completed and implemented MEAN's distributed generation policy including providing sample copies of an interconnection policy for MEAN wholesale electric customers.
- Added three new MEAN wholesale electric customers: Lake View, Iowa and the Nebraska commu-

nities of Snyder and Trenton.

### Public Alliance for Community Energy (ACE)

- As part of its ongoing advocacy role for customers, ACE intervened in a docket before the Nebraska Public Service Commission that would allow Black Hills Energy to implement a Cost of Service Gas program in its Eastern territories. If approved, the program could signal the end to the Choice Gas Program in Nebraska. The PSC ultimately rejected the pro-

See 'YEAR' on page 3

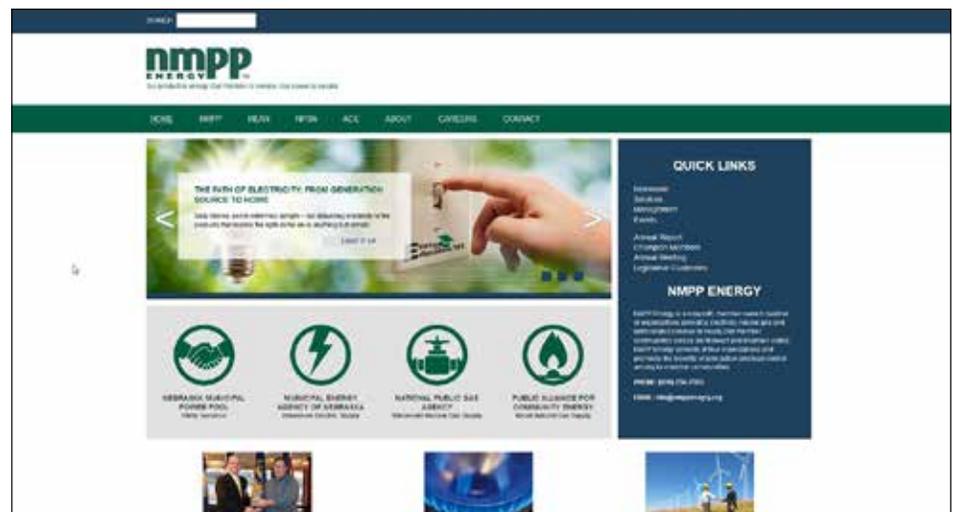
## NMPP Energy unveils website redesign

NMPP Energy launched its new Web site redesign in May.

The site is mobile friendly, allowing for intuitive viewing on mobile devices and tablets. It incorporates a modern look in line with today's web page standards and includes current information and services regarding each NMPP Energy organization.

The site was developed by the NMPP Energy communications department working with NMPP Champions member Proteus of Lincoln, Neb.

Future plans for the website are to include a members-only web portal where organizational information, such as board meeting packets, can be shared with NMPP Energy organization constituents.



[www.nmppenergy.org](http://www.nmppenergy.org)

Along with organization-specific information, the site includes a news-room section, a listing of upcoming

board meetings, and a careers section for NMPP Energy and NMPP members to list employment opportunities.

# West Point earns ED certification

Nebraska Lt. Governor Mike Foley recently recognized the City of West Point, Neb., for certification in the State of Nebraska's Economic Development Certified Community (EDCC) program. Lt. Gov. Foley presented the certification to local leaders during the Cuming County Economic Development organization's annual dinner on April 30.

West Point is one of 39 communities to earn EDCC distinction in the program, which is sponsored by the Nebraska Diplomats and administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. State officials established the program in 2005 to recognize communities for their preparedness to attract new industries and grow existing businesses. As part of the certification process, qualifying communities must identify a well-defined program that actively engages with their existing business community and offers a supportive environment for welcoming new economic development projects. This includes documenting available sites and buildings, local financing and incentive programs, and a strategic plan for economic development, such as implementing a progressive strategy to grow the community's labor market.

"Nebraska's EDCC program is one of only a few in the nation that recognizes communities for preparedness in economic development," said Lt. Gov. Mike Foley. "By earning this certification, West Point leaders have



Photo Courtesy of West Point News

**Receiving West Point's certification are (left-right) Councilman Tom Black, Treasurer Ralph Luebbert, Mayor Marlene Johnson, Lt. Gov. Mike Foley, City Administrator Tom Goulette, Councilman Bruce Schlecht, Councilman Jerry Hugo, Councilwoman Debra Ell, Councilman Roger Paus and City Clerk Mary Kempf.**

shown that they have the ability to compete for new jobs and investments in today's competitive market. This official certification has the potential to provide the community with another tool for economic growth, which has already had tremendous success in the recruitment and expansion of local businesses."

## Collaboration and cooperation

Successful efforts in business, housing and workforce development contributed to recent community growth. In 2016, collaboration between state and local leaders resulted in the recruitment of a pet treat manufacturer, which now occupies the once-vacant Land O'Frost Building.

This project was a result of cooperation between the City of West Point, Cuming County Economic Development (CCED), the State of Nebraska, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Northeast Nebraska Development District and F&M Bank.

## Expanding relationships

Expanding relationships with local educational leaders continue to create opportunities in workforce recruitment. Through a partnership with CCED, Northeast Community College created a "Manufacturing Bootcamp," which provides basic workforce readiness skills for residents entering the workforce. The program builds on tools and techniques related to quality production, customer service, and safety in manufacturing facilities. Graduates of the program can connect with area business leaders through interviews and skills training, which is designed to add to the community's talented labor pool.

"As our local leaders continue to grow this community's business and industry sectors, we look forward to building new success stories by being a newly-certified EDCC," said West Point Mayor Marlene Johnson. "The City of West Point is proud to join a distinguished group of EDCC's in Nebraska."



# ACE wraps up Choice Gas selection period

ACE, the Public Alliance for Community Energy, recently wrapped up another year of providing competitively priced natural gas in the Nebraska Choice Gas selection period, which ran from April 13-May 2.

The selection period was originally scheduled to end April 27, but was extended to May 2 after Black Hills Energy, the program's administrator, was late in mailing a significant number of Choice Gas selection packets.

Overall, gas rates during the selection period were slightly higher than in 2016 but remained historically low. Natural gas production declined the last 12 months causing a gradual rise in prices during this year's selection period.



**Several staff members from various departments work together during the Choice Gas selection period to provide customer pricing and support.**

NMPP Energy photo

ACE's preliminary selection results were shared during the ACE Board meeting held in May. Overall, ACE had a slight gain in accounts to approx. 18,000 and an increase in natural gas volume sales.

"Every campaign has some unexpected turns," said Beth Ackland, director of retail gas services. "With the extended days

of the selection period, staff pulled together extremely well on behalf of our member communities and turned the selection period into a positive. Ultimately, ACE is about providing a competitive choice for consumers and we certainly achieved that."

Ackland shared with the ACE Board that she will be meeting with Black Hills representatives to review the campaign and selection period and to work toward improving the program for the benefit of all consumers.

## Successful year

Continued from page 1

posed program in Nebraska and Colorado.

- ACE successfully transitioned to a new wholesale natural gas supplier. The transition was extremely smooth and allows ACE to continue to provide competitive rates to customers.

- A one-day strategic planning session was held where several staff and three members of the ACE Executive Committee actively participated.

### National Public Gas Agency

- The NPGA Board approved a new rate structure in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year. The new structure is designed to simplify rates, allow for improved marketing and create a better mechanism to recover fixed costs.

- The agency, as part of a shipper's group, intervened in a federal interstate pipeline rate case that impacted three NPGA members. The net savings to members over the life of the initially proposed capital improvements is estimated to be around \$3.1 million.

### Nebraska Municipal Power Pool

- NMPP signed 10 new contracts for cost-of-service studies during the year.

- Revenues for NMPP were ahead of plan primarily due to strong financial performance in Computer Services.

- The ENERGYsmart Commercial Lighting Program, administered by NMPP for MEAN

long-term wholesale customers, had a successful year providing financial incentives for more than 60 projects in 20 communities.

- To increase advocacy and educational opportunities for members, NMPP joined and/or became active participants in several regional organizations. Staff also spent significant effort strengthening relationships with regional utility groups, state energy, regulatory and environmental offices as well as various regional vendors.

Overall, the organizations of NMPP Energy had a successful year, and with a new year under way, we're keeping our collective sleeves rolled up to continue serving our members as efficiently and effectively as possible.

# Pierce line project receives helping hands

*NECC utility line students receive hands-on experience by assisting nearby utility*

As the utility superintendent for the City of Pierce's (Neb.) electric department, Rich Eymann faced a large project with minimal staff to tackle it. He found a solution just 14 miles down the highway.

Eymann tapped into Northeast Community College's (NECC) Utility Line Program to have students assist in completing a mile-long line rebuild project. The partnership allowed Eymann to complete the large project quickly while providing real-world, hands-on experience to future line workers.

"They (students) were excited about it as they get a chance to work on real line," said Eymann.

The work took place over a week in April and included having more than 30 students in two groups removing, framing and setting new poles and installing new line.

"It's a good feel for everybody because (the students) get to work within a crew with other people watching them and making sure they are doing it safely and the way we expect them to do it," said Eymann.

The electric department in Pierce is typical of many small municipalities with minimal staff that wear many hats along with



City of Pierce photos

**(Top photo) Electric utility crews and utility line students from Northeast Community College break for lunch during Pierce's mile-long line rebuild project.**

maintaining the local electric distribution system. Without the students' help, Eymann said the project would have taken him and another City employee multiple years to complete as it would have to be done a little at a time. Eymann also viewed the opportunity as a chance to connect with prospective future employees for his electric department.

Eymann graduated nearly 40 years ago from the same utility line program, although the college was under a different name. He knew a couple of the current instructors and had occasional communication with the instructors.

While Pierce's large project worked out for the utility and

**See 'PIERCE' on page 5**

## Staff news

### Amber Degner

Amber Degner joined the NMPP Energy team as receptionist/office support specialist in April. Amber takes over at the front desk reception area for Shari Schmidt, who retired. Amber earned a business administration degree from the



University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She most recently worked as a billing specialist at Baylor Evnen law firm.

### Shari Schmidt

Receptionist Shari Schmidt retired in April after 19 years at NMPP Energy. We send best wishes to Shari for a happy retirement!



## ACE Board elects secretary/treasurer for 2017-18

The Public Alliance for Community Energy (ACE) elected Jeremy Tarr of Burwell, Neb., to fill the vacancy for secretary/treasurer for the remaining of fiscal year 2017-18 at its May board meeting in Kearney, Neb. The fiscal year runs through March 31, 2018.

Other ACE officers for the year include Bruce Clymer, city administrator, Gothenburg, Neb., chair and Andrew Devine, city administrator, Albion, Neb., vice chair.

## Pierce line project receives helping hands

### Continued from page 4

the utility line program, it isn't something the program can do often. The program is limited to projects it can assist on, said NECC Utility Line Instructor Matt Johnson. Projects must fit within the program's curriculum and schedule so it's more feasible for students to assist nearby utilities in shorter half-day or one-day projects. Past projects have included retiring old lines, installing new light poles and lighting and installing underground line in a park.

The projects provide a valuable learning experience for students.

"Even though they do the same thing here at school, it's for a grade," said Johnson. "Here they have a real-life experience. They have to contend with traffic where they're on the road



City of Pierce photo

### Utility line students assist with setting new electric poles.

and in the ditches. There's real people out of power while we're doing it. This is not something that's going to get torn down at the end of the semester. It's go-

ing to be permanent and has to be done well. You're also working with other linemen in the industry and can see how they do things."

## First National Bank: 160 years of taking care of customers

For 160 years, First National Bank has focused on doing what's right for our customers and the communities we serve. Our independent ownership has guided our long-term investments, rather than managing from quarter to quarter to satisfy Wall Street. Our rich history, strong capital, experienced management and high standards further validate that First National Bank is the ideal financial services partner:

- Founded in 1857, First National Bank is rooted in six generations of family leadership.
- We are part of the largest privately owned banking com-

pany in the United States, with nearly 5,000 employees and \$19 billion in managed assets.

- One of the nation's Top 10 Agribusiness Lenders as ranked by the ABA.
- First National operates more than 100 retail banking locations in Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, Illinois, Colorado, Kansas and Texas.

What truly sets us apart from other financial institutions is the way we work with our clients. We'll do whatever it takes to deliver a superior customer experience. We establish and maintain long-term relationships based on shared values with customers and

employees. Customer interactions are based on relationships – not transactions.

We haven't lost sight of the foundation on which our success was built. Integrity, Respect, Passion - these are the cornerstones of our Operating Philosophy and represent our commitment to you and our communities. At First National Bank, we strive to better serve you and your banking needs – and we are as hopeful and excited about the future of our bank as our founders were.

For more information on First National Bank, visit [www.firstnational.com](http://www.firstnational.com).

A complete listing of NMPP Energy Champion Businesses is on page 7

## Clean Power Plan faces uncertain future

Former President Barack Obama's Clean Power Plan is facing an uncertain future as a federal appeals court recently put the plan on hold for 60 days, ordering parties to file new legal papers on whether the case should be sent back to the Environmental Protection Agency, which is responsible for carrying out the plan.

Written by the Obama administration, the plan calls for limiting greenhouse gas emissions from existing power plants. President Donald Trump has been an outspoken critic of the plan and has taken steps to roll it back. Shortly after being sworn in as president, Trump appointed Scott Pruitt as administrator of the EPA. Prior to his



EPA nomination, Pruitt was the attorney general of Oklahoma, one of the states that filed a lawsuit against the plan.

The U.S. Court of Appeals heard oral arguments on the case last fall but did not issue a ruling before President Obama left office.

Trump signed an executive order that took steps to unwind

the plan and requested the court to temporarily suspend work on the case.

The EPA issued the CPP during the summer of 2015. The plan calls for a 32 percent reduction in power plant carbon emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. Under the plan, each state has specific carbon emission reduction targets.

---

## Support NMPP member communities through the Champions Business Program

Champions are businesses and organizations that support NMPP Energy's effort to provide products and services to members. Consider these businesses when your utility or municipality has a business need. If your business is interested in becoming an NMPP Energy Champion, call Andrew Ross at (800) 234-2595.



---

### Champions Business Directory

---

#### **Financial Services**

**Ameritas Investment Corp.** (Ameritas.com)..... Omaha, Neb.  
**D.A. Davidson & Co.** (dadavidson.com/ficm) ..... Omaha, Neb.  
**First National Bank** (Firstnational.com)..... Omaha, Neb.  
**UNICO Group, Inc. and Midlands Financial Benefits** (unicogroup.com) .....Lincoln, Neb.  
**Nebraska Energy Federal Credit Union** (ne-fcu.com) ..... Columbus, Neb.  
**RBC Capital Markets** (rbc.com)..... Denver, Colo.

#### **Regulatory/Compliance Services**

**Air Regulations Consulting** (airregconsulting.com).....Lincoln, Neb.  
**Power Plant Compliance** (Powplant.com) ..... Oketo, Kan.  
**NAQS Environmental Experts** (naqs.com).....Lincoln, Neb.

#### **Utility Services & Supplies**

**EnergySolutions, Inc.** (Energysolutions-inc.com)..... Omaha, Neb.  
**Fairbanks Morse Engine** (Fairbanksmorse.com)..... Beloit, Wis.  
**Hometown Connections, LLC** (Hometownconnections.com) .....Lakewood, Colo.  
**JK Energy Consulting, LLC** (JKenergyconsulting.com) .....Lincoln, Neb.  
**Kriz-Davis Co.** (Krizdavis.com)..... Grand Island, Neb.  
**NovaTech** (Novatechweb.com) ..... Lenexa, Kan.  
**PDS, Inc.** (PDSinc.biz) ..... Omaha, Neb.  
**Protective Equipment Testing Laboratory** (petl.com) ..... Great Bend, Kan.  
**REM Electric, Inc.** (Davidsoncompanies.com).....Nebraska City, Neb.  
**RESCO (Rural Electric Supply Cooperative)** (resco1.com) ..... Ankeny, Iowa  
**Solomon Corporation** (Solomoncorp.com)..... Solomon, Kan.  
**Stanley Consultants, Inc.** (Stanleyconsultants.com) ..... Muscatine, Iowa

#### **Computer/Technology Services**

**Proteus** (Proteus.co) .....Lincoln, Neb.  
**Salt Creek Software, Inc.** (Saltcreek.com) .....Lincoln, Neb.

#### **Engineering Services**

**EPSIM Corporation** (epsim.us) ..... Boulder, Colo.  
**HDR** (hdrinc.com) ..... Omaha, Neb.  
**JEO Consulting Group, Inc.** (jeo.com) ..... Wahoo, Neb.  
**Lutz, Daily & Brain, LLC** (ldbeng.com)..... Overland Park, Kan.  
**Olsson Associates** (Olssonassociates.com) ..... Lincoln, Neb.  
**Sega Inc.** (segainc.com) ..... Stilwell, Kan.

#### **Legal Services**

**Chapman and Cutler, LLP** (chapman.com) ..... Salt Lake City, Utah  
**Spiegel & McDiarmid** (spiegelmcd.com) ..... Washington, D.C.

#### **Telecommunication Services**

**Consortia Consulting** (consortiaconsulting.com) .....Lincoln, Neb.  
**River Oaks Communications Corp.** (rivoaks.com) ..... Centennial, Colo.



8377 Glynoaks Drive  
Lincoln NE 68516

NON PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 402  
LINCOLN, NE

# Essent

NEWSLETTER

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Employment Opportunities

### Gas, Water and Wastewater Collection Superintendent

**Nebraska City (Neb.) Utilities** has an opening for the gas, water, wastewater collection superintendent. The superintendent performs technical, administrative, and supervisory duties in directing the design, construction and maintenance of the natural gas transmission and distribution system, water distribution system and wastewater collections main system. The position requires knowledge of DOT/PHMSA natural gas regulations and the ability to enforce regulations to

assurance compliance with federal, state, and local guidelines associated with natural gas transmission/distribution, "10 State Standards" & NHHS for water distribution, and NDEQ for wastewater collection system. The supervisor must have leadership skills with the ability to establish and attain operation objectives for the employees and communicate effectively with employees, regulatory agencies, and the public. Nebraska City Utilities offers an excellent benefit package. Nebraska City Utilities is an Equal Opportunity Employer. For a complete

job description or to apply for this position please contact Leroy Frana or Dan Patton at (402) 873-3353. Applications and resumes with a written description of your strengths, skills, experience, and education qualifying you for this position must be submitted to Leroy Frana or Dan Patton at Nebraska City Utilities, 100 Central Avenue, Nebraska City, NE, 68410. Position open until filled.

## Upcoming Meetings

**August 9** - PPGA Meeting

**August 16** - MEAN Committees

**August 17** - MEAN Board/  
Mgmt. Committees

For all descriptions of employment opportunities go to [www.nmppenergy.org](http://www.nmppenergy.org).

**To submit an ad:** NMPP members can advertise job openings for free in the Essent newsletter and on the nmppenergy website. E-mail your job opening to: [info@nmppenergy.org](mailto:info@nmppenergy.org).

Essent is published as a service to NMPP Energy members. The subscription rate for nonmembers is \$50 per year. Copyright 2017, Nebraska Municipal Power Pool.  
Send comments to: Essent, Attn: Editor, 8377 Glynoaks Drive, Lincoln, NE 68516 or e-mail: [kwickham@nmppenergy.org](mailto:kwickham@nmppenergy.org)  
phone: (800) 234-2595 • Fax: (402) 474-0473 • [www.nmppenergy.org](http://www.nmppenergy.org)  
Publisher: Robert L. Poehling, Executive Director, NMPP Energy  
Editor: Kevin Wickham, Communications Specialist