

## NMPP utility training sessions set

The Nebraska Municipal Power Pool will hold a series of utility training sessions on a variety of topics at three different locations across Nebraska during late January and into February and March.

Locations include Lincoln, Broken Bow and Sidney in Nebraska and will include two, six-hour training sessions at each location. Each site will hold a session on safety training led by Kansas Municipal Utilities and a vendor/in-house training session that will cover several topics including:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- Substation and regulator operation and maintenance;
- Metering installation and maintenance;
- Grounding equipment transformer, OCR's, meter loops, substation fencing, etc.;
- Lockout & tagout;
- Bucket and Digger Derick operation and maintenance; and
- Mutual Aid protocol discussions.

Since forming, the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool has assisted member utilities with training opportunities covering a wide variety of electric distribution system topics.

Many NMPP member utilities are small with utility staff wearing many



### 2019 Utility Training Session Dates

#### Lincoln, Neb.

- **February 26** - Safety Training led by Kansas Municipal Utilities
- **March 5** - Vendor/In-House Training

#### Broken Bow, Neb.

- **February 27** - Safety Training led by Kansas Municipal Utilities
- **March 6** - Vendor/In-House Training

#### Sidney, Neb.

- **January 31** - Vendor/In-House Training
- **February 28** - Safety Training led by Kansas Municipal Utilities

#### For more information, contact:

Mandy Hansen, Supervisor of Member Services, (402) 473-8259, ahansen@nmppenergy.org or Rich Eymann, Electric Dist. O&M Specialist, (402) 473-8207, reymann@nmppenergy.org.

hats so providing training opportunities involving several utilities from the same region has had value through the years.

All NMPP member utilities are

eligible to attend the six-hour sessions. Cost is \$500 per year with up to five attendees per participant community.

# FERC must keep transmission costs reasonable and fair to all

By **Delia Patterson**

*Senior Vice President, Advocacy & Communications and General Counsel, American Public Power Association*

In some regions, particularly those with regional transmission organizations and independent system operators (RTO and ISO), electricity transmission costs have risen significantly in the past several years, imposing a significant burden on transmission customers, including public power utilities.

The Edison Electric Institute projects that investor-owned utilities and standalone transmission companies will invest a record \$23.7 billion in transmission assets in 2018. This figure is approximately 15 percent more than the 2016 transmission investment (\$20.6 billion), and nearly double the level of investment just seven years ago (\$12.0 billion). An analysis prepared by the Brattle Group confirms this sharp increase in transmission spending in recent years, calculating that investments by transmission owners from 2013 to 2017 exceeded \$70 billion in the RTO and ISO regions alone.

While much of this transmission investment is for legitimate reasons such as accommodating new renewable generation and upgrading aging infrastructure, the American Public Power Association urges the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to adopt and enforce policies that support reasonable transmission rates.



For example, FERC should ensure that proposed transmission projects receive adequate scrutiny in regional transmission planning processes and that the authorized equity returns included in cost-based transmission rates are not excessive. The Brattle Group study found that nearly half of the 2013-2017 transmission investment in RTO and ISO regions was not subject to the full RTO/ISO regional transmission planning process. An open and transparent planning process helps ensure that proposed transmission infrastructure is truly needed and will benefit customers. And getting needed transmission built should not require piling additional incentives on top of already generous returns.

The Association is closely following recent FERC pronouncements regarding the Commission's policies on allowed equity returns and transmission incentives.

In an October 16, 2018 order, FERC proposed a new approach for calculating the allowed return on equity (ROE) to be included

## Potential impacts to MEAN Participants

Transmission charges are a pass-through cost on each MEAN participant's monthly wholesale electric bill.

FERC policy decisions regarding equity of returns for regional transmission projects could impact transmission charges to MEAN participants as well as other regional utilities.

MEAN joins APPA and other regional groups in monitoring the situation on behalf of its member participants.

in the rates of transmission owners in ISO-New England. Application of this new approach could result in higher allowed ROEs and could increase the level of incentive ROE that transmission owners are permitted to collect. At its November open meeting, FERC directed that this new approach be considered in other pending proceedings.

FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee also announced at the November meeting that the Commission intends to consider whether it should make additional changes to both its calculation of base ROEs and its long-established policies on transmission incentives. Chairman Chatterjee said FERC's incentive policies were overdue for a "fresh look," with input from all interested stake-

See 'TRANSMISSION' on page 3

# Transmission— Proposed ACE rule allows more flexibility for states

Continued from page 2

holders, not just those involved in the pending ROE proceedings. He said it was “high time” to see if the Commission’s ROE and incentive policies are producing “the level and type of transmission investment the nation needs.”

As FERC undertakes this review, the Association urges the Commission to adhere to its statutory obligation under Federal Power Act sections 205 and 206 to ensure that transmission rates are just and reasonable and not unduly discriminatory and preferential. For an incentive rate to meet this standard, the costs of the incentive must not outweigh the expected benefits. Incentives must be carefully designed to encourage the desired behavior, and not be greater than what’s needed to achieve the desired result. FERC must abide by the long-standing principle that the level of return follows the level of risk.

While it’s important transmission owners earn a fair rate of return on their investments in infrastructure, many are receiving overly generous returns of 10 to 12 percent. Rates of return should reflect actual market risks and not have the unintended consequence of encouraging building or over-building just to generate revenue. Return on equity rates must reflect current economic conditions, and any additional incentives must be awarded judiciously and only as needed to promote beneficial transmission investment.

FERC must support policies and rates that get needed transmission built in a way that reduces overall costs to consumers.

The last two presidential administrations have rolled out their own energy plan focusing on cleaner energy production. Former President Barack Obama’s administration unveiled the Clean Power Plan (CPP) while President Donald Trump put forward his administration’s Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule.

Both plans came out of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), run by excellent, well-meaning and highly-trained people who care about the environment. The CPP was a robust renewable energy plan addressing climate change and carbon emissions. The controversial plan had many legal challenges which caused years of delays. It was ultimately repealed by the Trump administration EPA and replaced with the proposed ACE rule, which also establishes emission guidelines for states to develop to address greenhouse gas emissions from existing coal-fired power plants.

In comparing the two plans, the ACE rule may be more effective in accomplishing its goal. Utilities are moving toward cleaner energy production without the CPP’s heavy federal mandates, thanks to improving power plant technology and the overall shift in power generation using natural gas, wind and solar due to a vari-

ety of valid economic reasons.

Both plans included similar policy goals and components which impact U.S. power plants, but they take different directions regarding mandates on reduction of carbon emissions. For example, while renewable energy (wind) was one of the building blocks of the CPP, the prior production tax credit was far more effective in the growth of wind farms than the federal government mandating their existence under the heavily contested CPP. Both plans call on states to meet specific standards, but ACE allows more time for implementation as states move away from coal power generation and look to other sources of energy. Under ACE, states have more latitude to establish their own performance targets.

The CPP used building blocks of renewable energy with a short fuse. The ACE rule builds more on improving the efficiency of existing fossil fuel plants and allows states to support new technologies utilities can use when developing or changing power resources. In the past a power plant owner might not have made an operational change for fear of triggering the new Source Review rule. Under ACE, coal plants can be updated with more sensitive environmental measures and not fear new regulation due to major modifications. Certainly, coal is in decline and older plants have retired, but the ACE rule supports new technology to run existing plants better.

The proposed ACE rule is a good start by providing added flexibility for states and utilities to operate while still working toward lowering the country’s carbon emissions.

\* \* \*

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## Legislative Notes



By Chris Dibbern

# Registration now open!

## Keynote speakers set for Annual Conference



### Opening Keynote Speaker

Kirk Lippold, U.S. Navy Commander (Ret.), USS Cole

*"Leadership and Accountability When it Matters"*

Commander Kirk Lippold was the commanding officer of the USS Cole when it was attacked by al Qaeda in the port of Aden, Yemen in 2001. Currently, Commander Lippold is president of Lippold Strategies, a consulting firm specializing in executive leadership development and crisis management. He is the author of "Front Burner — Al Qaeda's Attack on the USS Cole".



### Closing Keynote Speaker

Steve Collier, director of Smart Grid Strategies at Milsoft Utility Solutions

*"Trends and Developments in the Utility Industry"*

The utility industry is experiencing significant change and evolution. Steve Collier will discuss these changes and how it relates to today's utilities. He serves as Milsoft's resident smart grid expert and industry thought leader, writing, speaking and consulting widely on issues, technologies and applications related to the development of a modern, intelligent electric power grid.

## Registration Form *(Clip and mail to: NMPP Energy, 8377 Glynoaks Drive, Lincoln NE 68516)*

Municipality/Firm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Title(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street/PO Box: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*One complimentary registration will be given to an elected official with every paid member registration.*

Elected Official Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Fee & Payment Options

**Registration Fee** Member/Champion Rate .....# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$150 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

*Fee includes: pre-conference workshop, all programs, breaks, breakfasts, lunch and banquet* Non-Member Rate.....# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$275 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Banquet Tickets .....# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$45 ea. = \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL PAYMENT DUE: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ *Planning to attend Pre-Conference A-Z Infrastructure Workshop March 26.*

# \_\_\_\_\_ *Planning to attend first night reception.*

Payment Enclosed

Please Bill Me

To Pay Electronically via ACH, contact Laurie for instructions - 800.234.2595

**LATE REGISTRATION:** After Mar. 1, 2019 registration will be \$175 each for members/champions.

**TO BOOK LODGING:** Go to [nmppenergy.org](http://nmppenergy.org), click on "Annual Conference" link and then click on the "Book a Room" link.

You can also call Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel 333 So. 13th St. Lincoln NE 68508 at 1-888-236-2427. Group rate: \$90+tax. (Cut off date 3/12/19 for group rate. Group name: NMPP 2019 Annual Meeting. Group Code: MPP.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Email Laurie Keiser at [lkeiser@nmppenergy.org](mailto:lkeiser@nmppenergy.org).

# Albion uses ACE funds for trail project

The City of Albion, Neb., recently used its revenue return funds from ACE (Public Alliance for Community Energy) to help fund the first leg of a multi-phase recreational trail system project.

The 8-foot-wide concrete trail was completed this summer and includes two loops: the shorter Fuller Park loop is .3 miles while the Fairgrounds Loop is 1.5 miles long and provides more varied terrain and elevation.

As a member community of not-for-profit ACE, the City of Albion received \$3,278 through ACE's revenue return program for fiscal year 2017-18. Overall, Albion has received more than \$29,700 as a member of ACE, the only community-owned natural gas supplier in the Nebraska Choice Gas program. The ACE Board of Directors approved an overall distribution of \$250,000 to its 72 member communities for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

ACE provides competitive pricing for natural gas to customers in the Nebraska Choice gas program and through its revenue return program distributes funds above the cost of operation back to its member communities.

Residents identified a trail system in a 2016 commu-



Courtesy photo

**A trail system was identified by Albion residents as a top priority in a community survey. The project was a collaborative effort that included the City and several other entities working together.**

nity survey as a top priority. The Fuller Park and Fairgrounds Loop are the first leg of a multi-phased initiative. The project, which included a total budget of \$350,000, is a collaborative initiative of The Boone County Foundation Fund, the City of Albion, Boone County, Boone County Development Agency, Boone County Agricultural Society and interested citizens.

## 2019 Choice Gas Selection Dates

The 2019 Nebraska Choice Gas selection period will start April 12 and run through April 25.



# RBC Capital Markets has successful history of working with local governments in region

[www.rbccm.com](http://www.rbccm.com)

RBC Capital Markets (RBC-CM), formerly Dain Rauscher, has more than a 50-year history of working with local governments in Nebraska and the surrounding region to issue tax-exempt bonds.

They are a full-service investment banking and securities brokerage firm and currently rank fourth nationally as a senior managing underwriter of tax-exempt municipal bonds. RBC Capital Markets brings considerable expertise and financial resources to their public power and local government clients.

Its parent company, the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), is a diversified international financial services organization that operates in 15 countries, more than \$100 billion in market capitalization and is among the highest-rated banks in the public finance industry with Moody's "Aa2", Standard and Poor's "AA-" and Fitch "AA" ratings. RBCCM provides financing to power providers throughout

the United States and around the globe.

The company maintains a strong presence in Nebraska with Wealth Management sales offices in Lincoln and Omaha as well as offices in Iowa, Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas and South Dakota. Over the past 50 years, RBCCM has underwritten bonds for many Nebraska and Midwestern issuers. Our 30 Nebraska-domiciled Wealth Management financial consultants sell significant amounts of Nebraska tax-exempt bonds to Nebraska investors. In the NMPP Energy service area, RBCCM is one of the most active underwriting firms, including both Colorado and Nebraska.

RBCCM tailors its service to meet its client's financing needs. They strive to provide innovative solutions to attain the lowest possible

cost of capital for our clients. Its Public Power Finance Group develops financings for all types of public power transactions including generation, transmission and distribution bond issues, refunding bond issues and renewables and gas pre-pay bond issues. RBCCM can also serve as a physical commodity and swaps provider for its public power clients. They also underwrite general obligation, water and sewer revenue or excise tax revenue bonds for local governments.

RBCCM welcomes the opportunity to work with the members of NMPP Energy to structure, rate and sell your bonds, whether public power related or otherwise. Please contact Nate Eckloff at (303) 595-1206 or Tim McEwen at (402) 465-3806 for information about having RBC Capital Markets serve you on your next financing.

For a complete listing of NMPP Energy Champion Businesses, see page 7

## Employment Opportunities

### Electric Lineman

The City of **Curtis**, Neb., is accepting applications for a Lineman. This individual will oversee and maintain all areas of the Curtis Light and Water electrical distribution system and generating plant. Duties include, but are not limited to, maintenance, repair and upgrades of all electric systems. Requirements include a valid Nebraska driver's license, must obtain CDL. Electrical and or lineman experience is highly preferred. The City of Curtis will consider training an individual with the aptitude and desire to learn this position. All training and certification costs will be paid by the city. Wage will depend on experience

and certifications. Full family health insurance and retirement included. Curtis has great schools, friendly people, low crime, spectacular Arrowhead Meadows Golf Course, and is situated in the heart of some of the best hunting and fishing in the Midwest. Relocation incentives are available through the Medicine Valley Economic Development Corporation. Visit [Curtisnebraska.com](http://Curtisnebraska.com) for information on the area. Resume and references can be mailed to: City of Curtis, P.O. Box 6, Curtis NE 69025 or emailed to [curtis@curtis-ne.com](mailto:curtis@curtis-ne.com). Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The City of Curtis is an EOE. Contact Doug

Schultz (308) 367-4122 or [curtis@curtis-ne.com](mailto:curtis@curtis-ne.com) with questions.

### Lineman I

The City of **Wayne**, Neb., Municipal Utilities is currently accepting applications for a Lineman I position. A minimum of five years' experience in the electrical field or technical school graduate is preferred. Examples of work: Participates in construction, maintenance and repair of overhead and underground electrical distribution and transmission lines; sets poles, strings wire, and hangs or installs transformers, lightning arresters, cut-outs, cross arms

See 'EMPLOYMENT' on page 8

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## 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.



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## Champions Business Directory of Services

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### **Financial**

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.org)	Columbus, Neb.
RBC Capital Markets (rbc.com)	Denver, Colo.

### **Regulatory/Compliance**

Power Plant Compliance (Powplant.com)	Oketo, Kan.
NAQS Environmental Experts (naqs.com)	Lincoln, Neb.

### **Utility/Community**

EnergySolutions, Inc. (Energysolutions-inc.com)	Omaha, Neb.
Hometown Connections, LLC (Hometownconnections.com)	Lakewood, Colo.
Foundation for Educational Services (fes.org)	Lincoln, Neb.
JK Energy Consulting, LLC (JKenergyconsulting.com)	Lincoln, Neb.
Border States (borderstates.com)	Fargo, N.D.
NovaTech (Novatechweb.com)	Lenexa, Kan.
PDS, Inc. (PDSinc.biz)	Omaha, Neb.
Protective Equipment Testing Laboratory (petl.com)	Great Bend, Kan.
RESCO (Rural Electric Supply Cooperative) (resco1.com)	Ankeny, Iowa
Solomon Corporation (Solomoncorp.com)	Solomon, Kan.

### **Computer/Technology**

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

### **Engineering**

EPSIM Corporation (epsim.us)	Boulder, Colo.
Exponential Engineering Company (exponentialengineering.com)	Fort Collins, Colo.
JEO Consulting Group, Inc. (jeo.com)	Wahoo, Neb.
Lutz, Daily & Brain, LLC (ldbeng.com)	Overland Park, Kan.
Olsson Associates (Olssonassociates.com)	Lincoln, Neb.
Power Engineers (powereng.com)	Overland Park, Kan.

### **Insurance**

League Association of Risk Management (larmpool.org)	Lincoln, Neb.
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### **Legal**

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

### **Telecommunication**

River Oaks Communications Corp. (rivoaks.com)	Centennial, Colo.
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## Employment (cont.)

and insulators and related components; performs most skilled lineman tasks in constructing 2,400 to 13,000-volt lines; and monthly meter reading. Pay range will be \$19.36 - \$27.18. Starting pay will be based on prior experience and certifications. Applications and job description are available at the City of Wayne, 306 Pearl Street, Wayne, NE 68787. Applications are due by Jan. 31, 2019 and should be returned to Betty McGuire, City Clerk, with applicable resume. The City of Wayne is an EOE. For more information, call (402) 375-2896 and ask for Tim Sutton, electric distribution superintendent.

### Water / Sewer Operator

The City of **Denver**, Iowa is looking for a water/sewer operator. Qualified applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent. Once hired, the employee will be required to make consistent progress toward attaining a Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator Grade III Certification, a Grade II Water Treatment Plant Operator, and a Grade II Water Distribution Operator. Preferred applicants will have a minimum of a two-year post high school degree and/or hold waste water, water distribution, and water treatment certifications. Salary to be based on education and certifications. Salary is competitive and will increase with each

step toward the Grade III Certification. Applicants should submit cover letter, resume, and salary history and five references to the City of Denver, 100 Washington Street, Denver, Iowa 50622. Position is open until filled. Review of applications will begin on Jan. 2, 2019. EOE

## Upcoming Meetings

- Jan. 16** .....ACE Board
- Jan. 16** .....MEAN Committees
- Jan. 17** .....MEAN Board and Mgmt. Committee
- Feb. 21** .....NPGA Board

**To submit an employment ad...** NMPP members may advertise job openings for free in the Essent newsletter. The deadline is the 15th of each month to run the following month. E-mail [kwickham@nmppenergy.org](mailto:kwickham@nmppenergy.org).