

Preserving public power requires advocacy, education

Electricity is so ubiquitous in our lives, we rarely think about it. The same could be said regarding the public power business model used for generating and delivering that electricity to end-use customers.

Nebraska’s public power system has been around for a long time. And yet, like electricity itself, few give it much thought. Public power in Nebraska developed during the 1930-40s largely because it wasn’t profitable enough for large, investor-owned utilities to serve small, rural communities.

As a result, today Nebraska is the only state in the country served 100 percent by public electric utilities. Through the decades, the state’s public utilities have planned, invested and built the infrastructure and electric generation resources to adequately serve their respective customer-owners. It’s a system that has worked extremely well and continues to work well even as the industry has gone through significant changes over the past decade.

Bills introduced last year in the Nebraska Legislature took aim to erode the state’s public power system

– one that has successfully delivered reliable and economical electricity to customers for decades. Although those bills were indefinitely postponed at the committee level, it is anticipated more bills could target Nebraska’s public power system in future legislative sessions.

Recently, I shared information with several Nebraska state senators about the state’s unique public power system and public power in general, including the importance of preserving that system for the benefit of customers. Here are a few facts regarding Nebraska’s public power system from the U.S. Energy Information Administration:

- Nebraska’s electric rates are extremely competitive regionally and nationally, ranking among the lowest rates by state in the nation.
- Compared to the 16 states that offer retail choice, Nebraska’s average retail price is lower than all of them and significantly lower in most cases.
- Nebraska ranks third nationally in reliability (average power outage in minutes).
- On average, the state’s electric homeowners spend just \$3.53 per day for electricity.

It’s easy to take Nebraska’s unique public power system for granted as it has worked so well for

From the Executive Director



By Bob Poehling

EPA repeals clean power plan

Environmental groups prepare to challenge

The head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed a new rule in October that overrides former President Barack Obama’s proposed Clean Power Plan.

The controversial plan was proposed by Obama in 2015 and sought to limit carbon emissions from existing coal-fired power plants.

Scott Pruitt, administrator of the EPA, claimed the plan was an example of federal overreach by essentially picking energy resource winners and losers. Repealing the plan was one of the primary platforms of President Donald Trump’s presidential campaign.

The plan called for the U.S. to cut carbon dioxide emissions to 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Each state was required to meet specific reduction targets and allowed for each state to decide how to achieve reductions. The U.S. Supreme Court put the plan on hold in 2016 after legal challenges by industry and more than two dozen states.

Pruitt’s rule will not become final for months and then is expected to be challenged in courts by environmental groups.

See ‘PUBLIC POWER’ on page 5

Committee to select annual award winners

An informal voluntary committee will be selecting the annual awards presented each year at the NMPP Energy Annual Conference in March.

Each year the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool awards an individual with the Bob Arraj Innovative Service Award and the Municipal Energy

Agency of Nebraska awards an individual with the Rudy Hultgren Dedicated Service Award. Along with these individual awards, community Project of the Year awards are also announced.

The committee, consisting of recent award winners, will select among award nominations

for each of the award categories. The awards selection committee members are:

- Randy Woldt, **Wisner**, Neb.
- Chris Anderson, **Central City**, Neb.
- Pat Davison, **Imperial**, Neb.
- Tom Ourada, **Crete**, Neb.
- Doug Goracke, **Tecumseh**, Neb.
- Larry Brittenham, **Superior**, Neb.
- Bob Lockmon, **Stuart**, Neb.,
- Mike Varney, **Torrington**, Wyo.

An email including information about the awards and an application form will be sent in December to mayors, city clerks and utility superintendents of NMPP member communities requesting award nominations and further explaining the awards.

It is highly encouraged to consider nominating individuals and/or community projects you feel worthy of these awards so they may be recognized by their peers and community.

If you have any questions, contact Carol Brehm at cbrehm@nmppenergy.org.

Mark your calendars!
NMPP Energy Annual Conference
March 26-28, 2018
in Lincoln, Neb.
Details coming soon!

nmpp **ENERGY** Staff news

Vuong Nguyen recently joined the NMPP Energy team as database administrator, assigned to the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN).

Nguyen has a bachelor's degree in actuarial science and mathematics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

He has 20 years of experience working with and developing databases, most recently at Sandhills Publishing in Lincoln.

With the addition of the database administrator position, Scott Hartz was recently named business systems administrator for MEAN. He previously served as business performance and systems analyst for MEAN.



LIHEAP application season now under way

Many states around the country began accepting LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) applications for the elderly and disabled starting Oct. 1. General applications in many states began Nov. 1, and some states start Dec. 1.

Requirements for applying may be different from state to state, but in general, requirements include a copy of Social Security cards for all members of the household, a copy of their recent heating bill as well as a recent electric bill. All household members also need proof of gross income for the past three months, the past calendar year, or their most recent federal income tax return.

With colder temperatures setting in, now is a good time for utilities to let customers know of available LIHEAP assistance.

To find information about application dates, local LIHEAP contact information and other information about LIHEAP in your area check the LIHEAP Clearinghouse website at liheapch.acf.hhs.gov.

Maintenance, opportunities mark ‘shoulder months’

As summer turns to fall, the energy markets transition also. Around the industry spring and fall months are known as “shoulder months” or “outage seasons.” For most electric utilities summer or winter is when electric loads are at their peak, and spring and fall is when loads are at their lowest point of the year.

Energy Dispatch Notes



By Adam Schieffer

As summer transitions into fall, summer heat gives way to windy, cooler weather, resulting in a decrease of overall electric demand and load but increase in wind generation. This combination provides a good time for thermal generators, such as coal-fired baseload power plants, to schedule time to go offline

for maintenance and upgrades. These are referred to as scheduled outages and are typically scheduled for these shoulder months.

Generators aren’t the only equipment that need periodic maintenance. Transmission equipment also needs maintenance and upgrades, and utility transmission owners use the shoulder months to schedule outages to transmission equipment. This can result in opportunities for energy dispatchers at the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN) to fulfill load requirements for MEAN customer-owners with cheaper power produced in a market that has wind resources outputting more energy than that market needs.

Another outage season market opportunity MEAN’s dispatchers capitalize on to save money is severe weather fluctuations such as temperature swings associated with cold snaps and

winter storms.

Cold weather can lead to increased electric demand and frozen rain can coat transmission lines and wind turbine blades, causing both to fail. The combination of decreased output from thermal generators (remember outage season), increased demand, decreased transmission capabilities and sudden decrease in wind generation can cause prices to spike in a market. MEAN’s dispatchers use these opportunities to move power from markets experiencing lower prices to loads in markets with higher prices from the increased demand and weather-caused transmission outages. The revenue from these opportunities ultimately helps keep rates as low as possible for MEAN customer-owners.

* * *

Adam Schieffer is dispatch supervisor for the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska.

Talking energy efficiency in Colorado...



NMPP Energy photo

The Nebraska Municipal Power Pool’s Andrew Ross, far left, moderates a panel during the 10th Annual Rocky Mountain Utility Efficiency Exchange Conference in Aspen, Colo., in October. The conference focused on developing, managing, promoting and improving efficiency measures and gaining buy-in from customers, utilities, vendors and regulators.

Bayard fire department recognized for community preparedness efforts

Nebraska Lt. Governor Mike Foley in September presented the City of Bayard (Neb.) Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department and Department Chief Mike Harimon with the Local Hero Award, which recognizes extraordinary service and leadership in helping residents following the June 2017 tornado which hit the community.



Member News

The award was presented along with several other awards as part of the Lt. Governor's "Be Prepared" Awards, which recognize volunteers and community organizations for excellence in emergency preparedness and disaster response. Joining Lt. Gov. Foley in presenting the awards were Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Assistant Director Bryan Tuma and Nebraska Citizen Corps (NCC) Coordinator Ryan Lowry.

Fort Morgan holds open house, community barbeque

The City of Fort Morgan, Colo., celebrated its Utilities Week during the first week of October by holding its annual open house and community barbeque. The event was used to recognize the value provided by the municipality's utilities, which include electric, natural gas, water, sewer and trash services.



Courtesy photo

Nebraska Lt. Gov. Mike Foley honors the City of Bayard, Neb., Volunteer Fire Department for its community preparedness in response to a tornado hitting the community in June.

Several local businesses donated supplies to make the event possible. City utility employees help set up the event, cook and serve the food and staff various informational displays.

The community has enjoyed the benefits of being served by a consumer-owned utility system for many years, providing a voice in how their utilities operate, the city stated in a news release.

"Thanks to both the foresight of a number of the city's early leaders and employees over the years who have worked diligently to keep the lights on, the water running, homes and businesses heated by natural gas, trash picked up and the sewer system flowing, the city has truly benefited from the ownership of its own utilities," stated the news release.

Indianola Municipal Utilities hires general manager

Herbert (Tom) Gaffigan Jr. will be the next general manager of Indianola (Iowa) Municipal Utilities (IMU) pending the finalization



Courtesy photo

The City of Fort Morgan, Colo., celebrates Utilities Week each October with a community barbeque.

of his contract, the Des Moines Register recently reported. Adam Voigts, chair of the IMU Board of Trustees, said Gaffigan planned to start at IMU on Oct. 23.

Gaffigan previously served as general manager of Maquoketa (Iowa) Municipal Electrical Utility since 2014. Prior to that, he served as chief executive officer at Harlan (Iowa) Municipal Utilities from 2001 to 2012.

MEAN provides eLearning through online service

Litmos site will be used for training, education and communication

The Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN) Services Committee recently approved a program that provides MEAN long-term total requirements participants (Service Schedule M and K) with added online educational and training opportunities as well as a communications outlet.

The Litmos learning management system will be used to provide online training content in several areas. During the first year and upon recommendation by the Services Committee, MEAN will purchase five training courses for each SSM and SSK participant community. The courses are up-to-date and relevant and includes Microsoft Office, OSHA health and safety training, leadership management, human resources and

Setting up your Litmos eLearning account

- **Step 1:** Each MEAN participant community is required to provide an email address to Brittany Millard (bmillard@nmppenergy.org) that will be used for participating staff when logging onto the site.
- **Step 2:** An email confirmation will be sent from "MEAN system@litmos.com" (be careful not to mistake it for spam.)
- **Step 3:** After clicking the indicated link, confirm the information in Section 1 and complete only Section 3, which asks for the single password your community will use to access the site. Note your community name will appear in the first and last name sections—that's OK. Click "continue".
- **Step 4:** To initiate the welcome video either click on the "Course Library" or "Not Started" tab.

customer service.

The courses can be viewed by one person at a computer or in a larger group setting.

Staff assigned to MEAN has the capability to upload custom text and video content for education and training. Registered communities will automatically be notified of custom-made training and news items that have been made available. Possible news items may include updates and notices regarding board

meetings and announcements or news on various events.

To date 27 percent of MEAN's SSM and SSK participant communities have logged onto the system. MEAN's goal is to have as many eligible participant communities signed up to take advantage of this site and the opportunities it can offer.

If you have any questions, please contact Carol Brehm at (800) 234-2595.

Public power

Continued from page 1

so long. It continues to provide competitive rates, local control, transparency through public meetings, high reliability and customer responsiveness.

We must remain vigilant in protecting Nebraska's public power system. This includes ongoing education to inform citizens of the benefits of public power. Those education efforts could include talking to local

groups, businesses and your local state senator about the value of your local public utility. I am also available to come and share information to local groups regarding Nebraska's public power system. The Nebraska Power Association (www.nepower.org) and the American Public Power Association (www.publicpower.org) has resources available for use as well.

The next time you flip on a light switch, turn on your television or coffee maker, take just a second to acknowledge the foresight of those earlier Nebraskans that supported a system that works for its customer owners. Then, turn your attention to the task of protecting it by staying vigilant against those who seek to undermine the state's public power system and the benefits it provides.



When it comes to insurance, LARM knows cities

When Fred Wiebelhaus or Dave Bos visit the cities and villages who are members of the League Association of Risk Management (LARM) pool, they can identify with their problems and concerns. Both were police officers before working in Loss Control and Field Adjusting for LARM and both understand the unique needs of a municipality.

“Our staff’s knowledge about cities and villages makes us stand out from the crowd as insurance providers,” said Mike Nolan, LARM executive director who also served as a city administrator for 28 years. “Clerks, city managers and board members know that LARM staff understand how a power outage from a wind storm or a disruption in a water plant can affect a city’s operation. We’re here to help them get operating again as soon as possible.”

LARM was formed as a result of a tight insurance market in the mid-1980’s. Premiums were high enough that a handful of cities decided to form an insurance pool to insure themselves in order to save money and obtain insurance services tailored to their needs. Today, 165 members across the state are still saving money and enjoying the training, loss control tips and excellent customer service that comes with belonging to LARM.

“We currently have over \$9 million in surplus dollars and are growing. We look for opportunities to bid for

insurance coverage for government entities across Nebraska because we know we can save them money and provide valuable service including up-to-date information about issues like workers compensation, special events, and state regulations,” Nolan said.

LARM is governed by a board made up of the members. Recently, the LARM board voted to provide \$500 grants to members who submit an idea for a safety item they could use. LARM also maintains a speaking bureau on topics related to claims, open meetings law, leadership and much more.

“We are in the business of protecting the assets of Nebraska cities and villages so they can grow and prosper. We can do that better than other insurance providers because we know cities,” Nolan said.

For more information about LARM go to www.larmpool.org or call 402-742-2604.



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

Employment

Utilities Superintendent

Due to the planned retirement of the current utility superintendent, the Board of Public Works/**Falls City** (Neb.) **Utilities** (FCU) is accepting application for the position of utilities superintendent. Minimum qualifications include a high school diploma or equivalent and a valid driver’s license. Bachelors or associates degree preferred, but not required. Five years related experience in utility maintenance and/or construction, to include three years in a supervisory position. Nebraska Grade 2 water and Class III wastewater operator licenses preferred. Applicant must be highly motivated with a great work ethic. The utility superintendent has direct responsibility for the safe, reliable and efficient delivery of electric, natural gas, water and wastewater services to

the community of Falls City, Neb., and FCU service areas. FCU is governed by a five-member Board of Public Works appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the Falls City City Council for staggered five-year terms. FCU employs 33 staff members working in utility operations, consisting of electric generation and distribution, natural gas distribution, water treatment and distribution and wastewater collection. Reporting to the Board of Public Works, the FCU Utility Superintendent is responsible for all aspects of FCU operations.

Starting salary is negotiable. Excellent employee health insurance, six percent pension match, and other excellent benefits. The position will remain open until filled. A more detailed job description and applications are available on the City’s website or at the City Office (2307 Barada Street). Applications can be submitted on the

city’s website, emailed to g.jorn@fallscityne.us, mailed to 2307 Barada Street, Falls City, Nebraska 68355, or submitted in person at the City Office.

Wastewater Plant Operator

The City of **Fairbury**, Neb., seeks applicants for a wastewater plant operator. The position will aid in the operation of the treatment plant, assist in plant maintenance, perform sampling activities and perform other duties as necessary. Position will also assist the water department with miscellaneous duties regarding water/wastewater operations. The applicant must be mechanically inclined to conduct routine and special maintenance as well as have the ability to operate heavy machinery. Ability to read and understand mechanical plans a must. Ability to utilize computers and technical tools

See ‘EMPLOYMENT’ on page 8

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 of Services

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

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

Community/Utility

EnergySolutions, Inc. (energysolutions-inc.com).....	Omaha, Neb.
Fairbanks Morse Engine (Fairbanksengine.com).....	Beloit, Wis.
Hometown Connections, LLC (Hometownconnections.com).....	Lakewood, Colo.
Hubbell Power Systems (Hubbellpowersystems.com).....	Bellevue, Neb.
Foundation for Educational Services (fes.org).....	Lincoln, Neb.
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

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.
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.
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 (spiegelmcd.com).....	Washington, D.C.

Telecommunication

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



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Employment Opportunities (cont.)

required. Applicant must be able to respond to emergencies. Must be able to conduct weekend checks of the treatment plant on a rotating basis. Applicant must be able to obtain a Class 'A' CDL license. It is a condition of employment that the individual holding this position possess a current Nebraska Wastewater Class 3 license or obtain such within two years of employment. Finalists must possess a valid driver's license with acceptable driving history. Post-Offer Employment Testing (POET), including but not limited, to drug screening, criminal background check and a physical capacity profile will be required. Position will remain open until filled. Candidates must submit a resume and completed job application to Collin Bielser, City Administrator, P.O. Box 554, Fairbury, NE 68352. A job application form is available at City Hall or at www.fairburyne.org. Please contact Waste-

water Plant Superintendent Dennis McAtee at (402) 729-2026 for additional information and a detailed job description. The City of Fairbury is an EOE.

Electric Department

The City of **Neligh**, Neb., is accepting applications for the electrical department. The job is a full-time position and includes but is not limited to working with high voltage electricity, operating bucket trucks and digger derricks, trencher, dump truck, loader and backhoe. Must have a Class B CDL or be willing to obtain within three months. City requires on-call rotation and physical ability to work for extended periods in all types of weather. Applicants must be willing to learn operation of electrical generation units and apparatus. Knowledge of electric generation beneficial. City requires the applicant to be willing

to work in other departments if necessary. Wages dependent upon qualifications and prior experience. City has an excellent benefit package with health and life insurance, retirement, vacation, sick and personal leave and paid holidays. Successful applicant must pass a pre-employment drug test. Position open until filled. Applications may be picked up at the City office at 202 Main Street or sent electronically by emailing dana@neligh.org. With questions call the City office at 402-887-4066. The City of Neligh is an EOE.

Upcoming Meetings

- Nov. 15** — ACE Board
- Nov. 15** — MEAN Committees
- Nov. 16** — MEAN Board/Mgmt. Committee
- Dec. 13** — MEAN Committees
- Dec. 14** — NPGA Board

For descriptions of all employment opportunities go to www.nmppenergy.org.

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

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