

Innovation and leadership position MRES for success during the energy transition

Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), a joint action agency (JAA) of 61 municipally owned electric utilities located in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota, has been busy making things better for its member communities.

With the construction of two solar projects (including a November 6 groundbreaking in Brookings, South Dakota), transmission planning work, and a focus on the changing nature of power generation, MRES is staying ahead of the curve on meeting members' power needs.

MMUA sat down with Tim Blodgett, MRES' Vice President of Member Services and Communications, to learn more about the important work MRES has been up to.



MRES leaders attended the groundbreaking event in Brookings. From left: MRES Senior Resource Engineer Nick Fanning, Brookings Deputy Mayor Nick Wendell, MRES President and CEO Matt Schull, Brookings Municipal Utilities Board Vice President Doug Carruthers, BMU General Manager Steve Meyer, ALP (Minnesota) Utilities General Manager Ted Cash and Sioux Center (Iowa) Municipal Utilities Utility Manager Murray Hulstein participated in the Brookings Solar Project's ceremonial groundbreaking. Meyer, Cash, and Hulstein also serve on the MRES board of directors, and Cash is secretary of the Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (WMMPA) board of directors.

Brookings Solar

The Brookings Solar Project consists of 5 megawatts (MW) of solar generation, enough

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The 2024 elections – a gift that keeps on giving

By Kent Sulem

With the calendar reading December, the ballots counted (and in two races, recounted), canvassed, and certified to the Secretary of State, most people assume the 2024 elections are finally behind us.

They would be wrong. While Minnesota House leaders continue preparing for a legislative session led by an evenly divided 67-67 membership, this may not be the final makeup of the 2025 legislature.

As reported in the last issue of *The Resource*, at the end of election night, two races appeared to fall within the margins for a recount paid for by the State. In District 14B, challenger Susan Ek appeared to have lost the race to incumbent Dan Wolgamott by a mere 28 votes. However, after correcting a problem discovered with the tabulating of some mailed-in ballots, the margin grew to a 191-vote difference,

which removed the option for a state-funded recount. However, Sherburne County agreed to pay for a recount due to the abnormalities in counting and reporting certain ballots. The recount confirmed the original tally, allowing Rep. Wolgamott to claim victory.

Over in District 54A, however, the recount has proven to be just one step in the process of determining a winner. On election night, Rep. Brad Tabke appeared to have hung on to his seat by the slimmest of margins, a 14-vote lead (up from the 13 votes first reported) over the total received by challenger Aaron Paul. This spread falls within the margins for a state-funded recount, and Mr. Paul requested one. The recount actually found an additional vote for Rep. Tabke, briefly increasing the margin of victory to 15 votes. However, a successful challenge to a ballot cast for Rep. Tabke returned

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Update on proposed OSHA Emergency Response Rules

By Kent Sulem

On November 12, 2024, OSHA held the first of several day-long hearings to get input on the proposed new Emergency Response rules.

The final hearing was held on December 4, 2024. While not a direct concern to municipal utilities, a few individuals in member communities flagged it as an issue of which to be aware, so MMUA tuned in to the broadcast of the first hearing. It was not feasible to tune in each day.

The November 12 hearing split time between supporters and opponents, and neither side held back on sharing their thoughts. The supporters of the proposed OSHA rule were primarily fire chiefs and associations representing fire chiefs. Most appeared to speak for larger communities and career firefighters, although their testimony provided broad support for the rules as presented, and

they stressed the need to focus on safety over costs. They also stressed that the current rules are out of date in terms of new gear and equipment and the types of risks being faced.

Opposition to the new rule came from volunteer firefighters and their associations. They testified to the adverse impact the rules would have on small and often rural departments. The primary concern is that the costs and time commitment required to comply with the proposed new safety standards would not be feasible for these small departments nor for the communities they serve. Concern has also been expressed that the new rules would be a disincentive toward recruiting new volunteer firefighters. If implemented, those who testified say small, volunteer fire departments may be forced to shut down due to their inability to satisfy the proposed rules. This would decrease

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Clarification on battery rebates and eligibility for net metering

By Bill Black

In 2024, the Minnesota Legislature charged the Department of Commerce with awarding up to \$3 million in grants by July 2027 for energy storage system installations by non-Xcel customers who have solar systems.

As it did with the Solar for Schools program, Commerce has drafted, in consultation with MMUA and MREA, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that a grant recipient and their electric utility must both sign off as part of the grant process. One point in the MOU assures the grantee that the battery

addition will not disqualify them from continuing to receive the utility's net metering rate—if they are receiving it—so long as the battery will not export electricity to the utility system.

While seemingly straightforward as explained here, there is extraneous language used within this provision in the MOU about measuring system size that may seem confusing to many. The unnecessary extra wording stems from a Public Utilities Commission proceeding that, fortunately, went in favor of utilities. Unfortunately, the agreed language is only as

clear as MMUA could convince Commerce to make it, given apparent outside pressures on Commerce. However, Commerce did agree to add one clarifying sentence at the end of the MOU to encapsulate the significant point. It says, "When configured in this manner, an addition of a battery will not impact eligibility for net-metering." MMUA and MREA are advising their member utilities and co-ops that they can be comfortable with this point and need not withhold signing the MOU because of it.



Tommy Flores joins MMUA

Tommy Flores has joined MMUA as a Regional Safety Coordinator and JTS Instructor in the northeast region.

Tommy is excited to share his knowledge and experience with MMUA's members, and to help them work well and get home safely every day.

Tommy began his career by doing tree trimming. With the goal of becoming a lineworker, he later entered an apprenticeship program through the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Upon graduation in 2006, he worked for a utility doing barehand work, and in 2014 he took a position doing helicopter linework. In

that role, he did energized work and maintenance work, learning to navigate both OSHA and Federal Aviation Administration safety rules. This experience taught him the importance of a strong safety culture.

Tommy's most recent position was with Marshall Municipal Utilities in Marshall, Minnesota. He joined the utility in 2018 and enjoyed drawing upon his previous experiences as a lineworker to contribute to his teams. Tommy worked with Marshall's industrial customers and learned a lot about the system's substations and system. He also began sharing his knowledge with others at MMUA schools held at the



Marshall training center and elsewhere.

Tommy lives in Marshall with his wife, Becca, and children Piper, Dawson, and Desmond. In his free time, Tommy likes spending time outdoors with his family and going scuba diving. Welcome to MMUA, Tommy!

OSHA emergency response rules

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safety by increasing response times. Without the smaller volunteer firefighting and first responder units, help would have to come from the nearest available community. That could be more than an hour away.

OSHA has already received nearly 4,300 comments on the

proposed rules but has elected to hold a second open comment period from December 5, 2024, through January 17, 2025. Firefighters and their departments are asked to be specific about concerns and provide examples when possible. A final decision on the proposed new emergency

response rules will be made after the second open comment period closes.

Further information, including access to OSHA's comment portal for this docket, #2007-0073, can be found at: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/OSHA-2007-0073>.

We make house calls

In August 2021, I stood on that Cragun's podium, looked squarely at the MMUA faithful in the audience, and vowed to visit every member town within a year or so of installing my coffee mug on what had been Jack Kegel's desk.

I meant it. It seems to me that you should be able to depend on the leader of your association to show up, both at your front door and at whatever other doors are necessary to get the job done for you.

It's now been a little more than three years since that day. I have not been to every town yet, but I'm working on it. (When I was a kid my dad always said my eyes were bigger than my stomach as we moved through the line at potlucks too. Biting off more than I can chew goes way back.) So in 2025 I'll be redoubling my efforts to hit the highway in the Honda and make more house calls. I truly enjoy seeing MMUA communities, putting eyes on your utility operations, visiting with your staff and commissioners—and learning more about how this association can be useful to you. “You can't lead from behind,” as the saying goes.

House calls go way back at MMUA. For nearly 30 years, MMUA has brought as much programming as possible directly to your door. Things like our apprenticeship program, safety program, job training modules, and more, are all designed to be at their best when we are based in your utility,

working side by side with your team, and helping you make real progress on real work. Nobody has yet figured out a way to do mutual aid recovery without showing up in person either. Mike Willetts and the team are constantly looking for ways to improve what we bring on the technical side of the operation, and our list of onsite, on-demand technical and safety services grows every year.

Did you know there's more? In addition to being at your utility delivering our technical and safety offerings—and the occasional afternoons when a member of the MMUA team is in town for a casual chat—we have a number of other valuable “house call” services you may find beneficial as a member. Let me tell you about them.

1. Free training for your customers' workers and kudos for you. I have mentioned in the past that MMUA is the recipient of a 2024–25 Susan Harwood Training Grant from OSHA. Through this program, we can offer an interesting and helpful session on chemical safety and hazard communication for employees in your town. (Check out the article on page 8 for more details.)

To meet the requirements of the grant, we have to train community employees, not just utility employees, so bring 'em in. The more, the merrier. It doesn't matter if they work

in small manufacturing, put vehicles through the car wash, stock grocery shelves, run a daycare, or deal with hair dye at the salon. This training is for them. There's an extra hour of training for their supervisors as well. In towns where there is need, we will have materials in Spanish.

The Susan Harwood grant is aimed at worker education, so the curriculum that will be followed has to be approved by OSHA. However, MMUA enjoys multi-tasking. So we plan to also take a few minutes as we introduce ourselves to provide the members of your community with interesting information about the benefits of having a hometown utility. It's part of our strategic goal of helping preserve local control by educating our communities about the value of your work.

What's in it for you? Your employees will get the training as well, and in front of your customers, your utility will be given all the credit for bringing the training to town. It's valued at \$500, and it will be free to them. All we ask of you is some help in inviting local businesses to participate and pointing us to a space where the training can take place. Should you feel like providing some coffee and crumpets (this is Minnesota after all), that would be a bonus.

Interested? Contact your safety

From My Desk to Yours

Karleen Kos
MMUA CEO



coordinator, Mike Willetts, or Blaine Chaulklin.

2. Free speaker for your events. When I was around four years old, I recited something from the second chapter of Luke at the Christmas Eve children's pageant, and I've been speaking in public ever since. They made you work for your hard candy and shiny apples down at the Lutheran church in those days.

Today, I am available and very willing to come to your community and provide content for your customer event, the Rotary Club luncheon, or the Ladies' Aid Society. As a native Minnesotan and a bit of a history buff, I love researching our communities and tailoring a talk about the benefits of the hometown utilities model for each town. Early in December I did that in Austin—an easy one for me since my parents live there—and we had a great time. General manager Mark Nibaur remarked afterward, “You should do this in other towns,” and I thought, “He's right.”

The point of this is strategic for you and for MMUA. The Association is keen to carry messages and provide unbiased information your ratepayers may only be able to “hear” from an outside entity. The data show that when people understand and appreciate their utility, they are less susceptible to selling it. So, if you would like a speaker for a community event, let us know. And don't worry. If you just can't abide my lame jokes, I can delegate.

3. Leadership consulting services. In addition to all the safety and technical consulting services MMUA has offered over the years, MMUA has rolled out additional assistance recently.

These are fee-based contracts, and they are tailored to your needs.

One example is strategic and operational planning assistance. I am currently working with a utility that has done strategic work in the past, but the completed plans have usually ended up in a file and the outcome has felt irrelevant. Late last summer, the utility's staff and their commission were about to embark on a new CapX plan when they got into a discussion regarding costs and how sure they were—or were not—about whether their plans would make sense over time. So MMUA is customizing a process for them that will gather data from stakeholders (ratepayers, staff, commission, and industry sources) so that a clear strategic direction can be discerned, obstacles identified, and mitigations contemplated proactively. With the strategic direction clarified and documented, we'll then develop an operating plan and accountability system to ensure relevance and continuous adjustment.

Elsewhere in this issue of *The Resource* you will find information about our new DUEL™ leadership development program for municipal utilities professionals. Within that set of training courses for individual leaders, we will offer several modules that can be adapted to help your entire team improve communication and solve problems. These modules include courses on constructive behaviors for working together, dealing with difficult situations, driving effectiveness and productivity, problem solving—and others. As with the strategic planning, these offerings will be tailored to your needs, and we will hold the sessions in your community.

Around a year ago I mentioned in this column that I was willing to visit with your commission or council any time that might be of value to you. That offer remains open as well. As much as I love MMUA's new office space, I look forward to seeing yours someday soon.

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to power 1,100 homes in the Brookings area. Brookings Solar is a homegrown project. “MRES kicked it off internally; it was our boards —MRES and WMMPA— that approved it,” says Tim.

Through the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, MRES is able to build Brookings Solar without a private partner. “With elective pay, we now have the same access to tax credits as the private sector,” says Tim. “With the Brookings Solar project, we will build it, we will own it, and we will get the tax credit for it.”

On this work, Tim discussed the importance of having a great project partner, in this case, Brookings Municipal Utilities. “A lot of it was the ability to facilitate the capacity needs of the utility themselves, the ability to get into their substation. We don’t want to have a negative impact on the utility or the member’s customers,” says Tim. “It takes a larger member to support a project of this size.”

Brookings Solar, as well as the in-progress Marshall Solar Plus project, will be completely situated behind the meter, meaning they don’t need to be on the transmission grid. This has helped MRES bring these projects online faster and more efficiently.

“The electrons from this project will stay on our members’ distribution system. All of our member utilities benefit through their indirect ownership of the project,” says Tim.

MRES celebrated groundbreaking for the Brookings project on November 6. “On the day of the groundbreaking, we had a great celebration and good weather. We had roughly 50 folks there representing the community, the county, and interested parties including state delegates from South Dakota and even staffers from our federal delegation!” says Tim.

The next step for the project is to award the project construction contracts. After that, site grading will occur, with construction commencing early in 2025. The goal right now is to commission in December of 2025. “As long as there are no disruptions to the supply chain, this is a fairly typical timeline for us,” says Tim.

Brookings is also being built with the possibility of expansion in mind. “We are using about half of the land that we purchased for this project. That is intentional, so we do have future growth capabilities,” Tim says. “Nothing is planned right now; we frequently go through our IRP (Integrated Resource Plan) process, factoring in members’ load growth and our current and future power supply resources.”

Marshall Solar Plus

Sixty miles east of Brookings, construction on MRES’ Marshall Solar Plus project in Marshall,



Marshall’s Solar Plus solar farm. The farm is located in the north part of the city near Marshall’s City Wastewater Plant.

Minnesota, has already been completed. “This is our first entry into battery storage,” says Tim. The project includes a 5 MW battery storage facility coupled with 10 MW of solar generation.

The plant is currently going through the testing process. “Right now, we are working on feeding energy back into the system. We are also conditioning the batteries through minimal charging,” says Tim. “We are

getting it ready to produce and store at full capacity. It should be fully producing after the first of the year. We will probably have a ribbon cutting sometime in the spring.”

Because Marshall Solar Plus commenced before passage of the Inflation Reduction Act in 2022, the project is owned by Marshall Solar Plus LLC, whose parent company is US Solar. “We will purchase it upon completion

from the private company that currently owns it, and we will transition to getting the tax credit,” says Tim.

Transmission expansions

MRES has also been an active participant in transmission expansions that are occurring across the region. “We are part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) Tranche

1 buildout; expansion out of our Alex substation is part of that,” says Tim. “We are the majority owner of the Big Stone to Alexandria transmission project. We are also owners in the second circuit of CapX Fargo to Minneapolis, and others as well.”

These transmission expansions are key to being able to get renewable resources out to the customers that need them. Landowners, however, sometimes are

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MRES President and CEO Matthew Schull speaks at the groundbreaking for the Brookings Solar Project on November 6.



Scott Hain (left), general manager of Worthington Public Utilities, 2nd vice chair of the MRES Board and president of WMMPA, and Vernell Roberts (right), general manager of Detroit Lakes Public Utilities, chair of the MRES Board, and director on the WMMPA Board, tour the Marshall Solar Plus project.

opposed to new transmission lines in their neighborhood. “It’s been mixed, no one wants it in their backyard,” notes Tim. “We are trying to be sensitive to impacts, as most of these are running through rural areas. We try to have the least amount of impact on people. There’s opposition to a certain extent, but also an understanding of the need. There is a knowledge of needing more transmission.”

Despite the concerns about transmission siting and reluctant acceptance of it in many cases, there are financial benefits for citizens located near transmission. “They all have some level of tax benefit locally for individuals within that footprint,” says Tim. “We hear about the negative, but we don’t always hear about the positive. Any property impacted receives payments that go to landowners. It can be one-time or on-

going payments for transmission.”

New leadership, same strategic vision

Matthew Schull joined MRES as president and CEO in 2023, replacing longtime incumbent Tom Heller, who led the organization for more than 30 years. Schull’s previous role was as Chief Operating Officer of ElectriCities in Raleigh, North Carolina. The organization is

a nonprofit membership organization of municipally owned electric utilities with a mission, programs, and services similar to MRES.

MRES works to stay laser focused on the needs of its member communities. “We have a strategic plan that we develop every year, and we are very proud of that,” Tim says. “We continue to advance the goals we have in place. The changing landscape

of generation work is driving our strategies.”

Part of the changing nature of generation is MRES’ energy strategy. “We want to be environmentally sensitive, so we take the social and the economic impacts into account for all of our projects,” Tim shares. “We are focused on staying the course and bringing the most reliable and affordable power to our membership.”

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The state needs to extend the Energy Assistance program

(This editorial was originally published in the Star Tribune on December 8, 2024.)

By Karleen Kos, Annie Levenson-Falk, Darrick Moe and Lori Schultz



Current assistance falls short of the need, and it's not available at all during summer months.

Good news for many who struggle to cover winter energy expenses: Minnesota's Energy Assistance program is open for the season and providing heating assistance to Minnesota households, as it has for more than 40 years. Unfortunately, available assistance will fall far short of the need — and it's not available at all during the summer, when households are most likely to face utility shut-offs. That's why we are calling on the state of Minnesota to expand the program.

The federally funded Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program provides vital relief during the winter months, helping families and individuals manage heating costs so they

can stay safe and warm.

Roughly 500,000 Minnesota households are eligible for Energy Assistance, but only about a quarter of those households end up receiving assistance. Meanwhile, people have fallen further behind on their energy bills in recent years. Facing compounding pressures from inflation, the cost of housing and lingering effects of the pandemic, Minnesotans are now more than \$100 million past-due to their utilities.

The consequences are real. More Minnesotans have had their gas or electric service shut off this year than any time in at least a decade. The majority of these shut-offs occur between June and September — after the Cold Weather Rule protections end, and when Energy Assistance is not available to help.

As our summers become hotter and more unpredictable, our

state's focus solely on heating leaves a dangerous gap. The absence of cooling assistance leaves thousands of Minnesotans — elderly people, young children and those with pre-existing medical conditions — exposed to severe health risks. This is more than an inconvenience; it is a public health issue.

According to the National Weather Service, extreme heat is now the deadliest weather-related hazard in the United States, claiming more lives annually than hurricanes, floods or tornadoes. This fact alone should spur urgent legislative action. Minnesota has already felt the effects of this trend, with summer temperatures hitting record highs and heat waves becoming more frequent and intense.

For too many families, this situation presents an impossible choice. Many have to go without

food or medicine or take out predatory payday loans to keep the lights on.

Most states already provide Energy Assistance in the summer months — including our Midwest neighbors in North Dakota and Nebraska. It's time for Minnesota to join their ranks.

That's why our organizations are working together to ask the Minnesota Legislature to provide additional funding for Energy Assistance and to keep the program open through the summer. We're joined by more than a dozen utility companies and advocates for various Minnesota communities. Our diverse groups represent a broad spectrum of Minnesotans, but we all agree: Everyone should have access to a safe, comfortable home year-round.

The Energy Assistance program has provided crucial

support to Minnesotans for more than 40 years. The state should act now to protect its residents.

In the meantime, to find out more about Energy Assistance and apply, visit mn.gov/energy-assistance.

Karleen Kos is the chief executive officer of the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association, a not-for-profit organization representing hometown utilities and their ratepayers; Annie Levenson-Falk is the executive director of the Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota, a nonprofit advocate for the state's utility consumers; Lori Schultz is the executive director of MinnCAP, the membership organization for Minnesota's network of 24 Community Action Agencies; Darrick Moe is president and CEO of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association, a not-for-profit trade association serving Minnesota's electric cooperatives.

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The 2024 elections

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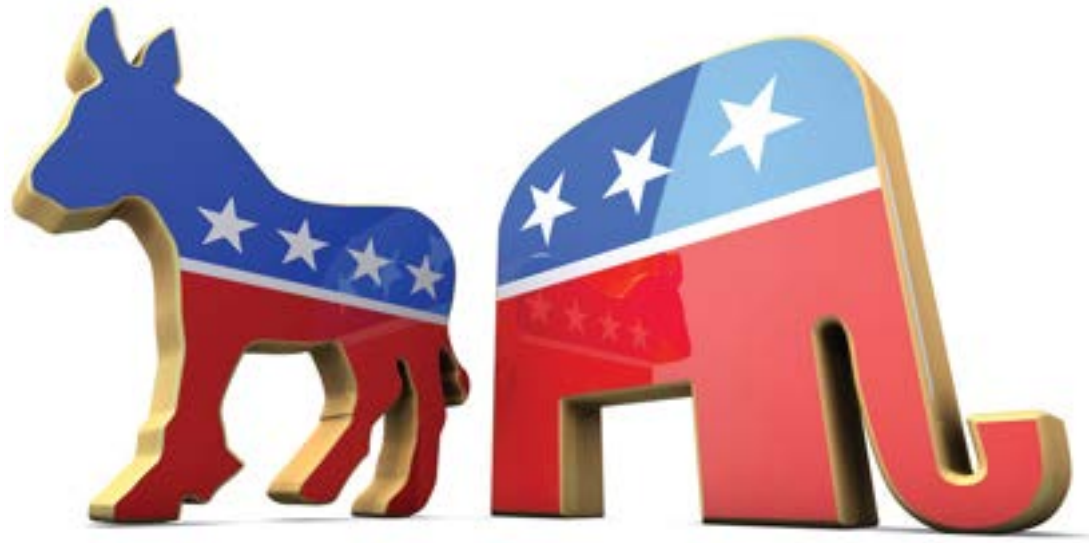
the official outcome to a 14-vote difference.

Although the recount in District 54A is complete, things remain unsettled. During the recount, it was also discovered that 21 mailed-in ballots, 20 uncontested ballots from one precinct and one contested ballot from a different precinct, had been documented as having been received but never tabulated. The working theory is that the election judges failed to remove the ballots from their privacy envelopes before the envelopes were discarded. An independent investigation by the city attorney's office failed to locate the ballots, even after combing through rubbish at two landfills used by the City of Shakopee.

Given that the number of lost ballots exceeds the margin of victory, Mr. Paul has filed an election challenge with the courts. He is seeking an injunction against the Secretary of State granting an election certificate to Rep. Tabke, a declaration of vacancy in District 54A, and ultimately a new election within the district. If the injunction is

granted, and a special election is ordered, the House would convene on January 14, 2025, with a one-vote 67-66 Republican majority. Conceivably this means that Republicans would claim the Speaker of the House position and would control the makeup of House committees with the authority to assign more Republicans than DFL members to each committee. They would also be able to have only Republican chairpersons instead of co-chairs if this happened. However, such actions would draw sharp attacks from the DFL, as it would go against the committee structure agreed upon by DFL and Republican leaders while planning for the 67-67 tie. Under that agreement, each committee will be co-chaired by one member of the DFL and one Republican. Each committee will have 14 members, 7 from each party. A bill would require at least an 8-1 vote to pass out of committee.

House negotiators developed this sharing agreement in hopes of avoiding the political gaming that occurred in 1979, the only



other time the Minnesota House has been tied 67-67. However, the ability to seize control may be tempting. After all, should Rep. Tabke prevail in the special election, the House will return to a 67-67 tie vote, and motions to reconfigure leadership roles and committee structures will likely fail on a party-line vote. Should Mr. Paul prevail; the Republicans will gain a 68-66 majority and legitimate claim to control leadership and committees.

It is possible the judge will deny the injunction against issuing Rep. Tabke's election certificate. This will likely be met with an attempt by House

Republicans to refuse to seat him. If Rep. Tabke were to vote on such a motion, it would fail 67-67 and the plans for operating under a tied chamber would need to be followed if anything is to be done. If he were not to be allowed to vote, Republicans would again have a 67-66 majority, at least until the special election is completed. In other words, things are complicated, and there are too many "what ifs" to guess what the circumstances will be the day the legislature gavels in.

If the 54A situation is not enough drama, in District 40B, losing Republican candidate Paul Wickstrom has filed a law-

suit seeking to have the winning DFL candidate, Curtis Johnson, removed for failing to reside withing the district. On election night, Johnson prevailed by approximately 30 points in a reliable DFL district. However, his opponent argues that Johnson lives in Little Canada with his family, and not in the studio apartment Johnson claims is his legal residency while looking for a new family home in Roseville. Should Wickstrom prevail, the Republicans would have a 67-66 majority or possibly a 67-65 majority depending on where things stand in the District 54A legal proceedings. Thus, the final makeup of the House could be 67-67 tie, or a one or two seat Republican majority.

Over in the Senate, Senator Mitchell's trial on felony burglary charges is scheduled to begin January 27, 2025, but that could change. A felony conviction would likely lead to her expulsion from the Senate. A conviction or plea to a lesser charge would leave her future as a senator up to her peers. Because she is a sitting Senator, and with the DFL holding only a 1 vote majority, a motion to have her removed would fail 34-33 if Mitchell were to vote like she did in 2024 or fail for lack of a majority 33-33 tie vote. If a special election is held, and should a Republican win the special election, Republicans would seize control by a one vote majority, 34-33.

The bottom line is that it is distinctly possible the structure and makeup of the legislature when it is called to order on January 14, 2025, is not what will be in place by the time of mandatory adjournment on May 19, 2025. The only certainty is that the DFL trifecta is over. Who the Governor has to negotiate a budget with is not yet clear and could change partway through the negotiations.

MMUA is a non-partisan entity and will be prepared to work with any and all legislators of any party to achieve goals related to our mission. The MMUA Board of Directors is scheduled to vote on MMUA's legislative priorities at its meeting on December 10. These issues will be summarized in the next edition of *The Resource*.



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Grant funds MMUA in bringing valuable training to your customers

We are excited to announce MMUA has been awarded the 2024 Susan Harwood Training Grant.

This program's purpose is to train employees of small businesses in communities throughout the Midwest on chemical hazards and hazard communication. The training is valued at \$500 per person and is offered at no cost to employees and owners of businesses, with an added training segment for supervisors. These training sessions will be scheduled through September 2025.

Along with the training, there is an added advantage for MMUA member communities. In a short separate segment, our team will showcase the value of hometown utilities, helping participants better understand the value of local control and the work you do. Intended participants are small businesses and farms in your community.

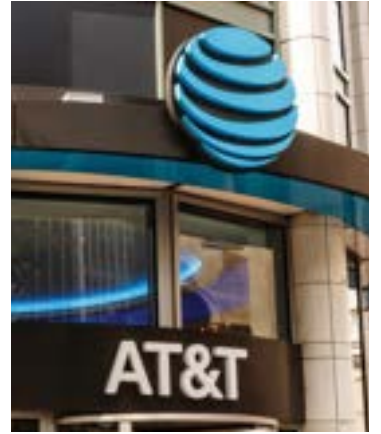
If you and your team are interested in hosting this training event for your community, please reach out to your MMUA Safety coordinator or contact us at info@mmua.org for more information.



US Cellular sells \$1 billion of spectrum licenses to AT&T

On November 7, US Cellular announced that it would be selling \$1 billion in spectrum licenses to AT&T. US Cellular had previously announced plans to sell most of its cellular licenses, which included a sale to wireless company T-Mobile earlier this year.

The AT&T deal will see US Cellular sell 55 percent of the spectrum it still owns. T-Mobile purchased parts of US Cellular in the spring of 2024 in a \$4.4 billion transaction that included its wireless customers, stores,



and 30 percent of the spectrum US Cellular owned at that time.

Global emissions continue to rise (slightly) as the world tries to turn corner on carbon



New data from the Global Carbon Budget, a collaborative effort of 100 experts based in the United Kingdom, has found that global carbon emissions rose 0.8 percent in 2024.

The number was a definite mixed bag as the world is getting close to stopping the growth of emissions but still is not dropping them at the rate needed to prevent warming beyond the 1.5 Celsius temperature target.

Simultaneously, the report found that 22 countries had decreased their carbon emissions while still continuing to grow their economies. These countries include developed western countries like Germany and the United States.

Researchers noted the success of developed countries in markedly decreasing their emissions shows that it can be done successfully in other places: a ray of hope for climate targets that may seem far away in 2024.



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Some 2 million gallons of untreated wastewater spill in Sioux City



On November 6, an unplanned wastewater discharge occurred in Sioux City, Iowa, when the Floyd lift station failed around 10:00 in the morning.

Two million gallons of untreated wastewater went into the Bacon Street channel, with some

entering the Missouri River. The lift station was quickly repaired, and the discharge ended.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is currently monitoring the situation. There have been no fishkills reported from the spill to date.

Nebraska municipal lineworker survives electrocution with help from his coworkers

A Grand Island, Nebraska, lineworker had a near-death experience on November 5 when he was electrocuted on a power pole in the city.

The lineworker was unconscious, was not breathing, and

was in the throes of cardiac arrest. His fellow lineworkers jumped into action, first doing a pole rescue of the man. They then began cardiopulmonary resuscitation and gave him help with an automated external defibrillator. The man's heartbeat had been

restored before first responders arrived on the scene. He was then taken to the local Grand Island Regional Medical Center. The lineworkers' training and quick thinking likely saved the life of their colleague.

Natural gas-oriented Initiative 2066 passes in Washington State

A ballot initiative put forward in Washington State designed to prevent any restrictions on natural gas has passed with just over 51 percent of the vote.

The initiative, called 2066, was put forward by the Building Industry Association of Washington and was assisted by a conservative political committee called "Let's Go Washington."

The affirmative vote on the measure will require utilities and local governments to provide natural gas to eligible customers and prevent approval of utility rate plans that end or restrict access to natural gas or make it too costly. It also would



remove code requirements designed to get more electric heat pumps in newly built houses, apartments, and commercial buildings.

The components of the ballot initiative are expected to take effect upon the certification of the election on December 5.

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Transformer School



Attendees learned about the dangers of transformer fires.



Instructor Scott Meinecke shared how safety rules are something that should be viewed as a privilege, not extra work. Every safety advancement had to be fought for by people who wanted things to be better.



Scott shows off a rotation meter that can be bought from Amazon for \$12. Low-priced meters like this are not UL-tested and can be dangerous to use on the worksite.



The miniature transformer banks are an excellent tool for learning about transformer connections.



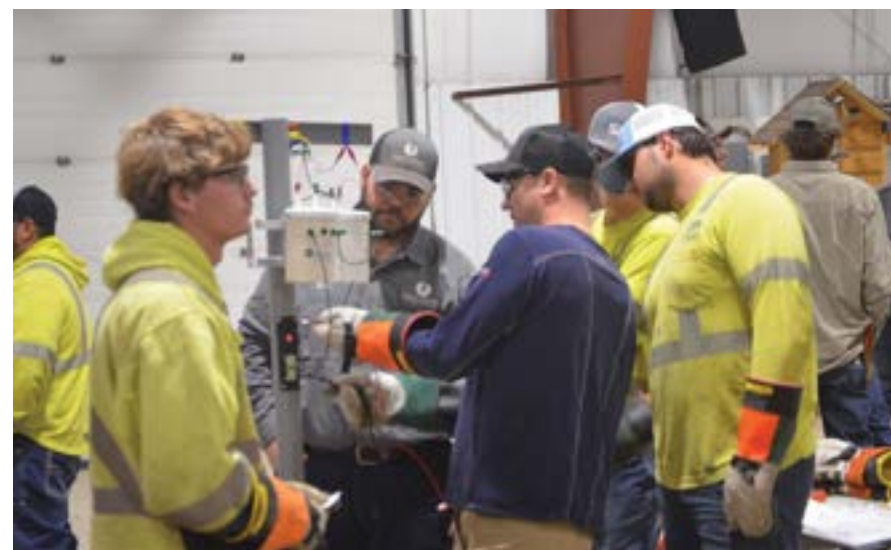
Learners go over their job briefings before starting work on the transformers.



An attendee works through a diagram.



A learner makes a connection.



A group of attendees make sure the connection is just right.

Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory builds plasma stellarator for \$640,000

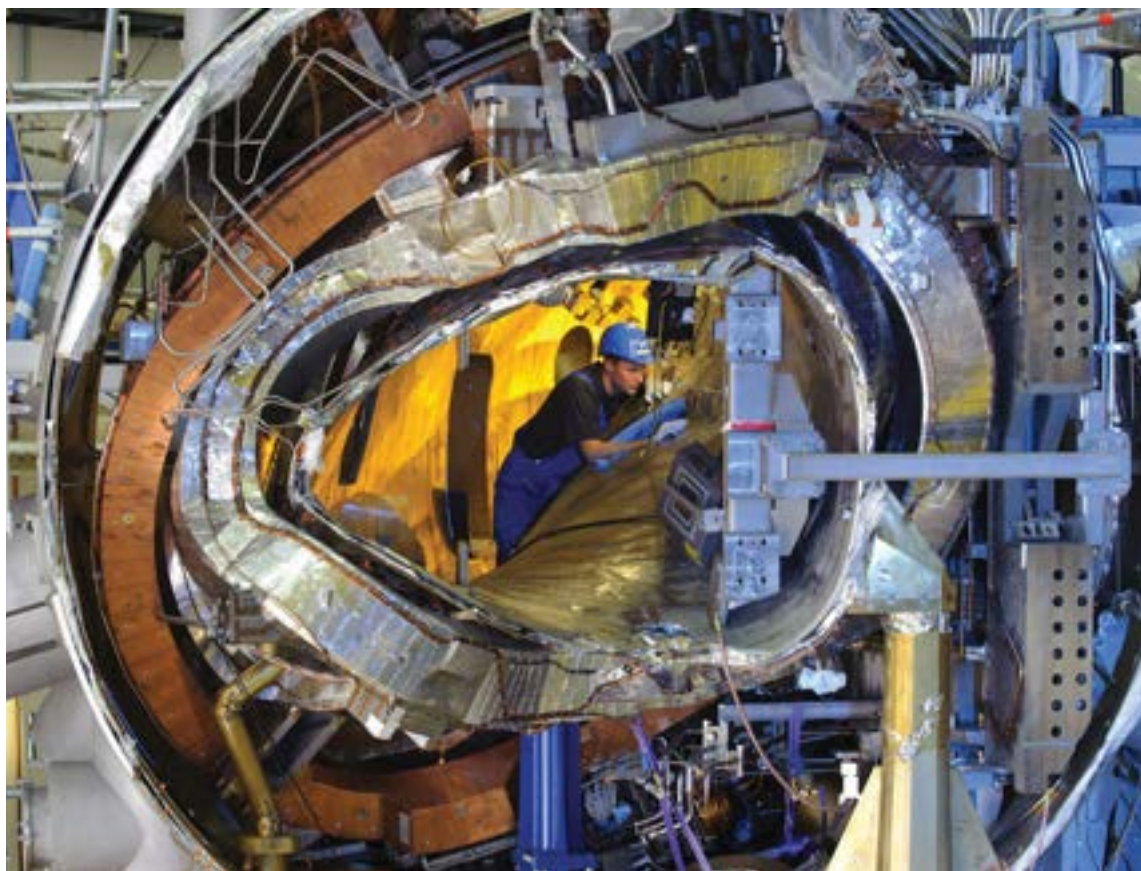
Researchers at Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory have turned the world of nuclear fusion on its head by building a fusion plasma reactor that doesn't cost billions.

Instead, the price tag is a mere \$640,000.

The team got there by using modern innovations like 3D printing to make some components. The fusion reactor stellarator has more than 9,000 rare-earth magnets that help it create plasma from charged particles. Superheated plasma can create near-limitless energy with

low levels of nuclear waste and fuels that are found inexpensively in nature.

The team is hopeful that this downscaling of nuclear fusion can allow for faster ramping-up of more efficient fusion reactors and quicker implementation of real-world fusion power plants.



Researchers examine the possibilities of covering the world's highways with solar panels



A journal article released earlier this year by a team of researchers from three Chinese universities and Columbia University in the United States has found that by covering the world's highways with solar panels, more than 60 percent of the world's energy needs could be addressed.

The study, published in the journal *Earth's Future*, looked at a scenario where the world's highways would be roofed with solar panels. The scientists found that an additional benefit of roofing highways would be an 11 percent reduction in road accidents. Most of this reduction would occur due to negation of

the weather's effect on traffic.

However, this project would also entail higher costs. The researchers noted the levelized cost of energy (LCOE) for such an endeavor would average out in the range of \$60-\$120 per megawatt-hour (MWh). This compares somewhat favorably to the average global cost of \$66/MWh. In areas with lower amounts of available land, the local LCOE would be even more competitive.

In their findings, the authors stated that highway-based solar would be better for the land, water, ecology, and human well-being than other types of solar installations.

Decorah, Iowa moves forward to vote on new municipal electric utility

On November 18, the Decorah, Iowa City Council voted 5-1 to hold a special election on March 4, 2025, that will give voters the opportunity to create a municipal electric utility in the city.

In the lead up to the March vote, the city council also approved mechanisms that will help the city explore the logistics of moving to a municipal utility.

The reasons for the vote were familiar ones. Alliant Energy, the local electricity provider,

has increased electric rates sharply in the city over the past several years. Council members emphasized the importance of educating the community on the positives of municipalization so that citizens can make an informed choice.

Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals considers the legality of net neutrality

Net neutrality rules were again on the docket on October 31, when advocates on both sides of the issue met for oral arguments before the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.



Net neutrality is the principle that internet service providers should treat all data on the internet equally, without blocking or slowing down the content based on its source.

On one side was the telecommunications industry, which argued the government does not have the right to impose net neutrality rules on internet service providers. On the other was the Federal Communications Commission, which argued the Commission could determine the extent of regulation to which the industry is subject.

Net neutrality is again up for discussion due to the June 2024 Supreme Court ruling ending

the Chevron deference, which allowed federal regulators, as subject-matter experts, to set specific regulations within certain constraints set by legislation. After the June decision, the matter of net neutrality and other government regulations, will more often fall under the purview of legislators and judges rather than unelected subject matter experts.

The courts will ultimately have to determine the extent of net neutrality. Since the matter is currently at the appeals court level, resolution will likely take several years.

Stepping into Leadership



Ten utilities professionals completed MMUA's "Stepping into Leadership" curriculum on November 14. Graduates were back row (L-R): Angela Hauge, Zach David, Adam Pybas, Anthony Lance, Tim Howard, and Corey Kreutzbender. Front row: Dave Dahlberg, Jagger Hoffmann, Joe Nosbush, and Greg Larson. Congratulations graduates!

Minnesota municipal utilities named APPA Smart Energy Providers

Several Minnesota municipal utilities have been named “Smart Energy Providers” by the American Public Power Association.

The designation goes to utilities that have demonstrated a history of commitment and accomplishment in the areas of

smart energy planning, energy efficiency, distributed energy resources, environmental and sustainability programs, and communication and customer experience.

The designation lasts for three years. The following municipal utilities have earned this designation for 2024.



Austin Utilities



Owatonna Public Utilities



Rochester Public Utilities



City of Saint Peter Electric Utility

MMUA congratulates this year’s designees as well as continuing designees Elk River Municipal Utilities and Moorhead Public Service.

Mayo Clinic gets ready for power plant expansion, geothermal project

Mayo Clinic is drawing closer to beginning its Prospect Utility Plant project, which is slated to begin in the winter of 2024-2025.

The project will include two parts: the expansion of the existing Prospect Utility Plant, and the construction of a geothermal system.

The Prospect Utility Plant will expand by 75,500 square feet to better serve the needs of Mayo Clinic. The fuel for this system will be natural gas, with the project anticipated to come online in fall of 2027.

Meanwhile, Mayo’s planned geothermal system will heat and cool two new clinical buildings. Mayo’s goal for the system is



to help the clinic reduce carbon emissions by 10 percent at its main Rochester headquarters. This system and the new buildings are planned to be completed by 2030.

Mayo has some experience with geothermal technology, as they recently opened a new hospital in La Crosse, Wisconsin that also features a geothermal system.

Arkansas electric cooperative to spend nearly \$1 billion to switch from coal to gas generation

Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC), a major electric cooperative in Arkansas serving 500,000 customers across the state, has announced it will spend \$850 million to construct more than one gigawatt of new natural gas generation.

The cooperative’s new generation will consist of a 900 megawatt (MW) two-turbine single-cycle plant that will be built in Naples, Texas, in the northeast part of the state. AECC will also expand its Thomas B. Fitzhugh Generating Station in Ozark, Arkansas, from 170 MW to 270 MW with the addition of two new units.

The Texas plant is expected to reach operation in November of 2028, with the Arkansas expansion expected to reach operation by the end of 2025. AECC is retiring 1,200 MW of coal by 2030, necessitating the new gas generation.

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Commissioner Sullivan appointed Organization of MISO States President

Minnesota Public Utilities Commissioner (PUC) Joseph Sullivan has been named President of the Organization of MISO States (OMS).

The organization represents the interests of state and local utility regulators in the MISO region, which covers 15 states. The goals of OMS include planning to ensure reliable electricity service and keeping rates affordable, while addressing the needs of decarbonization in the

energy sector.

In a statement, Sullivan said, "I'm honored to be elected as the incoming President of the Organization of MISO States. I am excited to work on some of the biggest issues facing our region, including transmission planning, distributed energy resources, and how we can affect policy."

Sullivan has served on the PUC since March of 2020. He previously served as Vice President of OMS.

Massachusetts ratepayers will likely pay \$512 million for power transmission project



On October 28, three Massachusetts utilities filed a request with the state to pass \$512 million in additional costs for a new power transmission line in Maine on to ratepayers.

The New England Clean Energy Connect transmission line will provide clean hydropower from Quebec to customers in Massachusetts.

The total project increase in price from \$1 billion to around \$1.5 billion was caused by delays to the project as well as inflation. The project has been caught in a swirl of controversy involving everyone from environmentalists to voters, who stopped construction in November of 2021 after approving a law that kept the line from being built. Construction restarted when the law was

found to be unconstitutional.

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources and the state's attorney general signed on to the filing, which was sent to the state Department of Utilities. The parties backing the filing say that even with the increased costs, consumers in the state will still benefit from lower future utility costs due to the project.

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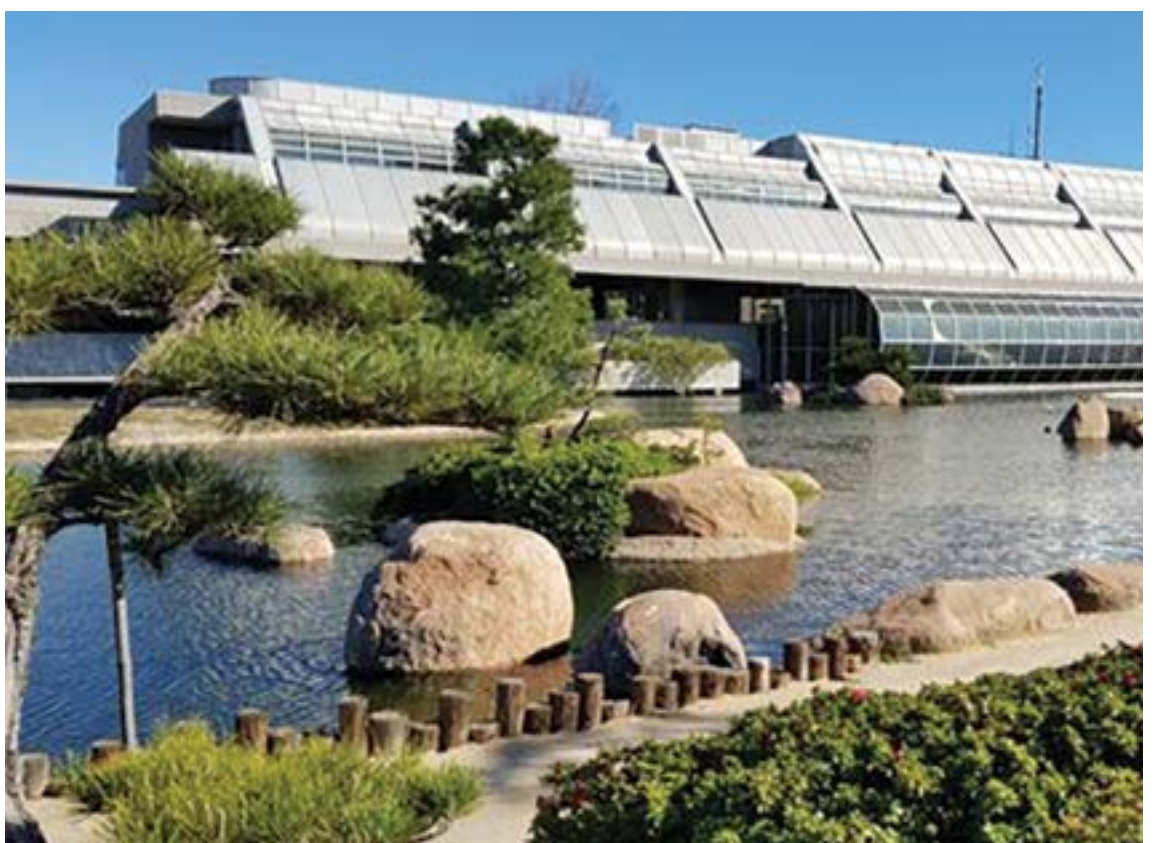
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Los Angeles to join ranks of cities using direct potable reuse



In December 2024, Los Angeles began construction of new infrastructure at the Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant in Van Nuys that will allow the city for the first time to use direct potable reuse, or the processing of wastewater directly into drinking water.

The new "toilet to tap" facility will be able to make enough water to supply about 250,000 people and help Los Angeles avoid some of the water supply issues resulting from increasing droughts in the region. Los Angeles used treated wastewater for outdoor irrigation in the past,

but this project will take that move a step further.

Direct potable reuse will be implemented in 2027, when the facility is expected to be completed.

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Five governors send letter to PJM regarding recent capacity auction, rising electricity rates

On October 25, Delaware Governor John Carney, Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, Maryland Governor Wes Moore, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, and Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro sent a letter to PJM Interconnection regarding PJM's recent capacity auction.

The July auction saw clearing

prices almost 10 times higher than occurred at the previous auction.

The governors noted these results will undoubtedly lead to higher rates for utility customers in their states. They also expressed concern with PJM's capacity market construct, which they worry could lead to prices that do not accurately

reflect true supply and demand in the electricity market. In that regard, the governors offered several technical solutions to PJM they believe might fix the problem.

The governors also urged speeding up the interconnection process to add more capacity to the grid and decrease prices for consumers.

White supremacist charged with plans to blow up Nashville substation



On November 2, Tennessee resident Skyler Philippi was arrested when he had almost executed the launch of a drone loaded with explosives.

It appears Philippi's intention was to use the drone to destroy an electric substation in Nashville. He was caught by federal

agents moments before the attack, an action that could have left thousands without power.

Philippi allegedly undertook the planned attack in support of his white supremacist ideology, according to a Justice Department press release. He was charged with attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction

and attempted destruction of an energy facility.

Philippi had long told confidential informants and undercover FBI employees of his desire to commit a violent act. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Des Moines experiences sewage and wastewater discharge

On October 29, the city of Des Moines saw a wastewater and sewage discharge into North Walnut Creek.

The spill occurred where pipes carrying wastewater intersect with pipes used for rainwater runoff, causing the combined discharge.

Officials contacted the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and workers began cleanup activities almost immediately. Although no dead fish have been seen, the DNR recommended that people avoid contact with the creek.



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United States Geological Survey discovers huge lithium reserve in southern Arkansas



Research by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the Arkansas Office of the State Geologist has found enough dissolved lithium in southern Arkansas to "replace U.S. imports of lithium and more," according to lead researcher Katherine Knierim.

The study saw researchers for the first time estimate the total lithium present in a geological area called the Smackwater Formation, an ancient sea that lies under parts of Alabama,

Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Lithium in this area is present in brine: salty waters that form with underground salt deposits.

The estimate of the total lithium present was formed using artificial intelligence. The model projected that at minimum, the brines contain 5 million tons of lithium. What researchers must now determine is whether these lithium deposits can be extracted using today's mining technologies.

Suffolk County on Long Island votes to raise sales tax for water and wastewater treatment projects

Voters in Suffolk County, New York, which comprises the eastern two-thirds of Long Island, voted on November 5 to raise the county's sale tax by 1/8 of a penny to create funding for wastewater and water treatment projects in the county.

With the measure's passage, a 21-person board is now able to recommend projects to the county legislature, which sets county policy and adopts county budgets. The new tax will provide funding for clean water projects through 2060.

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Fort Wayne's innovative microgrid comes online

On October 30, Fort Wayne, Indiana's new municipal microgrid came online as Mayor Sharon Tucker flipped the switch.



A microgrid is a local electrical system that can operate independently or in conjunction with a larger electrical grid.

Fort Wayne's microgrid is unique for many reasons, including its use of solar panels that float on top of the city's wet weather storage ponds. The system's 12,000 solar panels, battery storage systems, biogas

generation, and natural gas generation are designed to supply power directly to the city's water and sewer plants. The new microgrid is estimated to reduce the carbon footprint of those facilities by 20 percent and provide 40 percent of the facilities' power.

California Governor Newsom signs executive order to address the state's rising electricity costs

On October 30, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order designed to address several areas that may be contributing to rising electricity prices in the state.



One area designated for scrutiny is state programs that were designed to do good things but now may be underutilized and thus drive up electricity costs. Newsom also directed the Office of Energy Infrastructure to look at wildfire mitigation programs as they currently exist in Cal-

ifornia and see to it that they are both doing their jobs and are efficient for ratepayers.

Newsom ordered the state's air resources board to maximize the California Climate Credit, which gives tax credits to

taxpayers two times annually. The governor also expressed an interest in vigorously pursuing federal funding so these monies could reduce electricity costs for all Californians.

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Sewage crisis in San Diego leads area to seek Superfund status, start plant repairs



On October 24, San Diego County Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer, along with other politicians and residents, submitted a petition to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to designate parts of the Tijuana River Valley in southern California as a federal Superfund site.

The move is a rare attempt to use the Superfund laws, normally reserved for toxic waste sites, to remedy a sewage crisis that is affecting San Diego and its neighbor across the border, Tijuana. Slow repairs to wastewater systems on both sides of the border, including at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, have caused untreated wastewater to reach the Pacific Ocean, exposing people to dangerous water and a foul smell.

Thankfully, even if Superfund status isn't granted to the larger area, repairs are forthcoming at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant. On October 29, officials met to celebrate the coming rehabilitation of the plant. The rehab effort should stop 90 percent of untreated wastewater from reaching San Diego's waterfront. The five-year project is being made possible through \$400 million in federal funding.

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Canadian electricity exports to US in 2023 fall to lowest level since 2010

New data out of Canada released in late October showed that electricity exports from Canada to the US in 2023 dropped to their lowest levels since 2010.

The information came from the Canadian Energy Regulator,

which licenses, supervises, regulates, and enforces all applicable Canadian laws regarding inter-provincial and international oil, gas, and electric utilities.

The drop in exports occurred because of droughts in the country that saw Canada prioritize domestic hydropower customers

over foreign ones. Low snow cover in the winter of 2022–2023 resulted in less runoff to power Canada’s hydropower plants, and thus less electricity production. Rainfall in the summer and fall was also at near-record lows in some parts of the country, exacerbating drought conditions.



AT&T announces \$1 billion deal with Corning to expand fiber broadband

On October 28, AT&T announced a multiyear agreement of more than \$1 billion with glassmaker Corning to purchase fiber and cable for expansion of the company’s broadband network. AT&T said the deal would be compliant with the Biden Administration’s “Build America, Buy America” purchasing rules, which will make their network expansion

fit the requirements of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program.

AT&T currently has 28.3 million broadband customers and aims to increase that to 30 million by the end of 2025.

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Generac to build virtual power plants to support water utilities

Generator manufacturer Generac is working with the United States Department of Energy (DOE) to use microgrids, i.e., local electrical systems, to build virtual power plants (VPPs).

VPPs are systems that combine different energy sources to create grid power. The Generac/DOE VPPs will serve the needs of water utilities in California.

Generac’s efforts will likely use a combination of renewable energy, storage batteries, and local generation to create the microgrid. The VPP project will deliver load reductions to the grid and provide more resiliency to water infrastructure at times when they need power the most.

Generac will be implementing its systems within California Water Association facilities.



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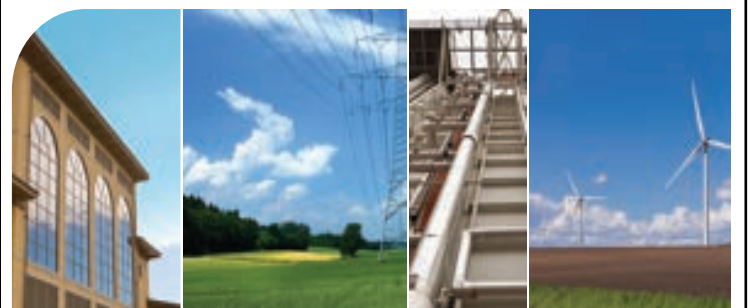
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ALP Utilities will once again be offering its holiday light recycling program. From early December through the beginning of February, lights can be dropped off at ALP's downtown headquarters so they can be recycled properly.

Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties celebrated 39 years of providing gifts to those who might not receive one through their "Holiday Sharing Tree" program. Currently, 900 families receive gift cards to help make the season brighter.



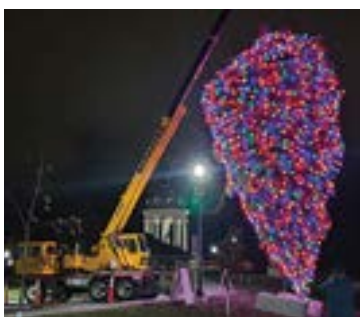
Caledonia is aiming to start operations at its new wastewater treatment plant by January 14, 2025. Work left to complete is mostly electrical, and some painting remains to be finished as well.

Grand Marais and Cook County at large experienced two sets of windstorms in early and mid-November that brought heavy rain and caused outages across the region.

Hibbing Public Utilities has received \$3 million in Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation funding for water infrastructure projects.

In early November, **Lake Crystal** was affected by a natural gas outage that impacted around 600 customers. Local gas provider CenterPoint Energy worked to quickly fix the problem.

New townhomes are coming to **Moose Lake** after several years of hard work from project partners. Moose Lake City Administrator Ellissa Owens thanked key stakeholders for the project, including the developer, city, economic development authority, and **Moose Lake Water & Light Commission**.



A 40-foot upside-down Christmas tree was installed in **New Ulm** near the historic Hermann Monument. The idea of the upside-down Christmas tree comes from German tradition dating

back to the eighth century. **New Ulm Public Utilities** was one of several groups who helped to make the tree a reality.

On November 18, **Preston** approved a conditional use permit for the Preston Dairy and Farm Association to build a 68.1-kilowatt solar system at its property on the edge of town.

Preston Public Utilities' general manager Jim Bakken and Preston City Administrator Ryan Throckmorton were also authorized to act as representatives on behalf of the city to start



the process for a United States Department of Agriculture grant and loan assistance program for the Preston wastewater treatment facility project.

On November 25, the **Willmar Utilities Commission** announced they would be offering the position of Willmar Municipal Utilities General Manager to Jeron Smith, who is currently the staff electrical engineer for the utility.



photos could be judged by the public from December 16–24. The winners will be announced on Christmas Eve, with first through third prize winners receiving a bill credit from Worthington Public Utilities and chamber checks from the Worthington Chamber of Commerce.

Worthington's Community Image Committee of FORWARD Worthington, Worthington Public Utilities, and RE/MAX Premier Realty are co-sponsoring the city's Holiday Lighting Contest this year. Judges drove through the city taking pictures of decorated homes so the



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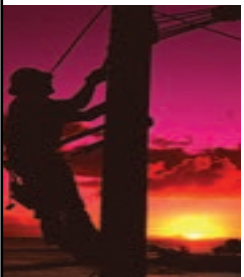


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Wisconsin municipalities that implemented city transportation utilities are scrambling after the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled in August that transportation utility fees in the state are unconstitutional. Cities that implemented transportation utilities are now examining how to address their projected street project budget deficits.



The saga of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine continued in October when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported the plant had lost connection to its only 330 kilovolt (kV) backup power line. The line was disconnected for more than 26 hours, leaving the plant dependent on a sole 750 kV line and a 150 kV line. Russia continues to attack the plant, and in December that country deployed drones that severely damaged a vehicle belonging to the International Atomic Energy Agency whose noncombatant crews are monitoring the situation on behalf of the global community.

On November 4, Sweden's Defense Minister Pal Jonson wrote that the government rejected applications for 13 offshore wind farms in the Baltic Sea due to security concerns. A government analysis has found that a large grouping of wind turbines could hinder Sweden's ability to detect incoming missiles.

Brazil is setting coal importation records as a long-lasting drought has left the country low on hydropower generation. Brazil set a record for monthly imports in November, when they imported 900,000 tons of thermal coal.

In early November, residents of the Haldizen Valley area in Turkey held a multiday vigil against a planned hydroelectric plant in Uzungöl. People kept company vehicles from accessing the area, and a fire was set at the site of the planned hydroelectric plant. Local politicians also joined the vigil.

WFSB-TV in Hartford, Connecticut dispatched its "I-Team" to investigate the costs of

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municipal power versus investor-owned utilities (IOUs) in its part of the state. Their reporting found the average electric bill for local municipal electric customers was on average 20–40 percent less than bills at local IOUs.

The country of Turkey is in talks with the World Bank to procure funding for updating of the country's electric grid. It is estimated the project could cost upwards of \$28 billion.

On November 16, the United States Department of State announced the US will help Ukraine decarbonize its steel industry by building small modular reactors in the country using existing infrastructure.



On November 18, the City of Cherokee in northwest Iowa received permission from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to discharge up to 2 million gallons daily of partially treated wastewater into the Little Sioux River from the community's wastewater treatment plant. The discharge plan allows for discharge for 25 days or until the plant's equalization lagoons are lowered to a safe level. The wastewater plant has been out of action since June 2024 due to flooding. The goal of the discharge is to lower the levels of the equalization lagoons and protect the remaining plant infrastructure.

On November 19, a Russian government commission met to consider creating cryptocurrency mining restrictions for 13 regions of the country. The planned restrictions are for areas of the country where mining activities may create energy shortages during times of peak energy demand. It is likely restrictions will be in place in the regions during the autumn-winter heating season until 2031.

The Washington Post reported on November 22 that the Biden Administration is working hard to allocate \$46 billion in federal funds to fund the major energy and infrastructure bills passed during Biden's time in office. Some \$303 billion in remaining funds cannot be directed until Donald Trump takes office on January 20.

2025 Meeting and Training Calendar



Cyber and Fiscal Security Threats and Preparation
January 21—MMUA Office
January 22—New Ulm
January 23—Brainerd

Substation School
March 11–13
Elk River

Minnesota Public Power Walleye Tournament
May 31
Rush Lake
Otter Tail

Overhead School
September 9–12
MMUA Training Center

Legislative Conference
January 28–29
DoubleTree Hotel
St. Paul

Electrical Skill Training for Water/Wastewater Operators
March 19–20
MMUA Training Center

Cross Training
August 5–7
MMUA Training Center

Gas School
October 7–9
MMUA Training Center

Meter School and Pre-conference Workshop
February 4–7
MMUA Training Center

Generation School
April 15–17
Glencoe

Summer Conference
August 18–20
Kahler Grand Hotel
Rochester

Technical & Operations Conference
December 9–11
Holiday Inn
St. Cloud

Emergency Preparedness and Restoration Conference
February 19–20
Holiday Inn
St. Cloud

Underground School
May 6–9
MMUA Training Center

Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo
September 9
MMUA Training Center

Transformer School
December 15–18
MMUA Training Center

Competent Person Excavation Safety Workshop
May 20–21
MMUA Training Center

MMUA calendar subject to change.



National events to note

APPA Legislative Rally
February 24–26
Mayflower Hotel
Washington, D.C.

Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo
March 29
Roseville, CA

APPA Engineering & Operations Conference
March 30–April 2
Sacramento, CA

APPA National Conference
June 6–11
New Orleans, LA



Upcoming events

MMUA Cyber and Fiscal Security Threats and Preparation Regional Workshops

January 21—MMUA office, St. Louis Park
January 22—New Ulm
January 23—Brainerd

Minnesota cities and local utility companies face an imposing array of cyber risks that are very real and increasing by the day. The cyber adversary may be a prankster, disgruntled current or former employee, hacker, or something much worse.

Like all businesses, public power and other hometown utilities are potentially exposed to data breaches involving personal information of employees, customers, and vendors. However, utilities face an even greater risk when they are exposed to cyber espionage, cyber extortion, and cyber attacks consisting of the manipulation or destruction of utility control systems and the equipment they operate and rely on.

Join MMUA and a host of experts who will offer valuable insights that can help you identify and mitigate these imposing threats to protect your vital systems, infrastructure, and reputation. Check the event page on MMUA's website for additional details.

Legislative Conference

January 28–29
DoubleTree by Hilton
Saint Paul Downtown

MMUA's Legislative Conference is one of the municipal utility community's primary opportunities to inform and influence state lawmakers. This year's event will occur near the start of the session. It is prime time for getting ahead of the push for final committee action and to lobby for a bonding bill adequate to meet utility infrastructure needs.

The conference will include engaging presentations from a diverse array of industry and legal experts. Topics will cover a variety of local government issues, MMUA's administrative and legislative priorities, and more.

Check the event page on MMUA's website for additional details.

Meter School and Pre-Conference

February 4–7
MMUA Training Center
Marshall

Meter School is a once-a-year opportunity to obtain hands-on technical electric metering training. There are two course options, Beginner/intermediate and Advanced, to allow participants to progress at a pace to fit their motivation and abilities. There is a pre-conference workshop held in conjunction with the school. Register online at mmua.org/events/meter-2025/register.

For more information, see the Events Calendar at www.mmua.org or call MMUA at 763-551-1230.