

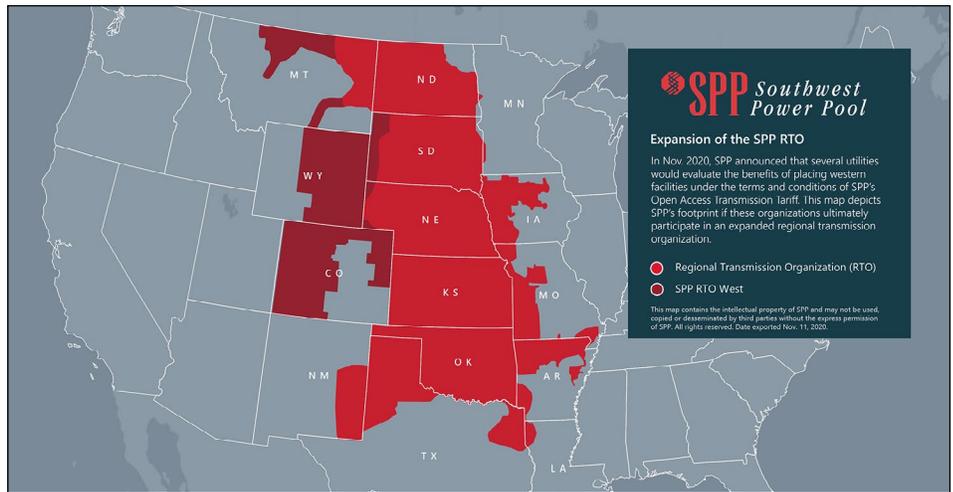
MEAN among utilities committing to evaluate membership in SPP RTO West

Study anticipates \$49 million in annual savings for current, new members

The Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN) in November joined several utilities in signing letters of intent to evaluate membership in a proposed expansion of the Southwest Power Pool's Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) into the Western Interconnection.

An SPP Brattle study found that the move would be mutually beneficial and produce \$49 million a year in savings. Additionally, SPP anticipates its wholesale electricity market, resource adequacy program and other regionalized services can help western members achieve renewable energy goals, reinforce system reliability and leverage new opportunities to buy, sell and trade power.

If they pursue membership, MEAN along with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Deseret Power Electric Cooperative, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) would become the first members of SPP's regional RTO to place facilities in the Western Interconnection under the terms and conditions of SPP's open access transmission tariff. WAPA's evaluation of RTO membership will consider the participation of its Upper Great Plains-West



(UGP-West) region and Loveland Area Projects. This would extend the reach and value of SPP's services—including day-ahead wholesale electricity market administration, transmission planning, reliability coordination, resource adequacy and more—and the synergies they provide when bundled under the RTO structure.

Current SPP members in Eastern Interconnection

MEAN, Basin Electric, Tri-State and WAPA's UGP-East Region are already members of SPP, having joined the RTO in 2015 when they placed their respective facilities in the Eastern Interconnection under SPP's tariff. Along with Deseret, each is also a customer of at least one of SPP's contract-based Western Energy Imbalance Services (WEIS), which includes reliability coordination and a real-time market scheduled to launch

in February 2021. The letters of intent indicate they will now work with SPP to evaluate the terms, costs and benefits of putting western facilities under the RTO's tariff. Commitments to join the SPP RTO West are anticipated to happen during the summer of 2021.

"MEAN has been a member of SPP in the Eastern Interconnect for several years and recognizes the benefits of participating in that market and energy cost savings it provides," said Brad Hans, MEAN Director of Wholesale Electric Operations. "SPP expanding in the Western Interconnect may lead to operational and administrative efficiencies to serve our wholesale power members. In the coming months, we will engage in discussions and evaluate the opportunity of this new proposed market with

See 'SPP RTO WEST' on page 5

ACE

PUBLIC ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITY ENERGY

Sidney using ACE funds to purchase lights for ballfield

The City of Sidney, Neb., City Council recently approved upgrading its Sidney Legion Park's softball field with a new lighting system with its revenue funds from ACE, the Public Alliance for Community Energy.

The new lights will be a significant improvement over the old lights and will bring the softball field up to date with the other softball fields in the complex, according to NewsChannel Nebraska.

Through its revenue return program, ACE has returned more than \$2.8 million to its member communities since it formed in 1998. The City of Sidney, a charter member community of ACE, has received more than \$194,000 since 1998.

ACE funds have been used for many projects including park and playground improvements, infrastructure improvements, public transportation, recreation trails and many more. To see a list of projects ACE funds have been used for, go to www.ACEenergy.org and click on the "ACE in the Community" drop-down link.

NMPP still seeking utilities interested in proposed AMI service

The Nebraska Municipal Power Pool Board of Directors heard an update on NMPP's proposed Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) service at their Nov. 5 Board meeting.

AMI is an integrated system of utility meters that enables two-way communication over a fixed network between a local utility and metering end-points. It allows for enhanced meter data collection, better management of outages, service calls, system maintenance, expanded billing options and an improved overall customer experience.

Currently, six member utilities have signed letters of intent to participate in the service, which includes joint-purchasing AMI equipment and a shared Meter Data Management system. NMPP continues to seek member utilities that may be interested in the service. The more utilities that participate in the service, the lower the costs for all participating utilities. The potential service is geared to assist NMPP member utilities that would have difficulty implementing an AMI system on their own.

Next steps include developing propagation studies for communities that have submitted letters of intent to participate to verify equipment needs and obtain final costs based on the number of communities participating so communities can decide whether to proceed.

NMPP Board Notes

For more information, contact Rich Andrysik at (800) 234-2595 ext. 225 or Rich Eymann at (800) 234-2595 ext. 207.

2021 NMPP Energy Annual Conference Update

An update was provided to board members regarding the status of the 2021 NMPP Energy Annual Conference, which is set for March 23-25 at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel in downtown Lincoln, Neb. It has been decided to proceed with an in-person conference rather than a virtual conference, depending on the COVID-19 situation, which remains fluid.

Legislative Guidelines approved for 2021

The Board approved the NMPP Energy Legislative Guidelines for 2021. The guidelines, available on the home page of the NMPP Energy website (www.NMPPenergy.org), serve as a statement of legislative policy by the NMPP Board on behalf of the NMPP membership.

The guidelines are used to inform legislators, government officials and other constituents on issues impacting the electric and natural gas industries.

The guidelines include sections on electric and natural gas issues as well as legislative policy and overall national energy strategy.



By Bob Poehling,
Executive Director



This Month at NMPP Energy

I hope your Thanksgiving holiday was enjoyable despite our current conditions with COVID-19. Case numbers have been on the rise not only in the Lincoln and Lancaster County area but across the Midwest. Our Pandemic Response Team continues to meet weekly and monitor the situation with the goal of keeping our team as safe as possible and meeting member needs.

We finished a busy month of November board meetings that were held virtually. Even though virtual committee and board meetings are not ideal, they are allowing the NMPP Energy organizations to move forward with member input and guidance. Here are some of the workstreams our team has been involved with the past month:

Nebraska Municipal Power Pool

- Utility rate study work was performed for Curtis, Seward, Kimball and Gering in Nebraska and Oak Creek, Gunnison and Trinidad in Colorado and Kingman, Kan.
- Work began on the 2021 Value Support Plan invoicing timeline and procedures for PowerManager software users.
- The City of Henderson, Neb., invested in PowerManager software, purchasing the Utility Billing-Easy Clerk module and software maintenance support and updates.
- Updates continued for the NMPP Services Customer-Owned Generation Resource Guide, last produced in 2017.
- Work continued on updates to the annual NMPP Typical Bill Survey for electric, water and wastewater rates.
- The NMPP Board held its board meeting virtually in early November.
- Copies of the 2020 National Electrical Code book was distributed to Electric Distribution Services participants as part of their agreement with NMPP.

Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska

- Staff continued work on multiple projects as well as participation in teleconference meetings and training opportunities, including Advanced Metering Infrastructure, Midcontinent Independent Sys-

tem Operator Market Symposium, Western Area Power Administration Balancing Authority Services and various Southwest Power Pool meetings.

- Unit capability testing work was done in the Village of Callaway, Neb.
- MEAN committee meetings and board meeting were held virtually in mid-November.

National Public Gas Agency

- Staff participated in the Public Gas Partners Pool 3 virtual meeting.
- The Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline (SSC) shippers group met to review a draft proposal to be sent to SSC prior to the next settlement conference scheduled for Dec. 8. The shippers group will be working with the investor owned Local Distribution Company's (LDC) group to submit a joint proposal.
- A presentation on gas supply and market outlook was provided to representatives of Walden, Colo.
- Seasonal gas supply for November-March was bid for both Colorado Interstate Gas pipeline members and customers and NPGA's delivery obligation through the CITI prepay, resulting in a combined estimated savings of more than \$40,000.
- Calendar 2021 gas supply was bid for Tallgrass interstate pipeline members and the delivery obligation for Public Gas Partners Pool 3 participants, which provides a combined estimated savings of more than \$15,000.

Public Alliance for Community Energy

- ACE staff attended a series of webinars discussing factors impacting the natural gas market in the United States.
- Staff met with a third-party provider to discuss its new website. More meetings will be scheduled as the project progresses.
- The ACE Board of Directors held their board meeting by teleconference on Nov. 10.
- Staff presented at the Choice Jump Utilities Management Program (CJUMP) annual meeting Nov. 18 held in conjunction with the annual conference of the Nebraska Association of Schools in Omaha. The conference was held virtually.
- The annual Choice Gas supplier meeting was held virtually in early November.

Mutual Aid Efforts

Utilities respond after ice storm

The Nebraska Municipal Power Pool coordinated several mutual aid efforts to restore power outages after a storm system brought freezing rain, snow and gusty winds to parts of Nebraska on Nov. 9-10.

Four utilities – Curtis, Holdrege, Auburn and Cozad – responded to assist the City of David City to restore power. Utilities from Stuart, Crete, Pierce and Wahoo responded to assist the City of West Point with outages and the City of Wayne responded to assist the Village of Pender in Northeast Nebraska.

NMPP's mutual aid service, developed years ago, provides



NMPP Energy photos

(Left) Utility crews work through the night to restore power in West Point, Neb. (Right) Ice-coated tree limbs downed power lines in Pender, Neb.

coordination service among utilities to assist member utilities with power restoration. For more information on the mutual aid ser-

vice or how to participate in the service, contact Mandy Hansen at mhansen@nmppenergy.org.

Working Together Works

Utilities collaborate on local electric system projects

Several electric distribution system projects by NMPP/MEAN member utilities are being tackled by utilities working together:

- The Town of Julesburg, Colo., is undergoing a pole change-out project with the help of The City of Chappell, Neb.
- The Village of Callaway, Neb., is making electric distribution system upgrades with the help of nearby utilities from Broken Bow, Ansley, Arnold and Sargent.
- The City of Bridgeport, Neb., is undergoing a primary voltage upgrade to its system with the assistance of Great Plains Power out of Grand Island, Neb.
- The Village of Shickley, Neb., will be working with Great Plains Power on a voltage upgrade along with new overhead lines.



- The Village of Arnold, Neb., will complete the last stage to their system voltage upgrade as MEAN assists with power plant questions on the wiring to keep it safe.

- The Village of Stuart, Neb., will be assisting the Village of Spencer, Neb., with several projects as budgeting allows.

It's important for utilities to devise a maintenance budget to keep their electric distribution system infrastructure reliable, said Rich Eymann, electrical distribution O&M specialist for MEAN. Earmarking a percentage of a utility's gross electric revenue for maintenance projects can be helpful to maintain a reliable system.

The organizations of NMPP Energy are at their best when utilities collaborate on projects. If your utility has a project it needs help with contact Eymann (reymann@nmppenergy.org) to see if NMPP/MEAN can assist.

MEAN Board approves bylaw changes

The Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska Board of Directors, at their Nov. 13 Board meeting, approved Phase I bylaws consistent with the changes from LB 858, MEAN's modernization legislation bill that recently passed in the Nebraska Legislature.

Once again, thanks to Sen. Dan Hughes and the Natural Resources Committee for LB 858 updates to Chapter 18 under Nebraska law.

The recently adopted bylaws improve governance and organi-

Legislative Notes



By Chris Dibbern

zation operations for MEAN's Board meeting quorum and voting. It allows Board member flexibility to go inactive if they do not attend meetings but become active right away the next time one attends the public meeting. This helps with such a large group of communities on quorum numbers and will never disenfranchise members who attend. A Board member who attends will always be allowed to vote, set rates, and contribute to leadership on the Board and committee level when they attend.

The bylaws address board meetings, committee meetings, and general housekeeping matters. Another big change is the role of Associates in the organiza-

tion. If a community chooses not to join the Board but wants to affiliate with MEAN, the Associate category is available – similar to the National Public Gas Agency. An Associate is a non-voting yet active participant in the agency with opportunities to serve.

The Phase I bylaw changes were developed by the MEAN Governance Review Committee chaired by Tom Ourada of Crete, Neb., with strong member input from the committee. The new set of bylaws will be sent shortly to the entire membership and posted on the MEAN Board webpage. If your community does not currently sit on the MEAN Board, call Michelle Lepin or me with questions about exploring new membership opportunities.

* * *

Chris Dibbern is general counsel of NMPP Energy. Contact her at cdibbern@nmppenergy.org or (800) 234-2595.

SPP RTO West

Continued from page 1

the goal of bringing value to the members we serve.”

Another benefit for MEAN in considering membership in SPP's potential expansion is its governance structure.

“SPP's governance is similar to MEAN's governance model,” said Hans, “where every member has a voice and a vote. We have seen a benefit to this in SPP with our participation and leadership in working groups and the ability to play an active role in the rules that will be set around our member-owned electric generation.”

The SPP Brattle study found that WEIS participants' membership in the SPP RTO would produce approximately \$49 million in savings annually for SPP's current and new members. The western utilities joining SPP would receive

\$25 million a year in adjusted production cost savings and revenue from off-system sales, and SPP's current members in the East would benefit from \$24 million in savings resulting from the expansion of SPP's market, transmission network and generation fleet. SPP's prior calculations of the value of RTO membership suggest that these benefits are only a portion of those current and new members will derive. There is additional value not considered by the Brattle study in five-minute real-time economic dispatch, achievement of public policy goals, lowered reserve-margin requirements, consolidation and regionalization of planning and other processes and more.

Integration of renewable energy

SPP has set numerous North American records for renewable

energy integration, serving as much as 75 percent of its total system's demand with renewable generation at certain points in time. SPP also expects wind to be its number one fuel source for the first time in 2020. In the years ahead MEAN will seek to add more carbon-free resources as earlier this year MEAN's Board of Directors passed a resolution to work toward a carbon neutral power supply by 2050.

“We've enhanced electric reliability while integrating more renewable generation than many in our industry ever thought possible, modernized the grid, built and operated a dependable and economic market, and equitably allocated the costs and revenues associated with these and other services,” SPP President and CEO Barbara Sugg said. “What's more, we've done it all while staying true to our collaborative and member-driven business model, and now we're excited for the opportunity to bring the value of RTO membership to new customers in the West.”



THIS MONTH'S FEATURED CHAMPION BUSINESSES

EnergySolutions, Inc. represents approx. 20 manufacturers of products, services for electric utility industry across four states

As a manufacturer's representative, EnergySolutions, Inc. provides a sales, service and marketing channel in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. EnergySolutions, Inc. represents about 20 manufacturers of products and services for the electric utility industry with a focus on local and national distributors as well as directly with electric utilities, contractors and consultants.

Three members of EnergySolutions, Inc. — Adam Nelson, Mike Amfahr and Bill Larson — completed and earned the distinction as Certified Professional Manufacturers' Representatives

(CPMR). Other associates at EnergySolutions, Inc. include Brian Bentley, Preston Schroer, Brad Nobiling, Ian Evans, Sharon Howells and Shannon Bryant. EnergySolutions, Inc. started as CE Howells Sales Company. Its founder, Charlie Howells (retired), called on area utilities since 1968. The agency was formed in 1976 and grew from serving only Nebraska and Iowa to serving four states. Earlier this year Scott Howells retired from ESI and the new agency principals are Adam Nelson and Mike Amfahr. Distribution, transmission, substation and automation

are ESI's main focus to electric utilities.

Many of today's top manufacturers are represented by EnergySolutions, Inc. such as ARP, Bashlin, Concast, Delta Star, Dura-line, Electro Industries/Gaugetech, Marmon Utility (Hendrix Wire and Cable & Kerite), Preformed Line Products, PUPI, Ruggedcom, SEEEO, Sensorlink, Siemens, Speed Systems, TAPP, TeleSCADA and Trojan Dryout Systems. For more information, visit the company's website, www.energysolutions-inc.com.

Employment Opportunities

Journeyman Lineman

The Village of **Stuart**, Neb., will be accepting applications for a Journeyman Lineman. The applicant will need to possess a Journeyman certificate. Knowledge and experience in actual line work and wages will be determined by applicant's experience level. There will be some out of town mutual aid work in electrical systems which may require occasional travel. Send resume to Village of Stuart Attn: Bob Lockmon, P.O. Box 177, Stuart NE 68780. Email: stuartutilities@gmail.com. The Village of Stuart is an equal opportunity employer.

Utilities Technician

City of **Bayard**, Neb., is seeking a full-time Utilities Technician. Bayard is a 2nd class city with a population of 1,209 and is located in scenic Western Nebraska, three miles north of Chimney Rock. The position is responsible for maintenance of the city owned electrical, water, wastewater, and streets.

To submit an ad

NMPP members can advertise job openings for free in the *Essent* newsletter and on the NMPP Energy Web site. The newsletter deadline is the 15th of each month. E-mail info@nmppenergy.org.

High school diploma or GED is required. Lineman Certification or electrical utility distribution system experience is preferred and will be given priority. Must possess, or be able to obtain, a Nebraska Class B driver's license, a Nebraska Grade 4 Water Operator Certificate, and a Wastewater Operator's Class L Certificate. Experience with heavy equipment including road grader, front-end loader, backhoe, and street sweeper is also beneficial. Salary is commensurate to experience. Benefits include 75 percent paid health insurance, employee paid dental and vision insurance, AFLAC, 50 percent paid short-term

disability, vacation and sick leave, 125-flex account, holiday pay, and retirement investment opportunity. A pre-employment drug test and monthly random drug tests are also required. For more questions please contact Shelly Bowlin, City Clerk/Treasurer at Phone: (308) 586-1121. Fax: (308) 586-1834. Applications can be picked up at 445 Main Street or send resume to: City of Bayard, PO BOX 160, Bayard, NE 69334. Email: shelly.bowlin@cityofbayard.net. Application review will begin immediately. Position open until filled. EOE.

Electrical Lineman

The City of **Ord** (Neb.) Utilities is currently seeking applicants for a lineman position. It is desirable that candidates be graduates of a lineman program, but it is not required. Duties include working on both energized and de-energized

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

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.

Regulatory/Compliance

Air Regulation Consulting (airregconsulting.com) Lincoln, Neb.

Utility/Community

Dogwood Energy Columbia, Md.
EnergySolutions, Inc. (Energysolutions-inc.com) Omaha, Neb.
Hometown Connections, Inc. (Hometownconnections.com) Lakewood, Colo.
GenPro Energy Solutions (GenProEnergy.com) Piedmont, S.D.
JK Energy Consulting, LLC (JKenergyconsulting.com) Lincoln, Neb.
Border States (borderstates.com) Fargo, N.D.
NovaTech (Novatechweb.com) Lenexa, Kan.
PDS, Inc. (PDSinc.biz) Omaha, Neb.
Protective Equipment Testing Laboratory (petl.com) Great Bend, Kan.
RESCO (Rural Electric Supply Cooperative) (resco1.com) Ankeny, Iowa
Sol Systems (solsystems.com) Washington, D.C.
Sunbelt-Solomon Solutions (sunbelt-solomon.com) Solomon, Kan.

Computer/Technology

Proteus (Proteus.co) Lincoln, Neb.
Quanta Technology (quanta-technology.com) Raleigh, N.C.
Salt Creek Software, Inc. (Saltcreek.com) Lincoln, Neb.

Engineering

ABP Engineering LLC (abpengineeringllc.com) Bennington, Neb.
Exponential Engineering Company (exponentialengineering.com) Fort Collins, Colo.
Farrabee Mechanical Inc. (farabeemechanical.com) Hickman, Neb.
Halker Consulting (Halker.com) Centennial, Colo.
JEO Consulting Group, Inc. (jeo.com) Wahoo, Neb.
Lutz, Daily & Brain, LLC (ldbeng.com) Overland Park, Kan.
Olsson (Olsson.com) Lincoln, Neb.
Shermco Industries (Shermco.com) Omaha, Neb.

Insurance

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

Legal

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

Telecommunication

Allo Communications (allocommunications.com) Lincoln, Neb.
Community Broadband Action Network (broadbandaction.com) Indianola, Iowa
River Oaks Communications Corp. (rivoaks.com) Centennial, Colo.



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NEWSLETTER

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Employment (cont.)

distribution lines; building and maintaining underground and overhead systems; and installation of new services. Requirements include graduation from high school or equivalent, a valid Nebraska driver's license and residency in the City of Ord. Applications must be received by Dec. 11, 2020. Salary based on experience and qualifications; competitive benefits. Applications may be requested from the Ord City Office, 201 So. 17th, Street, P.O. Box 96, Ord, NE 68862 or (308) 728-5791. EOE.

Electrical Lineman/Foreman

The Village of **Morrill**, Neb., is accepting applications for a full-time electrical lineman/foreman. The ideal candidate would have at least five years or more previous experience in construction, repair, maintenance and operation of the electric system. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen and possess a valid driver's license with the ability to obtain CDL within six months of hire.

Applications are available at Village of Morrill 118 S. Center St, Morrill, NE 68358 or online at www.villageofmorrill.com.

Completed applications, along with a cover letter and resume, should be emailed to electrical@villageofmorrill.com or delivered to the Village Office address above or mailed to P.O. Box 305, Morrill, NE 69358 and will be accepted until position is filled.

Salary package negotiable DOE, with excellent fringe benefits, including vacation, sick time, retirement, medical, and holidays. Village of Morrill does not discriminate on basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services. EOE

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Send comments to: Essent, Attn: Editor, 8377 Glynoaks Drive, Lincoln, NE 68516 or e-mail: kwickham@nmppenergy.org;

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Editor: Kevin Wickham, Communications Specialist