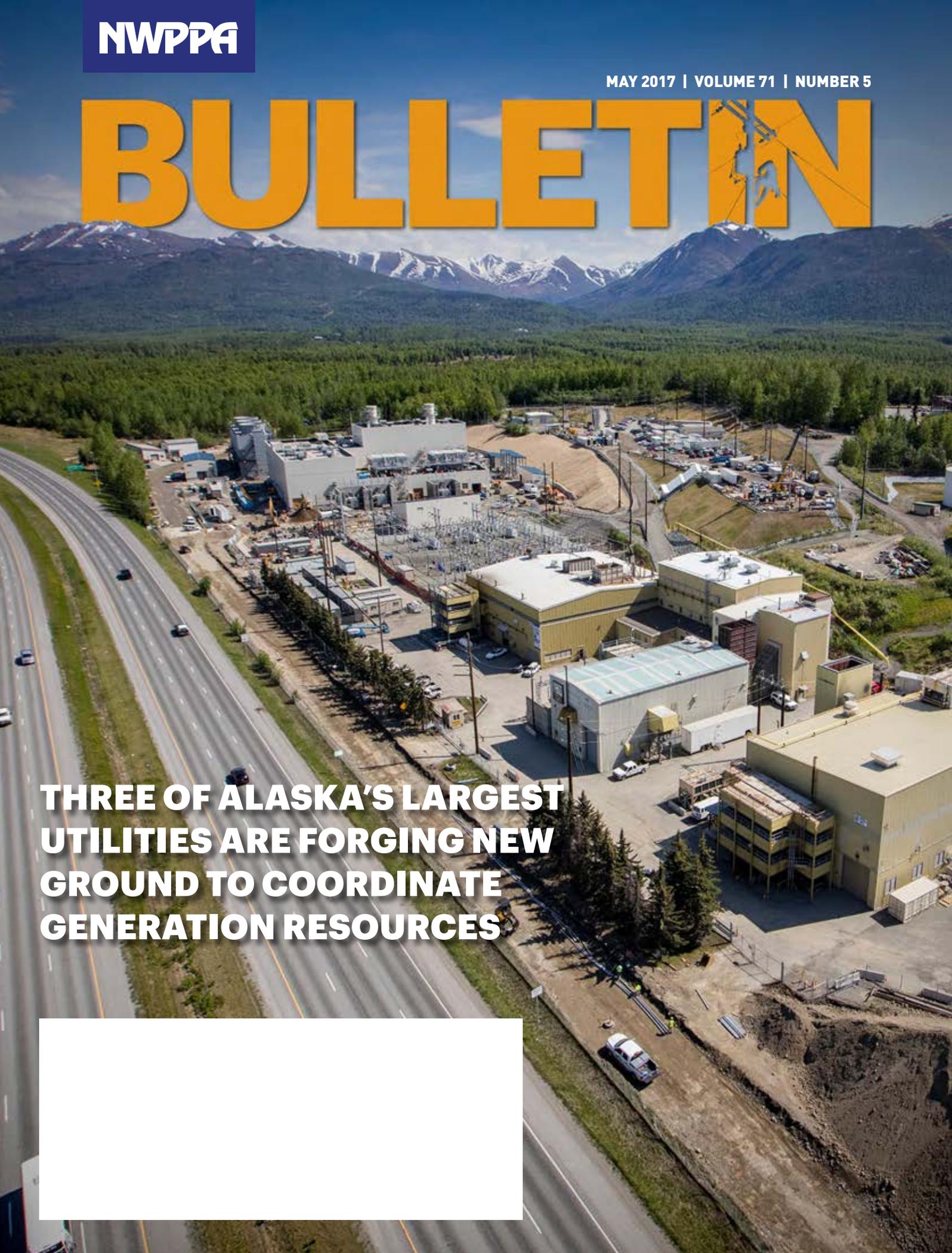


BULLETIN



THREE OF ALASKA'S LARGEST UTILITIES ARE FORGING NEW GROUND TO COORDINATE GENERATION RESOURCES





On the cover: An aerial photo of ML&P's Plant 2A, the most efficient power plant on the system based on heat rate that includes two combined-cycle generators. Photo provided by ML&P.



Opinions expressed in single articles are not necessarily policies of the Association. For permission to reprint articles, write or call the associate editor.

Editor: Debbie Kuraspediani
 Associate Editor: Brenda Dunn
 Graphic Designer: Mark Woodward
 Advertising: Brenda Dunn at (360) 816-1453
 or brenda@nwppa.org

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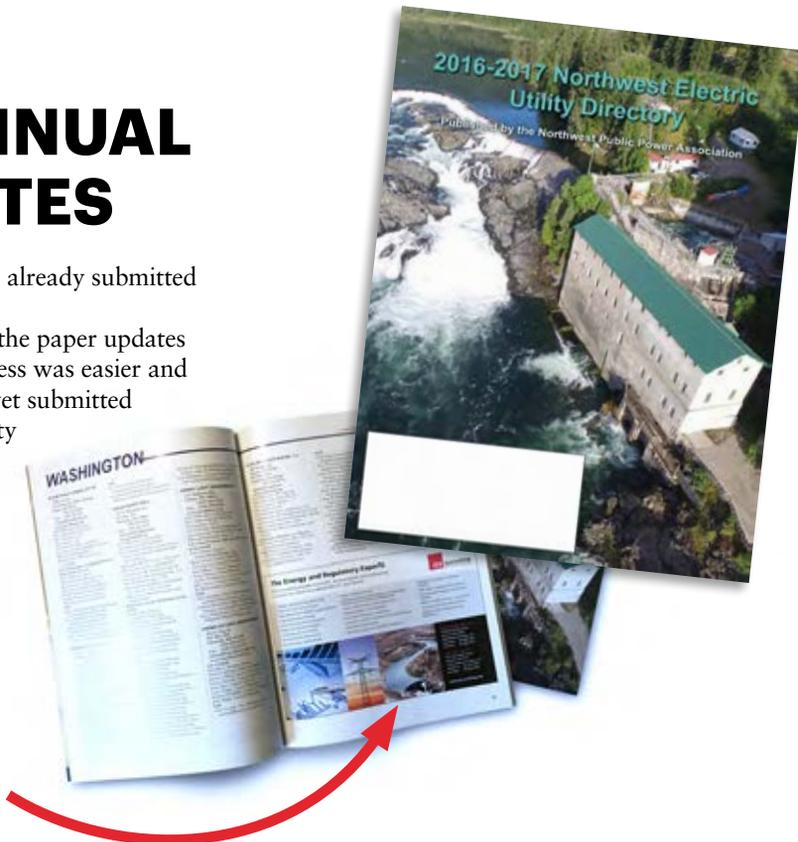
- 3 NWPPA News
- 10 Training Opportunities
- 12 Accounting and Finance
- 14 Distributed Generation
- 16 Marketing and Communications
- 18 Member News
- 22 Associate Member News
- 24 Washington, D.C., Report
- 26 Cover Story
- 30 Job Opportunities

STILL SEEKING ANNUAL DIRECTORY UPDATES

Thank you to the nearly 300 respondents who have already submitted their directory updates!

This year the Association opted to move from the paper updates and go digital with SurveyMonkey. We hope this process was easier and more time efficient for our members. If you have not yet submitted an update for the 2017–2018 Northwest Electric Utility Directory, you still have until May 15 to complete the online survey. Please contact Beth Iverson at beth@nwppa.org for the survey link or with any questions about the directory update process. NWPPA

Don't forget about the chance to advertise your business and be seen by every NWPPA member in the 2017-2018 Directory! Contact brenda@nwppa.org for more information.



Welcome to Washington's PUD No. 1 of Whatcom County

The Association is excited to announce our 153rd member: PUD No. 1 of Whatcom County! For a better idea of where Whatcom County sits in Washington state: the largest city in the county is Bellingham, Wash., and the county is bordered by Canada on the north, Okanogan County on the east, Skagit County on the south, and the Strait of Georgia on the west.

Founded in 1936 in Ferndale, Wash., the PUD has countywide authority in Whatcom County to supply water and electric services. The PUD first provided electric service in 1953 to the General Petroleum Refinery, and first provided water service in the early 1960s.

Currently, the PUD supplies one electrical customer and the PUD's two water intake plants with an average of 27 megawatt-hours of energy purchased from Bonneville Power Administration; owns 15 miles of transmission/distribution lines and three substations; and has an electric system peak usage of 29.6 megawatts.

The 21-person staff (three of whom are dedicated to the electric utility) is managed by Steve Jilk; the three-person board of commissioners represents the voting districts served by the PUD.

For more information about PUD No. 1 of Whatcom County, visit www.pudwhatcom.org. NWPPA

GM, DIRECTOR SURVEY RESULTS AVAILABLE SOON

This year's two annual wage and compensation surveys (the 2017 *General Managers Compensation Survey* and the 2017 *Directors, Commissioners, and Other Elected Officials Annual Compensation Survey*) have been closed and the results will be available by early June.

As a reminder, these are the only two utility compensation surveys that NWPPA will facilitate this year. (Northwest Wage & Hour surveys are managed separately and will continue to be offered annually.) The Association now rotates its annual surveys on an every-other-year basis. These two surveys will be offered this year, and then not again until 2019. Next year, we will open up the 2018 *Linecrew Wage and Benefits Survey*; that survey will again be available in 2020.

Utility general managers and senior HR management will receive the report via email. If you do not receive one by mid-June, please send an email to Brenda Dunn at brenda@nwppa.org.

NWPPA

Eight Tips for Entering Your Best 2017 Excellence in Communication Entries

Last month, utility communications employees and general managers should have received an emailed pdf of the 2017 Call for Entries for NWPPA's 24th annual Excellence in Communication Awards. If you did not receive one, you may download the complete brochure at www.nwppa.org; the Call for Entries can be found near the bottom of the Communications page under the Member Resources tab. All entries and fees must be postmarked by Friday, June 30.

After the entries have been received and logged, local industry and marketing experts will again judge the entries at the NWPPA office in July. The following tips combine the most common comments by judges and some insider tips from NWPPA. Good luck!

1. Every entry must include a label attached to it; however, NWPPA only needs the **billing information** one time. Feel free to only write your credit card information on one form, or better yet, include it on a separate sheet of paper that can easily be shredded and recycled.
2. Photos produced by apps and filters are acceptable, but they must be utility related—judges have scored low in the past if they do not see a utility connection. The new People's Choice award last year was super popular, so if you send in only one entry this year, think about sending in a photo. All photo entries will be viewed by your peers at the Northwest Communications & Energy Innovations Conference (NIC) Welcome Reception in September, so the more the better!
3. Remember that the 2017 awards are for pieces produced in 2016. The two trickiest entries are **annual reports** and **calendars** (under the Special Publication category). For annual reports, verify that your submission was written and produced in 2016, not 2017, before dropping it in the mail; for most utilities, this means you will want to submit your 2015 Annual Report. Calendars are essentially the opposite: submit your 2017 calendar because that is most likely what you produced in 2016.
4. A **statement of purpose** really helps judges understand the meaning and success of entries. The statements do not need to be lengthy, but if you can include an explanation of its purpose, the targeted audience, and its measured success, the judges really appreciate that information. Without that information, we often hear mumbblings from the conference room that sound something like: "It's a nice looking brochure/bill insert/etc., but I don't know why they created it or what the utility did with it."

5. For **newsletters**, enter as many issues of a newsletter as possible—all as one entry. If you have a quarterly newsletter to retirees, submit all four as one entry; or if you have a monthly newsletter to members, submit all 12 as one entry. In other words, a June issue and an October issue of the same newsletter should not be two separate entries—that is considered one entry for that newsletter and the separate editions are helpful examples of the newsletter for the judges.
6. The newer **Internal Communications** category is for anything that was produced for internal consumption: newsletters for employees, in-house informational pieces, training pieces, posters, flyers, PowerPoint presentations ... if it was produced in 2016 for your employees, enter it here. This was a new category in 2016 and a popular one!
7. If you entered your **website** last year, yes, you can enter it again this year, assuming you have maintained it at some point during 2016. Be sure to briefly explain the updates to the website in an attached **statement of purpose**.
8. **Social media** accounts are best submitted as individual entries. If you have a Facebook and Twitter account that you use interchangeably, enter them separately as two entries. If you have a social media campaign that uses multiple platforms to convey the same message, NWPPA considers that an advertising campaign and it should be entered under Category 3.

As in years past, the winning entries and utilities will be honored at Tuesday's evening reception at the NIC. This year the NIC is heading for California sun and will be held at the Embassy Suites Sacramento, September 17-20, 2017. Look for more information about the conference in upcoming *Bulletins*.

NWPPA

Contact Brenda Dunn at brenda@nwppa.org if you have any questions about the contest.

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The 2017 E&O Celebrated the Wild Wild West

Reno and NWPPA welcomed nearly 1,000 attendees, vendors, and speakers to the 2017 Engineering & Operations Conference and Trade Show last month. With a theme of Public Power in the Wild Wild West, the event focused on the significant changes underway in the western electric utility industry due to distributed generation resources, storage, demand response, automation, workforce retirements, and more.

“This year’s E&O delivered engaging and insightful speakers, great educational sessions, and a showcase of utility-specific products by all our supportive vendors,” said 2017 Conference Chair Catherine Simonsen. “Additionally, the E&O banquet featured safety award presentations and a very entertaining comedian. Reno was a great venue!”

The conference kicked off on Monday with an all-day Environmental Task Force meeting as well as three roundtable discussions that afternoon. Normally, the E&O hosts two roundtables (one for lineworkers and one for engineers), but this year the committee decided to add a third one for purchasing and stores employees—and it was very well attended.

“One thing that comes to mind with the Purchasing & Stores Roundtable is that the feedback from several utility employees was very positive,” said Michelle Marlowe, Purchasing & Stores Committee chair. “Many attendees commented that they hope the roundtable continues because they look forward to attending it next year.”

The conference used its spurs and kicked the event off into a gallop on Tuesday with the exceptionally well-attended Vendor Café, opening general session, and keynote speaker, Olympian Cliff Meidl. But before Meidl wowed the audience with his tale of tragedy turned into success, NWPPA had two very important awards to present.

The first award, the Award for Excellence in Engineering or Operations, was presented to Fall River Electric Cooperative Engineering



E&O Planning Committee Member Diana Hamilton (standing) facilitated the brand new luncheon for first-time E&O trade show vendors on Tuesday.



E&O Planning Committee members wore bright red, white, and blue plaid shirts to easily stand out in the sea of cowboy hats, belt buckles, and western shirts.



(L-R) E&O Policy Committee Members Bob Cusick of Central Lincoln PUD, Catherine Simonsen from SMUD, and Tina Ward of Mason County PUD No. 3 cut the ceremonial “ribbon” for the opening of the trade show on Tuesday night.

Manager Dave Peterson. Also known as the Milton Hunt McGuire Award, named after the longtime manager of the Electrical Department of the City of McMinnville, it was first presented in 1947 and is considered NWPPA's most prestigious award for a utility employee working in the areas of engineering or operations. Because of the high caliber of requirements to receive the award, it is not presented every year; the last presentation of the Milton Hunt McGuire award was in 2014. Peterson's wife, his general manager Bryan Case, and several of his co-workers were on hand to see him receive this honor.

Mission Valley Power's Kerry Weidrich received the second award, the Policy Committee's Recognition of Service Award. Weidrich, a long-time member of the Planning Committee, chaired the E&O in 2013 when it was held in Portland, Ore. That was the year of the infamous tie-dyed committee t-shirts that will not be soon forgotten. Upon presenting the award to Weidrich, Conference Vice Chair Pat Durham said, "That conference is still talked about today for the enthusiasm and quality of the conference. The attendance that year was one of the best in the history of the E&O and the program was superb, and led by the chair of the conference that year, our friend and colleague, Kerry Weidrich."

In addition to the general sessions and awards banquet, the conference hosted approximately 30 learning sessions spanning eight core utility categories. NWPPA Executive Director Anita Decker moderated Tuesday's always-popular CEO panel discussion of current issues that utilities are facing. On this year's panel were Jim Webb of Lower Valley Energy, Larry Weis of Seattle City Light, Roger Kline of Northern Wasco PUD, Alex Love of Nelson Hydro, and John Roukema of Silicon Valley Power.

Love, who is also the 2016-2017 president of the NWPPA Board of Trustees, spent the week sitting in on sessions, talking with attendees, and welcoming new vendors to the trade show.

"Compliments to the NWPPA staff on the E&O," he said. "I talked to lots of people and got consistently great feedback from first timers and returnees alike!"

Amidst the hundreds of utility returnees and first timers, we also invited six local college students to attend this year's E&O Conference.



Tuesday's always-popular CEO panel included (L-R) Jim Webb of Lower Valley Energy, Larry Weis of Seattle City Light, Roger Kline of Northern Wasco PUD, Alex Love of Nelson Hydro, and John Roukema of Silicon Valley Power.



Monday's Lineman's Roundtable was exceptionally well attended again this year.



(L-R) Planning Committee Members Michelle Marlowe of Cowlitz PUD, Sean Olson of Salem Electric, and Paul Wienecke of Clark Public Utilities facilitated this year's all-new Purchasing & Stores Roundtable.

Continued on page 8



Congratulations to the 2017 NWPPA Safety Award winners!



Congratulations to Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative's Dave Peterson for being the recipient of the 2017 Milton Hunt McGuire Award for Excellence in Engineering & Operations.

The students, primarily in the engineering disciplines, paired up with Planning Committee members to network with utility employees, sit in on sessions, and check out all that the vendors had to offer in the trade show.

“The hospitality of the NWPPA staff, attendees, and vendors made us feel so welcome,” said Matt Wetzell, an electrical engineering student at the University of Nevada, Reno. “I feel like I learned so much, and the conference confirmed to me that I want to pursue a career in the utility industry after I graduate in May. I know that this experience and the connections I made here will be invaluable in the future.”

And what about this year's trade show? This year over 200 vendors came to Reno to network with clients, and exhibit their products and services to potential new clients—all while celebrating the Public Power in the Wild Wild West theme. Terex Utilities won this year's Best Theme of Conference Award, Platt Electric Supply won Best Presentation of Product, and Arnett Industries won Best Enthusiasm. The winners will each receive one free standard booth in the 2018 E&O trade show. Didn't win a free booth this year but are still interested in being a vendor in Tacoma? Booths for 2018 were pre-sold at the Reno event, but at the time this issue went to print we still had 35 10'X10' spaces available. Email Jenny Keesey

at Jennifer@nwppa.org to purchase a booth for the 2018 trade show before they are all gone!

In addition to the vendor awards, NWPPA presented several safety awards throughout the conference. First, on April 13 prior to the opening general session on Thursday, E&O Safety Committee Chair Dale Benner presented the 2017 Safety Heroism Award to Clallam County PUD Line Foreman Sam Parks for his life-saving actions one evening in September. That evening, another of Clallam County PUD's employees suffered a medical event that caused him to lose consciousness while driving home. Parks was only two cars behind and saw what had happened; he stopped to render help. Parks automatically went into action along with others that soon arrived; the doors were locked so they broke the windows and Parks started CPR. Medical aid arrived and between the two they worked on him. The employee survived and said that he owes his life to his coworker.

The final safety awards were presented at Thursday evening's banquet. Employees accepted the 2017 NWPPA Safety Awards on behalf of their utilities in front of nearly 300 attendees at the banquet. The safety contest awards are based upon a review of each utility's safety contest form, the number of recordable injury/illness cases (the incident rate) in 2016, and the lost work days (the severity rate) in 2016. For a complete list of the first-, second-, and third-place winners per category, please visit our website at www.nwppa.org.

As always, a huge thank you to our sponsors for their generosity: Platinum Sponsor ECI, Inc.; Gold Sponsors Gore Electric, IPS Energy, POWER Engineers, SPX Transformer Solutions; Silver Sponsor Futura; and Signature Sponsors Commonwealth Associates, Evluma, and General Pacific. Without our event sponsors, attendees would not enjoy the lunches, refreshments, receptions, and other services that they provide.

For more photos from this year's conference and trade show, visit www.facebook.com/NWPPAssoc.

Mark your calendars for the 2018 E&O in Tacoma, Wash., April 9-12, 2018. We hope to see you there!



Clallam PUD Line Foreman Sam Parks (center) received the NWPPA Safety Heroism Award from E&O Chair Catherine Simonsen and E&O Safety Committee Chair Dale Benner.



Mission Valley Power's Kerry Weidrich, the 2013 chair of the E&O, received the Policy Committee's Recognition of Service Award.

RENO

June, July, and August 2017

Please visit www.nwppa.org to view the full course descriptions for these and other courses.

LABOR AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS GROUP MEMBER MEETING

Who Should Attend: Members of the NWPPA Labor and Employee Relations Group: general managers, labor relations managers, operations managers, and human resource professionals.

June 1–2, 2017—Pasco, Wash.

STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: UNDERGROUND LINE DESIGN AND SUBDIVISION LAYOUT

Who Should Attend: Staking engineers.

June 5–7, 2017—Boise, Idaho

LEADERSHIP SKILLS SERIES SESSION #1—SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Who Should Attend: Supervisors and managers, and employees who will be transitioning to a supervisory or managerial role in the future.

June 6–7, 2017—Whitefish, Mont.

WRITING EFFECTIVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Who Should Attend: Anyone who needs to write job descriptions for positions, including board members, utility managers, and human resources staff.

June 6–7, 2017—Vancouver, Wash.

STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: PROTECTION/BASIC SECTIONALIZING DESIGN

Who Should Attend: Staking technicians.

June 7–8, 2017—Boise, Idaho

STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: LINE INSPECTION

Who Should Attend: Staking technicians.

June 8–9, 2017—Boise, Idaho

DISTRIBUTION ENGINEERING SERIES: SESSION 1—PLANNING AND ANALYSIS

Who Should Attend: Engineers and senior technical personnel involved in distribution system design, planning, modeling, and analysis.

June 12–16, 2017—Vancouver, Wash.

INTRODUCTION TO RATE MAKING

Who Should Attend: Staff/analysts who are new to rate setting or the utility industry, as well as those new to demand response or interested in developing a demand response program for their utility.

June 14, 2017—Spokane, Wash.

ADVANCED RATE MAKING

Who Should Attend: Analysts and managers who are interested in developing new rates or updating the rate structures for their utility.

June 15, 2017—Spokane, Wash.

HARDENING WINDOWS NETWORKS

Who Should Attend: Network, server, desktop, and security administrators; and management-level individuals interested in this topic.

June 20–23, 2017—Vancouver, Wash.

STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: UNDERGROUND LINE DESIGN AND SUBDIVISION LAYOUT FOR CALIFORNIA UTILITIES

Who Should Attend: California utility staking engineers.

June 26–28, 2017—Alameda, Calif.

ELECTRIC UTILITY SYSTEM OPERATIONS

Who Should Attend: Any electric utility industry employee (utility or vendor) whose job performance will benefit from a basic understanding of the operations side of the utility business, including engineering; operations; safety; purchasing; information technology; regulatory and rates; customer service; public relations; legal; accounting; as well as utility commissioners and board members.

June 27–28, 2017—Idaho Falls, Idaho

STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: PROTECTION/BASIC SECTIONALIZING DESIGN FOR CALIFORNIA UTILITIES

Who Should Attend: California utility staking technicians.

June 28–29, 2017—Alameda, Calif.

NRECA CCD 2640: FINANCIAL DECISION MAKING

Who Should Attend: Directors, policy makers, and general managers of cooperative utilities.

June 28–29, 2017—Lakewood, Wash.

TELEPHONE EXCELLENCE

Who Should Attend: Customer service professionals and others who work with customers by phone.

June 28–29, 2017—Idaho Falls, Idaho

STAKING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: LINE INSPECTION FOR CALIFORNIA UTILITIES

Who Should Attend: California utility staking technicians.

June 29–30, 2017—Alameda, Calif.

DISTRIBUTION ENGINEERING SERIES: SESSION 2—OVERCURRENT PROTECTION

Who Should Attend: Engineers and senior technical personnel involved in selecting and coordinating overcurrent protection devices.

July 12–13, 2017—Vancouver, Wash.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP SKILLS SERIES SESSION 3, SERIES 5—INSIDEOUT COACHING

Who Should Attend: Directors, managers, graduates of the Leadership Skills Series, and newly appointed senior leaders.

July 12–13, 2017—Vancouver, Wash.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP: ONENOTE AND LEAN OUTLOOK

Who Should Attend: Administrative assistants, executive assistants, and clerks to the board.

July 18, 2017—Leavenworth, Wash.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS CONFERENCE

Who Should Attend: Administrative assistants, executive assistants, and clerks to the board.

July 19–20, 2017—Leavenworth, Wash.

HANDS-ON BASIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Who Should Attend: Administrative assistants, executive assistants, records coordinators, records managers, and any utility staff working with documents and records, both paper and electronic.

August 16–17, 2017—Newport, Ore. **NWPPA**

REGISTER TODAY!

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS CONFERENCE



July 19–20, 2017
Leavenworth, Wash.

SAVE THE DATE!

LOCALLY GROWN.
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September 17–20 Sacramento, Calif.

NORTHWEST COMMUNICATIONS AND
ENERGY INNOVATIONS CONFERENCE (NIC)

A Look Back at Public Power

50 YEARS AGO – 1967

The Eugene Water & Electric Board authorized purchase of a half-block site for a new office building as part of Eugene's civic center (Ore.) ... The City of Cordova received a \$223,000 REA loan to build 18 miles of line to serve 43 new rural customers (Alaska) ... Big Flat Electric Cooperative made plans to build 49 miles of distribution line to serve 54 new consumers and make extensive system improvements (Mont.) ... Byron Price was named as NWPPA's first-ever second vice president on the board of trustees ... Okanogan County PUD reduced electric rates by 10 percent for schools, churches, cities, and hospitals, effective May 1967 (Wash.).

25 YEARS AGO – 1992

Clallam County PUD's Ken Morgan received the 1967 Milton Hunt McGuire Award (Wash.) ... The Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association hired Sandra Collette-Flicker as the public affairs director ... Grays Harbor PUD assessed fluorescent light savings (Wash.) ... Homer Electric named Bill Iles as special assistant to the general manager (Alaska) ... Snohomish County PUD promoted Allan Aldrich to director of customer communications and services development (Wash.) ... Umatilla Electric Cooperative promoted Gerri Beauchamp to the position of manager of office services (Ore.).

5 YEARS AGO – 2012

Port Angeles established a wireless mobile data system to provide mobile services for public safety, as well as Internet access to the general public (Wash.) ... SMUD completed installation of smart meters for its more than 600,000 residential and business customers (Calif.) ... Chelan County PUD General Manager John Janney accepted a six-year employment contract (Wash.) ... The Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association Board selected Beth Vargas Duncan as OMEU's new executive director ... Tacoma Power's new Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery visitor center made a splash by winning an Outstanding Stewards of America's Waters Award for Public Education (Wash.).



By Julie Desimone

THE NEW LEASING STANDARD AND PURCHASED POWER AGREEMENTS

For the past several years, our technical articles in the *Bulletin* have been focusing on GASB followers as GASB has issued an unprecedented amount of new accounting standards over the past decade. Well, it is time for cooperatives and FASB followers to take note as FASB has released their new lease accounting standard. This article goes through some of the considerations—primarily for purchased power agreements—of this standard. However, GASB followers take note: GASB is close to releasing their version of lease accounting, so you're next!

In February 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued *Accounting Standards Update (ASU) 2016-02, Leases*, which provides new guidelines that change the accounting for leasing arrangements.

The new leasing standard becomes effective in fiscal years beginning after **December 15, 2018**, including interim periods within those fiscal years, for:

- Public business entities
- Not-for-profit entities that have issued (or are a conduit bond obligator for) securities that are traded, listed, or quoted on an exchange or an over-the-counter market
- Employee benefit plans that file financial statements with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

For all other entities, it becomes effective in fiscal years beginning after **December 15, 2019**, and interim periods in fiscal years beginning after **December 15, 2020**. Early adoption is permitted for all entities.

The new guidelines are contained in *Accounting Standards Codification (ASC) Topic 842, Leases*. Compared with legacy lease accounting, ASC Topic 842 primarily changes the accounting for lessees, requiring lessees to record assets and liabilities on the balance sheet for almost every lease. This significantly differs from legacy accounting for operating leases, under which they were viewed as executory contracts not recognized for accounting purposes (in other words, they were “off balance sheet”).

ASC Topic 842 defines a lease as “a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration.” Many utilities will need to look at their purchased power agreements or contracts to determine if the control in whole, or in part, is considered a lease.

Therefore, a contract is (or contains) a lease if **both** of the following two conditions are met:

 Identified asset	The contract explicitly or implicitly specifies the use of identified property, plant, or equipment.
 Customer control	The customer controls the use of the identified asset for a period of time.

It is important to note that the term “lease” is not required to be included in the contract language. All contracts must be analyzed to determine if lease accounting is appropriate.

The following discussion provides additional details on each of these criteria.

Identified asset

A lease must explicitly or implicitly identify a specific asset that is the subject of the contract. Therefore, if the supplier has a substantive substitution right, the contract is not a lease.

A supplier has the substantive right to substitute an asset if it both:

- Has the practical ability to substitute the identified asset, and
- Can benefit from exercising that right of substitution.

To demonstrate, assume ABC Cooperative enters into a contract to receive up to 20 megawatts from a solar farmer (vendor). The vendor owns hundreds of solar panels that have capacity well in excess of what is required under the contract and the vendor has the right to select which farm (or portion of a farm) will provide ABC's megawatts need. For instance, the vendor can easily shift ABC's megawatts to another farm if there are disruption issues with the solar farm currently being used.

This contract doesn't contain a lease, because no one specific asset is the subject of the contract. The vendor has the ability to determine which solar panels in which farm will be used to fulfill the vendor's obligation in the contract. Additionally, the vendor's substitution rights are substantive because it has the practical ability to substitute solar panels and can benefit from that right (by using certain solar panels for other business opportunities).

In contrast, assume ZYX is a university that purchases part of its power from a single solar farm under a purchased power agreement. Its contract with Solar Co. specifies the facility from which the megawatts will be provided to ZYX and states that the university will take all output from the facility for a specified period of time. The contract generally doesn't allow for a right of substitution, except for planned outages and during the commissioning phase of the facility.

Unlike in the prior scenario, the substitution right isn't substantive because it doesn't provide the supplier with an economic benefit. The supplier incurs expense in obtaining the replacement power and transmission to and from the ZYX's metering point and is unable to use the power from the designated solar farm for other lease arrangements. In this case, the solar facility meets the definition of an identified asset and in order to determine if the contract meets the definition of a lease, ZYX must determine if customer control is present in the contract.

Customer control

Under ASC Topic 842, a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset if, throughout the period of use, the customer has the right to both:

- Direct the use of the identified asset, and
- Obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from the use of the identified asset.

The right to direct the use of an identified asset means the lessee has the right to direct how the asset is used and for what purpose. This includes the right to change how the asset is used throughout the contract term. ASC Topic 842 further indicates that a supplier's protective rights over the identified asset don't necessarily prevent the customer from having the right to direct its use.

For example, a cogeneration facility is attached to FDR's generation unit. This cogeneration facility will produce power using steam output from FDR's generation unit. FDR will also purchase 100 percent of the output from the cogeneration facility. The contract specifies that the cogenerational facility will be maintained by FDR and FDR will determine the production level of the facility. Based on this set of facts, FDR has the right to direct the use of the cogeneration facility specified by the contractual arrangement.

The standard does not define "substantially all" of the economic benefits from the use of the identified asset. Therefore, each time a contract is evaluated, the company must determine its application of the term "substantially all." For example, in the previous scenario, if FDR receives all of the output of the facility, except for a byproduct that will be sold for less than 5 percent of total revenue derived from the contract, for the expected useful life of the asset, this would likely meet the criteria of "substantially all."

Conclusion

As this standard begins to be implemented, it is important for companies to step back and look for existing and new contracts that need to be evaluated under the new standard to determine if they are or contain a lease under the new definition. Documentation of considerations around identified assets and customer control are an important part of the company's internal control processes.

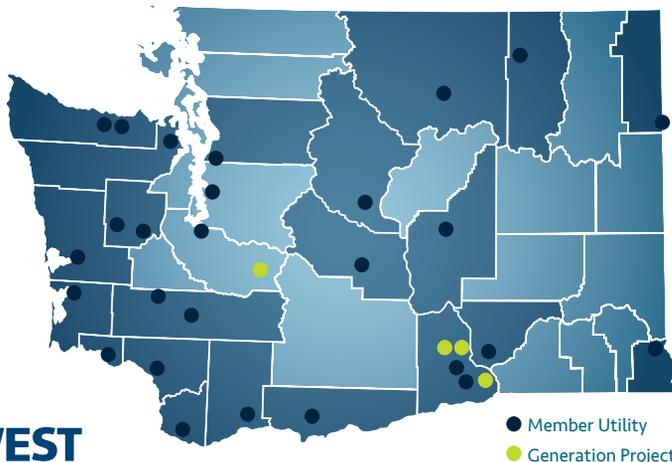
If you have questions about how to implement the new accounting standard or how it will affect your company, you can find more information and examples in ASC Topic 842, Leases: The FASB's New Guidelines and Their Effect on Leasing Arrangements (<http://bit.ly/2oD7I3L>). **NWPPA**

Julie Desimone is a partner in the Portland, Ore., office of Moss Adams LLP, the largest accounting and consulting firm in the West, and can be reached at julie.desimone@mossadams.com.

Celebrating **60** years as a public power partner!

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FEC's Transformative Technology Team Exceeds Expectations

By Wendy Ostrom-Price



What do you get when you put six creative employees of Flathead Electric Cooperative in a room and tell them to come up with an innovative project? According to General Manager Mark Johnson, what you get is...an innovative project.

“We gave these employees, who represent different departments and diverse perspectives, the task of finding a way to study the impacts of solar energy and back-up battery storage on our electric system and they exceeded expectations. We just gave them the bones and they added all the meat,” said Johnson.

The team consists of Energy Services Representative David Bopp, Executive Assistant Suzanne Childers, Business Analyst Matthew Clarke, Research Analyst Wade Harris, GIS Data Specialist Amanda Opp, and Member Services Representatives JoAnn Reed and Annie Westphal.

The impetus for what is referred to as the Residential Solar Storage Project was over concerns Johnson had about the electric industry being challenged by distributed generation, primarily in the form of photovoltaics and solar power, usurping the market share of traditional energy.

“As solar and other technologies become more widely adopted, it’s important that we understand how they will affect our system and the industry as a whole,” said Johnson. “Once we understand that, we can figure out how to coexist and benefit our members.”

The Flathead team consists of (L-R) Energy Services Representative David Bopp, Executive Assistant Suzanne Childers, Business Analyst Matthew Clarke, Research Analyst Wade Harris, GIS Data Specialist Amanda Opp, and Member Services Representatives JoAnn Reed and Annie Westphal. Photos provided by FEC.

The research strategy developed by the team includes the installation and data collection of a 7.2-kilowatt net-metered solar array on the roof of a residential structure, along with a 6.4-kilowatt-hour Tesla Powerwall and a Solaredge inverter. Obtaining a Tesla Powerwall battery for backup energy storage at the facility was a coup for FEC. To Flathead Electric's knowledge, the leading-edge product is the first of its kind installed in Montana. Rather than installing the system on a family residence, the co-op conducted an application process to select a local non-profit organization to receive the system (and its associated benefits).

The objective was to find a facility with electrical usage similar to a family residence, and the Flathead Youth Home met all the criteria. Conditions included that they have tax-exempt, non-profit status and be available for promotional and educational purposes; that there be a south-facing roof that was unobstructed; and that they had over 7,200 kilowatt-hours in usage per year to make sure that—post-solar install—they were a user of the grid rather than a net contributor to the grid over the year. There also needed to be room for the battery, inverter, and switching gear, and an agreement that FEC have access to that equipment with short notice if necessary.

The Flathead Youth Home is an eight-bed group home that is dually licensed to provide short-term crisis intervention and longer-term group care for youth, ages 10 to 18. Program Director Lance Isaak said he is excited about the project, calling it a “win” for all involved.

“Flathead Electric will be able to utilize a well-known facility for research, and we will benefit from savings on electrical expenses and demands, which will help offset the costs of caring for our community’s youth in crisis,” said Isaak. “In addition, we all get to learn more about alternative energy.”

So how does this residential solar storage system work? The solar panels absorb energy during the day (when the sun is shining) that is then stored in the battery. That energy can then be used at another time, such as during an outage. When fully charged, it can power important appliances for 4-6 hours. FEC likens it to saving a little sunshine for a rainy day.

Another potential benefit of battery storage is that it could lessen the peak usage for the home. When a home uses a lot of power at the same time as all the other homes on a system, the electrical grid as a whole hits peak usage, or the highest usage over a small window of time. These peaks increase power costs for FEC and its members; discharging a battery during peak usage could reduce their share of the increased costs.

FEC’s partnership with the Flathead Youth Home will last 10 years. After this time, the ownership of the system will be transferred to the Flathead Youth Home. With replacement of the inverter and battery at the end of their lives, the system could run indefinitely.



A Tesla Powerwall is installed in the Flathead Youth Home.

Overall, FEC seeks to learn how a member’s electrical profile might change if they use solar-power production integrated with electrical-power storage. This knowledge will help determine how to integrate the new technology into the local electrical grid to benefit members, as well as help determine how to maintain fair electric rates for all concerned. Since gathering enough relevant data will take several years, Johnson says he and the team wanted to take initiative on the project as soon as possible: it became fully operational in December of last year.

Johnson credits this latest FEC innovation to “an exceptionally forward-thinking staff and board of trustees.” **NWPPA**

Wendy Ostrom Price is the public relations officer for Flathead Electric Cooperative in Kalispell, Mont. She can be reached at either (406) 751-1820 or w.ostrom-price@flathead.coop.

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Where Should You Put Your Message: **ONLINE OR IN PRINT?**

By Megan McKoy-Noe

Both, says Ruralite Services CEO Michael Shepard. He joined the utility communications cooperative in 2016 after a career in newspapers and magazine publishing.

“One of the things we struggle with as communicators is the transition to digital and online messaging while still understanding what works in print,” said Shepard. “Do not look at digital as a complete transition from print. It is more complicated than that.”

Consider each message your utility wants to share. Some work best in print, while other messages should also be shared on social media or a website.

Science of print

“Print remains extremely valuable as a place to tell stories,” said Shepard. “Print is great for a message people aren’t necessarily looking for—a message you’re bringing to them. Make it as compelling as possible; tell a fascinating story readers were not expecting to learn.”

Science backs up the power of print. A 2015 study by the Canadian neuromarketing firm TrueImpact used eye-tracking, brain wave measurement, and questionnaires to compare the impact of print messages with email and online messaging.

The report found direct mail—materials you hold in your hands—are easier to understand than digital messages.

“Direct mail requires 21 percent less cognitive effort to process than digital media, suggesting it is both easier to understand and more memorable,” the report states. “When asked to cite the brand (company name) of an advertisement they had just seen, recall was 70 percent higher among participants who were exposed to a direct mail piece than a digital ad.”

Questions drive digital content

Websites and social media are ideal for question-driven messages. Outage updates, high-bill questions, immediate safety concerns—these are questions consumers seek answers to online.

“Folks are turning increasingly to digital sources (and away from radio and TV) for instant information,” said Shepard.

Digital platforms (website, social media, videos) help utilities provide succinct information to consumers quickly.

More than half of the average website’s traffic comes from mobile devices. Utilities need to make sure their websites use responsive design for easy mobile-device viewing. Content should be geared toward answering the common questions driving consumers to the website.

Social steps

Print helps readers discover stories. Websites answer questions. How does social media fit into a communicator’s toolbox?

“You can use social media to get out a serious message about something but in a more lighthearted way,” said Shepard.

Social media can be used to help followers discover stories about their community, much as you see in print. It can also be a key communication channel during an outage. Share pictures of damage, restoration efforts, and expected time to restore power.



Photo by Mike Teegarden.

Ruralite Services CEO Michael Shepard touched on the value of both print and digital at the Ruralite Services Annual Meeting on April 4.



Photo by Mike Teegarden.

Remember reach

Keep digital messages simple. A 2015 study by Chartbeat, a media analytics partner, found 55 percent of website visitors spend less than 15 seconds actively reading a Web page.

Think social media results are better? Think again. A 2012 PNM Resources survey of utility social media accounts found the best of the best—utility accounts with high engagement—attract only about 12 percent of a utility’s customer base.

Compare digital reach to *Ruralite* magazine’s last reader profile study. Fifty-eight percent of readers surveyed in 2013 read the magazine for 30 minutes or more. And when asked how many of the last four issues these people had read, 76.4 percent reported they had read all four issues. Since an average of 1.9 people read each issue, that means 477,286 out of 624,720 potential household readers open and read every issue of *Ruralite* magazine.

“The reality is that—at least for our industry—digital has an extremely modest impact. There is very little website, app, and social media traffic, especially when you compare it to how many utility consumers read the print version of their statewide publication or utility newsletter,” said *Ruralite* Managing Editor Curtis Condon. “Digital and print are not equal in terms of their effectiveness or value.”

Shepard agrees, encouraging utility communicators to use many—not just one or two—communication avenues to get the word out.

“Do not look at it as, ‘This goes here now,’” he said. “You may need to include five or six elements across different platforms to have a full communications plan.” **NWPPA**

Megan McKoy-Noe is the content marketing and development manager for Ruralite Services and can be contacted at meganm@ruralite.org. This article was originally published on the Ruralite Services blog on February 15, 2017.

CRPUD Board Appoints Nguyen as General Manager

At their April 18, 2017, meeting, the Columbia River PUD (Deer Island, Ore.) Board of Directors appointed **John Nguyen** as general manager. Nguyen has served as interim general manager since August 2015. He now becomes the third general manager in the PUD's 33-year history.



The action item before the board laid out several options, including extending Nguyen's interim general manager contract, hiring an outside firm for a competitive recruitment, asking PUD staff to conduct a competitive recruitment, or appointing Nguyen. During their discussion, the board members voiced unanimous support for the PUD's performance under Nguyen's leadership, and discussed the costs and challenges of the other recruitment options.

"John and his leadership team have been able to handle every critical task that was thrown at them, hands down," said Board President **Jake Carter**. "Our employees are happy, we have cash in the bank, and we are going in a positive direction. I have a hard time finding any negative in our current leader."

Following the discussion, Board Member **Debbie Reed** made a motion to appoint Nguyen, which was seconded by Board Treasurer **Craig Melton**. The motion passed unanimously and was met by a round of applause from the audience.

Nguyen thanked the board for the appointment and credited the leadership team for the success of the PUD.

"I have a great staff that I work with and everything that we have done together is because of their dedication and talent. I appreciate them," he said. **NWPPA**

Okanogan's Peters to Retire after 25 Years

Debbie Peters will be retiring after 25 outstanding years of service to Okanogan County PUD (Wash.). Peters started with the District as an account clerk in Brewster. In March 1997, she was awarded the energy services coordinator position. In 2002, she received her first **NWPPA** Excellence in Communication award in the Product Marketing category for her *Shed Some Light* ad placed in county newspapers.



(L-R) General Manager **John Grubich** presents the 25-year service award to **Debbie Peters**.

The District was honored to present her with her 25-year service award during their regularly scheduled Board meeting on April 3. **NWPPA**

SMUD Team Raises over \$23K for Youth Services

When the members of SMUD's most recent Building Leadership Talent team chose Wind Youth Services as the non-profit organization they would support throughout the course of their program, they committed to help in every way they could. And according to Wind, they delivered. Over the course of the last 12 months, the members of SMUD's BLT team raised more than \$23,000 in cash and in-kind contributions for Wind. In addition, the team volunteered hundreds of hours supporting Wind projects, including collecting hygiene kits, facilitating fundraisers, cooking and serving meals, and more.

"We are truly grateful for the efforts of SMUD's BLT team," said **Suzi Dotson**, executive director of Wind Youth Services. "The team provided so much for our at-risk youth, and we're very excited that some members of the team plan to continue to support us in the future."

Some of the team's most significant work was aimed at improving one of Wind's transitional youth shelters in Sacramento. Their efforts on that project included renovating and rehabilitating outdoor areas at the home; facilitating the donation of professional tree-trimming services for the home; assisting with indoor renovations; and facilitating the donation of a van that the facility uses to transport minors to school and other activities.

"Every year our BLT teams shine a light on the efforts of a local nonprofit," said **Laura Lewis**, SMUD's chief legal officer and one of the BLT team's executive sponsors. "This year, the members of the team really established a special bond with Wind Youth Services and the young people they help every day. The team really provided a great example of our commitment to this community." **NWPPA**



SMUD's BLT team takes a quick break from installing new landscaping at one of Wind Youth Services' overnight facilities.

John E. Shepherd Joins Peninsula Light

Peninsula Light (Gig Harbor, Wash.) welcomed the newest member of the organization's senior management team: **John E. Shepherd** as chief business officer. In this newly created position, Shepherd plays an integral role in achieving the organization's core purpose of continually improving quality of life for their members and fulfilling the PUD's values: integrity, innovation, respect, and dedication.



"John will provide transformational leadership during a pivotal period of innovation in the energy industry," said PenLight CEO **Jafar Taghavi**. "We are excited about John's role at PenLight, knowing he will help achieve our goals of reliability, member satisfaction, and maintaining economical electric rates."

Most recently, Shepherd served as president/CEO of Omni-FAB, a diversified manufacturer of engineering solutions for a wide range of industries.

Shepherd holds two master's degrees: an M.B.A. from the University of Washington and a master's in public administration from Seattle University. He earned his undergraduate degree from St. Mary's College in Northern California. Outside the office, he enjoys bicycling and spending time with his family.

NWPPA

Chelan Unveils Plans for All-Electric Meters

Chelan PUD (Wenatchee, Wash.) already has some 16,000 digital, one-way meters that allow meter readers to drive by and do meter reads, but the utility wants to take technology one step farther.

"Right now, the meter reading process is manual," said **John Stoll**, managing director of customer utilities. "With the new, two-way digital meters, the meter would 'ping' the utility with that data daily—no more driving that involves time and even means adding auto emissions into the air."

The new two-way, digital meters, also known as advance or automated meters, are part of Chelan PUD's efforts to invest in technologies that improve the efficiency of employees and provide greater convenience and options for customers. In the long run, the utility estimates that there will be substantial cost savings for the PUD through remote, automated data collection that provides real-time meter reads that are accurate and don't require a person onsite to do the reading.

For customers, it means that they can follow their energy use daily and make adjustments to keep their energy bills low. And, like many other utility services customers already have, they will be able to manage their electric utility account from their computer or mobile device by setting up their own dashboard that manages their energy consumption.

The timing is right for Chelan PUD to look at AMI. The PUD is replacing its current customer information system during the next two years and adding in AMI is a logical next investment. NWPPA

MEA Announces Second Quarter Rate Decrease

Effective April 3, 2017, the overall monthly bill for the average Matanuska Electric Association member (using approximately 680 kWh of electricity) decreased approximately 5.5 percent, from \$143.59 to \$135.69 per month, subject to RCA approval.

The decrease is the result of regular quarterly rate adjustments to both base rates and the Cost of Power Adjustment. The MEA Board of Directors voted on February 13, 2017, to authorize an increase of 0.45 percent in base rates, effective the second quarter of 2017. Under the terms of rules set by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, MEA is allowed on a quarterly basis to file for limited increases or decreases in base rates, provided that the adjustments stay within certain financial parameters established by the RCA. This base rate filing took effect on April 3, 2017.

MEA is also filing a 15.17 percent decrease to the COPA rate, due largely to revenue associated with economy energy sales, which reduces MEA's cost of purchase power and all else being equal, reduces the COPA rate. This demonstrates the ability of recent Railbelt collaboration to offset costs for cooperative members. NWPPA

Columbia REA's 79th Annual Meeting a Success

On April 20, Columbia REA (Walla Walla, Wash.) held its 79th annual meeting at College Place High School. The annual event was attended by approximately 320 members, employees, retirees, and special guests.

Between dinner and door prizes, the business meeting included reports about the financial state of the cooperative and a 2016 year-in-review presented by CEO **Les Teel**.

A record number of ballots were cast in this election cycle with nearly 650 members voting. The elections resulted in the re-election of two and the election of one new board member. **Greg Knowles** of Walla Walla (District 1) and **Vic Parks** of Burbank (District 2) each won re-election to the board, while **Neil Carpenter** of Waitsburg was elected to represent District 3. Directors serve three-year terms with a seat from each district standing for election each year. Immediately following the annual meeting, the newly formed board of directors met to elect officers: **Kathleen Wooldridge** of Starbuck remains president, Knowles became the vice president, and **Tom Hildreth** of Walla Walla fills the secretary/treasurer position.

Columbia REA's scholarship awards were also presented during the meeting. The awards include three academic scholarships, each renewable for up to four years, available to members and/or member's dependents, and a one-time award to a regional youth enrolled in a linework training program. **Teagan Aune** received the \$1,500 Clark A. Brewington Memorial Scholarship; **Jennifer Warren** and **Cameron Peters** each earned a \$1,000 scholarship; and **Trent Enloe** received the \$2,500 Jeff Meredith Memorial Scholarship. NWPPA



Neil Carpenter

Kohler Appointed to Advisory Committee

Alaska Governor **Bill Walker** has appointed **Meera Kohler**, president and CEO of Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, to the Renewable Energy Fund Advisory Committee. Kohler is filling the Small Rural Electric Utility seat held by **Brad Reeve**, former general manager of Kotzebue Electric Association who retired in February.



Kohler's term began recently and expires March 1, 2020.

NWPPA

Grant PUD Sets Electric Prices for 2017

At their business meeting on March 28, Grant PUD (Ephrata, Wash.) commissioners adopted 2017 retail electric price increases across all customer classifications.



The adopted 2017 budget called for price increases designed to add two percent in additional revenue from local (retail) customers. The typical residential household is expected to see an increase of approximately \$1.41 per month on their electric bill (assuming 1,800 kilowatt-hours). All increases were effective April 1 and are set to bring in an additional \$3 million in revenue this year.

The price changes align with commission policy of small, predictable increases, while at the same time ensuring that the cost of serving each customer group does not stray from adopted long-term targets. Currently, customers such as residential and irrigators pay between 34-45 percent below the cost to serve, while others such as large industrial customers pay nearly 38 percent above the cost to serve. This long-term policy also protects core customers, including residential, small business, and irrigation, from volatile price changes while also allowing the utility to keep up with rising costs and maintaining financial stability.

"Customers rely on us to power their way of life. These smaller, more predictable increases ensure we are there when they need us. While we never enjoy raising electric prices, we need to ensure we are positioned for future changes in our industry and as it relates to customer expectations," said Commission President **Larry Schaapman**. NWPPA

AMP Board Welcomes New President

At its February meeting, the Alameda Municipal Power Public (Calif.) Utilities Board elected a new president: Commissioner **Ann McCormick**. McCormick takes the helm from former PUB President **Mary Sutter**, who recently left the board because she moved out of Alameda.

President McCormick held a seat on the board from 2000 to 2010, and has served continuously as a board member since her reappointment in 2013. In her professional career, she is a founding principal of Newcomb Anderson McCormick, a San Francisco-based energy engineering and management consulting firm devoted to solving energy and sustainability issues. NWPPA

Great America Purchases 100% Renewable Energy from SVP

Silicon Valley Power (Santa Clara, Calif.) announced that California's Great America, Santa Clara's 100-acre amusement park, will cover 100 percent of its electricity use with renewable energy through SVP's Santa Clara Green Power program. Santa Clara Green Power is a renewable energy program that allows Santa Clara residents and businesses to purchase 100 percent solar and wind energy.



Great America's commitment to 100-percent wind energy (12,810 megawatt-hours annually) makes it one of the largest renewable energy purchasers in the Santa Clara Green Power program and a member of the U.S. EPA's Green Power Partnership's Leadership Club. This annual clean energy purchase is similar to the output of four large-scale wind turbines—reducing Great America's carbon footprint from electricity use by over 7 million pounds of carbon dioxide each year.

"We are thrilled about Great America's participation in Santa Clara Green Power," said SVP Senior Division Manager of Customer Services **Larry Owens**. "Their renewable energy commitment will place them among the top echelon of Silicon Valley's environmental leaders and make it the first Northern California amusement park of its kind to choose 100-percent renewable energy."

Great America joins the increasing circle of large businesses in Santa Clara that support renewable energy, including the City of Santa Clara, Intel, Applied Materials, and Santa Clara University. In addition, more than 70 small businesses and 4,000 households have committed to purchasing 100-percent renewable energy through Santa Clara Green Power. NWPPA

OTEC Offers Electrical Safety Tour to Weblos

While the rain may have been falling it certainly didn't dampen the spirits of the La Grande Weblos pack during their recent visit to OTEC's district office in La Grande, Ore.

"There are a certain number of Weblos educational requirements before you can move up to a Boy Scout," said pack leader **Stu Spence**. "I had heard about OTEC's public safety training programs, connected with the local office, and here we are. To have an onsite electrical safety show-and-tell demonstration is so much better than just me sitting down and talking about it. It is really awesome."

During the course of the tour, OTEC Manager of Loss Control **Jeff Anderson** took the rambunctious pack out into the equipment yard where they learned about the rules of electrical safety; watched Working Foreman **Dan Patton** and Journeyman Linemen **Blake Eckstein** climb and load power poles; and learned the importance of staying far away from power lines.

"It is really important to start electrical safety education early and respond to requests as we can from our communities," said Anderson. "The kids really like it and it goes a long way to providing a lifetime of knowledge on the power of electricity, how it works, safety aspects, and to be aware of the powerlines that are around you. Tours like these are just as enjoyable for the crews as well. It is a win-win for all of us."

OTEC offers free public safety training to schools, emergency response organizations, and government agencies. **NWPPA**



OTEC Manager of Safety and Loss Control **Jeff Anderson** demonstrates the importance of staying very far away from downed power lines and not becoming the path to ground for electricity.

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ABB Unveils DBL Distribution Blocks

DBL distribution blocks from ABB offer three configurations in one product: single-pole splitter, multi-pole splitter, and grouping functionality. They are also modular and touch proof, which eliminate the need for bus bars, isolators, and fasteners.

“Most people associate ABB connection devices with terminal blocks, but the line also includes thermal printers, solar connectors, DIN rail, distribution blocks—the list goes on and on,” said **Ginger Lohman**, US product marketing manager for connection at ABB. “The DBL solution is exciting because it is our first ABB-designed, ABB-manufactured distribution block. The best thing about DBL is the flexibility it brings to our customers. This is a block that can be used in commercial and industrial control panels, but thanks to our 1,500V IEC/1,000V UL ratings and reversible cover, it can also be used for solar grouping applications.”

A distribution block is an economical and convenient way of distributing power within an electrical circuit from a single input source to several devices in a branched circuit. The DBL distribution block is available in five sizes, ranging from 80-400A and can be easily ganged together for multi-pole applications. Blocks can be mounted to traditional 35 millimeter DIN rail or directly onto the panel. DBL is UL® recognized, offers high flammability resistance (UL94-V0 rating), and carries a 100kA SCCR rating (UL 1059/UL 508-A standard).

ABB is a pioneering technology leader in electrification products, robotics and motion, industrial automation and power grids, serving customers in utilities, industry and transport, and infrastructure globally. For more information, visit www.abb.com. **NWPPA**



Evluma Announces Seven-Pin AreaMax Option

Last month, LED lighting manufacturer Evluma announced the availability of a seven-pin option for the AreaMax™ LED luminaire for street and area lighting. In compliance with ANSI C136.41-2013 Standard for Roadway and Area Lighting Equipment—Dimming Control between an External Locking Type Photocontrol and Ballast or Driver, the AreaMax seven-pin model supports 0-10V dimming and the power and voltage monitoring features of most wireless controls nodes. Already well known for energy and maintenance savings features, such as Photocontrol Failsafe™ and ConnectLED™, the new option opens the doorway to additional savings and functionality for owners of the versatile AreaMax. Wireless control nodes only connect to luminaires with a compatible seven-pin twist-lock receptacle as they depend on power from the luminaire.



“A luminaire with a seven-pin option is your first step towards networked outdoor lighting,” said **Cathleen Shattuck**, marketing director at Evluma. “Customers can plan ahead knowing that if and when they choose a wireless node the luminaire will support it. In the meantime, the AreaMax seven-pin model remains compatible with three-pin photocontrols that may still be in inventory. Backward compatibility gives our customers the option to upgrade when it is convenient for them.”

AreaMax with the seven-pin option are available for order immediately. Other AreaMax options include a coastal-grade casting and hardware package and 3000K IDA (International Dark Sky) approved models in both Type V and Type III. All AreaMax carry a 10-year warranty.

Formed in 2008, Evluma is committed to developing affordable, long-lasting, and environmentally low-impact LED lighting solutions that fundamentally change the landscape of the outdoor utility lighting market. For more information, visit www.evluma.com. **NWPPA**

To advertise in future issues of the *Bulletin*, contact Brenda Dunn at (360) 816-1453 or brenda@nwppa.org.

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Commonwealth Associates, Inc.	15	Northwest Line Constructors Chapter (NECA)	31
Energy Northwest	13	Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)	Back Cover
GDS Associates, Inc.	21	Wagner-Smith Equipment Co.	23
National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC)	5		

Henkels & McCoy Hires Jeremy Graveen

Henkels & McCoy, Inc. announced the appointment of **Jeremy Graveen** to director of renewable energy for H&M's Central Region. In this role, Graveen is responsible for providing oversight and leadership for the safety and quality of renewable energy projects from bid initiation through project closeout, as well as the overall successful performance and profitability of the operations group.



Graveen has over 20 years of experience managing projects and programs with a focus on renewable energy for the past 10 years. His expertise includes business development, project management, customer relationships, subcontractor management, coordination of contract labor, project safety and quality, and equipment management. Prior to joining H&M, Graveen held positions at Knetter Construction, Maxim Technologies Inc., Marshall Erdman & Associates, and UPS.

Graveen holds a bachelor's degree in biological systems engineering with an emphasis on structures and construction management from the University of Wisconsin.

Henkels & McCoy, Inc. is a leading utility construction firm providing critical infrastructure for the power, oil and gas pipeline, gas distribution, and communications markets throughout North America. For more information, please visit www.henkels.com. **NWPPA**

GLE Selects OSI for New SCADA and DMS

Open Systems International, Inc. (OSI) has been awarded a contract by Great Lakes Energy (GLE) for a new SCADA and distribution management system (DMS) based on OSI's monarch™ (Multi-platform Open Network ARCHitecture) platform.



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GLE's new DMS includes a SCADA-centric ADMS architecture comprised of the following components: an advanced graphical user interface (GUI); advanced supervisory control and data acquisition; advanced alarm management system, communications front-end processor; historical information system and data archiving; real-time and historical trending and analytics; GIS and mapping interface; real-time distribution model and network visualization and connectivity analysis; automatic vehicle location visualization; Voyager™ remote browser-based user interface; switching order management; inter-control center communications protocol; and MultiSpeak® interface.

Open Systems International (www.osii.com), headquartered in Minneapolis, Minn., provides open, state-of-the-art, and high-performance automation solutions to utilities worldwide.

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WHAT'S GOING TO BE IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE PACKAGE?

By Elizabeth K. Whitney

Amid the high-profile priorities for the 115th Congress, one issue stands out as distinct from the other legislative possibilities: an “infrastructure package,” unlike tax reform or health care, finds its place on the agenda because of President Trump’s priorities, rather than congressional Republicans’. Further, an infrastructure bill is expected to attract bipartisan support and move through regular order, as opposed to the expedited—but highly partisan—budget reconciliation process. And importantly, its first draft will be proposed by the Administration rather than Congress.

It seems the 115th Congress has been gearing up for an infrastructure bill for months. To date, dozens of hearings have been held on infrastructure, and not just among the traditional committees of jurisdiction. The House Natural Resources Committee, Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee have all held multiple hearings looking at water and power infrastructure and how it is maintained, permitted, and financed.

Including energy items in a potential infrastructure package would be a positive development for NWPPA priorities—it could mean action on the hydropower relicensing and vegetation management provisions left over from last year’s energy bill, and provide a vehicle for energy efficiency and grid modernization funding. Some hearings have considered everything from smart grid investments to nuclear plants under the infrastructure rubric. But for all the talk of “infrastructure,” it is still not at all clear what the term actually encompasses from a legislative perspective.

Without a defined boundary, an infrastructure bill could become bogged down by its own weight. Too narrow an approach and lawmakers are certain to question whether their constituents would be subsidizing projects in another state, while industry sectors that have been gearing up for a major legislative vehicle may chafe at an opportunity missed.

The Trump Administration has promised that a proposal, originating in the Department of Transportation, will be sent to Congress as early as May. In advance of that proposal, a few potential areas for action have emerged, each carrying their own considerations.

Public-private partnerships

The signature piece of Trump’s envisioned infrastructure package is the public-private partnership. The President has made clear that when he refers to a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill, he means leveraging private capital to generate the investment—not at all the “stimulus package” of federal spending that flowed to projects in the first year of the Obama Administration.

Public-private partnerships are not a novel idea, nor are they foreign to public power. Many projects include multiple partners, and private entities that value tax credits are often included in power purchase deals alongside a consumer-owned utility with no tax burden. But allowing a private company to manage a public asset can be threatening to consumer-owned utilities that are concerned about maintaining local control and keeping customer costs low.

The idea also doesn’t sit well with lawmakers from rural areas who are concerned that private financing will flow to more profitable urban and suburban locales, leaving their constituents behind. Both Senate Environment and Public Works Chair John

Barrasso (R–Wyo.), whose panel has immediate jurisdiction over transportation and water infrastructure, and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chair Lisa Murkowski (R–Alaska) have publicly stated that public-private partnerships are insufficient to bring investment in infrastructure to less populous areas.

It's also not clear what the federal government's role might be in legislation designed to spur more of these arrangements. Will the White House propose a tax break for companies that enter into a partnership with a state or local public entity, or will it issue requests for proposals to build federal projects? Administration officials have given few indications of how, exactly, public-private partnerships will feature in legislation.

Permitting reform

One of the areas energy policy could most directly benefit is through reforming the permitting processes that add time and costs to building and maintaining infrastructure projects. Two of NWPPA's biggest policy priorities in recent years have been streamlining the hydropower relicensing process and bringing consistency to federal permitting for vegetation management on rights of way.

An infrastructure package could include these and other statutory changes, or it could clear pathways for specific projects that are currently awaiting approvals. Some of those actions could be done through legislation, but others could be done without an act of Congress. Trump has shown great interest in high-profile infrastructure projects like the Keystone XL pipeline, but it is not clear whether the Administration will be able to fast track a large number of smaller projects, especially given the slow pace at which the Administration is staffing up.

And, while the hydropower and vegetation management provisions have bipartisan support, both are likely to run into resistance from environmental groups. The hydropower provisions in last year's energy bill were not included in a final conference report, signaling that there is still work to be done to appease those who have concerns about maintaining the role of resource agencies. The vegetation management provisions appeared to overcome initial concerns about clearcutting, but could be swept up in broader complaints about the balance between energy production and environmental concerns.

Nevertheless, streamlining federal permitting appears to be a top priority for the Trump Administration. Even if energy-specific provisions are not included in the draft being prepared by the Transportation secretary, there is enough interest in Congress to ensure that they will be on the table and part of the discussion.

Direct investment

Congressional Democrats are largely on board with moving an infrastructure package—in concept. As the contours of the Administration's proposal have begun to take shape, however, some have voiced concerns about whether the package will include direct spending. President Trump initially discussed tax credits to spur investment, but other Administration officials have acknowledged that some federal spending is necessary to make the plan viable.

An infrastructure package would also be the most likely vehicle to include energy infrastructure pieces like grid modernization and energy efficiency. Those types of infrastructure cannot be easily financed through public-private partnerships like toll roads can. Some states have had success with seeding

clean energy revolving funds, and others have looked to on-bill financing or property assessments to fund upgrades behind the meter.

However, loading the bill with federal spending poses problems for conservatives. Wary of new costs, particularly on a bill that is anything but “must pass,” certain Republicans have previously balked at even relatively modest price tags. As an infrastructure package gains steam and more provisions are added, those concerns could bring the process to an early halt.

Specific projects

The Trump Administration has been seeking “shovel-ready” project submissions—even accidentally leaking a list of high-priority projects that was quickly discredited—that could quickly proceed with the right tools. That may implicate the project-specific permitting actions mentioned above, or it could look suspiciously close to earmarks.

Members of Congress and others in D.C. have long bemoaned the loss of congressionally directed spending. Earmarks allowed congressional leaders to move major legislation by promising funds for reluctant lawmakers' home district projects, and their absence has made it harder to overcome ideological positioning. Earmarks also ensured a relatively even distribution of federal project dollars across districts, as federal agencies doling out the same funds are more likely to award them to urban and suburban areas.

If specific projects are included in an infrastructure package, some type of organizing principle will need to be articulated in order to explain to members of Congress why a project in one district is a priority, but the project in theirs is not. President Trump has suggested including shovel-ready projects, referring to those that could start construction within 90 days of approval. That might be difficult to determine, not to mention it may leave behind some transformational energy projects that tend to have longer lead times.

Outlook for action

Congressional committees can only hold so many hearings on the problem of failing infrastructure before people begin asking what will be done about it. The considerations above mean the secretary of Transportation has her work cut out for her in developing a proposal that delivers on the President's promise and can pass both chambers of Congress, which means the timeline for presenting something to Congress could easily slip.

Recent discussions have suggested that infrastructure could be combined with tax reform, potentially easing the path for a major overhaul by pairing it with the more popular infrastructure idea. But as that idea gets translated into a concrete proposal, the details will matter. And despite its distinctions from the other major priorities for the 115th Congress, it may not be any easier to produce. What's certain now is that the ball is in the Administration's court—and expectations are high.

NWPPA

Elizabeth K. Whitney is managing principal of Meguire Whitney, NWPPA's Washington, D.C., consulting firm. She can be reached at either (207) 712-7521 or elizabeth@meguirewhitney.com.

THREE OF ALASKA'S LARGEST UTILITIES ARE FORGING NEW GROUND TO COORDINATE GENERATION RESOURCES

By Julie Estey, Julie Harris, and Julie Hasquet

An aerial view of MEA's Eklutna Generation Station, the newer 171-megawatt natural-gas-powered power plant in Eklutna, Alaska. Photo by Eagle Eye Gallery.

If you superimposed the state of Alaska on top of the continental United States, you would span almost the entire country.

Alaska is vast, but the transportation system is small and serves the majority of the population in the state. The Railbelt (called such because it was initially interconnected only by rail) spans approximately 700 miles from the salmon-rich, glacier-fed streams of the Kenai Peninsula to the cold, northern-light filled skies of Interior Alaska. Following this road and rail system, and serving the majority of the state's population, is the Alaska Railbelt Grid. While it is called a grid, it is not the robust, infinite grid found throughout the rest of the developed world. Alaskans affectionately refer to it as more of a long extension cord from Homer to Fairbanks. Along this extension cord sit six public power utilities that serve more than 400,000 consumers.

At the heart of the Railbelt is the largest population center, which includes the biggest city, the Municipality of Anchorage, and the Matanuska Susitna Valley, which is the fastest growing area in the state. This area is served by three utilities that serve a combined load of approximately 500 megawatts. Over the past five years, each of these utilities has built new generation in an effort to generate power more efficiently and reliably. The area is rich in natural gas; however, limited markets keep the prices between \$7–9/MCF, almost three times the costs paid in the lower 48, making plant efficiency a critical economic driver.

The new generation suite of these three utilities is tailor-made for cooperation. Member-owned cooperative Chugach Electric is the primary owner of Southcentral Power Project, an efficient combined-cycle plant with generation capacity to serve its primary load. Municipal Light and Power, which is owned by the Municipality of Anchorage, is a part owner of this plant as well, with a 30-percent share. ML&P just finished building Plant 2A, the most efficient power plant on the system based on heat rate that includes two combined-cycle generators. Matanuska Electric Association, a cooperative serving the Mat-Su Valley and outlying areas of the Municipality of Anchorage, built a new plant in 2015 that was sized and designed for their unique 148-megawatt, mostly residential load. Their ten 17.1-megawatt generators follow their noteworthy intra-day swing and provide a new service to the system: small, economic increments of power.

Combined, these three plants complement each other and provide efficient base-load power and optimize efficient load and peak following.

While economy energy sales have been prevalent between utilities on the system for some time, the new suite of generation has increased the number of players, potential savings, and



At the Power Pooling news conference on January 30, 2017, (L-R) ML&P General Manager Mark Johnston, Chugach CEO Lee Thibert, MEA CEO Tony Izzo, Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz, and Chugach Board Chair Janet Reiser. Photo provided by Chugach.

transactions through a loose power pool. This model provides the opportunity for utilities to make day-ahead dispatch and purchase decisions based on tariffed economy energy rates.

In addition to energy for native loads, the neighboring utilities also buy and sell reserves. Due to the relatively low loads and lack of redundancy on the system, reserve requirements, specifically spinning reserves, are a larger part of the generation requirements than in many other parts of the country.

After a year of interacting through this loose power pool, the utilities have been pleased with the savings for their members and forged new working relationships with the other utilities.

The Railbelt partners have also recognized the value of moving to the next step and coordinating generation resources through a single economic dispatch where the next increment of load on the system is met with the next most efficient generation source, regardless of location.

While dispatching the entire Railbelt grid would result in the largest savings, transactions are somewhat limited outside the core Anchorage and Matanuska Susitna Valley areas. A recent joint modeling exercise involving the partners estimated the majority of total Railbelt benefits could be achieved with dispatching these three utilities that serve Anchorage and surrounding area, garnering a potential \$12 to 16 million per year in combined savings for the region.

On January 30, 2017, the three general managers of Chugach Electric, ML&P, and MEA announced the signing of an agreement to work towards joint dispatch of their generation resources by the end of 2017 to form a tight power pool that would further optimize economic dispatch.

“Working together to provide power to our customers in the most efficient, cost-effective manner means lower costs and improved reliability for everyone,” said Lee Thibert, Chugach CEO. “This agreement represents a lot of hard work and cooperation on behalf of thousands of Alaska electric customers.”

The pool also provides the ability to more cost-effectively pool shared hydro resources that currently provide some of the least expensive power on the system. In addition, it may provide better integration of variable power in a more cost-effective way, piquing the interest of independent power producers eyeing the region for potential wind and tidal projects.

Continued on page 28



The Southcentral Power Project, which is jointly owned by Chugach and ML&P. Photo provided by Chugach.

The pool is being set up so that the other utilities on the Railbelt can become part of the pool or continue to purchase power from the region.

These types of models have been common in the Lower 48 for years. In Alaska, increased savings potential and new collaborative leadership at each utility committed to lower costs for the region have been the catalyst for a more structured arrangement.

“The leadership in place now is the right group to make this happen,” said Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz at a recent news conference. “These three general managers should share the credit for the recent progress and collaboration.”

The next step for the team is to focus on specifics for how the pool will work. “While the desire to collaborate is strong, there are still several open questions to answer,” said Mark Johnston, ML&P general manager.

Chief among those is the settlement process. As three utilities beholden to members and municipal residents, one goal of the pool is to ensure all ratepayers are made whole for all transactions and benefits they lend to the pool.

Some of the larger parameters have been established. The utilities will evenly split the benefits from all transactions. The pool will be managed by the Operations Committee comprised of senior-level staff from each utility. They will be governed by the Participants Committee made up of the three utility managers. The three will also work to make this happen with mostly in-house resources to ensure that expected benefits are not unnecessarily offset by additional costs.

Once that is complete, the final step will be to file the Tight Pool settlement process and other details with the state regulatory agency for approval. The Regulatory Commission of Alaska issued a letter to the legislature in June 2015 highlighting the value of system-wide, merit order economic dispatch and urging the utilities to consider voluntary steps toward collaboration.

“As chairman of the RCA, and the Docket Manager and author of this 2015 Legislative Report, I am encouraged by the Tight Pool being developed by Chugach Electric Association, Municipal Light and Power, and Matanuska Electric Association,” reported RCA Chairman Bob Pickett. “As the formal commercial agreements are finalized, the Commission looks forward to working constructively with the three utilities currently participating in the Tight Pool, and with any additional electrical utilities who choose to join in the future.”

Other utilities on the Railbelt are watching the efforts with interest. An open invitation has been extended to the other three Railbelt utilities to join or continue to buy and sell power from the pool.

Since the construction of the Alaska Intertie in the early 1980s, Golden Valley Electric Association has been purchasing power from the Anchorage utilities in its effort to keep its costs for members as low as possible. Far removed from the available natural gas supply, Golden Valley’s current fuel mix includes diesel, NAPTHA, coal hydro, and wind. GVEA has participated with the Anchorage utilities in the formation of this power pool and has been proactive in discussions around the continued evolution of the Railbelt utility system.

“GVEA is pleased that the southcentral Alaska utilities were able to reach this agreement and enjoy even more economic dispatching benefits,” said GVEA President & CEO Cory R. Borgeson. “This is a distinct advantage for GVEA, and we look forward to working with all the Railbelt utilities in 2017.”

A few of the utility players have considered the development of a system operator that could determine and enforce reliability standards and system planning. The utilities are also analyzing the benefits of a TRANSCO that would manage and operate all of the transmission assets in the state. Wisconsin-based American Transmission Company has been coordinating conversations and facilitating modeling of potential benefits.

What does it all mean for cooperative members and municipal residents? This is early in the development period, so it’s too soon to tell. The impact on rates will vary across the different utilities depending on how the savings are actually divided. But with Alaska’s uncertain, oil-based economic future and the renewed spirit of collaboration among Railbelt utilities, all savings options that will benefit customers are on the table.

“Cost savings know no borders,” said Tony Izzo, general manager for Matanuska Electric Association. “While MEA may see the smallest savings in this agreement, those savings are still worth going after for our members and the region.”

In addition to direct transactional savings, allowing the combined cycle units to operate at top efficiency and turning off the expensive peaking units will lend additional benefits to consumers. Retirement of inefficient and obsolete generating resources will improve customer savings. The arrangement also lends itself to potential coordination of fuel purchases and other ancillary savings that could add up to big savings over time.

Reactions from legislators, regulators, and the general public around the state have been positive.

“The work of the utilities serving Anchorage demonstrates what collaborative effort can achieve and builds on our cooperative work to provide reliable, cost-effective electric service for businesses and families,” said Johnston. **NWPPA**

Julie Estey is the director of external affairs for Matanuska Electric Association in Palmer and can be contacted at (907) 355-4447. Julie Harris is the public relations manager at Anchorage Municipal Light & Power and can be contacted at (907) 263-5423. Julie Hasquet is the manager of Corporate Communications at Chugach Electric Association in Anchorage and can be contacted at (907) 762-4489.



The Matanuska Susitna Valley served by MEA. Photo provided by MEA.



The Matanuska Susitna Valley served by MEA. Photo provided by MEA.



The Beluga River Power Plant across the inlet from Anchorage. Photo provided by Chugach.

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TO APPLY: Visit <http://www.muni.org/jol>.

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COMPANY: Lewis County PUD (Chehalis, Wash.)

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DEADLINE TO APPLY: May 24, 2017

TO APPLY: Visit <http://www.lcpud.org>.

POSITION: Network/Security Engineer

COMPANY: Benton PUD (Kennewick, Wash.)

SALARY: DOQ per year

DEADLINE TO APPLY: May 26, 2017

TO APPLY: Visit <http://www.bentonpud.org/careers>.

POSITION: Engineer

COMPANY: Tillamook People's Utility District (Tillamook, Ore.)

SALARY: \$5,900 per month

DEADLINE TO APPLY: May 19, 2017

TO APPLY: Visit <http://www.tpod.org>.

POSITION: Junior Engineer

COMPANY: Chelan County PUD (Wenatchee, Wash.)

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COMPANY: Tacoma Power (Tacoma, Wash.)

SALARY: \$91,145.60 per year

DEADLINE TO APPLY: July 10, 2017

TO APPLY: Visit <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/jobs>.

POSITION: Journeyman Lineman (U17-073)

COMPANY: Portland General Electric (Portland, Ore.)

SALARY: \$43.81 per hour

DEADLINE TO APPLY: June 6, 2017

TO APPLY: Visit <https://www.portlandgeneral.com/careers>.

POSITION: Journeyman Lineman

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