Northwest Public Power Association
BULLETIN

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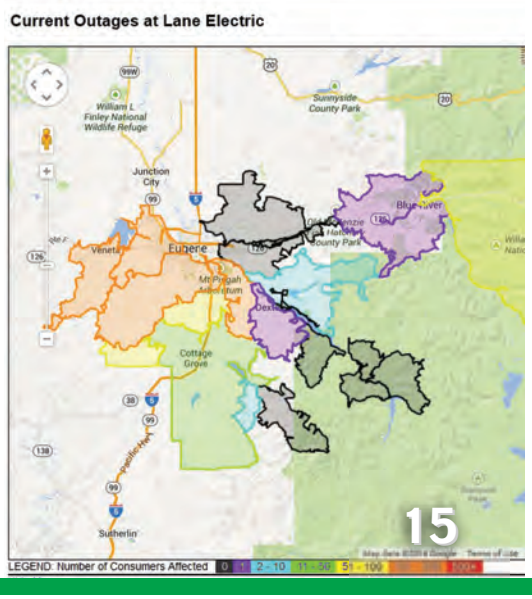
Fulfilling the need for speed

Plumas-Sierra helps the community grow its fiber network



On the cover: Wes Gray, manager of Engineering and Operations at Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative, stands outside Graeagle Substation that was connected to the Plumas-Sierra Telecommunications (PST) fiber optic network. Photo provided by Plumas-Sierra REC.

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The *Bulletin* is a publication of Northwest Public Power Association, a regional organization of diverse utilities. The membership is made up of utility districts, electric cooperatives, municipalities, and crown corporations in Alaska, British Columbia, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. We are also a trade association for nearly 300 companies, individuals, and organizations affiliated with the electric power industry.

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

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Anita Decker named as new executive director of NWPPA

On February 24, 2014, NWPPA announced that its board of trustees has selected Anita Decker to be the association's next executive director. Decker will join NWPPA as executive director elect on March 19 and take over as executive director upon Will Lutgen's retirement on April 1.

Decker comes to NWPPA with over 30 years of experience in electric power operations in the Northwest. Most recently, since 2007, she served as Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) chief operating officer. As chief operating officer, she was responsible for BPA's Power Services; Transmission Services; Environment, Fish & Wildlife; Customer Service; and Internal Business Services. While at BPA, she also served as acting administrator for the Western Area Power Administration during a seven-month detail from August 2012 to April 2013.

Prior to BPA, she spent 27 years with PacifiCorp, rising to the role of vice president. While at PacifiCorp, she worked in various positions of increasing responsibility related to customer service; transmission/distribution construction and maintenance; sales and marketing; human resources; energy conservation; procurement; real estate management; and SAP support functions.

"The NWPPA Board of Directors vetted many highly qualified candidates and we are confident in our decision to hire Anita," said NWPPA Board of Trustees First Vice President Ken Weiss. "We strongly believe that her extensive knowledge of electric power in the Northwest coupled with her several decades of experience with BPA and PacifiCorp will not only benefit our members, but it will enrich the Association in the coming years. The board and I are excited to work with her and start this new chapter in NWPPA's story."

A Seattle native, Decker moved to Portland in 1998 and has been involved in several civic activities, including the Portland State University School of Business' Business Advisory Council and the Portland State University School of Engineering Advisory Council. She is also the past president for the Liberty Theater Restoration Board in Astoria, Ore., as well as past chair of the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance. In 2010, she was the recipient of the *Portland Business Journal's* Orchid Award, which honors outstanding women in business and nonprofit organizations.

Decker earned a bachelor's degree in business management from Utah Valley University and completed a senior business leadership program through the Wharton School of Business. She is also a graduate of the INSEAD advanced management program in Fontainebleau, France. NWPPA

2014 GM, director surveys now open online

Northwest Public Power Association's 2014 *General Manager's Compensation Survey* and 2014 *Director, Commissioner & Other Elected Officials Survey* are now both open and ready to be completed by NWPPA utility members. To access either survey, go to www.nwppa.org, click on the Communications tab, and choose Surveys.

Each survey should take no more than 30 minutes to complete, and the survey reports that are generated are a valuable source of comparison information for utilities and their boards. All survey information is kept confidential and may only be accessed by general managers and HR senior management at NWPPA member utilities. If you would like a copy of your responses from either of the 2013 surveys, email your request to Brenda@nwppa.org.

These two surveys will remain open for members to update or complete until **April 15, 2014**. At this time they will be closed and reports will be generated with the survey results. Reports for these two surveys will be available in early June 2014 from our website. If you have trouble at any time during the survey process, please feel free to call Brenda at (360) 816-1453. NWPPA

Come round up the future of public power with NWPPA in Montana

For this year's Annual Conference and Membership Meeting, "Partners in Progress: Rounding up the Future of Public Power," NWPPA has a great lineup of presenters from both outside and inside the industry. This year's conference will take place in Billings, Mont., May 18-22, at the Holiday Inn Grand Montana. Some of this year's conference highlights include:

Keynote Speaker Simon Anderson: ***Recognizing the Trends Transforming the Utility Industry***

Simon Anderson, a professional near-futurist, keynote speaker, startup entrepreneur, and emerging technology and trends consultant, will discuss the importance of unlearning, emerging trends, and technologies. He recently co-authored the book *Foresight 20/20: A Futurist Explores the Trends Transforming Tomorrow* with fellow global futurist Jack Uldrich.

Anderson is the founder of Venture Foresight, LLC and Futur1st.com, a site dedicated to helping leaders and organizations recognize emerging technologies and trends. Having traveled to more than 20 countries, Anderson brings a global perspective to his work.

Panel: ***Elements of Change Impacting the Electric Utility Industry/Competition***

NWPPA's Annual Meetings are known for bringing speakers who are engaged and passionate about their work. This panel will address questions like: How are wind, solar, and electric vehicles going to impact local utilities and their members/customers? What will the challenges be to integrate these renewables with utilities? It should make for a very lively and informative session. Don't miss it!

CEO/general manager panel: ***Is the Public Power Business Model Changing?***

The industry is in transition. Coal is not a viable option for the future; renewables are in and misunderstood; electric loads are flat; load factors are declining and costs are rising, creating rate increases; and distributive generation and micro grids are the topic of many conversations. Fall River Electric Cooperative CEO Bryan Case, Grant County PUD General Manager Tony Webb, and City of Roseville Electric Utility Director Michelle Bertolino will explore the impact of key issues at today's public power utilities. It will also be a great chance for attendees to ask questions!

Meet BPA's new administrator: ***How Does BPA's Business Model Stay Relevant?***

BPA Administrator Elliot Mainzer will discuss his new role, challenges, and opportunities facing BPA.

Companion activities and golf, too!

Take some time while in Billings to visit the historic sites or just enjoy some shopping. A hotel shuttle can take you to Downtown Billings where you can visit the Moss Mansion Historical House, the Western Heritage Center, the Yellowstone Art Museum, and many other attractions. Come early on Sunday and play golf at the 18-hole Lake Hills Course where you may get to see antelope grazing on the fairways and waterfowl gliding on the lakes. It is a golf experience no one should miss!

Sign up today for NWPPA's 74th Annual Conference and Membership Meeting. To register, you can visit www.nwppa.org, send an email to Gail Patterson at gail@nwppa.org, or call the NWPPA office at (360) 254-0109. NWPPA

NWPPA communication contest begins its 21st year

Last year, NWPPA's Excellence in Communications contest reached an important milestone: it was the 20th year of the annual marketing and communication contest. This year, NWPPA hopes to reach a new milestone with the contest by shattering the previous record of 189 entries. Member utilities came close last year — entering just 13 shy of the record — so topping 190 should not be a hard task at all. If you have thought about entering in past years but just haven't, this is the year to do so. Or perhaps this year you enter just one extra item than you normally do.

As a reminder, the best overall communication effort by a member will be honored with the Tom Hougan Award. Last year's award went to Columbia River PUD out of St. Helens, Ore.; the PUD was the first utility to win the award twice in the award's 12-year history. The PUD first won the award in 2007.

As in years past, the winning entries and utilities will be honored at Tuesday's evening reception at the annual Northwest Communications & Energy Innovations Conference on September 16 at the Renaissance Seattle Hotel in Downtown Seattle, Wash. The conference itself will run from September 14-17, 2014, at the Renaissance. Look for more information about the conference in upcoming *Bulletins*.

Now is the time to start sorting through your 2013 communication pieces and setting aside what you would like to enter in NWPPA's 21st annual Excellence in Communication Awards. Look for the *2014 Call for Entries* brochure in your email inbox and on our website in early April. The brochure will have all of the details about this year's competition, including entry fees, categories, and how to submit your entries. All entries and fees must be postmarked by Friday, June 27. Contact Brenda Dunn at brenda@nwppa.org if you have any questions about the contest. NWPPA

Propeller heads came together for annual IT Workshop

Over 50 tech specialists from IT departments within member utilities arrived in Spokane, Wash., last month for NWPPA's annual two-and-a-half-day IT Workshop. The theme this year was "Propeller Heads, Unite!" — and unite they did! "The IT Workshop is a great opportunity to share and collaborate on IT struggles and successes that we all deal with in our utilities," said Salem Electric IT Manager Michael C. Richman.

In his keynote presentation, "The Missile and the Mobility: What's New and What to Do with Server 2012 R2 and Windows 8.1," Mark Minasi addressed the changes and challenges of Microsoft's newest operating system. "Minasi was a great keynote speaker — engaging and interesting," said Alaska Village Electric Cooperative Systems Administrator Sherry Kent. "He does a great job of analyzing the MS platforms and therefore has a great knack for projecting some future trends in that realm of the IT industry."

Attendees also heard presentations by subject matter experts on Virtual Extensible LAN (VXLAN) and what to expect from an information security assessment, as well as presentations by their peers on CIP audits; selecting a collaboration and document management program; and getting buy in for IT policies.

The highest ratings went, as always, to the roundtable discussions. Here participants exchanged experiences and offered advice on the issues they face in their work. This year, an optional dinner outing was added to give participants additional opportunities to network and build relationships outside of the roundtables and classrooms.

Salem Electric IT Manager Michael C. Richman proudly sports his new propeller beanie that he won at the workshop.

Clallam County PUD IT Manager Steve Schopfer summed up the workshop with just six words: "Good turnout, good discussions, good company!"

NWPPA would like to thank the representatives from SEDC, IVOXY, NISC, Summit Energy Tech, Cosaint, iDatix, and Acme Business Consulting who were on hand to sponsor various activities as well as provide information on their products and services. Sponsors play an important role at the workshop and attendees always value the opportunity to learn about the resources available in their field. NWPPA

Getting to know the NWPPA Board

- **Name:** Angie Sanchez Virnoche
- **Company:** FCS GROUP (Financial Consulting Solutions Group, Inc.)
- **Position:** Principal/owner
- **Education:** B.S. in business administration with a concentration in finance from Oregon State University
- **Years in utility industry:** 20
- **Years on NWPPA Board:** First year
- **What are the current challenges at your company?** Assisting our clients as they juggle the need for fiscal sustainability, rising power costs, reinvestment in the system, and maintaining affordable rates. We have seen an increase in greater public scrutiny which makes utilities very hesitant to do anything with rates. Communication, transparency, and education regarding the rate process are more critical than ever.
- **What do you see as the current challenges in the industry?** The current hot topic is distributed generation; utilities are having to think about their philosophy, policies, pricing, and rate impacts as a result of revenue loss that may be realized.
- **How does NWPPA help your company and the industry with these challenges?** NWPPA helps us keep in touch with current industry needs which allow us to develop solutions to our clients' needs before they become an issue.
- **Any hobbies outside of the public power world?** I love anything that takes me outdoors. If I have to list a few — I love gardening, hiking, and running. I am scheduled to run the Missoula half-marathon in July! NWPPA

NWPPA

Connect • Learn • Serve

A look back at public power

50 years ago — 1964

The Columbia River Treaty of 1961 was in front of the Canadian Parliament for ratification … A flat nine mills per kilowatt-hour and a $5 monthly minimum was the new all-electric commercial rate of the Franklin County PUD when electricity is the sole energy source; Clark County PUD and Benton County PUD previously adopted this rate as well (Wash.) … Wasco Electric Cooperative added the new all-electric addition to Maupin Elementary School to its electric load (Ore.) … At a special joint meeting of Tacoma's City Council and Utility Board, a tentative conclusion was reached to go ahead with construction of the $101 million Mossyrock Dam (Wash.).

25 years ago — 1989

"Z Man Fred" Ziari and "Dave the Rave" D'Avanzo rapped and promoted the benefits of public power in radio spots for Umatilla Cooperative (Ore.) … Line crews at Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative received a National Forest Service award for their heroic effort to keep power lines up during the Clark Fire (Calif.) … Dick Borges joined Mission Valley Power, formerly the Flathead Agency Division of Power, as its first general manager (Mont.) … Bill Kaltenekker was hired as manager of Cordova Electric Cooperative (Alaska) … Montana Governor Stan Stephens appointed John Brenden and Stan Grace to the Northwest Power Planning Council.

5 years ago — 2009

Jan Schori, the former general manager of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, received the Sacramento Metro Chamber's Businesswoman of the Year Award (Calif.) … Grant County PUD Director of External Affairs Andrew Munro was elected president of the National Hydropower Association (Wash.) … The Union County Chamber of Commerce named Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative's Nancy Van Sickle as its Woman of the Year for 2008 … Golden Valley Electric Association took first place in the Public and Community Service category of the Public Relations Society of America Alaska Chapter's Aurora Awards. NWPPA

April and May 2014

Please register 30 days in advance to receive the Early Bird discount. See www.nwppa.org for more information.

ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE MEETING

Who Should Attend: Utility environmental professionals (new and experienced), government agency staff, vendors, and anyone who is tasked with or interested in environmental issues, regulatory compliance, or mitigation in the environmental arena of electric utilities.
Overview: This is a regular meeting of the long-standing Environmental Task Force that examines environmental issues and the impact of current and proposed environmental regulations on electric utilities. This meeting occurs three times each year to review and discuss new and proposed regulations and issues facing each utility, and to hear from subject matter experts on key issues of the day, as well as from vendors with new technology or services.
APRIL 7, 2014 — RENO, NEV.

NWPPA ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

Who Should Attend: Utility engineering and operations personnel, as well as those in information technology, safety, purchasing, environmental, accounting, and communications.
Overview: This is an industry that rises to challenges and opportunities to provide safe, reliable, reasonably priced power to its customers on a reliable electric grid; therefore, it seemed only natural to have this year's theme be "Rally in Reno!" With more than four days of learning events and activities scheduled, the NWPPA E&O Conference and Trade Show provides a mix of education, networking, and trade show experiences that can help with the opportunities and challenges that you face.
APRIL 7-11, 2014 — RENO, NEV.

ONLINE — HANDLING HIGH-BILL COMPLAINTS

Who Should Attend: Customer service professionals and anyone who interacts with customers about their utility bills.
Overview: High bills are the number one concern or complaint of all utility customers. This session will help representatives look at these types of complaints in a different light by understanding the human dimension to the complaint. You will explore the reactions that customers have, the level of customer knowledge, and the results that customers want. At the end of the session, participants should be able to respond to high-bill concerns in a more confident, knowledgeable, and personable manner.
APRIL 9, 2014 — ONLINE PRESENTATION

CONDUCTING PROPER WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

Who Should Attend: Any supervisor or manager who may need to investigate employee complaints or workplace incidents.
Overview: This class will provide you with practical guidance and actual experience in evaluating a problem, deciding a course of action, conducting an investigation, and developing/maintaining effective documentation. You will work with other participants on real-life case studies to practice planning an effective investigation.
APRIL 9-10, 2014 — PORTLAND, ORE.

NEW! INCREASING COLLECTION EFFECTIVENESS

Who Should Attend: Employees within the customer service, credit, and collections departments of public power utilities.
Overview: This course will look at how your utility has worked its collection processes for years and offer concrete suggestions on how to apply new tools and techniques to improve "this is how we've always done it." Participants will learn how to fine tune their processes to improve customer relationships and leverage the latest technology to increase their revenue collection rates.
APRIL 15-16, 2014 — SEATTLE, WASH.

NEW! ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT FOR UTILITIES

Who Should Attend: Chief financial officers, senior-level accounting staff, auditors, general managers/CEOs, and legal counsel.
Overview: Enterprise risk management (ERM) is the discipline of examining the impact of potential financial, operational, regulatory, environmental, legal, safety, and reputation risks on an organization. Implementing ERM helps utilities achieve their objectives by improving their operation and organizational effectiveness. A strong ERM program will integrate risk management with strategy, tactics, and operational processes. In Part 1 of this program, the instructor will help participants plan how to implement ERM at their organizations or increase the effectiveness of existing ERM programs within their organizations. In Part 2, the instructor will address how utility executives can help their managers become more "risk aware" leaders. The instructor will share practical decision-making tools and techniques with participants, demonstrating how energy professionals can apply risk analysis and mitigation planning to significant organizational initiatives.
APRIL 16-17, 2014 — SEATTLE, WASH.

FRONT LINE LEADERSHIP #3: PERSONALITIES AND ATTITUDES IN THE WORKPLACE

Who Should Attend: Front line supervisors and managers that have completed *Front Line Leadership Session #1: Situational Leadership*, as well as those front line employees who will be transitioning to a supervisor or manager role in the near future and have completed *Front Line Leadership Session #1: Situational Leadership*.
Overview: This course, as taught by the Ken Blanchard Companies, begins with a self-discovery pre-workshop exercise to determine your personality type. The session continues with an explanation of how best to identify and deal with the different personality types you work with. Learn why it takes a different approach with members of your workgroup and how to bridge their temperaments to their developmental levels.
APRIL 23-24, 2014 — COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO

ELECTRIC UTILITY SYSTEM OPERATIONS

Who Should Attend: Any industry (utility or vendor) employee 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; and accounting employees.
Overview: This popular two-day course presents a clear understanding of the technical heartbeat of the utility by providing employees with a comprehensive understanding of electric utility system operations, including generation (fossil fuel, hydro, and nuclear generation), transmission, and distribution (down to 120v/240v residential connections). You will learn how all key pieces of equipment in the system are built, how the equipment operates, and how the equipment functions in the overall operations of a utility system.
APRIL 23-24, 2014 — BOISE, IDAHO

NEW! THE CUSTOMER FOCUS

Who Should Attend: All employees want to improve their internal and external customer relationships.
Overview: This two-day course focuses on building the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to deliver outstanding customer service. Topics covered include public relations, effective listening, rapport-building strategies, conflict resolution, effective communication tools, and stress management. Participants will learn how to handle potentially unproductive interactions and how to create positive experiences for both internal and external customers.
April 30-May 1, 2014 — Spokane, Wash.

NORTHWEST WAGE & HOUR MEETING

Who Should Attend: Members of the Northwest Wage and Hour group: general managers, labor relations employees, and human resource professionals.
Overview: Northwest Wage and Hour meetings are opportunities for members of the group to discuss issues relevant to labor relations within public utilities. The meeting includes Steering Committee updates and roundtable discussions on contract negotiations (excluding rates and percentages), grievances, arbitrations, and other current topics.
May 2, 2014 — Spokane, Wash.

LINEMAN SKILLS SERIES — REGISTER FOR ALL 3 DAYS!

Who Should Attend: Linemen, line crew foremen, substation personnel, electrical engineers, and safety managers.
Overview: Day 1 — *AC Transformers, Advanced Theory, and Practical Application*; Day 2 — *Regulators and Capacitors: Power Quality for Linemen*; and Day 3 — *Personal Protective Grounding*. Save $170 if you register for the entire three-day Lineman Skills Series instead of registering for each course individually! Save another $50 if you register for the series before the early bird rate ends on April 6, 2014!
May 6-8, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

LINEMAN SKILLS SERIES: DAY 1 — AC TRANSFORMERS, ADVANCED THEORY, AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Who Should Attend: Journeyman linemen, foremen/supervisors, engineers, and those involved in planning, scheduling, and engineering operations for a utility.
Overview: This advanced class provides attendees with a journeyman lineman's view of AC transformers. The curriculum includes a combination of electrical theory and hands-on practice. The overall program is to teach students how transformers are used to manage and control the flow of alternating current in electrical distribution systems. Attendees will be provided with an opportunity to work with and arrange transformers in a variety of configurations to achieve specific voltage outputs using hands-on equipment and computer simulation.
May 6, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

NUTS AND BOLTS OF WORK ORDERS

Who Should Attend: Employees involved in any aspect of preparing and/or processing work orders for their electric utility, or employees outside the accounting area who want a better understanding of the work order process.
Overview: This class covers everything you ever wanted to know about work orders and provides current information about specific documentation demands and forms necessary to meet accounting requirements. You will not only analyze the why of work order systems, but you will also review the how to of the process.
May 6-7, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

NEW! PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR UTILITY PERSONNEL

Who Should Attend: Anyone involved in projects — project managers, project team members, planners, or senior managers.
Overview: This two-day course is intended for both novice and experienced project managers and their supporters. The course provides an introduction to the primary processes and knowledge areas of applied project management, including initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing projects. Participants will learn how to effectively plan projects and understand the various stages of the project from one task to another.
May 6-7, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

LINEMAN SKILLS SERIES: DAY 2 — REGULATORS AND CAPACITORS: POWER QUALITY FOR LINEMEN

Who Should Attend: Electrical linemen, line crew foremen, substation personnel, and electrical engineers.
Overview: This course is designed to help the student better understand the function, purpose, and application of regulators and capacitors. Students will observe the inner workings of a step voltage regulator and applied electrical theory. Students will also learn to work safely with various capacitors in different configurations and connections, while using hands-on demonstrations.
May 7, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

NEW! CHALLENGING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Who Should Attend: Anyone who has completed at least two modules of the NWPPA Utility Accounting Certificate Program, or anyone with significant utility accounting/finance experience.
Overview: This is a computer-intensive class that will teach you how key ratios are developed, techniques for evaluating various financial reports, the components of cash flow, how to review your system's cash flow, and the determination of optimum equity.
May 7-8, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

LINEMAN SKILLS SERIES: DAY 3 — PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GROUNDING

Who Should Attend: All electrical workers involved in personal protective grounding.
Overview: This course discusses protective grounding theory, emphasizing safety and the range of acceptable currents. It also covers visual inspection of grounding systems (mats, connectors, risers, and straps); special considerations and hazards (IEEE Standard 80); and personal protective grounds, including sizing, testing, inspection, maintenance, and use.
May 8, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

QUALIFIED WORKER TRAINING

Who Should Attend: Engineers, technicians, meter readers, and other operations personnel who are required by OSHA 1910.269 to have this training.
Overview: The course covers federal regulations related to entering a secured area; minimum approach distances or clearances; personal protective equipment; job briefings; substation entrance procedures; and opening padmount transformers, switchgear, and metering compartments. Employees typically open and/or view electrical equipment in secured areas to take information off of nameplates, readings from meters or gauges, etc.
May 8, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

IT SECTION MEETING

Who Should Attend: Managers and staff who are involved in the information technology aspects of their organizations.

Overview: Join your colleagues from throughout the region for this convenient, one-day meeting that features a presentation on a current IT topic followed by open discussions with your colleagues. To make this informative meeting convenient for you, each section meeting starts late, ends early, and is close to an airport.
May 13, 2014 — Portland, Ore.

NEW! RCRA TRAINING FOR UTILITY PERSONNEL

Who Should Attend: All employees with environmental responsibilities at utilities and those companies that work with utilities.
Overview: Designed for electric utilities and part of NWPPA's Environmental Series, this course provides an overview of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) that was passed by the U.S. Congress on October 21, 1976. The law's focus is to regulate hazardous waste and non-hazardous solid waste; the law introduced a "cradle-to-grave" philosophy for the management of hazardous waste.
May 13, 2014 — Vancouver, Wash.

HAZWOPER 8-HOUR FIRST RESPONDER AWARENESS/ RE-CERTIFICATION TRAINING FOR UTILITY PERSONNEL

Who Should Attend: First responders who are likely to witness, discover, or respond to a hazardous substance release and need to initiate an emergency response sequence by notifying the proper people.
Overview: Part of NWPPA's Environmental Series and designed for the needs of electric utilities, this course will refresh your knowledge and understanding of the requirements for hazardous waste operations and emergency response (HAZWOPER), as required by 29 CFR 1910.120. This course also helps to satisfy the annual HAZWOPER training required for re-certification. This course trains operations-level responders to take defensive actions to a hazardous materials spill.
May 14, 2014 — Vancouver, Wash.

ONLINE — HELPING CUSTOMERS UNDERSTAND USAGE AND CONSERVATION MEASURES

Who Should Attend: Customer service personnel and anyone who needs to interact with customers about energy usage.
Overview: Many consumers are remarkably uninformed or misinformed about how to understand and control their energy use, how the utility designs its rates, and what to do to make their homes more energy efficient. Employees who are responsible for helping consumers understand their bills, the utility's rates, and how to be more energy efficient will gain knowledge and expertise so that they can communicate with customers in a more professional and credible manner.
May 14, 2014 — Online presentation

FRONT LINE LEADERSHIP #2: LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Who Should Attend: Front line supervisors and managers, and front line employees.
Overview: This is the second in a series of four sessions leading to a Certificate in Front Line Leadership from NWPPA. The front line leader's role in facilitating performance will be described, along with ways of dealing with challenges such as denial and reluctance to accept accountability.
May 14-15, 2014 — Seattle, Wash.

NWPPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Who Should Attend: Utility managers; assistant managers; senior staff; power supply managers; utility board and council members; associate members; and trade association heads.
Overview: Much of this year's agenda is set on key questions that will be discussed by experts and panels. Topics will include changes to the public power business model; how wind, solar, and the electric car industry are changing the business model; distributive generation — legal and authority pressures; finding your next executive — roles, responsibilities, and details of an effective plan; and why is the smart grid smart? For more information, see page 4.
May 18-22, 2014 — Billings, Mont.

PRE-CONFERENCE COURSE: INTERPLAY — A PUBLIC POWER BUSINESS SIMULATION

Who Should Attend: Policy makers, general managers, CEOs, senior staff members, and members of utility advisory committees.
Overview: Interplay is a team-based business simulation about public power that challenges teams of 4-5 participants to create value for customers/members by successfully managing an enterprise. During the simulation, team results are tracked, compared, and reviewed. At the end of the simulation, participants are asked to consider their learning and insight. Finally, participants are asked to create an action plan for using their insights to achieve a measurable business impact in their current job.
May 19, 2014 — Billings, Mont.

PRE-CONFERENCE COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Who Should Attend: Policymakers, general managers, clerks to the board, executive secretaries, and administrative assistants.
Overview: Robert's Rules of Order can be baffling and intimidating. People who know how to use it sometimes seem to employ the system as a weapon, not a tool to make meetings better; but it doesn't have to be that way. In this highly interactive and entertaining day-long class, attendees will learn essential principles and practice the tools and techniques to use Robert's Rules well in order to run smooth, efficient, and fair meetings. Topics covered will include making sense of motions; the fundamental rules of discussion and debate; dealing with disorder in meetings; the role of the presider and the rights of members; voting and abstentions; and knowing how to table or postpone a topic to another day.
May 19, 2014 — Billings, Mont.

NEW! HR STRATEGY: BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS CASE

Who Should Attend: Human resource professionals who plan and implement HR programs and initiatives.
Overview: The key to getting leadership support for HR initiatives is to demonstrate how these initiatives align with a business strategy that supports organizational priorities. During this course, attendees will learn tactics and techniques for building strong business cases that get leadership buy in and approval. This will be a highly practical, hands-on workshop. Participants will review case studies and get input from a panel of utility members from finance, engineering, operations, customer service, and communications on how HR initiatives impact their functional areas.
May 21-22, 2014 — Portland, Ore. NWPPA

For more information on these and other courses, go to www.nwppa.org.

by Joel Scruggs

BPA innovation increases line capacity and saves millions

There are many paths to innovation. For civil engineer Len Custer, it was discovering a new use for a simple device.

Connectors join sections of conductor together and play an essential role in the efficient transfer of electricity. But they are commonly viewed as a weak link in the power delivery chain because they can fail, particularly if they get too hot. For decades, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and others in the industry installed compression shunts on inadequate or failing connectors as a means of extending their operational life and potentially avoiding an outage.

While the Electric Power Research Institute, vendors, and others researched new materials that could minimize high-temperature effects on connectors, Custer theorized that compression shunts could split the amount of current traveling through the connector and allow a line to be continuously operated at much higher temperatures, therefore increasing the amount of electricity it could carry.

"At that time they were nothing more than a maintenance tool," recalled Tyler Ashburn, a civil engineer. "Installing them on existing connectors in good condition was unheard of."

The key to Custer's ingenious idea lay in the shunt's design. Shunting involves providing an additional electrical path around the connector by either wrapping preformed aluminum wires or clamping a jumper over sections of a power line adjacent to compression connectors. By providing a parallel path, it conducts most of the current and only a fraction of it flows through the connector.

Since it was a new application for certified off-the-shelf components, his concept was quickly embraced and tested. "There was tremendous support," Custer said. "As it evolved, more and more people got involved."

Getting more amperage out of a line typically meant completely rebuilding and replacing the existing conductor. But early testing at BPA's labs in Vancouver, Wash., confirmed Custer's hunch: the addition of aluminum shunts lowered the operating temperature of the connector and protected it under additional amperage and higher temperatures, allowing the transmission line to operate well above the previous summer normal rating of 1,070 amps and 212 degrees Fahrenheit (100 degrees Celsius), increasing its capacity by 40 percent.

"Using shunts to get more performance out of existing transmission lines was a ground-breaking concept," said Terry Oliver, BPA's chief technology innovation officer.

In 2007, BPA became the first in the industry to use a wrapped or helical connector shunt for high-temperature application. BPA installed shunts on its 68-year-old,

BPA Linemen Cole Bradbury and Patrick Gibbs install a helical connector shunt on BPA's 230-kilovolt Midway-Vantage line in central Washington, north of Hanford. Photo by Barry Peckham.

230-kilovolt Ross-Lexington line in order to accommodate the output from a natural gas-fired power plant in Longview, Wash. In addition to increasing the line's peak capacity from 1,070 amps to 1,500 amps, the upgrade cost $4 million less than rebuilding and reconductoring 20 miles of transmission line and it cut the outage time by more than half. They're also easy to install because they don't require equipment to handle full-line tension and most are installed in about a half-hour using bucket trucks.

In addition to the use of wrapped shunts, which are designed to be used on a single conductor size, BPA has developed an alternate shunt, commonly referred to as the "Custer" or "BPA" shunt, with two line tap clamps that can be applied when conductor changes are made within a line. It can also be used in substations when a shunt connection is needed from a conductor to a riser.

Custer dedicated more than 30 years of his professional career to increasing the capacity of BPA's transmission system. And before his retirement in December, EPRI released a report that endorsed the use of the Custer shunt for thermal upgrades of existing lines with conventional conductors and recommended it for protecting connectors on lines operating at high temperatures.

To date, BPA has installed shunts on several lines and realized cost savings of more than $32 million, most recently on its Walla Walla-Pendleton line to relieve overloading when both Combine Hills II and Vancycle wind sites are at full output. And the assessment for potential shunt application has been built into the agency's standards for planning transmission upgrades.

In the near term, BPA has three projects currently in design for shunts — one high-temperature application and two for compression fitting. "And we could easily see a couple of retrofits every year for the next 15 to 20 years," Ashburn added.

Whether increasing a line's capacity without replacement or protecting connectors from premature aging and failure, the helical shunt allows BPA to make the most of its existing transmission resources, which saves the agency, its electric utility customers, and their ratepayers millions in avoided costs.

"The connector shunt is a tremendous example of how we're finding creative, cost-effective solutions that help us continue to deliver reliable power to the people of the Northwest," said Larry Bekkedahl, senior vice president for Transmission and a member of EPRI's Power Delivery and Utilization Executive Committee. NWPPA

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by Derrick McCarty

January ETF meeting reports a record number of attendees

On January 13, the NWPPA Environmental Task Force (ETF) met in Seattle, Wash. The meeting broke an attendance record with 57 attendees — many being first-time attendees! This is not nearly as big as the record-breaking 111.5 million viewers who tuned in to watch the Seattle Seahawks dismantle the Denver Broncos in the Super Bowl, but we will take it.

This meeting continued the tradition we started last year of inviting Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10 staff to speak to our group. This year, we heard from Kate Kelly, EPA Region 10 director of Air, Waste, and Toxics; Heather Valdez, environmental engineer (air emissions); Madonna Narvaez, air toxics specialist (greenhouse gas [GHG] reporting); and Michelle Mullin, PCB coordinator (PCBs).

Kelly provided a general update on EPA's activities in Region 10 and focused much of her talk on the proposed EPA rule on New Source Performance Standards (NSPS). Under Section 111 of the Clean Air Act, EPA is authorized to develop technology-based standards which apply to specific categories of stationary sources. The categories of specific interest to NWPPA members under the NSPS would be for GHG emissions that apply to new — and could extend to existing — fossil-fuel-fired power plants. The EPA develops and implements the NSPS and delegates the standards to the states; however, even when delegated to the states, the EPA retains authority to implement and enforce the NSPS.

Reinforcing this report, President Obama announced during his State of the Union address that he has instructed his Administration to work with states and utilities to update carbon emission standards from power plants. Although specifics were not mentioned, he was likely referring to a proposed EPA rule on NSPS for new power plants and a rule that the EPA will soon propose for existing plants.

After hearing from the EPA staff, we were provided with a presentation on contaminated land ownership risk by Dustin La Vallee of Sacramento Municipal Utility District. He gave an overview of federal waste regulations and laws; talked about related court decisions; provided some examples of liability and protection options; and highlighted some regulatory incentive programs. This provided good background on land contaminants risk for the nearly 20 first-time participants at this meeting.

Next, we heard from three vendors about their respective products or services. We are pleased to report that two of the three are new NWPPA associate members: Tetra Tech and Amerizorb Absorbents. The other associate member joined a year ago, and Megan Higgins with Ecology & Environment (E&E) has attended every ETF meeting since. These firms provided the following information about what they do to the ETF:

- Tetra Tech is a firm providing integrated environmental permitting, engineering, project management, and construction services worldwide. Special thanks to Tetra Tech for sponsoring our lunch as well — much appreciated!
- E&E is an international environmental management firm that employs professionals in 85 different engineering and scientific disciplines.
- Amerizorb Absorbents is a Northwest-based company that has developed a proprietary process for manufacturing an organic peat moss-based product that is used for contaminant spill cleanup and vapor suppression.

Lastly, I spoke about the financial impacts of environmental compliance on utilities. As part of our work in the ETF, it is important to be able to illustrate the economic impact electric utilities incur in complying with environmental regulations while generating, transmitting, and distributing power. Having a better understanding of regulatory compliance requirements gives a more comprehensive picture of the cost of doing business. This is something that is important for government, regulators, utilities, and customers to keep in mind.

Next meeting

The ETF is seeking increased participation and encourages all NWPPA utility members to consider sending their environmental compliance staff to our meetings. We also encourage staff to join our ETF Basecamp to stay plugged in online to related activities, discussions, and documents. Participants help identify environmental regulatory topics of interest and help shape the ETF's agenda. The ETF meetings serve as a forum to assist members with procedure development specific to their utility by reviewing regulations and best practices and offering networking opportunities with other environmental professionals.

The next meeting of the ETF is set for April 7, 2014, in Reno, Nev., and will be held in conjunction with the NWPPA Engineering and Operations (E&O) Conference. For more information on the ETF meeting or the E&O Conference, visit www.nwppa.org. NWPPA

Derrick McCarty is the ETF chairman and an environmental management specialist II at Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) in Calif. He can be contacted at derrick.mccarty@smud.org.

by Keith Brooks

AMI brings Kootenai's IT and member service functions together

Today, electric cooperatives, municipalities, and PUDs are embracing advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) in a big way. More than 12 years ago, when Kootenai Electric Cooperative (KEC) deployed Aclara's TWACS® technology, it was one of the few. In 2002, we planned to use this powerful system to streamline our billing and outage management processes. AMI has allowed us to do that and more as we're now using AMI data to run our pre-paid metering and meter data management (MDM) programs.

Back in 2002, our main concern was reading the meters remotely once a month for billing; AMI being down due to failure was only an issue if it coincided with an upcoming billing read. Now, with the addition of new programs, we have members and employees relying on AMI systems to be up nearly 100 percent of the time. The system is used to calculate prepay balances and automatically send reconnect/disconnect commands to the remote switches on the meter. With over 1,000 meters with remote disconnects installed, it is essential that when people pay to be reconnected the lights come back on. In addition, the meters are read hourly and the data is sent back to our office three times a day. At noon each day, the data is uploaded to our system and our staff and members expect to be able to review it online.

To make these complex programs work, IT and a number of departments inside KEC have to work closely together. Since AMI requires equipment and software to be installed on desktops, in the server room, at substations, and in the field, operations, member services, and engineering personnel all have to be consulted when issues arise. Often these departments sound the alarm when something is broken. In fact, one of the biggest challenges we faced as the system evolved was the compartmentalization of knowledge; figuring out where a failure occurred and who should go fix it caused more delay than the actual repair. For example, IT understands the server installations but has little knowledge about the substation equipment and metering. It quickly became apparent that a project technician with a fairly complete understanding of all the components was needed to maximize AMI uptime. This position became a hybrid of departments with skills that crossed each but operated out of the IT department.

As the programs gained traction with our members, IT staff roles started to evolve. Traditionally IT staff's focus was internal to the cooperative. In the past, we didn't talk to members directly; however, that began to change. Whether it's help with our mobile app or questions about supported Internet browsers to view MDM, IT now plays a role in external member service.

Our programs and how our members benefit

KEC contracts with NISC for our CIS/ABS software. In addition, NISC's Smart Hub product (a Web portal and app for mobile devices) and MDM shows our members their elec-

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KEC members have embraced the meter data management programs and are now tracking their own use. For example, as shown above, members can log in to their account and view information such as their hourly electric use for a 24-hour period. Graphic provided by Kootenai Electric Cooperative.

tric use in a meaningful way down to an hourly increment. High-bill complaint calls have completely changed in our Member Services Department. Our MSRs and Energy Efficiency Program staff can immediately pull up a member's electric use and discuss it with him or her. Once we provide this information, members can often be talked through real energy efficiency changes right then and there.

When we implemented the MDM program, we slowly started using the information while on the phone with members and then began marketing it to our members. Our members have embraced this concept and are tracking their own use; now many members expect to see their data. For example, our largest industrial member, a saw mill, has regular internal meetings to review their energy consumption and make business decisions based on that data.

I recently spoke with a member who works with a water association. Prior to KEC offering meter data management, this member would drive an hour a week to the water pump meter to check the electric use (he had previously suffered a leak which caused a significant bill). Now this member can track his electric use from the comfort of his home computer. I can tell you that he is extremely satisfied with this service.

In 2011, we launched our pre-paid metering program, called Smart Pay. Members have the option of tracking their use either online or using an in-home display. When they run out of pre-purchased electricity, the power goes out at noon that day or the next; as soon as they pay, the power comes on within five minutes.

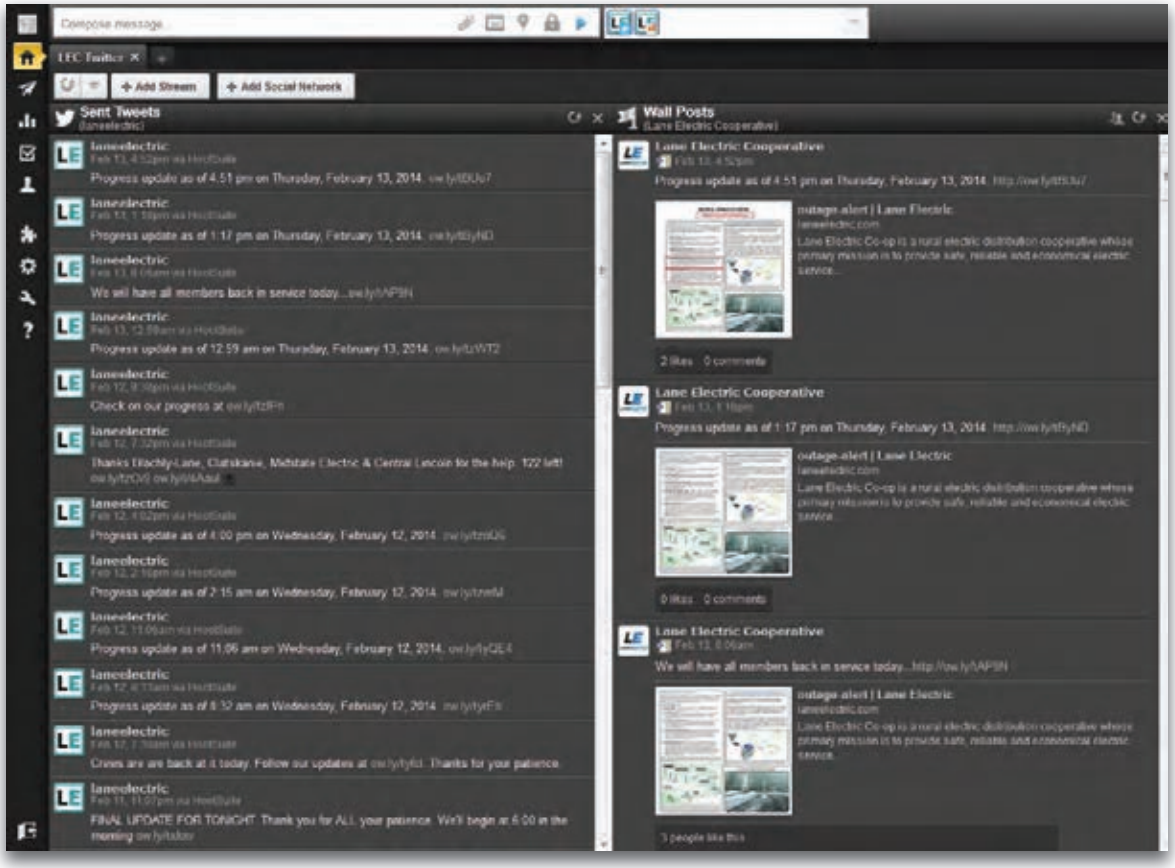
As a former GIS analyst, I'm especially proud of our outage management system. We use AMI to check meters during an outage to assist in the identification and location of the affected meters. The information helps reduce response time and outage duration. In addition, we also display real time outage information on our website for members to view. During a recent power outage, we had more than 5,000 hits to our power outage map page on our website. This information would not be as accurate without the use of AMI identifying the exact location of the outage. We are also using this mapping information to send text messages and emails to our members when their power goes out. These messages provide updates on when power is expected to be restored and when power has been restored.

One thing is clear: as we give our members more information, they not only expect it but ask for more. I believe continuing to innovate and offer our members more technology is only just the beginning of improving member satisfaction. NWPPA

Keith Brooks is the manager of Information and Member Services at Kootenai Electric Cooperative in Hayden, Idaho. He can be reached at kbrooks@kec.com.

by Dave D'Avanzo

Website and social media prove helpful during Lane Electric storm event



During the February storm, Lane Electric utilized social media avenues like Twitter to keep its members up to date on the outages and the progress they were making. Graphics provided by Lane Electric.

In the early days when outages happened, utilities used a standard protocol comprised of having crews report to the office, collecting information via members' calls one at a time, dispatching crews to locations to make repairs, reporting back via radio to the dispatch center, calling members at all hours of the night to confirm their power had been restored, and moving on to the next affected area. While the process worked well, it took far longer to gather the information, deploy crews, make repairs, and confirm restoration than it does today. In fact, those days were very different. On one occasion during a winter storm back in the early 80s, a member whose power was out reported her outage via a postcard and it read: "I know you are busy but my electricity has been out for four days now. I just wanted you to know. There's no hurry but when you get a chance, can you get my lights back on, please? Thank you." Four days plus time for mail delivery and "there's no hurry?" Wow!

Things are far different today. With the proliferation of computers, smart devices, the Internet, advanced metering systems, social media, and the like, information is not only available, it's expected. As such, Lane Electric in Eugene, Ore., has evolved with the times. They were the first co-op in Oregon — and likely the region — to fully deploy an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system. Initially, the AMI system provided the ability to read and collect meter data remotely and more quickly. Among the original features were the ability to verify whether a member's home had power or not, and address billing concerns with accurate and timely information. As the system matured, new options became available: prepaid billing, energy monitoring, outage alerts and management, real-time data, Smart-Hub tools, and more. Today, members can check their daily consumption; view and pay their bill; receive alerts; read news; learn about new programs and services; follow power outage progress; report an outage; request or discontinue electric service; and update their customer information quickly and easily all at www.laneelectric.com.

And then there are Facebook and Twitter. Lane Electric has incorporated social media into their mix of communication tools to reach out to its members. During the most recent weather event in early February when some members were

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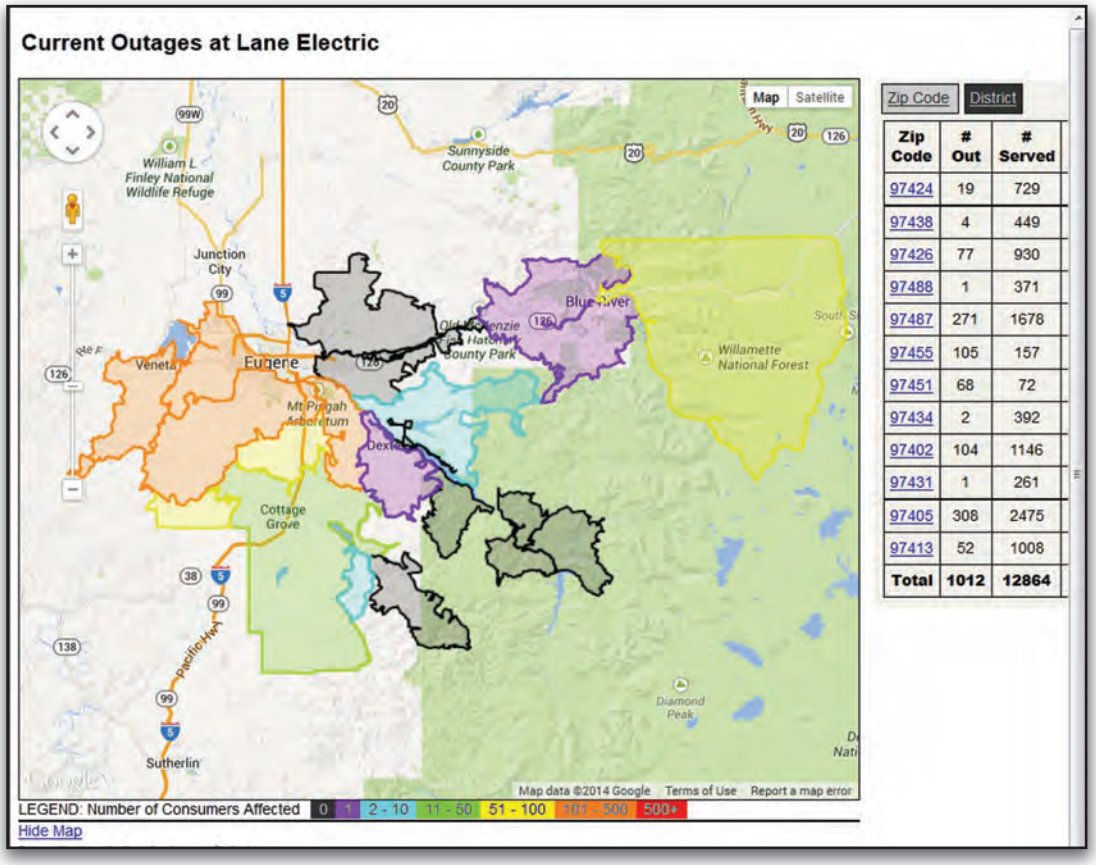


Members can view an outage map in real time on Lane Electric's website. The map shows areas by ZIP code where there are outages, as well as the number of members affected in each given area.

without services for five and six days, followers and friends alike received regular updates about Lane Electric's progress.

As an example, at 7:15 on Friday morning, February 7, a weather alert was posted on Lane Electric's website, as well as its Facebook and Twitter pages, to let members know what Mother Nature had in store. When the storm hit, members and Lane Electric's media partners were notified with an initial briefing as to what was happening. They were encouraged to follow the website updates and social postings. And they did just that. Interestingly, Lane Electric's Twitter followers and Facebook likes doubled in number during the course of the event.

When it comes to power outages and getting information to members, Lane Electric's website has been linked to its AMI system for years, providing frequent, real-time updates during storm and weather events, so members were better able to track the progress of the co-op's restoral efforts as the storm went on. With social media having been added to the mix, Twitter and Facebook are used regularly to provide frequent updates and notifications. They host links directly to Lane Electric's Outage Update page on their website where specific real-time information is available. Upon arrival to the Outage page, members see an outage map that identifies affected areas by magnitude, progress reports, ways to be better prepared for multi-day outage events, the process used for outage restoral, and more.

The outage map shows areas by ZIP code where there are outages. The number of members affected in each given area is displayed in the chart to the right of the map. The images correspond to a color chart at the bottom of the graphic based on the number of people without service in a given area. The areas and numbers ebb and flow based on the real-time information housed in the outage management system.

To support this information, frequent and continual updates are provided on the website throughout the restoral process. These updates are based on the progress crews have made or new problems that occur in the field. The ultimate goal of tying these systems together is member communications. Keeping members informed so they are able to make plans or preparations for what might be a long restoral process is critical. For that reason, a frequently updated road-by-road chart accompanies the information on the map and continues to let members know what they can expect.

With regular postings on Facebook and Twitter, activity on Lane Electric's website during the storm jumped from an average of 300-400 hits per day to just over 4,700 hits per day on outage-related pages alone. There were over 40,000 page views that week and new visits were up over 40 percent supporting the fact that people want to know what's going on.

It goes to show that members are always hungry for information. Whether through local newspapers, radio, television, the Internet, or social media, Lane Electric is committed to providing information to its members however they want it.

If you are interested in Lane Electric's website or social media pages, check out www.laneelectric.com. NWPPA

Dave D'Avanzo is the manager of Member Services for Lane Electric in Eugene, Ore. He can be reached at (541) 484-1151 or dave.davanzo@laneelectric.com.

Clallam PUD unveils its new look

A rendering of the east view of the new administration building. Graphic provided by Clallam PUD.

Last month, Clallam PUD (Port Angeles, Wash.) announced that it is on track for upgrading its aging facilities and improving operational efficiency by consolidating departments in the Carlsborg area and implementing a comprehensive facilities plan. The facilities plan was announced in November 2013.

"We are excited about the progress and are pleased to share the architectural renderings of our new administrative facility," says PUD General Manager **Doug Nass**.

The projected total cost of the new headquarters building in Carlsborg and the engineering addition to the Carlsborg Operations Center is preliminarily estimated at $12 million for approximately 36,000 total square feet (30,000 for the new headquarters, 6,000 for the engineering addition). Estimated costs include site development, construction, and all "soft" costs. NWPPA

Governor appoints Picker to CPUC

Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) Board of Directors Vice President **Michael Picker** was appointed by Governor **Jerry Brown** to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Picker will resign from his position on the SMUD Board prior to taking the oath of office. This position requires Senate confirmation. State law does not permit Picker to hold both the SMUD and CPUC offices.

Picker was elected to the SMUD Board of Directors in November 2012 to represent Ward 5. He was elected vice president of the SMUD Board of Directors last December. His term as vice president would have run through December 2014.

The SMUD Board of Directors will determine how to select Picker's successor in Ward 5 and will elect a new vice president. Ward 4 Director **Genevieve Shiroma** is currently SMUD's Board president. NWPPA

Sue Kelly named as APPA president, CEO

On January 29, 2014, the American Public Power Association (APPA) Board of Directors appointed **Sue Kelly** as the organization's new president and CEO to succeed **Mark Crisson**, effective April 1. Kelly has been with APPA since 2004 and is currently general counsel and senior vice president for policy analysis. She has extensive experience as an attorney dealing with federal regulation, particularly before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and is generally regarded as one of the top practitioners in that arena.

"Sue Kelly is an exceptional leader with a demonstrated commitment to public power. Her extensive industry knowledge, strong interpersonal skills, and record of achievement have earned her the respect of APPA's membership, her industry colleagues, and federal regulators," said **Gary Stauffer,** APPA Board chair. "The board of directors looks forward to working with Sue and has every confidence that she will successfully lead APPA and its members through the challenges that lie ahead."

"I am honored by the trust the Board has placed in me and to have this opportunity to lead an organization that is so vital to the interests of public power," said Kelly.

Kelly's work experience prior to joining APPA included stints with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and two Washington law firms. She earned a B.A. from the University of Missouri and J.D. from The George Washington University Law School. NWPPA

Grad promoted to operations director

On January 20, **Joe Grad** was promoted from superintendent of Transmission and Distribution to director of Operations at Franklin PUD (Pasco, Wash.). In his new role, he will be responsible for all functions of the Operations Department, including line crews, warehouse, mechanics, substations, the meter shop, and the operation and maintenance of generation equipment.

Grad is a longtime employee of Franklin PUD. He started his career in November 1979 as an apprentice lineman, and has also held positions as journeyman lineman and general foreman. His 34 years of experience and breadth of understanding within the Operations Department allow him to effectively lead employees and continue to be a respected leader for the utility, community, and public power. NWPPA

Speckman receives Distinguished Service Award

The Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association (ORECA) recently presented **Bob Speckman**, Salem Electric's general manager, with its 2013 Distinguished Service Award at ORECA's annual meeting. After 32 years at Salem Electric — general manager since 1997 — Speckman is retiring on April 30, 2014.

Speckman's commitment to cooperatives precedes his years at Salem Electric when, from 1976-1982, he was a lobbyist for ORECA spending many hours in the hallways of the State Capitol influencing legislators to support cooperatives.

As general manager, he has expanded Salem Electric's role in the communities it serves by increasing Salem Electric's presence through sponsorships, donations, and employee involvement. Salem Electric's commitment to conservation and renewable energy continued and grew under his leadership, and his involvement in public power has touched many industry organizations, including NWPPA, Northwest Regional Utilities, and the Public Power Council.

Recognized as Oregon's public power historian, Speckman has created an archive room at Salem Electric to not only retain Salem Electric's valuable historic information but public power's in general. Through his efforts, the history of Oregon's electric cooperatives has been preserved. NWPPA

Energy Northwest honored for safety

Energy Northwest has earned the Association of Washington Business' (AWB) Workplace Safety Award. Energy Northwest CEO **Mark Reddemann**, Safety Manager **Ed Prilucik**, and Safety Committee Chairman **Matt Harrington** were on hand during the AWB's presentation of the award in Olympia, Wash., on February 6.

The agency's safety recognition by AWB comes at a time when Columbia Generating Station, the agency's flagship energy resource, is generating more electricity than in the nuclear facility's operational history. In 2013, the facility generated 8.4 million megawatt-hours of electricity — a record for a refueling year, which occurs every two years — and in 2012 Columbia generated 9.3 million megawatt-hours, a record for a non-refueling year.

The AWB Better Workplace Awards honor member companies that demonstrate innovation in the areas of workplace safety; job training and advancement; and benefit and compensation programs. The 2014 awards recognize member businesses, both large and small, that go the extra mile in providing a family-friendly work environment, promoting safety, and enabling employees to achieve their best.

Energy Northwest was highlighted for their remarkable milestone that was achieved in the fall: 10 million hours without a lost-time injury. "That level of safety is nearly impossible for a large public power utility to achieve, but this Richland-based electricity provider holds itself to a higher standard," the award said. NWPPA

Chelan campaign wins Totem Award

Chelan County PUD's (Wenatchee, Wash.) campaign to introduce customers to energy-efficiency rebates and benefits in 2013 has been recognized with a top community relations award.

The Puget Sound chapter of the Public Relations Society of America recognized the PUD's Conservation Makes Cents outreach campaign with a Totem Award at the annual awards banquet in Seattle. The award is the top honor in the organization's Community Relations category.

2013 was the first year that Chelan County PUD offered a comprehensive menu of energy-efficiency measures to residential customers. The measures were introduced through a Conservation Department outreach campaign, called "Conservation Makes Cents," that included an animated video by North 40 Productions of Wenatchee; print and radio ads; billboards; and fliers available at local stores, home shows, and other public events.

Chelan PUD customers who took advantage of energy-efficiency programs saved 20,761,200 kilowatt-hours of energy last year — enough to power about 1,000 homes in Chelan County. The savings helped the PUD surpass its 2013 conservation goal by about 40 percent. NWPPA

Dover completes certification

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association recently recognized Montana's **David Dover** for completing the Board Leadership Program. Dover is a trustee on the NWPPA Board as well as vice president of the Fergus Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in Lewistown, Mont.

The Board Leadership Certificate recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Certified Cooperative Director. Directors who have attained the certificate have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses. NWPPA

Howard to head SMUD Customer Services

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) has named **Nicole Howard** as director of Customer Services. Howard will oversee all customer-related operations, programs, and services, including energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. She succeeds **Frankie McDermott** who was appointed SMUD chief customer officer last month.

Since June 2011, Howard has managed Customer Operations, with services that include the Contact Center; billing and credit; field services; and revenue protection (power theft prevention). She was also responsible for implementing operational opportunities made available by SMUD's smart grid initiative.

As a 12-year veteran of SMUD, Howard has served the community-owned electric utility in many capacities: as a supervisor in Supply Chain Services; as a cost-scheduling specialist and supplier diversity representative; and as a customer service representative. "Nicole brings a wealth of experience and the leadership skills we need as we continue to move forward into a challenging utility environment," said McDermott.

Howard holds a bachelor's degree in legal studies from UC Berkeley and a master's degree in public administration from CSU, Dominguez Hills. In addition, she is a graduating Fellow of the Nehemiah Emerging Leaders Program and the Catalyst Leadership Program. She currently sits on the Cosumnes River College Foundation Board. NWPPA

SnoPUD's West re-elected to head NEEA Board

On January 21, the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) Board of Directors re-elected **Jim West** to serve as board chair. West has served as the assistant general manager, Customer and Energy Services, for Snohomish Public Utility District (Everett, Wash.) since February 2009. The other officers for 2014 are Vice Chair **Deb Young**, program consultant, NorthWestern Energy; Treasurer **Bruce Folsom**, director, Energy Efficiency, Avista Utilities; and Secretary **Margie Harris**, executive director, Energy Trust of Oregon.

"NEEA's board of directors provides crucial leadership of this organization," said NEEA Executive Director **Susan E. Stratton**. "Their expertise in regional energy efficiency helps NEEA more effectively drive collaborative market transformation in the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. We're looking forward to the wisdom that our new and returning members will bring to the table." NWPPA

Nieborsky elected to help lead APPA group

Central Lincoln PUD's (Florence, Ore.) **Gary Nieborsky** has been elected vice chair of APPA's newly formed Mutual Aid Working Group. Nieborsky is the manager of distribution engineering and operations manager at Central Lincoln.

Danette Scudder, the member services manager at the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association, was elected chair. The two officers were elected when the group met January 29-30 in San Antonio, Texas. NWPPA

Gaines named chairman of LPPC

The Large Public Power Council (LPPC), focused in Washington, D.C., has selected Tacoma Public Utilities Director/CEO **Bill Gaines** to serve a two-year term as its next chairman. **Mark Bonsall**, general manager and CEO of the Salt River Project in Arizona, will serve as vice chair.

"I am honored to have the confidence and support of my peers as I take this leadership role with LPPC," Gaines said. "It is a time of transformation in the electric utility industry, and I will work with this group to continue to seek customer-focused policies for people in the communities served by TPU, as well as others around the country who are served by public power."

Gaines brings seven years of experience as Tacoma Public Utilities director/CEO and more than 30 years in the electric utility industry, including senior management roles at Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy, Inc., to his new role. Gaines has already helped shape LPPC's policy positions through his leadership as its vice chair, as a member of its steering committee, and as CEO sponsor of the organization's Energy Regulation Task Force. NWPPA

Di Stasio named CEO of the Year

The voice of the electric utility industry since 1922, *Electric Light & Power* magazine, has named its Large Utility CEO of the Year: Sacramento Municipal Utility District (Calif.) General Manager and CEO **John Di Stasio**.

"SMUD customers and employees should be proud to have Mr. Di Stasio leading their utility," said **Teresa Hansen**, editor in chief of *Electric Light & Power* magazine. "Mr. Di Stasio helped SMUD become the only large utility in California to meet the statewide goal of supplying 20 percent of its power from renewables in 2010, he has led the utility to financial stability, and SMUD customers are very, very happy."

Di Stasio won in the large utility division, which is open to North American electric utilities with 400,000 customers or more. SMUD is the nation's sixth-largest electric utility owned by its customers and serves 1.4 million people in 900 square miles. It employs more than 2,000 people and owns more than 10,200 miles of power lines.

Hansen presented the award on January 27 in San Antonio during the fifth annual Electric Light & Power Executive Conference. A feature article on Di Stasio appeared in the January-February issue of *Electric Light & Power* magazine and on the magazine's website. NWPPA

Paxton reaches 20 years at Douglas

On February 18, Douglas County PUD (East Wenatchee, Wash.) Commissioners **Lynn Heminger**, **Ron Skagen**, and **Jim Davis** presented a 20-year-service award to Meter Reader **Keith Paxton**. Commissioner Heminger thanked Paxton on behalf of the citizens of Douglas County for his many years of service; Paxton in turn thanked the commission. NWPPA

Watch your mailbox for NWPPA's 74th Annual Conference and Membership Meeting program!

Lewis County increases rates

At the February 11 Commissioners' Meeting for Public Utility District #1 of Lewis County (Chehalis, Wash.), the commissioners unanimously voted to enact a rate increase to begin March 1, 2014. With the rate increase, an average home using 1,100 kilowatt-hours will see its monthly bill go up by about $6 per month.

The Bonneville Power Administration increased its wholesale power rates to the utilities in October 2013. The District's commissioners postponed the implementation of that increase to local customers in hopes of helping them through the winter heating season.

The PUD had an outside consulting firm conduct a cost of service analysis (COSA) for the District and they confirmed the need for an increase to rates. Visit www.lcpud.org to view the COSA. NWPPA

Grays Harbor reports fewer outages in 2013

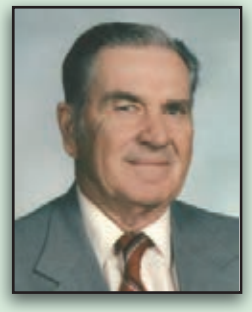
On February 11, the Grays Harbor Public Utility District (Aberdeen, Wash.) presented a report to its commissioners that said the power infrastructure performed admirably in 2013; working against recent trends, the total number of power outages and total number of customer hours without power were down in 2013.

"This is great news for the district and our customers," said PUD Board President **Russ Skolrood**. "Having a reliable system is of the utmost importance and there are still improvements that can be made, but I am proud of the advances made by our maintenance crews in 2013."

In 2013, PUD crews responded to 563 total outages, which is 11 percent lower than the five-year average and well below the 2012 total of 731. Those outages left customers without power for a total of 154,092 hours — 14 percent below the five-year average. Weather-related outages made up a large portion of the 2013 totals, with 49 outages attributed to broken or fallen trees, 35 attributed to lightning strikes, 24 attributed to storms, and 19 attributed to wind.

"There are some power outages we can work to avoid through tree trimming and vegetation management," said Skolrood. "Moving forward we will review these causes to ensure that we are improving data for tree trimming and asset management to build on system reliability." NWPPA

We remember



Wellen A. "Bud" Jones passed away peacefully on January 16, 2014, at the Sweet Memorial Nursing Home in Chinook, Mont., with family members at his bedside. He was 90 years old.

Jones, a farmer, was a lifelong resident of Turner and the Big Flat area. He was an early pioneer of rural electrification; serving many years on local, state, and national REC boards. Jones served 45 years on the board of Big Flat Electric Cooperative; 34 years on the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association Board of Directors (12 years as association president); and seven years on the CFC Board.

Jones was preceded in death by his wife of 59 years, Dorothy. He is survived by his sisters, Delores Calvert and Rosella (and Russell) Skones; children, Wellen (and Edie) Jones, Jr., Phyllis (and Jack) Laden, Warren (and Cherie) Jones, and Terry (and Tammy) Jones; 13 grandchildren; and two great granddaughters.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to the Turner Christian Church, the Turner Park, or one's choice. NWPPA

Joseph John "Jack" Stein died peacefully from complications of congestive heart failure at the Ray Hickey Hospice House on December 18, 2013, with his daughter by his side. He was 99 years old.

Stein was born on February 16, 1914, in San Francisco to Joseph John Stein and Davida Laura (Drake) Stein; he was the eldest of three boys. He lived in San Francisco, Seattle, Anacortes, and Bellingham while growing up, graduating from Whatcom High School in 1931.

After his father died in 1932, Stein found work as an able-bodied seaman with the Alaska Steamship Company to help his family and earn money for college. He graduated from the University of Washington in 1943 with a degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Navy; he served in the South Pacific during World War II. Upon the end of the war, he worked for Puget Sound Power and Light. In 1951, he accepted a position with the Grays Harbor PUD and became the manager in 1956. He consolidated the smaller local utilities and redesigned the operations of the PUD. In 1971, he accepted an appointment as the managing director of the Washington Public Power Supply System in the Tri-Cities where he was in charge of the financing and construction of their second nuclear power plant.

He retired in 1977 and he and his wife of 67 years, Elizabeth, moved to Des Moines, Wash. In 2006, they moved to Vancouver, Wash., to be near their daughter.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Donald and Robert, and wife. He is survived by his daughter, Judy Falk; son, Roger (and Faythe); granddaughter, Amy; grandson, Jacob; grandchildren; cousins; nieces; and nephews. NWPPA

Oregon, Montana to lead Power Council

On January 15, members of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council re-elected **Bill Bradbury**, one of Oregon's two members, to a second term as chair of the regional energy planning agency. Bradbury also was chair in 2013 and vice chair in 2012. The Council also re-elected Montana member **Jennifer Anders** to be vice chair.

Bradbury was appointed to the Council in September 2010 by then-Governor **Ted Kulongoski**. Before being appointed to the Council, Bradbury served as Oregon's secretary of state from 1999 to 2009, and served in the Oregon Legislature from 1981 to 1995, including as president of the Oregon Senate in 1993. He directed a non-profit organization, For the Sake of the Salmon, during which he worked with Northwest tribes; federal, state, and local governments; and timber, agriculture, and fishing interests.

Anders was appointed to the Council by Governor **Steve Bullock** in January 2013. An assistant attorney general in Montana before her appointment to the Council, she worked closely with Governor Bullock during his 2009-2012 tenure as Montana's attorney general. As an assistant attorney general, she dealt with a number of high-profile issues, including energy development, water quality, climate change, public land management, and interstate water compact allocations. She has spent her entire professional career in public service, working for four separate attorneys general in both civil and criminal law.

The Council develops and maintains a regional power plan and a fish and wildlife program to balance the Northwest's environment and energy needs. For more information, visit www.nwcouncil.org/. NWPPA

CEC recognized for its innovation

Last month, innovative business models in the distributed energy generation space were one of the hottest topics at the 2014 Solar Power Generation (SPG) USA congress in San Diego. In keeping with this theme, leading community solar company Clean Energy Collective (CEC) was recognized with the award for Most Innovative Solar Company.

CEC is the nation's leading community-owned solar developer, a distributed generation model that allows any participating utility customer the opportunity for solar ownership, including renters, those with shady roofs, and residents in multi-unit dwellings. CEC is unique in its embrace of utilities as partners in the development of medium-scale PV facilities that are jointly owned by individual ratepayers. Through this utility partnership the ratepayers may purchase a single solar panel from the community array or enough panels to offset their entire electricity bill.

SPG's awards panel acknowledged CEC for maximizing benefits for consumers while making the solution incredibly attractive for utilities. "Providing true ownership of panels to community solar participants, presenting no capital costs to the utility company, and demonstrating how such business models can be beneficial for all parties involved, Clean Energy Collective is paving the way for others to help distributed PV move forward," event organizer Green Power Conferences said in its statement.

Colorado-based Clean Energy Collective is the nation's leading developer of community-owned renewable energy facilities and power generation. For more information, visit www.easycleanenergy.com. NWPPA

BKI announces team changes

Rick Vermeers

In the last quarter, Brown & Kysar, Inc. (BKI) experienced two significant personnel changes: **Rick Vermeers** was hired as general manager for the organization and **Ethan Hendrickson** has left the company for a project manager position at Mill Plain Electric, a growing electrical contractor in Vancouver, Wash.

Vermeers recently retired as director of Electrical Engineering from Avista Utilities in Spokane after 37 years of service. He had already moved to the Camas area, so it was an easy decision to go to work in nearby Battle Ground. He has a balanced background in operations and engineering as well as more than 20 years of experience in administration.

Hendrickson was popular among his clients and his expertise will be missed both by BKI and his clients. He had a desire to move into a more operationally oriented position and that will serve him well in the long run. We certainly wish him well in his new endeavors.

BKI hopes to hire two senior design engineering positions to fill some of the experience gap left by Hendrickson's departure and to generally upgrade the experience level of the firm.

The goal of BKI is to be the best power engineering and consulting group in the Pacific Northwest for small- to mid-sized public utilities. For more information, visit www.bki.cc. NWPPA

T&B releases new iPad application

The recent 2.0 upgrade to the T&B Mobile iPad application from Thomas & Betts (T&B) features a new Tools button to retrieve literature, view videos, and even scan barcodes on T&B product packaging.

"The new T&B Mobile 2.0 application enables users to retrieve catalogs, brochures, videos, and other support tools quickly and easily," said **Chad Smith**, vice president, product management and marketing, at Thomas & Betts. "The tools are organized around our served markets, solutions, and product categories. We also have added an innovative barcode scanning tool that allows a user to scan a barcode and link directly to our rich attributed data and Web content."

T&B Mobile 2.0 is an upgrade to the application that was launched in April 2013. In addition to the new tools button for literature and video, the upgrade features an expanded Favorites folder that holds up to 30 documents, all of which can be sent via email or saved for future reference. The upgraded application also features a new PDF reader for more efficient navigation.

For more information about the new T&B Mobile 2.0 application from Thomas & Betts, please call (800) 238-5000.

Thomas & Betts Corporation, a member of the ABB Group, is a global leader in the design, manufacture, and marketing of essential components used to manage the connection, distribution, transmission, and reliability of electrical power in utility, industrial, commercial, and residential applications. For more information, please visit www.tnb.com. NWPPA

Cooper unites with Eaton

Eaton is a global power management company providing energy-efficient solutions that help customers effectively manage electrical, hydraulic, and mechanical power. A technology leader, Eaton acquired Cooper Industries plc. in November 2012. The 2012 revenue of the combined companies was $21.8 billion on a pro forma basis. Eaton has approximately 102,000 employees and sells products to customers in more than 175 countries.

Eaton's expanded engineering expertise and on-the-ground support are helping to solve your most critical electrical power management challenges across the globe. Eaton has the tools, resources, and experience to solve energy challenges big and small.

The transformative Cooper acquisition grows the global scale of Eaton's electrical business. The powerful combination of the two companies strengthens Eaton's global geographic footprint; expands market segment reach; and provides one of the broadest portfolios of products, services, and solutions in the electrical marketplace.

Cooper is part of the Electrical Sector of Eaton, a leader in power management solutions for customers in more than 175 countries worldwide. Cooper has a strong heritage of electrical components and solutions, including Bussmann electrical and electronic fuses; Crouse-Hinds and CEAG explosion-proof electrical equipment; Halo and Metalux lighting fixtures; and Kyle and McGraw-Edison power systems products. These products further enhance Eaton's capability to meet today's most critical electrical power management challenges. For more information, visit http://cooperwiring.com/content/public/en.html. NWPPA

by Deborah Sliz

Metcalf attack draws renewed congressional interest in grid security

The Wall Street Journal *(WSJ) published a three-part series on the Metcalf attack, which prompted other national news and broadcast outlets to publicize the incident and reignited Congressional concern. WSJ quoted former FERC Chair Jon Wellinghoff saying that the Metcalf attack was "the most significant incident of domestic terrorism involving the grid that has ever occurred."*

Congressional efforts to enact cyber security legislation have cooled in the 113th Congress, largely as a result of the President's February 2013 Executive Order.

That order, among other things, directed the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) to develop a "framework" of voluntary standards, processes, best practices, and methodologies to "align policy, business, and technological approaches to address cyber risks." NIST issued its Final Framework on February 12, 2014, and the Department of Energy will work with utility representatives to develop "implementation guidance" relating to the Framework.

In the meantime, there has been a sudden surge of media and congressional interest in the physical security of the grid, as a result of an April 2013 combined cyber/physical attack on PG&E's Metcalf substation in Silicon Valley, Calif.

On November 12, 2013, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D–Nev.), then-Energy and Natural Resource Committee Chair Ron Wyden (D–Ore.), Intelligence Committee Chair Dianne Feinstein (D–Calif.), and Homeland Security Committee Chair Tom Carper (D–Del.) wrote to the CEOs of APPA, NRECA, and the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), asking for a meeting to discuss the measures that utilities and the federal government are taking to provide greater protection of the electric grid from physical attacks. According to participants, a January 29 meeting of senior federal and utility officials with a bipartisan group of senators went well, with legislators expressing support for the many actions industry and government are taking cooperatively in response to mandatory Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) measures.

Shortly thereafter, the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) published a three-part series on the Metcalf attack, which prompted other national news and broadcast outlets to publicize the incident and reignited Congressional concern. WSJ quoted former FERC Chair Jon Wellinghoff saying that the Metcalf attack was "the most significant incident of domestic terrorism involving the grid that has ever occurred." As FERC chair, Wellinghoff aggressively advocated for more Commission authority to deal with threats to the grid; he is now citing the Metcalf events as demonstrating the need for such additional federal authority.

On February 7, Senators Reid, Wyden, Feinstein, and Al Franken (D–Minn.) sent a second letter about the physical security of the grid — this time to FERC Acting Chair Cheryl LaFleur and NERC CEO Gerry Cauley. The senators asked FERC and NERC to use their authorities under Section 215 of the Federal Power Act (FPA) "to determine whether additional minimum standards regarding physical security at critical substations and other essential facilities are needed to assure the reliable operation of the bulk power system."

"While it appears that many utilities have a firm grasp on the problem, we simply do not know if there are substantial numbers of utilities or others that have not taken adequate measures to protect against and minimize the harm from a physical attack. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link," the senators said.

LaFleur responded on February 11, stating that she has asked Commission staff to evaluate the issue with NERC, while making "every effort to ensure the confidentiality of sensitive security information," because FERC is subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.

LaFleur noted that since the Metcalf attack, FERC has taken "responsive action" with NERC, other federal and state agencies, and transmission and generation asset owners and operators. For example, FERC, NERC, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and the utility industry held a series of briefings for utility officials and local law enforcement, in locations around the country, to share information about the specifics of the Metcalf attack and to help identify resources and protection measures appropriate for particular facilities and locations.

FERC's approach of encouraging utilities to make physical security improvements by explaining why and where improvements should be made, "has resulted in improvements being implemented more quickly and more confidentially than a mandatory regulation could have accomplished," LaFleur said.

Cauley's response to the senators also cited the many actions that NERC and industry have taken in response to the April substation attack. Cauley agreed that FERC and NERC have authority under FPA Section 215 to develop physical security standards, but said he does not believe it makes sense to do so at this time. "There are more than 55,000 substations of 100 kilovolts or higher across North America, and not all those assets can be 100-percent protected against all threats. I am concerned that a rule-based approach for physical security would not provide the flexibility needed to deal with the widely varying risk profiles and circumstances across the North American grid and would instead create unnecessary and inefficient regulatory burdens and compliance obligations," he wrote.

Joining the fray is Senate Democratic Policy and Communications Committee leader Sen. Chuck Schumer (D–N.Y.). Schumer sent a February 17 letter to newly confirmed DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson and LaFleur, urging that they "act quickly to develop and enforce more stringent standards regarding physical security at substations and other critical facilities necessary to ensure the reliability of the bulk electric power system."

Schumer implied that the current FERC/NERC process for developing reliability standards is flawed. "Under the current approach, consensus is required between both FERC and NERC to mandate protections and proposed standards that do not receive support from both NERC and FERC can become voluntary. The process of reaching consensus can often take years, lagging far behind the pace at which new threats develop."

"While I applaud some of the initiative some electric power companies are taking to protect their facilities, the essential nature of our electric infrastructure to every aspect of our way of life calls for stronger mandatory and enforceable standards at the federal level," Schumer concluded.

At FERC's February 20 meeting, two commissioners issued statements commenting on the recent publicity and comments from legislators.

Commissioner Phil Moeller, referring to the WSJ articles, said that based on his experience, the electricity sector is engaged in an ongoing effort, and investing significant resources in protecting the cyber and physical security of the grid. "Although more needs to be done to develop additional transmission assets — and thereby provide more options to the operators of our grid — we still have the world's most advanced and robust electric transmission system that can respond instantly to planned and unplanned outages and even attacks. However, highlighting any real or perceived vulnerabilities and sharing specific security information or responsive actions may inadvertently promote the prospect of additional copycat attacks."

In light of these developments, NWPPA and its industry colleagues must continue their efforts to educate members of Congress and staff about steps utilities are taking to protect critical assets — individually and working with the federal government, and about information sharing and working in partnership with the government as the most effective tools for improving the security of the electric grid.

Commissioner John Norris expressed concern about the people who have "jumped on the reaction train" in response to the Metcalf incident. While stressing that he is not minimizing the events, he noted that this was an isolated incident, power was not disrupted, and no conclusions have been officially drawn as to the nature of the attackers. Noting that elected officials and "our former colleague" are calling for new physical protection measures, Norris cautioned against overreaction. "I believe it is more prudent, and greater overall security will be achieved, if we move forward with the meetings being planned with NERC and stakeholders. These meetings should focus on developing plans for system-wide security with a multi-functional approach that encompasses the vision of the grid of the future. We should be cautious about expending valuable time and resources, not to mention piling up billions in consumer costs in rate base, with the deployment of walls and fences."

In light of these developments, NWPPA and its industry colleagues must continue their efforts to educate members of Congress and staff about steps utilities are taking to protect critical assets — individually and working with the federal government, and about information sharing and working in partnership with the government as the most effective tools for improving the security of the electric grid. NWPPA

Deborah Sliz is with Morgan Meguire, NWPPA's Washington, D.C., consulting firm. She can be reached at either (202) 661-6180 or dsliz@morganmeguire.com.

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R–Alaska) released an electricity white paper on February 11 titled "Powering the Future." This paper is a follow up to her "Energy 20/20" document released last year. The paper "presents the case for greater awareness and engagement on electric reliability." It is also a call to action to encourage coordination between regulators and regulated entities to collaboratively address potential grid reliability issues, while ensuring that federal policy supports reliability efforts. The following is a summary of the paper:

Sen. Lisa Murkowski
Powering the Future
Ensuring that Federal Policy Fully Supports Electric Reliability

The Critical Issue of Electric Reliability

- No other electricity network on Earth provides as much power to as many people as reliably and affordably as the American grid. But keeping the lights on is a highly complex undertaking.
- Diversity is the key characteristic of the U.S. electric system. No single source provides a majority of the nation's power and each makes a distinct contribution to electric generation: coal (37 percent); natural gas (30 percent); nuclear (19 percent); hydropower (6.8 percent); and other renewables (5.4 percent).
- The energy mix that sustains the grid is changing. Coal has been the leading fuel source for decades, but its use has fallen as natural gas use has increased.
- The use of variable renewable resources is also increasing, with wind and solar adding record levels of new capacity in 2012. EIA predicts these resources, combined with other renewables, including hydropower, will reach the same market penetration (16 percent) as nuclear by 2040.
- Maintaining the stability of the electric grid as coal and nuclear baseload plants come offline as a result of both market forces and regulatory constraints, while managing an increasingly variable energy mix, including intermittent renewable sources, is the central challenge in ensuring electric reliability in the coming decades.
- The impact of new environmental regulations on power plants, coupled with federal government preferences and subsidies for power generation and use, must be taken into consideration.

Will Tomorrow's Grid Be Less Reliable?

- Bulk power system outages are rare and can be caused by many factors. In recent years, especially given the 2005 Energy Policy Act's mandatory requirements, the electric industry has invested significant resources to address both physical and cyber security threats and vulnerabilities.
- The fact that the April 2013 attack on a substation in California did not result in a power outage is a testament to the grid's resiliency and the importance of building redundancy into the system.
- The recent polar vortex resulted in at least 50,000 megawatts of power-plant outages and should serve as a wake-up call to the importance of baseload capacity in maintaining grid reliability.
- Our reliance on installed, dispatchable power generation during extreme weather demonstrates why diversity of baseload capacity and robust transmission and distribution systems are necessary to secure grid reliability.

EPA Should Not Propose Regulations Impacting Grid Reliability in a Vacuum

- EPA has not sought from NERC or FERC an analysis examining the impact of all of its rules in concert with one another
- Government experts, however, have done the math and according to the estimates, approximately 10 to 20 percent of existing coal capacity could be retired by the middle of the next decade. And EPA conceded that the MATS rule alone could result in "localized" reliability issues in some areas "due to transmission constraints or location-specific ancillary services provided by retiring generation."
- Today it is uncertain how many plants will retrofit to comply with various EPA regulations or simply close.
- While these should be recognized as red flags, the federal government continues to give short shrift to the potential consequences of its own rules and regulations — thereby increasing the likelihood of impacts to the nation's electric reliability.

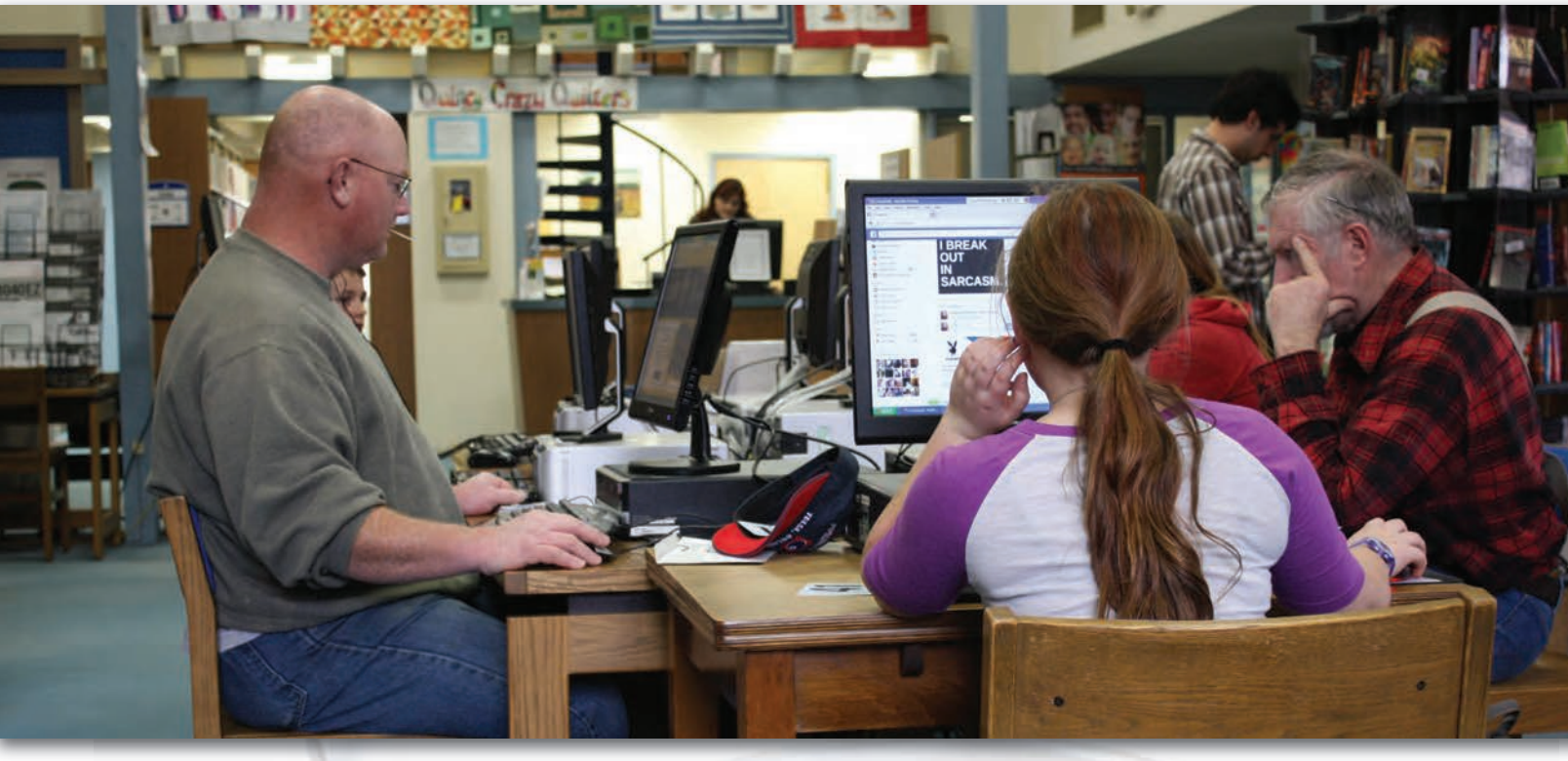
Call to Action

- Our goal must be a grid that is more reliable and more affordable. We need to recognize the central challenge of electric reliability in the coming decade: finding a way to replace retiring baseload capacity, while managing an increasingly variable energy mix.
- Policymakers must use their oversight authority to gather facts concerning the impact of government requirements on baseload capacity and the reliability of the grid.
- Federal agencies must formally review and recognize the realistic and predictable consequences of their regulatory actions with the dual goal of prevention and mitigation. FERC must be the unambiguous champion of reliability.
- Industry, regulators, and other leaders need to more vigorously share their views on the challenges facing today's grid — including physical security, cyber security, and regulatory impacts.
- The burdens of maintaining the grid must be fairly borne, and powerful regulatory laws must be judiciously administered.
- Federal regulators and legislators must recognize the importance of maintaining and improving reliability, affordability, and environmental performance in balance.
- Regulatory and legislative reforms should be considered to ensure a more robust role for electric reliability professionals in evaluating environmental rules.

by Donna Mills

Fulfilling the need for speed

Plumas–Sierra helps the community grow its fiber network



Hot spots like the one at Plumas County Library in Quincy, Calif., offer the general public 50-mbps service to which they would not otherwise have access. All photos provided by Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative.

Plumas County Library in Quincy, Calif., is an integral piece of a transforming landscape. Two to 10 or more people connect to the Internet at any given time via a wired connection (using library computers) or through wireless access using personal-computing devices, both inside and outside library walls.

Plumas-Sierra Telecommunications (PST), a wholly owned subsidiary of Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative (PSREC), connected the library to its new fiber-optic network on January 24, 2014, creating a 50-mbps hot spot. It was not until the county upgraded library equipment during the first week of February, however, that Internet speeds and reliability improved. Now wired connections from any library computer boast speeds of 50 mbps, with wireless connections reporting slightly less.

Plumas County Librarian Lynn Sheehy is extremely pleased and excited about the new network.

"We used to get a lot of complaints," said Sheehy, referring to old network and router issues. "The Internet was so slow before. We also had to use a WEP [wired equivalent privacy] key and people had problems with the passcode. Computer use is up now that our IT department updated our system and the [improved service] is still new. A lot of folks don't yet know about it."

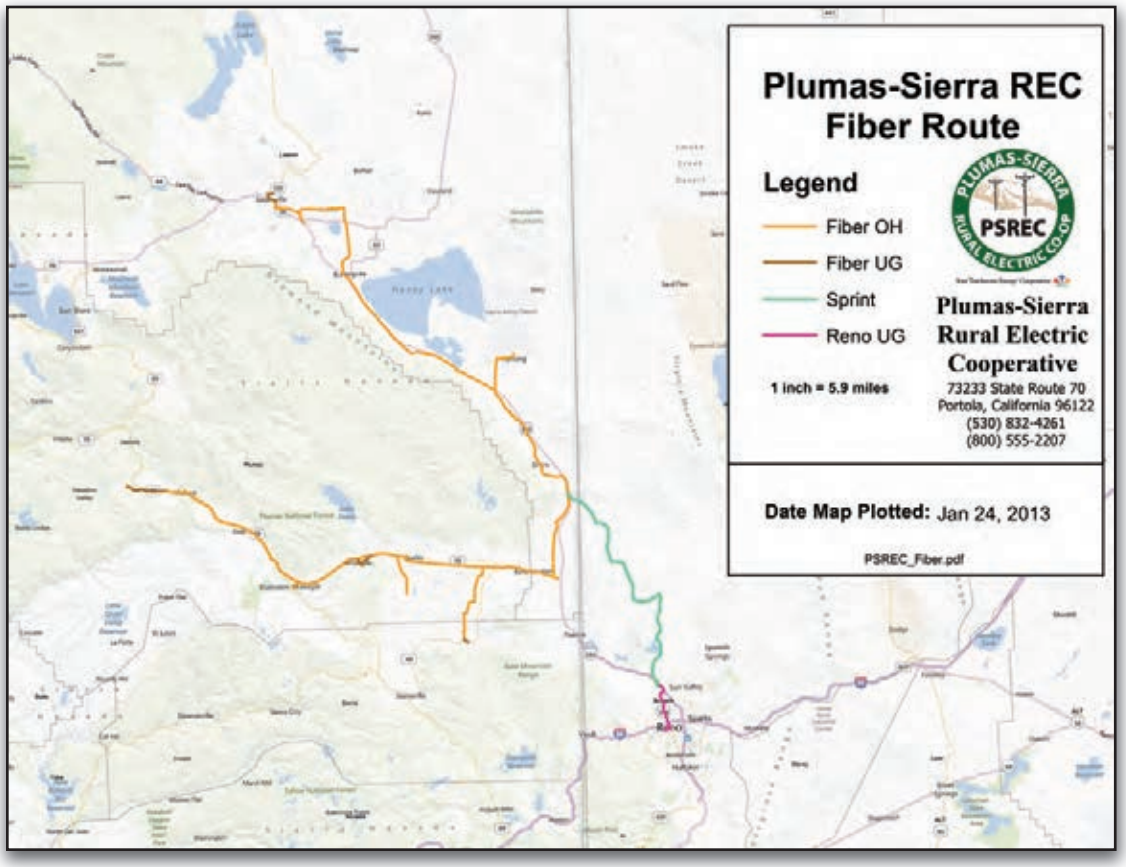
Sheehy said it is common to see at least one or two users on the library's computers accessing the Internet during slow periods, and all seven computers in use during busy times.

PST's fiber-optic network project — stretching from Reno, Nev., north to Susanville, Calif., and west to Quincy, Calif. — brings virtually endless bandwidth to the region, allowing faster, more reliable Internet connections.

Addressing a critical need

PST, PSREC, and the Plumas County Office of Education (PCOE) — with assistance from the Center for Economic Development and California State University Chico — first organized broadband deployment meetings throughout the region in 2010 to ascertain the need for broadband.

Continued on page 28



The PST fiber network runs from Reno, Nev., north to Susanville, Calif., and west to Quincy, Calif., much of it on Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative poles.

What they determined was the overall lack of backhaul facilities in the region offered limited bandwidth and connectivity — thwarting progress, jobs, and economic growth — while mounting requests for ever-faster Internet connections, skyrocketing Internet video traffic, and soaring mobile phone use drove a need for speed.

The resulting collaborative effort of partners within the region was a successful American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) award that would fund the construction of a 195-middle-mile fiber optic network.

PST engineers designed their network with a multitude of interconnection points to allow large anchor institutions (hospitals, colleges, schools, military, tribal communities, utilities, public safety, and prisons) and Internet service providers access to wholesale broadband. This would expedite deployment of services, significantly lowering cost while increasing availability and reliability to the end user.

PST's middle-mile fiber-optic project (completed in 2013) now serves as the core communication infrastructure for the region. The new network provides the region with a secure, vital link to the outside world, abundant bandwidth, and a pathway toward improving economic development, education, and quality of life.

Even before the initial phase of PST's fiber project drew to a close, rural business owners and community members in the tri-county area asked, "What next? When will we have access to broadband?"

Lighting the network

PST started testing the network in early June 2013 by connecting PSREC's SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system. PSREC needed the ability to monitor its electric substations and power plant in real time.

The new fiber-optic network's communication pipeline allows for improved system control, safety, security, and communication; and reduces travel and outage time — all from one central location. Operators can share system status and metering information with the California ISO and the Northern California Power Agency in real time. PSREC will have a majority of its substations connected to the network by the end of 2014. The cooperative is in the process of upgrading substation equipment to take full advantage of the increased bandwidth.

PST began turning up community anchor institutions (CAIs) as progress continued into the summer. Zito Media, a local cable TV, high-speed Internet, and digital phone provider in Susanville, Calif., became the first CAI and commercial customer to link to the network on July 1, 2013. Zito Media has been working with PST to improve the capacity, speed, and reliability of its high-speed Internet and digital phone services since acquiring the Susanville-area cable system in October 2012.

In addition to improving its existing high-speed Internet service, an innovative agreement between PST and Zito Media allows the cable provider to offer a range of services from 10 mbps to 50 mbps, making its high-speed Internet and digital voice services well suited for residential and small commercial customers.

Zito Media and PST sponsored a joint community hot spot at the Lassen County Veteran's Memorial building in

Susanville to help spur economic development. The 50-mbps, symmetrical wireless service provides free Internet access, and is open to veterans and the community at large.

According to Veterans Service Officer Todd Conner, Jr., "Our old Internet service frequently lost connection in the process of filling out forms, causing delay in monetary compensation for disabled veterans, grave marker orders, and flag requests." Conner said the new Internet service expedites the claims process for veterans, allowing for more time for community outreach and program development.

PST turned up six more businesses by early Fall 2013, including two hospitals, a high school, a college, an aviation equipment manufacturer, and Verizon Communications.

"We can hardly keep up with the demand," said PST Marketing and Sales Manager Joe Okoneski. "We are working as fast as we can to get businesses connected."

Plumas District Hospital (PDH) in Quincy claims the major distinction of being one of the first CAI's in the region to utilize next-generation broadband services.

PDH Information Systems Manager Brenda Compton said that having access to an external cloud-based product has resolved a multitude of issues, one of which was storage. The hospital is in the process of converting bulky patient records to an electronic form that can be stored on the cloud, freeing up valuable work space.

Compton said having immediate access to electronic records allows the hospital to spend more qualitative time interacting with and educating patients. "We've been able to provide excellent customer service. We can show patients their labs and charts right in their examining room through the EMR (electronic medical record) workstation."

The State of California's testing mandates in the K-12 segment placed additional demand for significant bandwidth within the region's school system.

PCOE requested a point-to-point network that could connect all of its schools, and allow the ability to test all students at the same time. PST responded. Now C. Roy Carmichael Elementary, Portola High School, Quincy Elementary, and Quincy High School are all connected to PCOE through PST's network.

PST established a similar connection to the Lassen County Office of Education between most all schools in Lassen County. In Sierra County, PST established a network connection to both the Loyalton High School and the Elementary School. Loyalton City Hall and other essential service offices in Loyalton are connected to the PST network, as is Portola City Hall and Plumas County Court House.

"We continue to seek out entities that have a critical need for better Internet and network services than are currently available in their areas," said Okoneski.

He explained that most business owners he speaks to are struggling just to get enough Internet service to meet the minimum requirements to run their businesses.

PST is also working on attracting new businesses to the area. "We want them to know we can meet any of their broadband needs," said Okoneski. "The old technology of having a T-1 to run a business is very expensive and just doesn't meet the needs of today's businesses, especially with so much being done through the Internet."

Continued on page 30

(L-R) Wes Gray, manager of Engineering and Operations, and Tim Retallack, IT support, monitor PSREC's system with state-of-the-art equipment and a high-speed fiber-optic connection through Plumas-Sierra Telecommunications.

Louise Jensen of the Lassen Land and Trails Trust said, "Plumas Sierra's development of a fiber-optic network will offer regional businesses, schools, and institutions like ours a great and competitive tool ... but just as importantly it means that visitors to our region will be able to stay in touch with work, home, and friends while riding on or hiking our trails, paddling in our waters, or camping or hunting in our scenic wilderness. While here, these visitors will support our local businesses on main streets and back roads throughout the region and share their great experiences with others."

Okoneski said PST's network offers dependable services 10 times the speed of a T-1 for less than what businesses in the region currently pay.

Future plans

PST continues to explore public access to the Internet through possible hot spots in order to facilitate digital literacy programs, ICT (information, communication, and technology) skills training, e-commerce, and e-learning opportunities. PST will be connecting the Plumas County Library branch in Portola in the next few weeks, with more hot spots scheduled down the road.

At the time this article went to press, PST was splicing network connections to Quincy establishments while making its way east toward Portola.

PST will expand its network incrementally with funding from the project's net earnings as the system grows.

Conclusion

What grew out of a necessity to improve electric utility-system monitoring offers new prospects to a community embracing change.

The region's ever-increasing Internet video traffic and mobile phone use will continue to drive the need for faster, more reliable Internet connections, and PST's fiber optic network will provide a secure link to the outside world with virtually endless bandwidth. NWPPA

Donna Mills is the marketing manager/energy auditor at Plumas-Sierra REC in Portola, Calif. She can be reached at either dmills@psrec.coop or (800) 555-2207, ext. 6032.

Job Opportunities

The Job Opportunities is a service provided to NWPPA member systems and associate members. Member price is **$110 per listing for a 30-day period.**

- Job Opportunities ads are also accepted from non-members. Ads are **$330 per listing for a 30-day period.**
- ***Copy must be received before the 25th of the month prior to the month of publication*** (for example, February 25 for March issue).
- The *Bulletin* is mailed by the 15th of each month.
- Complete the online Job Opportunities ad placement form at www.nwppa.org.
- NWPPA reserves the right to edit all listings in order to fit size requirements in the publication.

POSITION: Senior Electrical Engineer
COMPANY: Burbank Water and Power (Burbank, Calif.)
SALARY: DOQ.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: March 18, 2014.
TO APPLY: Contact Stephen Dowdy, Dowdy Recruiting, LLC, 27445 Stagecoach Rd., Conifer, CO 80433, (303) 816-0047, sdowdy@dowdyrecruiting.com.

POSITION: Substation Wireman #53823
COMPANY: Puget Sound Energy (Bellevue, Wash.)
SALARY: DOE.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: March 20, 2014.
TO APPLY: Apply online at www.pse.com/careers.

POSITION: Journeyman Lineman
COMPANY: Umatilla Electric Cooperative (Umatilla, Ore.)
SALARY: $40.09 per hour.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: March 21, 2014.
TO APPLY: Apply in person at the Hermiston or Boardman office, email to hr@umatillaelectric.com, online at www.umatillaelectric.com, or phone (541) 567-6414. Fax completed applications to (541) 289-3359.

POSITION: Social Visual Media Partner
COMPANY: Ruralite Services, Inc. (Forest Grove, Ore.)
SALARY: Entry level.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: March 21, 2014.
TO APPLY: Apply online at www.ruraliteservices.org/about/jobs.

POSITION: Cable Splicer/Electrician w/CLA
COMPANY: Sacramento Municipal Utility District (Sacramento, Calif.)
SALARY: $49.09 per hour.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: March 27, 2014.
TO APPLY: Apply online at www.smud.org/careers.

POSITION: Communications & Controls Engineer
COMPANY: Copper Valley Electric Association (Glennallen, Alaska)
SALARY: $75,000-$85,000 annually.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: March 28, 2014.
TO APPLY: Apply online at www.cvea.org. Click on *About Us* then *Careers*. Comprehensive reference and background checks will be performed.

POSITION: Electric Utility Engineering Assistant I
COMPANY: City of Redding (Redding, Calif.)
SALARY: $23.20-$37.01 per hour.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: March 31, 2014.
TO APPLY: Submit a City of Redding online application, found at www.ci.redding.ca.us/personnel/employment.cfm.

POSITION: Journeyman Lineman
COMPANY: Parkland Light & Water Co. (Tacoma, Wash.)
SALARY: $37.20 per hour.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: March 31, 2014.
TO APPLY: Application may be obtained at www.plw.coop. Submit completed application with resumé and cover letter to Parkland Light & Water Company, Attention: Pat Morehart, P.O. Box 44426, Tacoma, WA 98448.

POSITION: Operations Superintendent
COMPANY: Lewis PUD (Chehalis, Wash.)
SALARY: DOE.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: April 15, 2014.
TO APPLY: For a complete list of job requirements, go to www.lcpud.org and click on *Job Openings* under *Your PUD*.

POSITION: Senior Engineer
COMPANY: Golden Valley Electric Association (Fairbanks, Alaska)
SALARY: TBD.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: April 27, 2014.
TO APPLY: Submit a completed application by mail, fax (907) 458-6367, or email rmr@gvea.com.

POSITION: Senior GIS Programmer/Analyst
COMPANY: Matanuska Electric Association (Palmer, Alaska)
SALARY: DOE.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: May 20, 2014.
TO APPLY: Complete and submit an MEA application online at www.mea.coop.

POSITION: Senior Programmer Analyst
COMPANY: Matanuska Electric Association (Palmer, Alaska)
SALARY: DOE.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: May 23, 2014.
TO APPLY: Complete and submit an MEA application online at www.mea.coop.

POSITION: Distribution Engineer
COMPANY: Umatilla Electric Cooperative (Umatilla, Ore.)
SALARY: $71,000+ annually. DOE.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: Open until filled.
TO APPLY: Applications may be obtained at 750 W. Elm, Hermiston, Ore., online at www.umatillaelectric.com, email to hr@umatillaelectric.com, or by calling (541) 567-6414.

POSITION: Journeyman Meterman and/or Journeyman Relay/Meter Technician
COMPANY: Central Lincoln People's Utility District (Newport, Ore.)
SALARY: $41.41 or $42.06 per hour.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: Open until filled.
TO APPLY: Send resumé to Personnel, Compensation, & Benefits Manager, Central Lincoln PUD, P.O. Box 1126, Newport, OR 97365, fax (541) 574-2122, or email to styler@cencoast.com. NWPPA

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