

Moody's issues positive credit opinion on MEAN

Moody's Investor Service recently issued an overall positive stable credit opinion on the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska's outstanding power supply revenue bonds, citing multiple strengths of the organization and its power supply participants.

"MEAN has an established track record of raising rates when necessary while providing competitively priced power to its participants," the opinion summary stated. MEAN has lowered its targeted revenue requirement for four straight years. The targeted revenue requirement is the total net revenue required to cover MEAN's cost of operation.

The opinion stated MEAN has managed the risks well of competing in wholesale power markets the past few years. These risks include cost pressures such as higher transmission costs, price volatility and reduced ability to sell power to non-participants which can heighten pressure to increase rates to participants.

The opinion cited credit strengths and challenges moving forward. The strengths listed were:

- Average weighted participant credit quality
- Strong rate setting ability with improved fixed cost recovery mechanism
- Diverse power supply mix
- Solid liquidity reserves and no near-term debt needs

The challenges cited included stable but modest fixed charge coverage ratios, risk of regulatory requirements and associated costs, and a transition risk to lower-carbon emitting resources.

Considerations that factored into the overall opinion included MEAN's diversified pool of participants with positive credit quality, MEAN's strong rate setting ability, and rate competitiveness despite wholesale power market cost pressures.

NPGA Board Notes

NPGA joins shippers group in pipeline rate case

The National Public Gas Agency recently joined a natural gas pipeline shippers group to advocate for three of its members that will be impacted by an interstate pipeline rate case filed by Northern Natural Gas.

The NPGA Board received an update on the proposed rate case at their quarterly board meeting in September. The NPGA members of Lyons, Stromsburg and Pender in Nebraska are served by the interstate pipeline and will be impacted by the rate case, which includes a 91 percent increase in the rates they pay for transportation. The overall

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By Bob Poehling,
Executive Director



This Month at NMPP Energy

Below is a list of a few of the activities and workstreams that occurred during the past month at NMPP Energy on behalf of member communities:

Nebraska Municipal Power Pool

- Cost of Service Study work was performed on several communities, including Kingman, Kan., Holly and Gillette in Colo., and Stromsburg, Snyder and Kimball in Neb.
- Staff met with the Department of Environment and Energy for a tutorial on the new State and Local Emissions Inventory System (SLEIS) program.
- PowerManager Software visits included Beaver City, Arapahoe, Fairbury, Shelby and Utica in Neb. The PowerManager Users Group Conference was held in Bloomington, Minn., with another session set for Lincoln, Neb., in October.
- Staff participated in an Electric Vehicle Task Force conference call with other Nebraska utilities and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy.
- NMPP/MEAN hosted a Transformer Workshop in Alliance, Neb., for members at Western Nebraska Community College.
- The NMPP Board held its quarterly meeting in early September at NMPP Energy.

Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska

- Staff participated in the Colorado Public Utilities Commission's "Getting to 100 percent Renewable Energy - Different Viewpoints from Expert Energy/Emissions Modelers" in August.
- Preparations are underway to work on Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget items.
- Unit Capability Testing continued in Broken Bow, Neligh, Pender and Red Cloud, Neb.
- Work continued for Colorado communities on Colorado Department of Local Affairs solar Photovoltaic (PV) grants.
- Staff attended the Western Area Power Administration's Fiber Optic Partnerships discussion in late August. Discussion included WAPA customers' priorities and goals for fiber partnership and challenges with new partnerships. Staff is planning to submit comments to WAPA.

- Staff attended various meetings and training events held by regional transmission organizations in which MEAN is a participant.

National Public Gas Agency

- Staff and Board representatives attended the Northern Natural Gas's annual Municipal Meeting for pipeline updates and a winter market outlook.
- In conjunction with the Colorado Oil and Gas Association, staff attended events sponsored by Colorado Interstate Gas and Tallgrass Interstate Gas Transmission pipelines and met with representatives of suppliers to discuss new and ongoing business.
- Work continued on a possible Asset Management Arrangement on Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline. The new agreement would provide credit back to Superior, Neb., and Auburn, Kan., for their unused capacity on the pipeline along with reduced cost of gas due to optimization of delivery points.
- Analysis was completed on the impact of a proposed rate increase on Northern Natural Gas pipeline for Lyons, Pender and Stromsburg in Nebraska.
- The NPGA Board held its quarterly board meeting in September at NMPP Energy.

Public Alliance for Community Energy

- ACE staff met with the Nebraska Association School Boards to discuss the Choice Joint Utilities Management Program (CJUMP) and provide updated informational materials. Another meeting is scheduled for December.
- Staff visited ACE member communities Hartington, Laurel, Wausa, Spalding, Creighton, Bassett and Ainsworth in Northeast Nebraska to provide an update.
- Marketing research is underway regarding newspaper advertising opportunities.
- Staff received a market outlook and update on industry trends at an energy seminar held in Lincoln.
- Staff provided a response to the Public Service Commission regarding a review of the Choice Gas Program. A PSC workshop is slated for Sept. 25.

NMPP board approves new Champion businesses

The NMPP Board of Directors approved three businesses for the NMPP Champions program at the board's quarterly meeting in September. NMPP Champions are businesses and organizations that support NMPP's effort to provide products and services to the NMPP membership. The new Champions include:

Halker Consulting LLC

Halker Consulting provides engineering, procurement, construction and project management services for large and small energy infrastructure projects. It provides engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) services for electric generation, transmission, distribution and substation projects including system modeling, studies, protection and

control, testing and commissioning. (www.halker.com)

Emerald Transformer

Emerald Transformer provides nationwide services covering every phase of the transformer life cycle. (www.emeraldtransformer.com)

IC Energy Solutions

IC Energy Solutions provides high quality LED lighting and building controls for industrial and commercial applications. (www.icenergysolutions.com)

For information on becoming an NMPP Energy Champion business, contact Amanda Hansen at (800) 234-2595 or email Ahansen@nmppenergy.org.

NPGA Board Notes

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impact to the three NPGA members is estimated at approximately 10 percent of each of the community's total monthly gas bill.

Northern's new rates are set to go into effect Jan. 1, 2020. Once the rate case is settled at the federal level, any possible settlement refund would then be returned to communities served by the pipeline. NPGA staff will continue to stay engaged in the development of the case and advocate on behalf of impacted members.

Hedging strategies, industry outlook discussed

Representatives from BP Energy Company provided an outlook on the current natural gas industry and discussed possible hedging strategies. NPGA utilizes hedging strategies to manage its forward exposure to commodity risk. The goal of NPGA's hedging strategy is to minimize volatility of commodity gas prices, which results in more stable gas pricing.

Prepay status update

A status update was provided regarding NPGA's participation in gas supply agreements that seek to lock in natural gas at a discounted rate through prepaid gas transactions. NPGA staff continues to work with interested third parties that are monitoring market conditions favorably suitable for a prepay transaction.

Asset Management Arrangement update

NPGA is set to begin a new Asset Management Arrangement (AMA) trial agreement in November with a new wholesale supplier for NPGA members served by the Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline (Auburn and Superior, Neb.). An AMA extracts value from capacity rights on a pipeline. Under an AMA, unused capacity is marketed and sold, creating value back to the NPGA members served by that pipeline.

McCook uses ACE funds to buy shield

The City of McCook, Neb., City Council approved using funds it received from the Public Alliance for Community Energy (ACE) to purchase a portable ballistic barrier for active shooter incidents, according to the McCook Gazette.

McCook has received more than \$123,000 overall through ACE's revenue return program, including more than \$14,000 earlier this year. ACE has returned more than \$2.3 million to its Nebraska member communities since forming. In the past, McCook has used ACE funds for community betterment projects, including renovation of a bandshell and a community skate park.

Managing **risks** associated with mobile device apps

Applications (apps) on your smartphone or other mobile devices can be convenient tools to do a variety of tasks. But these tools can also put your privacy at risk. When you download an app, it may ask for permission to access personal information—such as email contacts, calendar inputs, call logs, and location data—from your device. Apps may gather this information for legitimate purposes—for example, a ride-share app will need your location data in order to pick you up. However, you should be aware that app developers will have access to this information and may share it with third parties, such as companies who develop targeted ads based on your location and interests.

Avoiding malicious apps and limiting information apps collect about you

Before installing an app...

- **Avoid potentially harmful apps** – Reduce the risk of downloading potentially harmful apps by limiting your download sources to official app stores, such as your device’s manufacturer or operating system app store. Do not download from unknown sources or install untrusted enterprise certificates. Additionally, because malicious apps have been known to slip through the security of even reputable app stores—always read the reviews and research the developer before downloading and installing an app.

- **Be savvy with your apps** – Before downloading an app, make sure you understand what information the app will access. Read the permissions the app is requesting and determine whether the data it is asking to access is related to the purpose of the app. Read the app’s privacy policy to see if, or how, your data will be shared. Consider foregoing the app if the policy is vague regarding with whom it shares your data or if the permissions request seems excessive.

On already installed apps...

- **Review app permissions** – Review the permissions each app has. Ensure your installed apps only have access to the information they need and



remove unnecessary permissions from each app. Consider removing apps with excessive permissions. Pay special attention to apps that have access to your contact list, camera, storage, location, and microphone.

- **Limit location permissions** – Some apps have access to the mobile device’s location services and thus have access to the user’s approximate physical location. For apps that require access to location data to function, consider limiting this access to when the app is in use only.

- **Keep app software up to date** – Apps with out-of-date software may be at risk of exploitation of known vulnerabilities. Protect your mobile device from malware by installing app updates as they are released.

- **Delete apps you do not need** – To avoid unnecessary data collection, uninstall apps you no longer use.

- **Be cautious with signing into apps with social network accounts** – Some apps are integrated with social network sites—in these cases, the app can collect information from your social network account and vice versa. Ensure you are comfortable with this type of information sharing before you sign into an app via your social network account. Alternatively, use your email address and a unique password to sign in.

Minimum efficiency standards to rise in 2023

Beginning in 2023, all new residential central air-conditioning and air-source heat pump systems sold in the United States will be required to meet new minimum energy efficiency standards.

The new standards effective in 2023 require a seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER)—a measure of a system’s cooling performance—of no less than 14 SEER for residential systems in the northern part of the United States and 15 SEER in the southern part of the United States, where cooling loads are a larger share of home energy use. Higher SEER ratings indicate more energy-efficient equipment.

In addition, the new standards require an increase in the heating efficiency of air-source

heat pumps—measured by the equipment’s heating seasonal performance factor (HSPF). The minimum HSPF will be 8.8 HSPF compared with the 8.2 HSPF required by the current standard that went into effect in 2015.

The Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) of 1975 first gave the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) authority to develop, revise, and implement minimum energy conservation standards for appliances and equipment. EPCA requires DOE to periodically amend energy conservation standards for certain equipment, but only if the amendments are energy-saving, technologically feasible, and economically justifiable.

The National Appliance

Energy Conservation Act of 1987 established the first minimum efficiency requirements for central air-conditioning and heat pump equipment sold in the U.S. These standards went into effect in 1992, and later updates went into effect in 2006 and 2015.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates 76 million primary occupied U.S. homes (64 percent of the total) use central air-conditioning equipment, and about 13 million homes (11 percent) use heat pumps for heating or cooling. When defining the new standards, DOE calculated that, in total, households using central air conditioners or heat pumps will collectively save \$2.5 billion to \$12.2 billion on energy bills during the 30-year period following implementation of the standards.



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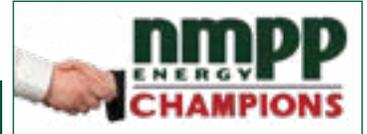
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THIS MONTH'S FEATURED CHAMPION BUSINESS



NovaTech provides substation automation services

NovaTech produces Orion products for substation automation and Bitronics products for metering and recording.

Orion applications include SCADA, RTU, Cyber Security, HMI, Tile Annunciation, Alarm Processing, SOE Recording and Math and Logic Processing. Bitronics applications include pole top Distribution Grid Monitoring, panel metering and display and fault recording.

www.novatechweb.com

NovaTech also offers engineering services, including panel design and fabrication, HMI screen development, Orion configuration services, SCADA systems engineering, on-site commissioning assistance, project management and training.

In the past four years, more than 120 new utilities have selected NovaTech for their auto-

mation needs. Some of its users in Nebraska include Omaha Public Power District, Nebraska Public Power District, Lincoln Electric System, Southwest Public Power District, Nebraska City Utilities, Beatrice Board of Public Works, City of Hastings, City of Fremont Department of Utilities and Norris Public Power District.

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

Employment Opportunities

Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent/Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator

The City of **St. Paul**, Neb., is seeking applicants for a sewer and wastewater treatment plant superintendent/sewer and wastewater treatment plant operator. This position is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the treatment plant grounds and collection system, responsible for compliance with all Federal and State Discharge Monitor reports, regulations and City policy regarding the wastewater treatment plant and for periodic reports on the conduct of the plant operation and maintenance. Successful candidate must be certified as a Nebraska Class I Wastewater Treatment Facility Operator or obtain it within 12 months of employment. Must have a valid driver's license; a CDL is preferred. An application and full job description may be obtained by contacting the City office at 704 6th Street, St. Paul, NE 68873 or by email-

To submit an ad

NMPP members can advertise job openings for free in the Essent newsletter and on the NMPP Energy Web site. E-mail Kevin Wickham at kwickham@nmppenergy.org.

ing laurab@cityofstpaulne.org. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Lead Lineman

The City of **Gunnison**, Colo., is accepting applications for the Lead Lineman position. Duties will include installation, maintenance, and repair of electrical distribution systems for the City. The successful applicant's duties will also include the supervision of the line crew, maintenance of records and safety meetings and a thorough knowledge of the principles of electricity. Education and experience must include a high school diploma or equivalent, graduation of hot-line school or equivalent, four to eight years of experience in the repair, maintenance and construction of electric

distribution systems, with some supervisory experience required. A full job description is available at the address below. Salary range will be \$70,900 to \$83,300 depending on experience with a very competitive benefit package. Send resumes to City of Gunnison, 1100 W. Virginia Ave., Gunnison, CO 81230. Attention: Will Dowis, electric department superintendent, (970) 641-8329, fax: (970) 641-8021 or email: wadowis@gunnisonco.gov.

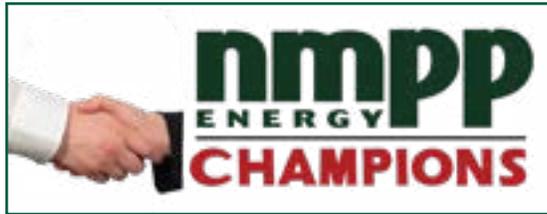
Utilities Lineman

The City of **Chappell**, Neb., is accepting applications for the position of an additional utilities lineman. This position works under the utilities foreman and in conjunction with current lineman. Assists in the operation and maintenance of the city-owned electric distribution and water system. Applicant must be willing to obtain Grade 4 water operator license. Prefer electrical experi-

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Support NMPP member communities through the Champions Business Program

Champions are businesses and organizations that support NMPP Energy's effort to provide products and services to members. Consider these businesses when your utility or municipality has a business need. If your business is interested in becoming an NMPP Energy Champion, call Andrew Ross at (800) 234-2595.



Champions Business Directory of Services

Financial

Ameritas Investment Corp. (Ameritas.com).....	Omaha, Neb.
D.A. Davidson & Co. (dadavidson.com/ficm)	Omaha, Neb.
First National Bank (Firstnational.com).....	Omaha, Neb.
UNICO Group, Inc. and Midlands Financial Benefits (unicogroup.com)	Lincoln, Neb.
Nebraska Energy Federal Credit Union (ne-fcu.org).....	Columbus, Neb.
RBC Capital Markets (rbc.com).....	Denver, Colo.

Regulatory/Compliance

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

Utility/Community

Dogwood Energy	Columbia, Md.
EnergySolutions, Inc. (energysolutions-inc.com).....	Omaha, Neb.
Hometown Connections, Inc. (Hometownconnections.com).....	Lakewood, Colo.
Emerald Transformer (www.emeraldtransformer.com).....	Coffeyville, Kan.
Foundation for Educational Services (fes.org).....	Lincoln, Neb.
GenPro Energy Solutions (Genproenergy.com).....	Piedmont, S.D.
IC Energy Solutions (www.icenergysolutions.com).....	Waverly, Iowa
JK Energy Consulting, LLC (JKenergyconsulting.com)	Lincoln, Neb.
Border States (borderstates.com).....	Fargo, N.D.
NovaTech (Novatechweb.com).....	Lenexa, Kan.
PDS, Inc. (PDSinc.biz)	Omaha, Neb.
Protective Equipment Testing Laboratory (petl.com)	Great Bend, Kan.
RESCO (Rural Electric Supply Cooperative) (resco1.com)	Ankeny, Iowa
Sol Systems (solsystems.com).....	Washington, D.C.
Solomon Corporation (Solomoncorp.com).....	Solomon, Kan.

Computer/Technology

Proteus (Proteus.co)	Lincoln, Neb.
Salt Creek Software, Inc. (Saltcreek.com)	Lincoln, Neb.

Engineering

EPSIM Corporation (epsim.us)	Boulder, Colo.
Exponential Engineering Company (exponentialengineering.com)	Fort Collins, Colo.
Halker Consulting LLC (www.halker.com)	Centennial, Colo.
JEO Consulting Group, Inc. (jeo.com)	Wahoo, Neb.
Lutz, Daily & Brain, LLC (ldbeng.com).....	Overland Park, Kan.
Olsson (Olsson.com)	Lincoln, Neb.

Insurance

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

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

Telecommunication

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



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Employment (cont.)

ence but will train the right person. Wage is based on qualifications. Quality benefits package. Application can be obtained at P.O. Box 487, 757 2nd Street, Chappell, NE 69129 or by email to chappellcityhall@hotmail.com. Website is www.chappellne.org. Inquiries can be sent to (308) 874-2401 or faxed to (308) 874-2508. EOE. Position will be open until filled.

Electrical Department Foreman

The City of **Sutton**, Neb., (pop. 1,502) is accepting applications for a position of full-time electrical department foreman with a pay range between \$25-35 per hour DOQ. This is a full-time position which requires knowl-

edge and training of electrical distribution with a preference given for in-field working background of 3 to 5 years of lineman experience. Preference is also given to applicants with leadership training and/or supervisory experience. The applicant for this position would need to perform skilled line work in the operation, construction maintenance, and repair of overhead and underground electrical distribution systems. Experience in construction and maintenance of overhead and underground, primary/secondary is desired. Being a certified journeyman lineman is a preference for this position. Education may substitute for some experience. The department is made up of one other lineman. The foreman aspect of the position will oversee the daily activities

and long-term planning of the electric (light) department and upkeep of the system. Full benefits include health insurance, H.S.A., pension contribution, sick and vacation time, comp. time, holiday time, uniforms, etc. Wage rates are negotiable, but compensatory with qualifications, experience and leadership abilities. Send cover letter, resume, and application form to: Sherrie Bartell, City Clerk, P.O. Box 430, Sutton, NE 68979-0430. A complete job description and application form can be obtained by calling (402) 773-4225 or by e-mail: cityofsutton@gmail.com. The City of Sutton is an equal opportunity employer. Position will be open until filled.

Complete job descriptions are posted at www.nmppenergy.org