

Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

March 2017

2017 Nebraska Legislature convenes

*By Lash Chaffin,
Utilities Section Director*

Nebraska lawmakers and their families and friends packed the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber on Jan. 4, 2017, for the opening day of the first session of the 105th Legislature. Owing mainly to the effects of term limits, 17 new faces were among the total of 49 Senators.

After the swearing-in ceremony, the Legislature began the process known as reorganization, which is when lawmakers choose the speaker and committee chairpersons who serve two-year terms. Twenty-five votes are required for election to leadership posts. These elections are – and were – conducted by secret ballot, despite discussions before the session began and during opening day about recording the votes in the open.

Norfolk **Sen. Jim Scheer**, who previously had served as the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee Chair, was elected speaker. Speaker Scheer also served as a Mayor and owns an insurance business. The Speaker of the Legislature has the responsibility for setting the Legislature's daily agenda that lists the order in which bills and resolutions will be considered.

Outcomes in other standing committee races, included:

Sen. Lydia Brasch of Bancroft was elected chair of the Agriculture Committee.

Sen. John Stinner of Gering

was elected chair of the Appropriations Committee.

Sen. Brett Lindstrom of Omaha was elected as chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. He succeeds Sen. Scheer, who was elected speaker.

Sen. Mike Groene of North Platte was elected chair of the Education Committee.

Sen. Tyson Larson of O'Neill was elected chair the General Affairs Committee.

Sen. John Murante of Gretna, was elected chair of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Sen. Merv Riepe of Ralston was elected chair of the Health and Human Services Committee.

Sen. Laura Ebke of Crete was elected to the Judiciary Committee Chair.

Sen. Dan Hughes was elected to chair of the Natural Resources Committee.

Sen. Mark Kolterman of Seward was elected as chair of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee.

Sen. Joni Albrecht of Thurston was elected chair of the Business and Labor Committee.

Sen. Justin Wayne of Omaha

2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



was elected to serve as chair of the Urban Affairs Committee.

Sen. Jim Smith of Papillion was elected to chair the Revenue Committee.

Sen. Curt Friesen of Henderson was elected chair of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.

Sen. Dan Watermeier of Syracuse was elected chair of the Legislature's Executive Board.

Sen. Mike Hilgers of Lincoln was elected to chair the Rules Committee.

Sen. Anna Wishart of Lincoln was elected as Enrollment and Review Committee Chair, a position traditionally awarded to the youngest freshman Senator.

To close an estimated \$900 million budget gap, Gov. Pete Ricketts proposed a tight budget, spending cuts, dipping into several cash funds and taking about \$92 million from the cash reserve fund.

In addition to these budget cuts, the Legislature will address many issues that affect municipal utilities and public works departments.

As part of the budget-cutting procedure, it appears that there will be attempts to reduce funding

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UTILITIES SECTION

2017 Nebraska Legislature convenes

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for municipal stormwater grants, water sustainability and Department of Roads transportation funding.

Municipal public works departments also are concerned about **LB 389**, which purportedly creates an accelerated regulatory framework to deploy small wireless technology. Small wireless technology is a way to enhance internet capacity in highly congested areas such as the Century-Link Center, Memorial Stadium, or Pinnacle Bank Arena. Small wireless technology on its own does not provide broadband service. LB 389 would give authority to use municipal right of way and utility poles to both wireless providers that construct facilities, and to entities that only build wireless

facilities hoping to find a service provider to lease their facility.

A municipality still would be able to require a permit, but there would be restrictive guidelines on permit length, permit phasing for multiple projects, construction commencement construction, and insurance requirements. These provisions, and other provisions dealing with charging for right-

of-way and pole use, would make it almost impossible to conduct right-of-way and pole attachment management.

This bill also is opposed by the Nebraska Power Association, which represents all of the Nebraska electric public power entities, including municipal systems.

Although the next two bills

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2017 Backflow/Cross Connection Workshops to be held

Four Backflow Workshops are scheduled: Aug. 23 in Beatrice, Aug. 24 in Wayne, Sept. 6 in Ogallala and Sept. 7 in Grand Island. Watch for flyers/brochures or visit our website at www.lonm.org. Call the League at 402-476-2829 if you have questions.

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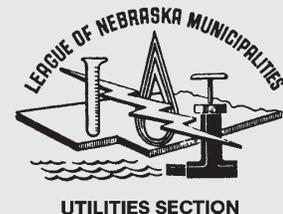
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2017 Nebraska Legislature convenes

Continued from page 2
were already killed by the Legislature by press time, **LB 660** and **LB 657** were bills attempting to set the framework for retail electric choice in Nebraska. Both bills were strongly opposed by all elements of the Nebraska Power industry, including the League and NMPP Energy and many business groups.

LB 657 would have mandated that public power providers, including municipal systems, provide a very detailed billing breakdown that would include separate charges for energy, transmission, generation and distribution.

LB 660 would have set the groundwork for electric retail choice in Nebraska. Upon certain conditions taking place, individual customers would eventually be allowed to purchase power

from sources other than your municipality or the public power provider that leases or owns your electric system. There are currently 16 states that have some form of retail choice for electricity. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the average residential energy rate in 14 of those 16 states exceeds the national average. And, the rates in all 16 of those states exceed the average residential energy rate in Nebraska.

LB 494 would create an additional category of public records that can be lawfully withheld from public disclosure. The purpose of the exemption is to allow public electric utility systems to protect data, maps and information regarding critical physical and cyber infrastructure.

LB 127 would change provisions under the Open Meetings Act. The bill strikes language allowing public bodies to give reasonable advance publicized notice of meetings by a method designated by the public entity and recorded in its minutes. The bill then requires the notice to be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction and allows notice

also to be provided by another appropriate method designated by the public body.

LB 256 would allow municipalities to adopt a vacant property registration system. Under **LB 256**, a municipality may adopt a Vacant Property Registration Ordinance (VPRO) that may apply to residential or commercial buildings, or both.

Continue to follow League publications for further details.

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Backflow, safety videos available through Advantage Library

Backflow training and safety videos are available through the Utilities Section Advantage Library. Requests for videos can be made by returning a request form or emailing a request to info@lonm.org.

- **WW-008 Backflow Prevention Device Testing AWWA Video (VHS)**
- **WW-009 Field Testing Backflow Preventer USC Video (VHS)**
- **WW-023 Anybody Can Do It (VHS)**
- **WW-023 Cross Connections: The Unseen Hazard (VHS)**
- **WW-041B Part 5 Cross Connection Control Program (DVD)**
- **WW-045 Watts Backflow Prevention (DVD)**

Need to get someone trained/licensed as a wastewater operator?

The Nebraska Water Environment Association (NWEA) has a training workshop in Kearney July 20-21, 2017, coinciding with the Heartland Conference.

Contact Ryan Hurst, NWEA Training Chairman, at rhurst@mindennebraska.org or call 308-830-3824.

Information also can be found on the www.ne-wea.org website.



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Classifieds

Job Openings

Electric Journey Line Worker. The City of Alliance, Nebraska (8,500), is accepting applications for the position of full-time Electric Journey Line Worker with a pay range of \$25.40-\$28.97 per hour DOQ.

This individual will perform skilled line work in the operation, construction, maintenance and repair of overhead and underground electric distribution and transmission systems.

Applications with resumes will be accepted until the position is filled. A complete job description and application is available at www.cityofalliance.net.

The City also is taking applications for **Electric Line Apprentice**. This position includes an excellent benefit package including health insurance, retirement, vacation, sick leave and paid holidays.

Full-Time Water/Wastewater Apprentice/Operator. The City

of Broken Bow Water/Wastewater Department is accepting applications for full-time employment.

This position involves, but not limited to, construction of new water and sewer mains, tapping services, clean-up of job sites, shoveling, raking and assisting other departments as needed. Multiple skill levels are needed.

Department of Health and Human Services certification helpful, but not required. CDL not required, but must be able to obtain CDL within 6 months. Willing to train the right person. Wage dependent on qualifications and a better than average benefit package.

Applications and job description are available at the City Clerk's office located on the main floor at 314 South 10th Avenue or www.cityofbrokenbow.org. Submit application and related information to the City of Broken Bow, ATTN: City Clerk, 314 South 10th Avenue, PO Box 504, Broken Bow,

NE 68822, or via email at clerk@cityofbrokenbow.org. Applications will be taken until the position is filled. Broken Bow is an EOE.

For more information, please contact Water/Wastewater Superintendent Darren Marten at (308) 870-3421.

Water Resources Specialist position for Little Blue NRD. Responsibilities: water quality programs, monitoring, chemigation, related water quality management activities; also IT and database skills required. Salary commensurate with experience and qualifications. Other benefits provided. Application at: http://www.littlebluenrd.org/pdfs/forms/employment_application.pdf. Little Blue NRD, PO Box 100, Davenport, NE 68335. (402) 364-2145.

Wastewater Maintenance Worker, City of Norfolk. A Nebraska Grade 2 Wastewater Certification or higher is preferred. However, if qualified applicant does not have, applicant must obtain a minimum Nebraska Grade 2 Wastewater Certification within 2 years, at which time advancement to Operator status may be available. Must have a valid driver's license, and be able to obtain a Class "A" CDL license.

Skills in electrical, mechanical, welding, and plumbing are beneficial. Will be trained to operate and perform routine maintenance on wastewater and transfer station equipment and buildings. Computer knowledge using Word and Excel also are beneficial. The scheduled work rotation includes occasional weekend work and once per month on-call time.

Continued on page 6

Nebraska Breaktime Trivia "Just For Fun"

Q-1. In 1854, this Nebraska territory was created and eight post offices were in operation. Do you know where they were located?

Q-2. What is the Nebraska state song?

Q-3. In what Nebraska city or village is the Wild Horse Golf Course located?

Q-4. Do you know where this liberty statue is located?

Answers found on page 10.



Classifieds

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Must reside within a 30-minute response time. Beginning \$2,650/month.

For more information and to apply: www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/human-resources or Personnel Office, 309 North 5th Street, Norfolk, through 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 3. EOE.

Village Utility Superintendent. The Village of Ansley is accepting applications for a Utility Superintendent. This individual will oversee and maintain all areas of the electrical distribution system and generating plant, water and sewer departments. Successful candidate will train alongside the current superintendent until the end of this year. Duties include, but are not limited to, maintenance, repair and upgrades of all utility systems. This person must be willing to work with the other Village departments when needed. Requirements include a valid Nebraska driver's license, must obtain CDL (B) within 3 months of hire, pre-employment drug and alcohol testing, and becoming a certified water operator (Village

will pay for training). Electrical or lineman experience is preferred and wage is based on experience. Benefits include insurance and retirement package. Resume and references can be mailed to: Village of Ansley, PO Box 307, Ansley, NE 68814 or emailed to villageofansley@nctc.net. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The Village of Ansley is an EOE.

For Sale

Tennant 830-II Street Sweeper. The City of South Sioux City is currently selling a 2004 Tennant 830-II street sweeper with 1,185 hours and 1,792 miles. The engine is a turbo diesel and a manual is included. Innovative dry-dust control improves ambient air quality by sucking up the dust and dirt stirred up by the brushes. This sweeper is powerful, easy to use and compact.

The sweeping ability begins with a self-adjusting center point suspended main brush that efficiently picks up sand, dirt, rocks, broken glass and bulky light debris. Main brush dust is pulled by

twin, high-volume vacuum fans into a long lasting, high capacity filter to remove dust particles and exhaust clean air. One button sweeping makes operation easy and requires less training time; an unobstructed view ensures a clear view of the sweeping area and bystander safety; four-wheel steering allows the machine to maneuver easily around obstacles, corners and heavy traffic. Productivity Enhancing Options: waterless side brush dust control for area incompatible with water. Vario sweeping brush moves in and out, up and down to reach hard to access areas on the either side of the machine. A 9½ feet high dump allows discharge into large roll off bins and dump trucks. Centrally suspended brush penetrates contours of any surface for thorough cleaning.

We are asking a for \$35,000. If you have any questions or would like to know more about the street sweeper, please contact Joyce Wilson, South Sioux City Purchasing Agent, at 1615 1st Avenue, South Sioux City, NE 68776; call 402-494-7548; or email jwilson@southsiouxcity.org.

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Nebraska utilities history

The Utilities Section Newsletter will continue to feature histories of both utilities and associate members. Any historical data and/or photos of your utilities, a specific facility, or articles already written are welcome, along with permission to print. If you have questions, contact Rob at 402-476-2829 or robp@lonm.org.

By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./
Training Coordinator

Holbrook, located in Furnas County, saw Isaac Burton, a Saddler for Company A – 2nd Nebraska Calvary, explore this area near Deer Creek around 1862. He returned around 1870 and opened a trading post in a log cabin with H. Dice. On Aug. 27, 1872, a post office was established as Burton’s Bend. In the 1870s, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroads were built through the area. Before 1879, school sessions were held in private homes. One was held in a dugout on the land of Ella Larson. In 1879, land was given for a school and a frame school was built in Burton’s Bend, located west of Deer Creek. On March 16, 1881, the post office name was changed from Burton’s Bend to Holbrook. The settlement name also was changed to Holbrook after a Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad official. In 1887, the school district was divided and the little white frame

school building was moved to the Haley District. That year, a new white frame school was built in Holbrook on land south of the current school building.

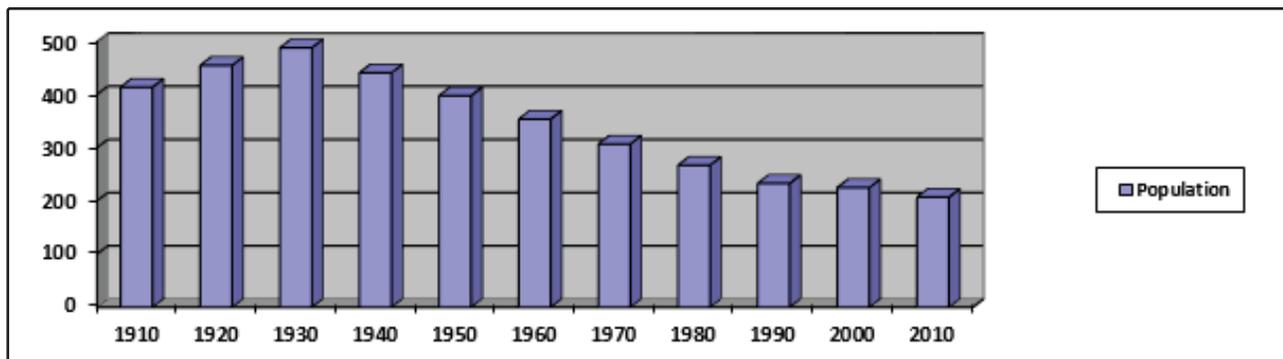
By 1890, Holbrook had a railroad station and by 1895, about 20 local businesses were lined on the dirt Main Street. On April 24, 1907, a fire destroyed many businesses with an estimated loss of \$10,000. From early 1907-1910, Holbrook supported many businesses, such as the Silver Moon Flour Mill, a dray service, jewelry store, two hotels, three grain elevators, a harness shop, lumberyards, two banks (Bank of Holbrook and Security State Bank), a weekly newspaper, an auto agency, drug store, blacksmith, meat market, movie house livery barn and a two-story frame public school building by 1909. From 1909-1927, school activities were held in the Lyric Opera House because the school only contained classrooms. By 1910, the population increased to 414 and the water system consisted of



Holbrook Water Tower. 2013 Photo.

individual wells and wind mills. Around 1910, Holbrook supported a Republican Valley Hospital, a lumberyard and several churches.

In 1920, the population was 455
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Nebraska utilities history

Continued from page 7

and about 1920, a steel truss-style lattice bridge spanned the Republican River, south of town. Extensions to the electric light plant were considered and work commenced on the new electric light power plant with the building to be completed by 1921. In 1922, the Holbrook Milling Company installed a 30-horse power (hp) Fairbanks-Morse engine. A 1927 fire in the Lyric Opera House prompted the construction of a new two-story brick school

building. The first classes in the new building were held in the fall of 1928.

The electric system was served by Intermountain Railway Light and Power Company, which later became the Western Public Service Company in 1927. From 1930-1940, the population declined from 488 to 441. The electric system was operated by Western Public Service Company. Holbrook had a representative take part in the organizational meeting of the Utilities Section in

April 1932. The Utilities Section adopted its Constitution and Bylaws at that meeting. In 1934, Holbrook became a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities.

By 1950, the population declined to 398, the school began bus service in 1954 and an addition was built on the north side of the school. By 1951, the fire department had 25 volunteer firemen and the natural gas service was supplied by Kansas Nebraska

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Nebraska utilities history

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Natural Gas Company. The village had an auditorium, which was maintained from a 0.03 mill tax levy. The water system and 130 water meters in service were owned by the village. The water meter deposit was \$5 and the rates were: \$0.15 per 1,000 gallons. In 1958, the electric system had about 20 miles of distribution line and 230 meters were owned by the village. The village also owned the diesel generation plant (capacity of 188 KWH) and the current was purchased from Twin Valleys Public Power District at the wholesale cost of \$0.018. The electric meter deposit was \$10 and the residential rates were: first 25 kWh at \$0.10, next 25 kWh at \$0.06, next 50 kWh at \$0.04; the commercial rates were: first 25 kWh at \$0.10, next 50 kWh at \$0.07, next 50 kWh at \$0.05, next 75 kWh at \$0.04; and the power rates were: first 50 kWh at \$0.06, next 150 kWh at \$0.05, and next 200 kWh at \$0.04. The disposal plant was owned by the village and was maintained by a tax levy. The garbage was collected by a private collector and was paid by

the village. By 1958, the electrical generation and distribution system was owned by the village and supplied by Twin Valleys Public Power District.

The population was 354 by 1960, and the sewer system and disposal plant were owned by village. The village-owned water plant and meters in service had a meter deposit of \$5 with rates at a minimum of \$2.25, then \$0.15 per 1,000 gallons. By 1962, the meter deposit increased to \$10. The population by 1970 decreased to 307 and by 1973, work was done on the sewer system. Holbrook was once noted as being the "City of Beautiful Elms," but by the 1970s, had lost many of their Elm trees to Dutch Elm Disease. The population decreased again in 1980 to 267. By 1982, Holbrook rejoined the Utilities Section and law enforcement was provided by the Furnas County Sheriff's Department. The natural gas system, in 1983, was supplied by KN Energy Inc. By 1990, the population was 233 and by 1999, the sewer disposal plant consisted of a rock trickling filter system designed for 0.04 million gallons per day

(mgd), an Imhoff tank/spiragester/clarifigester with disinfection by chlorine gas.

By 2000, the population was 225 and by 2003, a lagoon system with a lift station was installed, replacing the old mechanical plant. In 2005, there were discussions with Cambridge, Indianola, Bartley and Arapahoe to develop a new joint water system. That year, they received \$250,000 to link to the Arapahoe water system and the village would begin purchasing water from Arapahoe. The project also would replace an old cast iron main, install meters for all users and renovate the water tower. The USDA Rural Development also awarded additional funding of \$886,000. In 2006, a project funded by a \$250,000 grant consisted of paving 34 blocks of gravel streets. In 2007, the electric distribution lines and meters were owned by the village and the current was purchased wholesale from Twin Valleys Public Power District. The village had three acres of parks with playground equipment, ballfield, restrooms and recreational vehicle

Continued on page 10



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Nebraska utilities history

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(RV) camping sites. The sewer rate was \$13.50 per month and waste removal rates were \$11.75 for residential and \$29.50-\$66 for commercial businesses. Water rates were \$22.50 per month for residential and \$22.50 per month plus \$0.000150 per unit for commercial/industrial with a minimum bill of \$22.70. In 2008, the water system had 25 fire hydrants. That year, the village became a member of ACE and was served natural gas by SourceGas. The village had 3.32 miles of streets with four blocks hard surfaced with asphalt.

The 2010 water system had a monthly residential base fee of \$22.75 and commercial fees of \$22.75 for ¾-inch meters and \$45.50 for ½-inch meters. The commercial water rates were \$13.50. The total deposits for all utilities were \$250 for rentals and \$100 for owners.

By 2010, the population de-

creased to 207. In 2013, solid waste collection service was provided by Schaben, a private company.

Today, Holbrook has a population of 207 and is a League of Nebraska Municipalities and Utilities Section member. The village owns the sewer lagoon system, the water distribution system and the electric system. The village purchases water from Arapahoe and purchases electric current from Twin Valleys Public Power District. The electric system is supplied by two 12.5 kilovolt (kV), three-phase distribution lines owned by Twin Valley PPD. Distribution with substation transformer capacity of 750 kilovolt amps and distribution voltage is 2,400-volt delta.

The village maintains a cemetery, a park with RV hookup and several blocks of paved and graveled streets. The natural gas system, which was served by

SourceGas, was purchased by Black Hills Energy in 2015.

References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1958-1970, 1974-75, 1978-1996, 1998-2015; Nebraska Place Names, 1960; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Public Power Magazine, Vol. 51, No. 1, January-February 1993; History of Furnas County Past and Present Vol. I, 1987; Johnsons History of Nebraska, 1880; Andrea's History of the State of Nebraska, 1882; McCook's First 100 Years, Portraits of the Past, 1982; Lincoln Star Newspaper, 2005; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; U.S. Atlas Adams County, 1890; Hershey Times newspaper, 1920-21; Community Facts, Furnas & Harlan Counties Nebraska, August 2008; The National Grain Journal and County Grain Shipper, Vol. 6, February 1922; Electrical World, 1920; Nebraska Blue Book, 1915, 1920, 1928, 1936, 1946 and Who's Who in Nebraska, 1940.

"Just For Fun" Answers

A-1. Table Creek and Nebraska City (Otoe County), Bellevue (Sarpy County), Brownville (Nemaha County), Omaha (Douglas County), Fort Kearny (Buffalo), Plattsmouth (Cass County) and Turkey Creek (Pawnee County) *Reference: Lincoln Journal Star 2006 article by Jim McKee*

A-2. "Beautiful Nebraska"

A-3. Gothenburg (golf.com in 2016-2017 rated Wild Horse as the second-best Nebraska Course behind Prairie Dunes, located near Valentine)

A-4. David City (north of the city park entrance)

**More information
on upcoming
seminars and
workshops can be
found
on the League
website at [www.
lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org).**

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Outstanding Water Operator Awards

Lonnie Petrzilka of Denton and Jeff Sweetser of Fairbury were recognized by the Nebraska Health and Human Services as Outstanding Water Operators for 2017. Congratulations, Lonnie and Jeff!

Russ Topp Award

Richard "Dick" McCabe of Emerson was the recipient of the Russ Topp Award at the 2017 Nebraska Rural Water Conference held in Kearney March 14, 2017. Congratulations!

Auburn and Beatrice Airports Recognized

The "Project of the Year" was

awarded to Auburn's Farington Field with Engineering Consultant Olsson Associates and contractor Hawkins Construction.

The 2016 "Nebraska Airport of the Year" was awarded to the Beatrice Municipal Airport by the Department of Aeronautics at the 25th Aviation Symposium and the 46th Maintenance Seminar. Congratulations again to the Auburn and Beatrice Airports!

Do you, your department or facility have something to crow about? Received an award, had an article written highlighting an event or person? Have a project worthy of acknowledgement in the *Utilities Section Newsletter*?



If so, please send your information to any of the League/Utilities staff so we can share your excitement or pride of an award, noted article or project with other members. Too often we read about negative news in our local newspaper, but the positive should be celebrated, embraced and shared. Optimism can be contagious and others may find positive ways to use your success to enhance a project or event in their municipality, department or facility.

2017 Solid Waste Screening Workshops held

The 2017 Solid Waste Screening Workshops were held Jan. 31 in Hastings, Feb. 2 in West Point and March 9 in Gering.

The morning topics covered the NDEQ required hazardous material identification and waste screening procedures, which new employees of landfills and

transfer stations need and also is a good refresher for all current employees.

The afternoon topics covered road safety, facility safety programs and a safety roundtable.

The optional tours were limited due to weather and time. At the Gering workshop, their shredder

was displayed and some attendees took advantage of observing the baling operations.

This year, 33 participants from 16 systems were in attendance. These workshops were sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section.

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Training calendar

June

June 8 Safety WorkshopCity Hall, Ponca

July

July 13 Water Operator Training WorkshopFire Hall, Ogallala

August

Aug. 23..... Backflow WorkshopRisky’s Sports Bar & Grill, Beatrice

Aug. 24..... Backflow WorkshopFire Hall, Wayne

September

Sept. 6 Backflow WorkshopFire Hall, Ogallala

Sept. 7 Backflow WorkshopBoarders Inn & Suites, Grand Island