

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

December 2017

## Rob Pierce, longtime League employee, receives George Warren Fuller Award from AWWA

**R**ob Pierce, League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Field Representative/Training Coordinator, received the George Warren Fuller Award Nov. 9 from the American Water Works Association. Pierce, a longtime League employee, received the award at a joint conference in Kearney of the Nebraska Section American Water Works Association, Nebraska Chapter American Public Works Association and the Nebraska Water Environment Association.

“Since his first day on the job, Rob has shown an extremely high level of empathy with municipalities and their employees,” said

Lash Chaffin, Utilities Section Director, LNM. “If something good happens at a city or village, he celebrates that victory. If something bad happens, he mourns alongside the city. This attitude shows up every day in his approach to his work and people can sense it immediately.”

George Warren Fuller Awards are presented annually by the American Water Works Association to the sections’ respective selected members for their distinguished service to the water supply field in commemoration of the sound engineering skill . . . the brilliant diplomatic talent . . . and the constructive leadership which characterized the life of George Warren Fuller.

Congratulations, Rob!



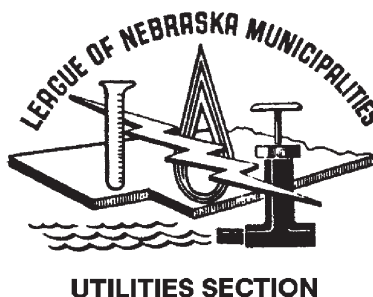
*Photo taken Nov. 9 at joint conference in Kearney of the Nebraska Section American Water Works Association, Nebraska Chapter American Public Works Association and the Nebraska Water Environment Association. From left: Jim Meyer, friend; Richard Pierce; Erica Pierce, brother and sister-in-law; Rob Pierce; Marilee Hoppner; John Hoppner, sister and brother-in-law; Marjean Green, sister. Photo by Lash Chaffin, Utilities Section Director, LNM.*



*Mark Coleman, Michigan Section Director and a former Fuller Award Winner, presents Rob Pierce, LNM, with the George Warren Fuller Award.*

Happy  
Holidays

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Lash Chaffin  
Utilities Section Director  
Rob Pierce  
Utilities Field Representative

## 2017 National Bioenergy Day

On Oct. 18, 2017, the 5th Annual Bioenergy Day was held in South Sioux City at the Delta Hotel (formerly Marina Inn). Hosts of the Bioenergy Day included the City of South Sioux City, Green Star Gasifiers LLC and the Nebraska Wood Energy Team.

Topics included:

- Renewable Energy in South Sioux City
- Challenges and Opportunities for Biomass Energy in Nebraska
- Biomass Energy Research
- Forest Management Opportunities through Wood Energy
- Economic Benefits of Renewable Energy
- Renewable Energy in Nebraska
- The Importance of Renewable Energy Diversification

In the afternoon, the City of South Sioux City was awarded

the “National 2017 WAPA Administrator Award” by Mark Gabriel CEO of Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). When all projects are up and running, South Sioux City’s goal is to reach 57 percent of its energy to be supplied by renewables: 5 percent solar, 33 percent wind, 12 percent wood energy and 7 percent hydroelectric (water) energy.

Following the award presentation, an “Unveiling Ceremony” by Green Star Gasifiers officially announced the unveiling of its innovative eight-megawatt woody biomass power plant and 100,000 ton per year torrefied wood pellet



*National 2017 WAPA Administrator Award being presented to the City of South Sioux City.*

manufacturing facility to be constructed in 2018/2019.

The afternoon wrapped up with the following sessions:

- Green Star Vision and Opportunities for Public Private Partnerships to Solve Today’s Energy Challenges
- Small Scale Gasification Technology and Applications

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## 2017-2018 Executive Board

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City Administrator and  
BPW General Manager  
Beatrice



## 2017 National Bioenergy Day

*Continued from page 2*

- Utility Generation Using Biomass

The classroom sessions were followed with a bus tour of some of the many projects underway in South Sioux City, such as the Gasifier project at the Riverside RV Park, the Community Orchard, the 21-acre Solar City project, the Big OX (wastewater to methane facility), the future site of the Green Star Plant and the Ethanol Plant west of Jackson.

Note: South Sioux City also in-

vested in four electric cars and is one of the original eight communities to install electric recharge stations in Nebraska. The other communities include Albion, Bellevue, Kimball, Lexington, Nebraska City and Ogallala.

The Bioenergy Day was a success and a thank you goes to the following event sponsors and partners: Siouxland Chamber of Commerce, Green Star Gasifiers, The Siouxland Initiative, South Sioux City, Nebraska Forestry Service, Biomass Power Asso-



*Torrefied wood pellets.*

ciation and the Nebraska Wood Energy Team.

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## Classifieds

**Lineman.** The City of Mitchell is accepting applications for the position of Line Worker until the position is filled. This position is responsible for maintaining the cities electrical system. The successful applicant must establish residency within a 15-minute response time.

Applications and complete job descriptions, are available at the City

Offices, 1280 Center Avenue, Mitchell, NE 69357, 308-623-1616, or [cityadmin@mitchellcity.net](mailto:cityadmin@mitchellcity.net). AAA/EEO

**Services Foreman and Heavy Equipment Operator.** The City of Mitchell is accepting applications for the positions of Services Foreman and Heavy Equipment Operator until the positions are filled. The successful applicant

must establish residency within a 15-minute response time of Mitchell and must possess or be able to obtain a mosquito spraying certification.

Applications and complete job descriptions, are available at the City Offices, 1280 Center Avenue, Mitchell, NE 69357, 308-623-1523, or [cityclerk@mitchell-](mailto:cityclerk@mitchell-city.net)



[city.net](http://city.net).

The City of Mitchell is a veteran-friendly community and we would encourage those who have served in the armed services to apply. AAA/EEO

## Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

- Q-1.** In 1932, what city/village in Nebraska showed off one of the largest municipal electric plants built in the United States by exhibiting an impressive electric fountain that played jets of water lighted by colored flood lights?
- Q-2.** What was the fastest growing city in Nebraska by percentage from 2010-2016?
- Q-3.** The Finch Memorial Public Library is in what Nebraska village?
- Q-4.** Do you know where this municipal power plant is located?

**Answers found on page 12.**



### Hello Progress

The greatest accomplishments start with the smallest details. **This is where great begins.**



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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](mailto:robp@lonm.org).*

*By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./  
Training Coordinator*

**F**airmont, located in Fillmore County, had settlers in the area by 1870 and a post office called Hesperia was established June 29, 1871, at a farm located northeast of the current site. In October, the site was surveyed (laid out) by the South Platte Land Company on Section 30, Town 8, range 3 west consisting of 188.67 acres. On Oct. 15, the first store was opened where the Cubbison Block now stands. It may have been the building removed from Fillmore City to the new town site. By fall 1871, several buildings were constructed, including a Methodist Episcopal Church and the Burlington Railroad built lines through the area.

On Jan. 26, 1872, the post office changed from Hesperia to Fairmont and relocated to a store north of the Cubbison Block. The population was about 600 at this time with 40 buildings. On May 1, the *Fillmore County Bulletin* newspaper began. The community soon had three brickyards in

operation and the Gaylord House was built. In August, the first elementary school session was underway and that fall, a Burlington & Missouri Railroad depot was built. One source noted that Fairmont was reclassified as a village in 1872 and another had papers filed for incorporation on May 26, 1873. In 1873, a park was laid out on seven acres and a new two-story school was built for District 19. In 1875, the E. B. Branch & Company Bank was established. On Jan. 1, 1878 the Fillmore County Bank was organized and was incorporated April 1, 1880. A suspected arson fire destroyed several buildings in town in 1878, the same year the Fairmont steam flouring mill was constructed. By 1880, the population was 1,029 and several businesses were operating, which included a large grain house, a steam elevator, flouring mill, machine shops, a lumberyard, hotel, merchandise stores, a bank and a newspaper. On Oct. 27, 1881, the *Nebraska Signal* newspaper started with a total of three newspapers publishing papers. On Feb. 1, 1882, the

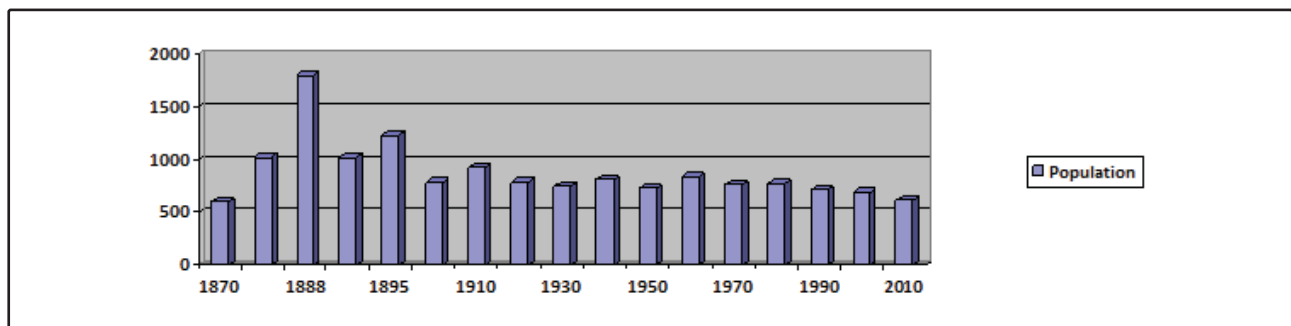


*Fairmont water tower; 2000 photo.*

Fairmont Creamery Company was organized as a stock company.

The Fairmont Dairy Association was formed and began operating a cheese factory, which made 250 pounds per day or about 80,000 pounds per month. Several trees were planted in the park and the population was around 800. In

*Continued on page 6*



## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 5*

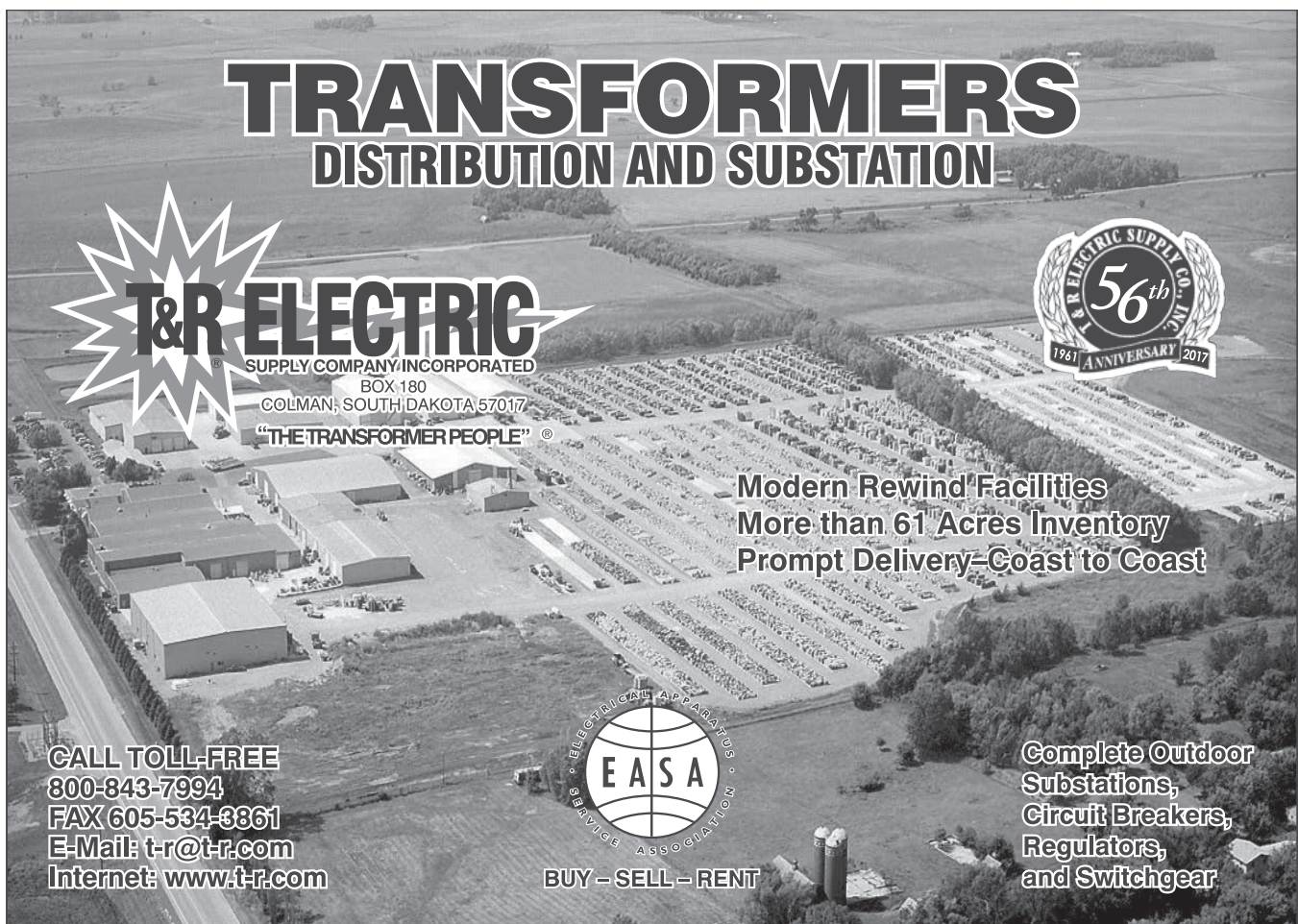
1882, Fairmont included two banks, two grain elevators, two lumberyards, eight grocery stores, three general stores, a dry goods, two hardware stores, three drug stores, a boot/shoe store, three hotels, two bakeries, two saloons, two harness shops, a furniture store, two livery stables, two blacksmiths, two meat markets, three coal yards, a marble works, a flouring mill, a cheese factory and several small shops. Also, that year, the school had five school teachers, the Telephone Exchange

and a packing plant were built in 1883. In 1884, two grain elevators were operating and Fairmont was said to have been incorporated (possibly as a city of the second class).

Before 1885, each home and business had its own well for water supply. In May 1885, the village sold bonds to construct a city waterworks. A water storage tower was to be built with a 30-foot square at the base and 16-foot square at the summit. A 92-foot-tall tower with a 350-gallon standard barrel tank (prop-

erly covered) was built. (Note: one source listed a water storage standpipe installed in 1878.) The well had a pumping apparatus able to pump 250 barrels per hour and water mains and a hydrant were to be installed for \$8,390. In August, the first water mains were laid via contractor Williams, which were constructed of wooden well-tubing, worm grooved wrapped with wire and painted with tar. It was said the first pressure popped the mains like egg shells. The first telephones were installed and

*Continued on page 7*



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## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 6*  
the dirt street had crosswalks to content with the mud. In 1886, the post office building was destroyed by fire. That year, the Farmers State Bank was established and the Fairmont building was constructed. A two-story South Ward and a two-story North Ward Schools were built in 1887. That year, a windmill was constructed and it was said that the water system began. A new pump was installed at the city well in 1888 and the population was estimated at 1,800. That year, a traveling library was in operation and the first Fairmont High School student graduated. A fire in 1888 burned the Cubbison Block and several businesses on Fillmore Avenue, partly due to the wooden water mains bursting under pressure needed to control the fire. In 1889, a bell was installed for \$25. In 1890, the population was 1,029 and by 1891, new city wells were completed. In 1892, contracts were let and new cast iron pipe mains were installed, replacing the wooden mains. In April, work in the city park included plowing and the planting of 200 ash and elm trees. By 1893-94, a fire

department was organized with 20 firemen. From 1891-1895, the Fairmont Creamery Company purchased the creameries in Friend, DeWitt, Fairbury, Geneva, Milford and Hebron. The population in 1895 was 1,233, but by the 1900 census, dropped to 784.

In 1900, additions were made to the school building and in November, the ladies of Fairmont collected \$115 for the city to purchase new street lamps. In December, the city purchased four gasoline street lamps for \$60, once again with the help of the Fairmont ladies. These lamps were powered by the city gas plant located next to city hall. High winds damaged structures around the city including toppling the Burlington water towers and wrecking the city waterworks windmill. On June 6, 1901, the seven-acre park land was sold to purchase land for a park closer to town. On July 9, 1901, Ordinance Number 12 was signed, which provided a franchise to Bertise E. Aldrich of Fairmont for construction and operation of a water works system. Construction began with a modern steel standpipe but was interrupted because of mate-

rial delivery delays. In October, two new water wells were dug to a depth of 250 feet. The 100-foot steel water standpipe was built and in operation by January 1902. Also, a steam plant was acquired to operate the well pump and the city bought lots 392 and 393 west of the standpipe for \$26.50. The Burlington Railroad completed a new water tower in 1903. In 1905, T. J. Bender traded a farm for the Fairmont water plant. The Corporate Fairmont Creamery Company offices, which moved to Crete in 1894, and then moved from Crete to Omaha in 1907. The gas plant in 1908 was enlarged with a new air compressor and a six horsepower (HP) engine taking the place of the water motor. On April 15, 1909, the mayor signed the privileges and franchises to T. J. Bender for establishing, constructing, enlarging, maintaining and operating a power, heat and electric light plant with all necessary equipment including poles and wire. The ordinance required that service to the city and consumers extend from sundown to 12 a.m. and from 5 a.m. to sunrise, except Sunday evenings when service




*Continued on page 8*



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## Nebraska utilities history

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shall extended from sundown to 11 p.m. Later, service extended to Monday and Tuesday when washing and ironing was done. On June 28, 1909, construction began on the electric plant and in November, electricity was turned on. Also in 1909, a new two-story brick school building was built for \$33,000.

The population in 1910 was 921, the fire department had a fire cart, hook and ladder and hoses. In 1911, the Bank of Fairmont was established and the school with 82 high school students had a new maple floor installed in the gym. Also that year, the city erected a new 85,000-gallon water storage tower. On Jan. 22, 1912, the Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Company bought the Nebraska Telegraph Company. In 1915, the Fairmont Electric Light & Water Company plant had a 230 HP boiler, an 85 HP steam engine with a generator rating of 40 kilovolt amps (kVA). A new swimming pool was built in 1919 and water rates were a minimum of \$1 with excess at 1,000 gallons per \$0.15. In 1919, the city took over the electric plant from Mr. Bender and

the light rates were a minimum of \$1.20 with the first 10 kilowatts (kW) at \$0.175 per kW, the next 10 kW at \$0.15 per kW, next 10 kW at \$0.125 per kW and over at \$0.10 per kW. Later, the city sold the power plant to the Blue River Power Company and electric current was purchased from them.

In 1920, the population was 785 and a new (125 feet x 180 feet) swimming pool was completed by Ed Hall called "Fountain Beach" that had a crushed rock and sand bottom. Also in 1920, the street lighting was changed from gas to electricity. In 1922, the Fairmont Library Association organized and the 1920s saw new buildings built, such as the *Chronicle Newspaper* building (1924), the United Methodist Church (1925) and the Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph building in 1929. In 1928, the water plant and distribution mains were publicly owned with rates of \$0.30 per 1,000 gallons and a minimum of \$1 per 1,000 gallons per month. Electric current was provided via transmission lines with rates of \$0.06 to \$0.153 per kilowatt hour (kWh).

The population in 1930 was 740 and by 1932, the city used natural

gas. In 1933, the Bank of Fairmont and the Farmers State Bank consolidated. In 1934, Fairmont was a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities. In 1939, a sanitary sewer system was installed by the Public Works Administration (PWA) for \$19,000 and used 120,000-man hours to build. There were 18,000 man-hours spent to build a disposal plant. All lines were surveyed and accurate grades established as vitrified clay piping was installed. Planks were used for preventing cave-ins, brick manholes were installed and then the trench was filled and soaked with water. The disposal plant project included installing a trickling filter with primary and secondary clarification and an estimated cost of \$85,000 (45 percent grant) with Scott & Scott as consulting engineers. Before 1939, outdoor privies and cesspools made up the means of sewage disposal. In 1940 the population increased to 810 and in 1941-42, an airbase (one of 11 built in Nebraska) with five hangars, runways and a water tower was constructed on an 1,840-acre site along with a 350-bed hos-

*Continued on page 9*

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## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 8*  
pital. On Dec. 1, 1942, the base opened and housed B-24s, B-17s and B-29s, there were 600 officers and enlisted men, and 100 civilian workers. From 1943-1945, the base served as home to almost 6,000 officers and enlisted men. By 1946, the airport was declared surplus by the Army. In 1948, the air base was turned over to the state aeronautics department. The site was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. In 1948, the city fire department purchased a new fire truck.

In 1950, the population dropped to 729 and in 1952, the *Fillmore Chronicle* newspaper ceased publication. In 1953, several rural school districts consolidated and the population was estimated at 750 in 1956. In 1956, a fire truck was purchased and the fire department also served the rural area with 30 volunteer firemen. The natural gas system was supplied by the Central Electric & Gas Company. The water plant and meters in 1956 were owned by the village with a flat rate of \$1.50 per month. The public sewer system and disposal plant were maintained by a one mill tax levy. The

electrical system and 300 meters in 1958 were owned by the village and supplied by Consumers Public Power District with a \$10 meter deposit.

The population in 1960 increased to 829 and the electric system with 350 meters in service was owned by the village with current supplied by Consumers Public Power District. A meter deposit was \$10 with residential rates of first 8 kWh at \$1, next 50 kWh at \$0.0334, next 100 kWh at \$0.0484, next 300 kWh at \$0.1034 per kWh with a minimum of \$1. Power rates were first 200 kWh at \$0.04, next 800 kWh at \$0.03 and all over 1,000 kWh at \$0.025 per kWh and a minimum of \$1. The natural gas was supplied by Western Power & Gas Company with rates of first 500 cubic feet (cuft) per month at \$1.25, next 1,500 cuft at \$1.013 per mcf, next 3,000 cuft at \$0.763 per mcf, next 5,000 cuft at \$0.593 per mcf, next 40,000 cuft at \$0.593 per mcf, next 50,000 cuft at \$0.573 per mcf, and over 100,000 cuft at \$563 per mcf with a minimum charge of \$1.25. In 1962, the public water distribution system and 300 meters in service had

a meter deposit of \$10 and for residential a flat \$1.50 per month. The electric system in 1962 had a meter deposit of \$10 and residential rates of first 8 kWh at \$1, next 11 kWh at \$0.07 per kWh, next 30 kWh at \$0.05, next 250 kWh at \$0.03 per kWh and a minimum of \$1. Power rates were first 200 kWh at \$0.08, next 700 kWh at \$0.03 and the balance at \$0.0125 per kWh with a minimum of \$1 per month. For years, the garbage was hauled by Frank Willey with his wagon and team of horses. He retired in 1966. In 1962, the garbage was collected by a private collector with a charge of \$1 per month. In 1963-1964, a new elementary school was completed and the population was estimated at 829. In 1964, the city purchased the 1929 Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph building for use as a city office building. They leased space back to the telephone company until 1967 when the building was designated as city hall. In 2006, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1969, a library was built and the old building razed in 1968.

In 1969-1970, the electric sys-  
*Continued on page 10*



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## **Nebraska utilities history**

*Continued from page 9*  
tem was owned by the village and supplied by the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). The population in 1970 was 761 and by 1973, a new swimming pool was constructed. Gary's Refuse Service of Milford provided collection service and the disposal plant located 1/2-mile south of Fairmont stabilized wastewater rates. In 1973, electric light rates were first 8 kW at \$1, next 17 kW at \$0.08 per kW, next 100 kWh at \$0.06, next 150 kWh at \$0.05 per kWh, next 225 kWh at \$0.03 per kWh, next 1,000 kWh at \$0.025 per kWh and all over at \$0.0175 per kWh. In 1979-1980, the 1909 school building was torn down.

By 1980, the population was 767 and a new gym and one-story addition was made to the school. In 1981 the village upgraded the existing sewer plant to an AERO MOD activated sludge extended air treatment facility with a capacity of 120,000 gallons per day for an estimated \$215,000 and financed by municipal bonds. The work was to be completed by 1982. In 1990, the population decreased to 709 and in 1991, the village received a \$200,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for a new water well, water distribution system upgrades and new 200,000-gallon spheroid elevated water storage tower replacing the old standpipe. The total cost of the water project was \$575,000. In fall 1991, Fairmont Recycling was organized and solid waste collection was by private hauling contractors. In 1992, the hospital built in 1961 was remodeled. The village-owned electric system supplied by

NPPD had about 93 electric customers. By 1997, the fire department had 12 volunteer firemen. The activated sludge AERO MOD wastewater treatment facility designed for 0.12 million gallons per day, used aerobic sludge digestion treatment. In 1999, the village considered a new sewer system for an estimated \$1.3 million to change from a mechanical system to a lagoon system. In 2000, the population was 691, but by 2010, dropped to 616. In 2011, the Fairmont School became part of the Fillmore Central School System, with K-4 in Geneva, middle school in Fairmont and the high school in Geneva.

Today, Fairmont has a population of about 560 with mostly curbed gravel streets with about 22 percent paved mostly on H Street and 6th Avenue. The village maintains a swimming pool and park with shelters, playground equipment, a bandstand and a ball field. The village has a public library and a volunteer fire department with about 30 volunteer fire and rescue personnel. The village owns and maintains a water and wastewater system and owns the electric system. Fairmont is a wholesale electric customer of NPPD, supplied natural gas by Black Hills Energy and private collectors provide solid waste collection. Fairmont has been a longtime member of the Utilities Section and an incorporated village/city for 131 years.

Note: The Fairmont Creamery was started in Fairmont but quickly outgrew the village. The head offices were moved to Crete and then Lincoln. By 1930, the Fairmont Creamery Company

had 3,000 creameries across the United States. In 1947, the company was known as Fairmont Foods Inc., and in 1974 the corporate offices were moved to Houston, Texas. Just goes to show you that some things with roots from a small village can grow and prosper!

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956-1966, 1968-81, 1984, 1986, 1989, 1991-2015; Nebraska Municipal Review, 1928, 1946, 1991; Fairmont Nebraska 100 Years, 1873-1972; Fairmont Nebraska 125 Years, 1873-1998; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Fairmont Internet Website, 2000, 2004; Andrea's History of the State of Nebraska, 1882; Johnson's History of Nebraska, 1880; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2006, 2007; Public Power Magazine Vol. 51, Number 1, January-February 1993; Nebraska Our Towns...Central Southwest, 1991; Nebraska Place Names, 1960; Pages of History, Nebraska High Schools, Past & Present 1854-1994 Maps Tell a Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Electric Power Development in the United States, Dept. of Agriculture, January 1916 and Community Fast Facts NPPD Internet site, 2011.*

**Mark your calendars  
for the Snowball  
Conference on Jan.  
24-25, 2018 at the  
Kearney Holiday Inn.**

## Crow Line: A line of positive communication that all can share

*Correction: Ken Swanson, one of the TOPOPs winners at the Annual NS-AWWA Conference, was listed in the November 2018 Utilities Section Newsletter as being from Nebraska City. Ken is from Auburn. Sorry and congratulations, Ken.*

### NWEA Wastewater Systems Receive Safety Awards

Congratulations to the following wastewater systems that received safety awards at the Annual NWEA Conference banquet Nov. 8, 2017 in Kearney.

- 1-4 operators – Gold: **Scottsbluff**;
- 1-4 operators – Silver: **Minden**;
- 5-9 operators – Gold: **Norfolk** and **Columbus**;
- 5-9 operators – Bronze: **North Platte** and **Lincoln**;
- 10+ operators – Gold: **Papio Creek-Omaha**; and
- 10+ operators – Silver: **Grand Island**.

**Congratulations to Keith Kontor** of Fremont for receiving a quarter-century award for 25 years of service with the NWEA.

**Todd Boling** of Norfolk and **Jim Condon** of Olsson Associates received volunteer awards from

the Water Environment Federation (WEF).

### Scott Wilber Awards

This award recognizes well-operated facilities within Nebraska.

Recipients of this award included: **Columbus, Fremont, Grand Island, Lincoln North-east Facility, Minden, Norfolk, Tyson Fresh Meats-Lexington** and **Wilber**. (There were 11 applicants this year.)

**NWEA-Best in Class** for large systems (>5 million gallons per day) – **Lincoln Theresa Street Facility**, for medium systems (2-5 mgd) – **North Platte** and for small systems (<2 mgd) – **Scottsbluff**. Congratulations!

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.

## Solid Waste Screening Workshop scheduled

A Solid Waste Screening Workshop is scheduled for Jan. 30, 2018, at the Hastings Airport Terminal. The workshop will include three hours on “Hazardous

Waste Screening” and two hours on operations and safety.

The workshop is sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section.

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



## Looking back at 2017

The year 2017 was once again a busy year for the Utilities Section staff. Over 50 workshops, conferences and safety meetings were held. In the past 14 years, over 14,000 people participated in training workshops and conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by the Utilities Section.

The monthly *Utilities Section Newsletter* featured the following topics for the year:

- Numerous Legislative Bills Affecting Utilities/Public Works Departments;
- Annual Conference Highlights; State Mileage Reimbursement Changes;
- County Highway/City Street Superintendent Licensing Training;
- Head Protection Safety;
- Kearney Ultra-Violet Disinfection Implementation;

- Water System Funding & Loan Upgrades;
  - Fall Tree Planting;
  - Employee Service Recognition;
  - Recycling Grants; and
  - Valentine's Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Program Implementation.
- Safety articles featured:
- heart attack awareness;
  - backflow safety videos;
  - head protection safety;
  - material handling safety tips;
  - safety awards;
  - landfill safety programs;
  - weed trimmer safety;
  - playground safety;
  - eye protection safety;
  - safety workshops;
  - APPA safety manual;
  - parks & recreation safety tips;
  - fall prevention;
  - fire prevention; and



- office and shop safety.

Monthly member history articles highlighted several municipalities with an emphasis on their utilities including:

- Sargent;
- Ruskin;
- Stella;
- Holbrook;
- Colon;
- Franklin;
- Broadwater;
- Scottsbluff;
- Mason City;
- Upland;
- Clatonia;
- Broken Bow;
- Daykin; and
- Fairmont.

## Milestone celebration recognition

Is your municipality or utility celebrating a historic milestone? We are encouraging members to provide any information on milestones being celebrated such as 75 years of operating the electric system. About 1942, private electric systems were phased out in Nebraska and several municipalities took over the

systems in the 1940s.

When was your water, wastewater, electric, power generation system established? When were facilities built, improvements made, etc. If your utilities is celebrating a 25, 50, 75, 100-year milestone, let the Utilities Section help you celebrate by recognizing it in the newsletter.

## "Just For Fun" Answers

- A-1. Hastings. (data supplied to [casde.unl.edu](http://casde.unl.edu) by Catherine Renschler)
- A-2. Hickman at 29% with Ralston second at 23% growth. Reference: [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com)
- A-3. Arnold.
- A-4. Callaway.

## **SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER**

### ***Space heater safety***

*Reprinted from December 2013  
Utilities Section Newsletter*

*By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./  
Training Coordinator*

During cold weather, we use space heaters in a variety of buildings or enclosures such as the shop, office, well house, garage, trench, basement, duck blind or a chemical storage room/facility. Heaters come in a variety of types which can use gas, wood, kerosene or electricity. The most common portable electric heaters are either radiant or convective. Portable heaters can be economical, but also can possess hazards if not used properly.

Hazards of using space heaters include fires and burns by contact or close proximity to a heating element, flame or the hot surface area. Selecting heaters with guards around the flame or heat elements help protect against incidental contact by people, clothing or burnable items. Flammable liquids such as gasoline should not be stored or used around space heaters. Gases of any type can ignite causing a fire to start.

Sizing a heater for the area which you are heating is important and avoiding the use of extension cords is usually a plus. If an extension cord is used, it must meet the ampacity (amps) and voltage of the space heater. The heater should be stable and used in the upright position with at least 30 inches between the front of the unit and another surface. Heaters should not be run under furniture,

in cabinets or behind curtains or drapes. Some office heaters have safety switches that shut down if the heater tips over. Don't operate a heater that has a damaged plug or cord and don't run cords under rugs or carpeting.

Most heaters are not intended for use in wet or moist areas and avoid areas where a heater could fall into water, as electricity and water should not meet. If a heater blows a fuse or trips a circuit breaker, don't refuse with a larger fuse or breaker. Have a licensed electrician check the circuit before using the heater as there may be electrical problems that

could result in a fire or damage to equipment. A heater should be unplugged when not in use and especially when you leave the area. Air monitoring and proper ventilation may be needed as some heaters such as those using gas can deplete oxygen or produce carbon monoxide which can lead to CO poisoning.

Remember that if a portable heater must be used, be sure to take the proper precautions as to not endanger yourselves, your coworkers or the public. Don't let your action lead to a reaction from a firefighter or emergency rescue worker.

## **2017 Host Thank You**

A special "thanks" to the 2017 workshop/conference host cities and villages. The Utilities Section would like to take this opportunity to thank the communities, their management and staff for their dedication, hard work and hospitality in efforts to host Utilities Section sponsored seminars, workshops and conferences in 2017: Alma, Auburn, Blair, Beatrice, Chadron, Kearney, Fairbury, Franklin, Fremont, Gering, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Lawrence, Lincoln, McCook, Nebraska City, Norfolk, North Platte, Ogallala, Omaha, Ponca, Ravenna, Schuyler, Sargent, South Sioux City, Stuart, Tecumseh, Valentine, and Wayne.

If your system would like to

host a workshop, contact Rob at the League office 402-476-2829 or email [robp@lonm.org](mailto:robp@lonm.org)

## **Common safety incident errors**

The following items are all errors when it comes to avoiding an accident:

- Eyes or mind not on the task at hand;
- Lack of attention and putting yourself in the line of fire of an accident waiting to happen;
- Loss of balance, poor footing or lack of reaction times to stay out of hazard's way; and
- Lack of using adequate personal protective equipment.

## Training calendar

### January

Jan. 4 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Library, Blair  
Jan. 11 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Library, Pawnee City  
Jan. 17-19 ..... Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference ..... Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln  
Jan. 24 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Holiday Inn, Kearney  
Jan. 24-25 ..... Snowball Conference ..... Holiday Inn, Kearney

### February

Feb. 6-7 ..... Meter Conference ..... Holiday Inn, Kearney  
Feb. 13 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Norfolk  
Feb. 14 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Columbus  
Feb. 15 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Beatrice  
Feb. 26-27 .... Midwinter Conference ..... Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

### March

March 6 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Chadron  
March 7 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Gering  
March 8 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... North Platte

### 2018 Electric Training Workshops

#### Hot Line (Rubber Gloving) Workshops

May 1-3 – Norfolk

Sept. 11-13 – Sidney

#### Electric Underground

Sept. 5-6 – Sidney

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

**Water and Wastewater Operators licenses are due at the end of this year.** Did you get your hours? Water operator (grades 1-4) hours as of 11/1/2017 can be found on the DHHS website at: [http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/ContinuingEducationGrades1\\_4.pdf](http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/ContinuingEducationGrades1_4.pdf).