

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

August 2011

## DOT proposes to eliminate most of sign replacement mandate

By Lash Chaffin,  
Utilities Section Director, LNM

The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) recently issued a press release proposing to eliminate the unfunded mandate that all street signs must be replaced and upgraded to a higher retro-reflectivity standard by 2015. Instead, signs will only have to be upgraded to the new standard after the useful life of a sign expires.

This proposal repeals an unfunded mandate during one of the most financially-challenging times for local governments in history. The current rule would require local elected officials to make what should be an unnecessary choice between upgrading signs that function perfectly well in the judgment of local officials and making more difficult budget decisions, such as furloughing employees.

The U.S. DOT is accepting public comments until Oct. 31 before implementing this important rule change.

Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez stated that "Local and state transportation agencies are best-equipped to determine when they need to replace signs and other items in the course of

their daily work. We are proposing these changes to give them the flexibility they need to balance their many responsibilities and make the best use of taxpayer dollars."

The deadlines requiring that certain street name signs be replaced by 2018 to meet minimum retro-reflectivity standards and requiring larger lettering on those street name signs are among the series of deadlines eliminated under the amendment proposed.

The proposal also would eliminate deadlines for increasing the size of various traffic signs, such as "Pass With Care" and "One Way," as well as warning signs, such as "Low Clearance" and "Advance Grade Crossing." Instead, communities will be able to replace and upgrade these signs when they reach the end of their useful life.

The proposed rules also extend the deadline for implementing an assessment or management method.

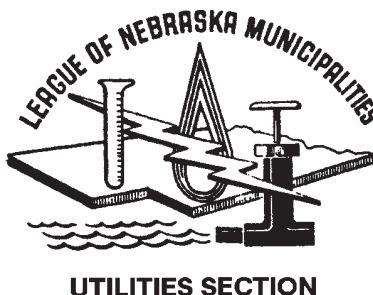
The DOT has retained 12 deadlines for sign upgrades that are critical to public safety. These safety-critical sign upgrades

include installing "ONE WAY" signs at intersections with divided highways or one-way streets and requiring STOP or YIELD signs to be added at all railroad crossings that don't have train-activated automatic gates or flashing lights.

Last November, FHWA published a request for comments in the Federal Register on deadlines and received almost 600 comments from highway agencies, state departments of transportation, other organizations, and private citizens. FHWA took these comments into consideration as it developed the Notice of Proposed Amendments. FHWA is also soliciting public comments for this proposed rule. Comments should be directed to <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>.

If you would like to receive your *Utilities Section Newsletter* by email rather than regular mail, please contact Brenda at [brendae@lonm.org](mailto:brendae@lonm.org).  
Thank you!

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Lash Chaffin  
Utilities Section Director  
Rob Pierce  
Utilities Field Representative

## 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,  
Utilities Field Representative,  
LNM

**S**outh Sioux City, located in Dakota County, had considerable activity in the area by the 1850s. In 1956, town-sites were established in the area such as Stanton and Pacific City, which were established by the Burlington Railroad. In 1856, Stanton consisted of 30 buildings of which about 12 were saloons.

In August 1856, a town-site called Harney City was registered,

which was later called Newport. In 1857, official papers were filed, but the name Covington was given rather than Newport. That same year, a plat was filed for a South Covington. By March 29, 1858, a post office was established as Covington. On Nov. 20, 1858, Covington and Pacific City were incorporated as villages.

Thirty years later in 1887, the town-site of South Sioux City was platted and the first newspaper was established on Aug. 27 of that same year. The incorporation date varies depending on which source



South Sioux City Water Storage Tower, 2000 Photo.

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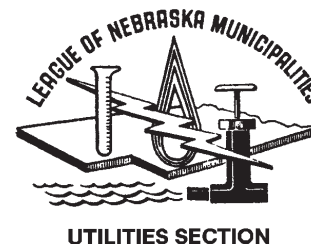
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## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 2*

is to be believed as Jan. 4, 1887, June 4, 1887, and 1889 are all listed as incorporation dates. On Jan. 1, 1889, the first newspaper merged with the *Sun Newspaper* and the post office changed its name from Sioux to South Sioux City on March 25, 1889. Also in 1889, a pontoon-type toll bridge was built across the Missouri River. In July 1889, the South Sioux City Electric Motor Street Railroad Company was established.

On May 1, 1893, Covington and Stanton were annexed as part of South Sioux City. By 1893, a flouring mill had been erected and the village consisted of two general stores, two hardware stores, four grocery stores, one lumberyard, a variety store, a bakery, millinery, two butcher shops, one bank, two hotels, a billiard hall, two saloons, a wagon shop, blacksmith, two newspapers, an opera house, and a buss/hack line. In 1895-96, a combination bridge was built across the Missouri River, accommodating trains, streetcars, pedestrians and horse drawn vehicles.

With a population of about 700, electricity was first established in the area about 1896. The population in 1900 was at 889 and by 1910, had increased to 1,196. South Sioux City became a city of the second class in 1918 and by 1920, the population had increased to 2,402. Like many Nebraska cities in the 1920s, street paving projects improved the city's transportation infrastructure.

In the 1930s, the population again increased to 3,927 and a Public Works Administration water project installed asbestos-lined water mains with a water plant located where the current fire hall sits next to city hall. By 1940, the population again increased and the city began using natural gas. In the 1940s, Consumers Public Power District likely took over the electric light system when they acquired all private electrical company properties in Nebraska. In 1949, the St. Michaels Parochial School was established, adding to the long-standing school system in the area.

As the population increased in the 1950s to more than 5,000, the city made the jump to a city of

the first class. Projects in 1956 consisted of a water filtering plant, a new well, a warehouse building and a 225,000-gallon water storage tank and water and sewer main extensions. The B Street water treatment plant had a daily design capacity of 1.5 million gallons and designed to remove iron and manganese. In 1956, the 1,647 water meters in the system were owned by the city with the following water rates: first 6,000 gallons @ \$0.25/1,000 gallons (gal.), next 6,000 gal. @ \$0.20/1,000 gal., next 13,000 gal. @ \$0.15/1,000 gal., next 25,000 gal. @ \$0.010/1,000 gal., over 50,000 gallons @ \$0.075/1,000 gal., minimum \$1.50.

In 1956, the electric rates were: residential – first 30 KWH @ \$0.05, next 30 KWH @ \$0.04, next 60 KWH @ \$0.025, minimum \$1; commercial – first 25 KWH @ \$0.06, next 25 KWH @ \$0.05, next 950 KWH @ \$0.04, next 4,000 KWH @ \$0.03, over 5,000 KWH @ \$0.025, minimum \$1. Power rates were: first 1,000 KWH @ \$0.04, next 4,000 KWH @ \$0.03, next 5,000 KWH

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## **Nebraska utilities history**

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@\$0.025, minimum \$1.

In 1958, a paving project was completed, garbage was collected by a private collection service and the city operated a sewer collection system with a service fee of \$0.50/month. In the late 1950s to 1960s, the city owned the distribution system, including meters, and current was

supplied by the Iowa Public Service Company. The city owned approximately 1,600 electric meters with a meter deposit of \$10.

In 1960, electric current and natural gas was supplied by the Iowa Public Service Company. The cost of current for street lighting was \$5,000 per year and the cost of pumping water

was \$1,850 per year. The water system had approximately 1,800 meters in service with a \$5 deposit. In 1962, the sewer rates were \$1.50 per quarter for residents and the city now had approximately 2,400 water meters in service. By 1970, the electrical system was owned/operated by the city and current was supplied by the

Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD).

In 1976, the Sergeant Floyd Memorial Bridge was built across the Missouri River. By 1980, the population was 9,339, the natural gas system was operated by the Iowa Public Service (I.P.S.) and supplied by Northern Natural Gas.

The Riverview water

*Continued on page 5*

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## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 4*  
treatment plant was built in 1984 for removal of iron and manganese and designed for 3,320,000 gallons. In 1997, the city began exploring the building of a fiber optic network with construction beginning in 1998 and completed by spring of 2001. By 2000, the city has two iron and manganese treatment plants with a capacity of six million gallons per day total production. In 2004, a grant was received for water main exten-

sions. Also that year, the city received a \$122,300 grant to install a lift station and sewer line from the existing wastewater lagoon to the city's sewer system.

By 2009, the city had 12 lift stations, 40 miles of sewer main (6- to 24-inch), 850 manholes, and sewer rates were \$8.14 per month with usage fee of \$0.71 per 1,000 gallons with a minimum service charge.

Today, South Sioux City is a city of the first class, has nearly 60

parks (about 1,700 acres), an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, a Covington Links Golf Course, an Iron Horse Golf Course along with a South Ridge Golf Course. The water system has eight water wells along the Missouri River, two water treatment facilities, overhead storage of one million gallons (four 250,000-gallon towers), a daily demand of about 2,250,000 gallons, and a historic peak of 4,700,000 gallons per day

*Continued on page 6*

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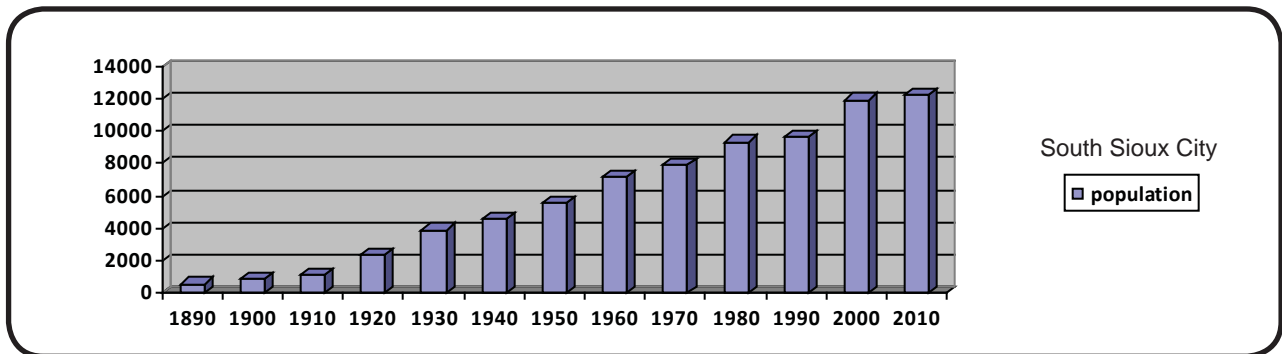
Continued from page 5 along with about 600 fire hydrants in service. The collection system wastewater is pumped to the treatment facility located in Sioux City. The electrical system is owned by the city and operated/supplied by the Nebraska Public Power District, has 67 miles of streets, with 62.5 miles hard surfaced (asphalt, concrete and bituminous). Natural gas is provided

by Mid-American Energy, with eight-inch mains and a pressure of about 90 pressure per square inch (psi). The city also has an airport with a Martin Field and solid waste is collected with 2009 residential rates at \$12.50/month for one container, a \$2.50 for each additional containers. The fire department has 26 members, 16 emergency management technicians (EMTs),

two fire halls and a fire insurance rating of 6 & 9. South Sioux City has been a Utilities Section member for over 30 years.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 2002-2011; Nebraska Municipal Review Magazine, 1971; Perkey's Nebraska Place names, 1995; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Nebraska Traveler Magazine,*

*2003; Public Power Magazine, Vol. 51, Number 1, January-February 1993; Nebraska A Guide to the Cornhusker State 1979; Nebraska Our Towns... North Northeast, 1990; Maps Tell Nebraska's History, 1991; Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th Edition, 1982; Public Power Weekly, Feb, 1997; NEDED Internet site, 2007; and Warner's History of Dakota County Nebraska, 1893.*



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# Classifieds

**Lights and Water Commissioner.** City of Edgar, located in SE Nebraska, population 498, will be accepting applications for utility worker.

Work duties will involve repair and maintenance of City-owned Electrical and Water System. Also included in work duties, will be repair and maintenance of



water system, sewer, pool, parks and streets. Other work duties will vary from operating heavy

equipment, paper work, and records keeping, snow removal to general labor of the maintenance and upkeep of all City-owned properties.

Salary is based on experience. Job position open until filled. Application forms and a list of minimum qualifications will be available at City Hall @ 508 3rd Street, Edgar, NE. (402) 224-5145. Monday-Friday 9 AM - 5 PM. Resumes may be sent to City of Edgar, Attn: Brad Brennforder, PO Box 485, Edgar, NE 68935.

## Who has the best tasting water in Nebraska?

Bring your water to the annual Nebraska Section American Water Works Association (NS-AWWA) Conference to be held Nov. 2-4, 2011 at the Holiday Inn in Kearney.

The NS-AWWA is once again hosting the "water taste test" event. A panel of expert water tasters has been assembled to judge the event to determine who has the best tasting water in Nebraska for 2011.

The Nebraska Section AWWA winner will be nominated to com-

pete in the National AWWA Water



Taste Test at the National AWWA Conference if the winner meets the National AWWA eligibility requirements. Past Nebraska winners in this event have been Lincoln (2009) and Fremont (2010) water systems. The national competition began in 2004 with the Nebraska section first competing in 2009.

### Reminder

Effective July 1, 2011, the mileage rate at which elected and appointed officials, employees, or volunteers may be reimbursed was increased to 55.5 cents per miles.

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## Rubber Gloving School held

The western Nebraska Electric Rubber Gloving School was held Aug. 23-25 at the Wheat-belt Public Power District Training Field in Sidney. Nineteen linemen from 12 municipalities and 25 Rural Public Power District line workers attended this three-day workshop.

The participants were divided into groups and rotated stations, which included a transformer station, a C-4 Bell change-out, an aerial switch, an under bilt crossarm change-out, a C-1 pole change-out, a C-1 crossarm change-out and two beginner groups, which started with basic wire tying on insulators, splices, armor rod use and pin top change-out.

These groups also performed a transformer change-out and worked with a variety of different trucks. The first day also featured four stations demonstrating four different types of fall protection climbing belts and arrest equipment.

The following company representatives participated as instructors, exhibitors, and/or provided demonstrations, equipment and donated material (listed alphabetically; \* = Associate Member):

\***Altec** – Don Selachek, Bruce Bower, Colby O'Brien

**Altec Supply** – Chad Hyatt

**Cahoon Sales** – Greg Schraeder

**Electrical Apparatus Service Company (EASCO)** – Jeff Wilson

\***Energy Solutions** – Scott Howells, Steve Baum

**ETI** – Whit Hamilton

\***Evans Lipka & Associates** –



*Switch Station*

Doug Kottas

**Greenlee** – George Hoff

**Layton Truck** – Joe Burbach

\***McCaskey Company** – Ken Rieck

**Salsbury** – Chad Eley

**Terex** – Joe Boatright

\***WESCO** – Dave Troudt

A special thanks to all the manufacturers for their support and the linemen that participated as instructors.

### Pender Wastewater Workshop held

A one-day Wastewater Workshop was held Aug. 11, 2011, at the Pender Fire Hall and sponsored by the League of Municipalities Utilities Section.

The morning sessions covered refreshers on lagoon, oxidation ditch and sequencing

batch reactor (SBR) basic operations. The afternoon consisted of a refresher on confined space practices and current regulatory and wastewater industry issues. Wastewater operators in attendance received 5.0 contact hours toward re-certification of their license.

# Training calendar for 2011/2012

## October 2011

Oct. 25-27 .....Power Generation Conference (Diesel Conf.) ..... Downtown Holiday Inn, Lincoln .....  
Oct. 27 .....Safety Workshop ..... Downtown Holiday Inn, Lincoln

## November 2011

Nov. 29 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Community Center, Bridgeport

## December 2011

Dec. 1 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Wally's, Fairbury  
Dec. 13 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Fire Hall, South Sioux City  
Dec. 14 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Christensen Field, Fremont  
Dec. 15 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Lincoln Water System, Lincoln

## January 2012


Jan. 4 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Fire Hall, Crete  
Jan. 5 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... VFW, Plattsmouth  
Jan. 11-13 .....Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference ..... Embassy Suites, Lincoln  
Jan. 24 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Kearney  
Jan. 25-26 .....Snowball Conference ..... Holiday Inn, Kearney

## February 2012

Feb. 27-28 .....Midwinter Conference ..... Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

*Workshops also are listed on our website at [www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org) "Calendar of Events."*

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