

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

September 2011

## Mark your calendars for January 11-13

By Lash Chaffin,  
Utilities Section Director, LNM

The 2012 League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities/Public Works Annual Conference is scheduled for Jan. 11-13 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln.

The conference kicks off with a stand-alone optional Preconference Seminar Jan. 11, titled *How to Manage ALL Emergencies – Large and Small: Best practices when you are short-staffed and short of equipment, and the crisis just seems to keep coming at you!*

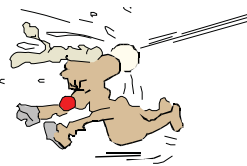
This Preconference Seminar is for managers in villages and cities that are being forced to make tough decisions. Registered

## Snowball Conference scheduled

The 2012 Snowball Conference is scheduled for Jan. 25-26

at the Kearney Holiday Inn.

Watch for flyers and brochures for registration information.



attendees do not have to register for the entire conference. This seminar will count for 5 hours water and 5 hours wastewater credit.

On Jan. 12 and 13, share time with your colleagues and learn how to better manage your utility and public works departments. Some of the important educational opportunities include:

- **How to Make Contractors and Excavators Responsible for Timely Locates, Specific Locates and Requests, Excavation Accidents, and the Costs of One Call;**
- **Setting Wages Legally for All Classes of Municipalities;**
- **New Diesel Engine Rules are Going to Change How Nebraska Does Business;**
- **Your Swimming Pool and the ADA;**
- **Henderson v. Columbus:** Learn how this court case might affect your Water, Wastewater, Electric, Natural Gas and Stormwater Utilities;
- **Federal Aid Highway Project Status Report;**
- **Municipal Utility and Public Works Legislative and Regulatory Update.** Whether you have a water, wastewater,



### UTILITIES SECTION

electric, natural gas, street, recreation or other department, the Nebraska Legislature has a tremendous effect on how you do business. Do not miss the latest information on legislative and regulatory activities.

• **And much, much more!!!**

There will be water, wastewater and engineering credits available for many of these sessions. Do not miss this great opportunity.

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!



### UTILITIES SECTION

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Utilities Section Director  
Rob Pierce  
Utilities Field Representative

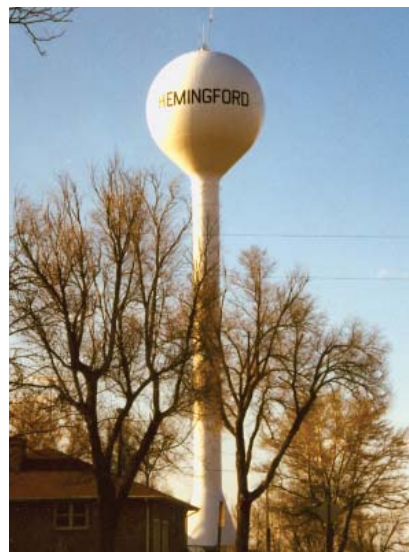
## Nebraska utilities history

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

**H**emingford, located in Box Butte County, had Canadian settlers come to the area in the summer of 1885. On Jan. 20, 1886, a post office was established (one source listed Sept. 20, 1887), a school was built in 1886, and became incorporated as a village May 5, 1886 (one source listed the incorporation as 1887). By 1887, it was noted that the village had about 12 buildings in

town and in 1889, the Burlington Railroad reached Hemingford. In 1890, a large three-story flour roller mill was built and a 2½-story brick school building on the hill (first occupied in 1894). About 1890-91, Hemingford won the county seat over Nonpareil. A waterworks system was discussed in 1893 and bids taken in 1894. By February, a contract with the Tamaqua Manufacturing Company of Tamaqua included 10 hydrants at \$29.50 each with freight and the installation of a water system. Soon a brick well house and an



Hemingford water tower, 1998  
Photo.

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## 2011-2012 Executive Board

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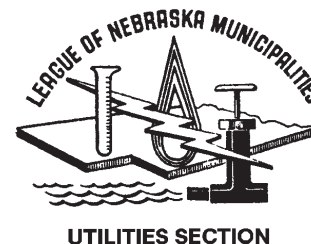
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## Nebraska utilities history

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80,000-gallon standpipe were built. In the late 1890s, an Opera House was built and in 1899, lost a county seat election to Alliance. The two-story courthouse building was moved via train to Alliance, traveling the 20 miles in about 21 minutes. By 1900, the population was 133 and a windmill and tank sat at the north end of Main Street. In the early 1900s, several fire companies provided fire protection service. In 1910, a fire destroyed about 11 buildings at a total cost of about \$50,000. Many homes were built in 1910 with wells and windmills to pump water up into tanks on elevated platforms or in attics, thus indoor plumbing could be installed. Some homes had indoor plumbing, but most had outhouses in their back yards. In 1910, Dr. McEuen installed a home electrical plant in 1910 with many in the area scared of the electrified lines and would walk around them rather than under them. The population rose from 272 in 1900 to about 1,000 by 1915. The Farmers Creamery was shipping butter to Chicago and in 1915, the

Hemingford Light & Power Company had a light plant with a 25 horse power (HP) gas engine with a generator rating of 16 KVA. In 1918, electricity was furnished by Alex Olds with electricity turned on at dusk and turned off at midnight. Current was also supplied two mornings a week so the washing and ironing could be done. About 1918, a volunteer fire brigade armed with a length of hose on a hose cart was pulled by manpower to fires. By 1919, four passenger trains arrived per day, a Farmers' Cooperative was started and a large two-story brick store was built.

The 1920 census reported a population of 706 and again, fire destroyed six downtown buildings at an estimated cost of \$70,000. The building of a fire hall and jail were discussed in 1922 and in 1923 the women's club started a library. In 1926, a new two-story brick school was built and in September 1927, two main business streets north and south were graveled.

By 1928, Hemingford was a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities, the water plant

and distribution mains were publicly owned with rates of \$0.25 per 1,000 gallons. The privately owned power plant rates were \$0.20 per kilowatt hour (KWH) and in October, street lights were installed. In 1929, the Hemingford Telephone Company started 24-hour service and bids for a new (outfall lagoon treatment plant) sewer system were to be completed in the fall to serve a population of 2,000. The collection mains were laid in October and construction completed by December. In 1930, the Hemingford Cooperative Telephone Company was organized and the population increased to 1,025. In the 1930s, the school was remodeled as a WPA project and crushed rock was applied on Niobrara Avenue (Ave.), Ogallala Ave., Custer Street and Cheyenne Avenue.

Population in the 1940s decreased to 792, the 1,600-acre Box Butte Reservoir (WPA project) was built 10 miles north of town on the Niobrara River. The Consumers Public Power District acquired all Nebraska properties of Western Public Service Compa-

*Continued on page 4*

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## **Nebraska utilities history**

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ny. The population rose again to 946 in 1950 and on September 9, 1953, the city purchased the electrical system from Consumers Public Power District for \$94,927. In 1956, the fire department had 25 volunteers, and the cemetery was owned by the village, which was maintained by a mill levy, lot sales, donations

and special care.

The water plant and 250 meters in service were owned by the village with a meter deposit of \$5. Electric current for pumping water cost \$240 per month and customer rates were a minimum of \$1.25 per month. The wastewater disposal plant and sewer system was owned by village and maintained

by a \$0.25 per month service charge. The electrical system and 430 meters in service were owned and operated by the city with current supplied by Consumers Public Power District at a wholesale price of \$0.0104. The meter deposit was \$10 and the cost of street lighting amounted to \$162.90 per month. A monthly

pickup of solid waste was provided by a private collection service.

By the 1960s, the population was 904, a white spheroid shaped water tower was built, a new school building was built and, after 16 years, the electrical current supplier changed from Consumers Public Power District to Nebraska

*Continued on page 5*

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## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 4*

Public Power District (1969). In 1973, the natural gas system was operated by the Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company. In 1975, a new gymnasium was built at the school complex and by 1976, construction began on the wastewater treatment facility. The population in 1980 rose to 1,023 and coal trains moved through town every 24 hours. In 1985, a new city/fire hall was built and a new fire truck was added to the fire department fleet of three fire trucks, three

ambulances and a pickup.

The water system consisted of three municipal wells (an Allis Chalmers engine on well located on west side of town), two storage towers (standpipe and spheroid shaped structures), and fire hydrants and miles of distribution mains. In 1986, improvements were made to the sanitary sewer system and a facultative retention lagoon system designed for 0.084 million gallons per day (mgd). In 1990, the population was 953, the Hemingford Community Health

Care was started and a \$750,000 water improvement project consisting of three wells, a touch read meter system, new fire hydrants were installed and backflow devices and distribution system improvements were completed. In 1993, the electrical system had 552 customers and in 1995, a baseball complex consisting of two fields were built. The population in 2000 rose to 993 and in 2005, solid waste was collected by SWANN, the fire insurance

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## Nebraska utilities history

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rating was 7 and 10 and a swimming pool was built.

Today, the population is about 869, about 99 percent of the streets are paved/curbed, has a park with playground equipment, picnic tables, shelters, rest rooms, a swimming pool, tennis courts, a baseball field complex, Hemingford Golf Course, public library, solid waste is served by Solid Waste Agency of Northwest Nebraska (SWANN) for collection and landfill disposal. The water system has five wells, two non-potable for irrigation only with an average depth of 320 feet, a pumping capacity of 1,200 gallons per minute, overhead storage of 210,000 gallons and color-coded fire hydrants. The wastewater lagoon system has a rated capacity of 0.002 mgd, an average daily

demand of 0.002 mgd, and peak demand of 0.005 mgd. The natural gas system is operated by Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company, a member of ACE, and supplied by a two-inch transmission line with an operating pressure of 575-600 pounds per square inch (psi). Hemingford also has been a member of the Utilities Section for over 30 years.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1964-70, 1987-94, 1996, 1998-2011; Nebraska Municipal Review Magazine, 1928; Hemingford Nebraska 1886-1986, 1986; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, Elton A. Perkey 1995; Nebraska Life Magazine, 2001; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Hemingford Internet Website, 2003 Public Power Magazine, Vol.*

*51, Number 1, January-February 1993; Nebraska Historic Building Survey Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Box Butte County, Nebraska, July 1996; Kearney Hub Newspaper; Nebraska Our Towns...The Panhandle,*

*1988; Nebraska Health & Human Services Website, 2004; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Who's Who in Nebraska, 1940; and the Electric Power Development in the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, January 1916.*

## Backflow Workshops held

Four one-day Backflow (Cross Connection) Workshops were held in Ogallala (Sept. 6), Grand Island (Sept. 20), Wayne (Sept. 21) and Beatrice (Sept. 22). There were 177 grade 6 water operators and plumbers in attendance at these four workshops. Operators attending received five recertification hours toward renewal of their grade 6 and grades 1-4 water operator licenses. Also,

wastewater operators received five recertification hours toward renewal of their licenses.

These workshops were sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section and the Nebraska Section American Water Works Association backflow committee. These workshops are held annually at these sites so operators are provided with recertification hours to keep their license renewed.

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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.

## Electric Underground School held

The western Nebraska Electric Underground School was held Aug. 31-Sept. 1, 2011, at the Wheatbelt Public Power District training field in Sidney. Ten linemen from five municipalities and Rural Public Power District line workers attended this 1½-day workshop. The first day started with Bob Hessler of Safetyline Consultants Inc., providing training on confined spaces and trenching/shoring. Then the participants were divided into smaller work groups, which rotated through the work stations the remainder

of that day and the next morning. The work stations consisted of two secondary fault finding stations, three primary fault finding stations, and an equipment, elbow installation, termination and splicing station.

Instructors at these stations included, Brian Winfield (Moehn Sales), Ed Kohmetscher (EUSCO-Hipotronics), Gary Capps (HDW), Mike Adkins (Ditchwitch), Ken Riech (McCaskey Co.), Steve Baum (EnergySolutions), Ryan Hammond (McCook Public Power District), Jim Meyer (WESCO),

Lloyd Wolfe (WESCO), Doug Kotas (Evans Lipka) and Jim Grimes (Raycom).

The Utilities Section would like to thank all the instructors and their respective companies and manufacturers for their participation and donation of material at this workshop: Ditchwitch, EnergySolutions Inc., EUSCO, Evans Lipka and Associates Inc., HDW Electronics, McCaskey Company, Moehn Electrical Sales Company, Rycom Instruments, Safetyline Consultants Inc., WESCO and 3M Electrical Products Division.

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SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

# Basic safe lifting techniques

*By Rob Pierce,  
Utilities Field Representative/  
Training Coordinator*

In spite of the increased use of innovative machinery and equipment, moving, lifting, and carrying are often a major part of our daily job tasks. Understanding and using basic lifting fundamentals can help to minimize or possibly eliminate back strains and other muscle pulls or tears. Back injuries are not often a result of one particular incident, but rather from cumulative trauma from poor lifting techniques while performing daily tasks over and over again.

Sometimes injury reports show back injuries occurring from picking up a pencil or tying your shoe. These simple tasks are usually when the back decides to give out from stress over a period of time, not occurring from just that

task alone. The practice of thinking first then applying safe lifting practices can help to minimize a back injury. Some tips to follow are first, size up the load and get in a stance to ensure good footing. Place feet apart about shoulder width. Always bend your knees and try to keep your back straight, while getting a firm grasp of the object to be lifted. Keep the load close to your body and gradually lift, allowing your legs to do most of the work. Avoid twisting your body while in the same motion as lifting. If the load is too heavy, get help or seek aid from mechanical lifting equipment.

Remember your age and physical condition, as it may not be what it once was and bragging rights are not worth an injury. Be sure to always push a load rather than pull as it puts less stress on the back. Work on keeping yourself fit and use stretching



exercises before performing a lift as it will help keep the back flexible. Injuries from lifting, pushing, pulling, reaching or tugging are common injuries that can be avoided. Remember, your back is one of the weakest links in the overall mechanics of how your body functions, so take care of it! Lift smart!

## *Urban Forestry Workshop held*

An Urban Forestry Workshop was held Sept. 15, 2011, at the Gering Fire Hall. The workshop covered the basics of urban forestry management, proper tree pruning, line clearance chain saw safety and general load securement. Employees from Gering and Kimball were in attendance. This workshop was sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section.

This course provided a basic foundation for parks workers, electric line workers or any other utility workers dealing with trees and shrubs in their community. Many of the trees in our Nebraska communities are getting old, not unlike our other aging municipal infrastructure and needs attention to minimize liability, while enhancing the aesthetics of our communities.

## Water operators receive recognition

Three water operators received awards at the Western Nebraska Rural Water Association Conference held in Gering Sept. 14, 2011. The Nebraska Health and Human Services presented the “Outstanding Operator Awards” to **Jerry Mathers** of Benkelman and **Ken Furry** and **Hugo Chavas** of Terrytown.

Congratulations to Jerry, Ken and Hugo for their commitment and dedication to their respective water systems!

## Training calendar for 2011/2012

### 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

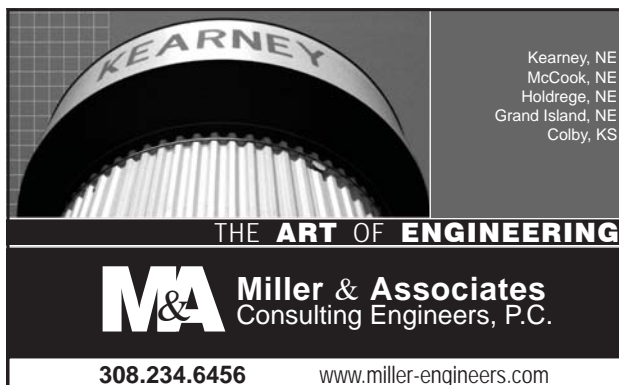
*Workshops also are listed on our website at [www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org) "Calendar of Events."*

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