

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

February 2022

## 2022 Snowball Wastewater Conference

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

The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Snowball Wastewater Conference was held Jan. 26-27, 2022, at the Kearney Holiday Inn. The conference was cosponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities-Utilities Section and the Nebraska Water Operators Division (NWOD) of the Nebraska Water Environment Association (NWEA), a member of the National Water Federation (WEF). This year, the conference attendance totaled about 210 with 174 operators. The past 31 years, more than 7,280 operators, engineers and wastewater-related company representatives have participated at this conference with over 312 hours of recertification “relicensing” credit for wastewater participants. This year, licensed **wastewater attende**es received **10.25** hours toward their wastewater relicensing and **water operators received up to 4.5 hours**, depending on which sessions they attended. (Eight sessions received water credits). Certificates were issued with wastewater hours, but those with water licenses will need to keep track of their hours. The credit hours list will be posted on the League’s website at [www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org). If you have questions on credit hours for this conference, contact Rob at the League office.

The Snowball Conference morning sessions included:

One Call Process for Safe Digging and Preventing Damage to Underground Utilities; Dissolved Oxygen/Total Suspended Solids; SCADA Cyber Security Update; Reliable and Cost-Effective On-Site Energy Options for Water and Wastewater; Basics of Trenching and Shoring; Shaft Grounding-VFD Protection for Equipment; and Title 124 Pumps – What You Need to Know. The afternoon sessions included: Take the Mystery Out of Industrial Stormwater; Basic Collection Maintenance; Pump Cavitation 101; CIPP Lining and Manhole Rehabilitation; Energy Efficiency – Controlling Blowers with Valves and VFDs; Collection Systems Biostimulation; and Hydrogen Sulfide Reduction.

On Jan. 27, following the operator breakfast, Scott Seelhoff provided NWEA and NWOD updates on association activities. The morning sessions included an operator certification program update and a USDA funding discussion provided by four presenters from USDA. Lash Chaffin (Utilities Section Director) wrapped up the conference with a legislative and industry update emphasizing recent ARPA funding changes.

Speakers at this conference included: Jill Geyer of Nebraska

811, Chris Johnson and Lee Dunn of Gurney & Associates Inc., Warren Humphrey of Olsson, Adib Amini of Fox Strand, Ross Carda of United Rental, Tricia Scott and Mike McBride of NDEE, Brian Gongol of Gongol & Associates, Monte Dakan of Johnson Service, Marl Pomajzl of JEO, Scott Seelhoff of Fremont, George Edwards of Edwards Environmental, Dave Fulton, Kaleb Browning, Ryan Brandt, Meredith Mingelldorf and Sara Pierce of USDA Rural Development and Rob Pierce and Lash Chaffin of the League of Nebraska Municipalities-Utilities Section.

A special “thank you” to the Holiday Inn for providing excellent facilities and food for the conference events. Once again, the meals were filling and delicious! A special thank you to the following companies (listed alphabetically) that supported the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Snowball Conference by providing exhibits, speakers and/or sponsorship, which always helps make the conference a big success:

- Bert Gurney & Associates, Inc.
- Core & Main
- Crouch Recreation
- DJ Gongol & Associates, Inc.
- Dutton-Lainson Company
- Edwards Environmental Corp.
- Electric Pump, Inc.
- GPM
- HACH

*Continued on page 2*

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UTILITIES SECTION

Lash Chaffin  
Utilities Section Director  
Rob Pierce  
Utilities Field Representative

## 2022 Snowball Wastewater Conference

*Continued from page 1*

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- Nebraska 811
- Nebraska Department of Environment & Energy
- **Nebraska Generator Service**
- **Olsson**
- **Rose Equipment**
- UECO

- United Rental
- **USDA Rural Development**
- Utility Equipment Company
- **WILLCO Inc.**

*Those listed in BOLD are League/Utilities Section Associate Members.*

The dates for future Snowball Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed with the Kearney Holiday Inn: Jan. 25-26, 2023; Jan. 24-25, 2024; and Jan. 22-23, 2025.

### ***Do you need to get a wastewater or water operator certified?***

Check the following websites for information on their training and test dates.

Nebraska Water Environment Association – [www.nebwea.org](http://www.nebwea.org)

Nebraska Rural Water Association – [www.nerwa.org](http://www.nerwa.org)

Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy – [www.ndee.gov](http://www.ndee.gov)

### **Credit hours reminder**

If you attended the 2022 Snowball Conference and/or the 2022 Utilities Conference, your water and wastewater hours will be posted soon on the League of Nebraska Municipalities' website at [www.lnm.org/utilities](http://www.lnm.org/utilities).

## 2022-2023 Executive Board

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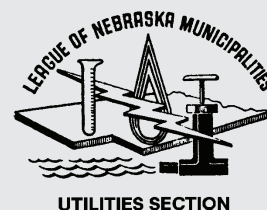
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## 2022 Electric Meter School held

The Annual Nebraska Electric Meter Conference was held Feb. 8-9, 2022, at the Kearney Holiday Inn. The Electric Meter School was cosponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities-Utilities Section and the Nebraska Rural Electric Association in cooperation with Northeast Community College. There were 83 participants from across Nebraska, including 27 municipal workers from 17 systems and 35 lineworkers from rural electric systems. Attendees were from Ansley, Broken Bow, Central City, Cozad BPW, Curtis, David City, Imperial, Mullen, Nebraska City Utilities, Ord, Oxford, Polk, Schuyler, Seward, Stuart, Syra-

cuse and Wayne.

The first day included sessions by Chris Kelmel of Anixter; Jim Meyer and Mike Myers of WESCO; Bill Edelman of Dutton Lainson; Bill Amelse of Primus Marketing; Logan Knudsen and John Vandenberg of Border States; and Will Elliott of ACLARA.

The second day included sessions by Will Elliot and Mike Gagnon of ACLARA (Honeywell); Ryan Alkire of GE Renewable Energy; Craig Thelen of the State of Nebraska Electrical Division; and Rob Reese of TESCO. Special thanks to these presenters and their companies who provided some outstanding educational

sessions. A special thanks to those companies setting up exhibit tables and/or sponsorship at the conference including: ACLARA Technologies, American Power, Border States, Dutton Lainson/ITRON, GE/Graybar, Moehn Electrical Sales, RESCO (EUSCO, Primus Marketing), TESCO-The Eastern Specialty Company and WESCO/Anixter.

The 2023 Meter Conference is scheduled for Feb. 7-8 at the Kearney Holiday Inn. Be sure to mark this date on your calendars.

Future Electric Meter Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed with the Kearney Holiday Inn: Feb. 7-8, 2023; Feb. 6-7, 2024; and Feb. 11-12, 2025.

## Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

**Q-1.** Which Utilities Section member is located between Gilead and Harbine on Highway #136?

**Q-2.** Which Utilities Section member is located between Parks and Max on Highway

#34?

**Q-3.** Which Utilities Section member is located between the Lorenzo and Dalton (just south of Huntsman) on Highway #385?

**Q-4.** Which of these villages/

cities are not located on Highway #20? Crawford, Gordon, Merriman, Valentine, Butte, Ainsworth, Bassett, Orchard, Clearwater, Plainview and Osmond.

**Answers on page 8.**

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## **SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER**

### **Safe heart health**

*Reprinted from February 2016  
Utilities Section Newsletter*

According to the American Heart Association, heart attacks are the leading cause of death in the United States. Symptoms of a heart attack may be pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms, chest discomfort accompanied by light-headedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath. More than 1.5 million Americans suffer heart attacks every year and almost half a million die.

Our hearts are the pumps of life and we should not take them for granted. As we get older, we should put more emphasis on health and wellness. In the utility business, we talk of asset management and we often put our main asset, “us,” on the back burner as far as priorities go. Why? We often get busy with work-related assets such as buildings, equipment, material, vehicles and preventative measures are taken to ensure they last and are functioning properly. We should make sure number one is included in the

asset management.

We need to make certain we get an adequate amount of sleep to fully charge our body. A good place to start is trying to get seven hours of sleep. I personally like to wake up without the stressful blare of an alarm.

A consistent, healthy diet is a plus. Avoid eating fats (especially saturated fats), eat fewer refined foods and limit sodium. Eat more fruits and vegetables and consume less fruit juices. Minimize the consumption of sugary sodas, excessive coffee and alcohol. Controlling some of our habits such as smoking and drinking and managing hypertension and stress can be helpful.

Everyone should have an activity or hobby that helps to relieve stress. Monitor your body’s health components or essential assets such as cholesterol, blood pressure and weight and have regular medical visits. When monitoring, don’t forget your body mass index (BMI), as obesity and an unhealthy weight gain can lead to health complications such as diabetes.

Exercise, by staying active while pushing your limits, but not too far. As one health specialist stated, “sit less and sweat more.” A good exercise program might be at least 30 minutes per day for five days a week (150 minutes per week).

Today, many of our public facilities have **automated external defibrillators (AEDs)** available for use in an emergency situation. A defibrillator is a device that uses electricity to restart the heart or shock it back into its correct rhythm. It is used when someone has a sudden cardiac arrest. This is when the heart suddenly stops pumping. AEDs are designed to be user-friendly, providing simple steps of operation that can save someone who has a sudden cardiac arrest. Statistics state that every year, cardiac arrest affects over 300,000 Americans. Quick and proper use of an AED may increase survival from 5 percent to over 70 percent. If you find yourself using an AED, the first things to do are try and stay calm, someone needs to call 911 immediately and CPR must be started.

### **Red Cross steps on using an AED**

After checking the scene and ensuring that the person needs help, you should ask a bystander to call 911 for help, then:

- 1) Complete the CHECK and CALL steps.
- 2) As soon as an AED is available, turn it on and follow the voice prompts.
- 3) Remove all clothing cover-

ing the chest. If necessary, wipe the chest dry. Place one pad on the upper right side of the chest. Place the other pad on the lower left side of the chest, a few inches below the left armpit. Note: If the pads may touch, place one pad in the middle of the chest and the other pad on the back, between the shoulder blades.

- 4) Plug the pad connector cable into the AED, if necessary.

5) Prepare to let the AED analyze the heart’s rhythm. Make sure no one is touching the person. Say, “CLEAR!” in a loud, commanding voice.

- 6) Deliver a shock if the AED determines one is needed. Make

*Continued on page 11*

## Nebraska utilities history – Chambers

*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 [rob@lonm.org](mailto:rob@lonm.org).*

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

**C**hambers, located in Holt County, had settlers in the area by 1880-81 and a store with an unofficial post office at the Wry Homestead, which was operating by 1883. By 1883, several homesteaders and businesses had been added and by April 25, 1884, a post office was established, initially called Juanita after the youngest daughter of Mr. Rufus C. Wry, original owner of the site. Juniata already was being used by another post office, so another name was chosen by W.D. Matthews, postmaster of the Frontier post office in O'Neill. He selected Chambers in honor of his friend, Benjamin F. Chambers, a registrar at the land office at Niobrara. A mail route was established by 1884, the town site had 12 businesses operating and by the end of the year, a retail store, a harness shop, a hotel and a livery barn were in operation. The *Chambers Journal* newspaper was established in 1885, but was

moved in 1885 to Shamrock and another newspaper, the *Chambers Eagle* was started. In 1886, the "Harvest Home Festival" was organized and a townsite was said to have been surveyed/platted Sept. 14, 1886. Although another source noted June 6, 1887, as a plat date and another stated a plat was not filed until Sept. 24, 1901. Somewhere during this time period, a survey/plat was filed and incorporation was approved.

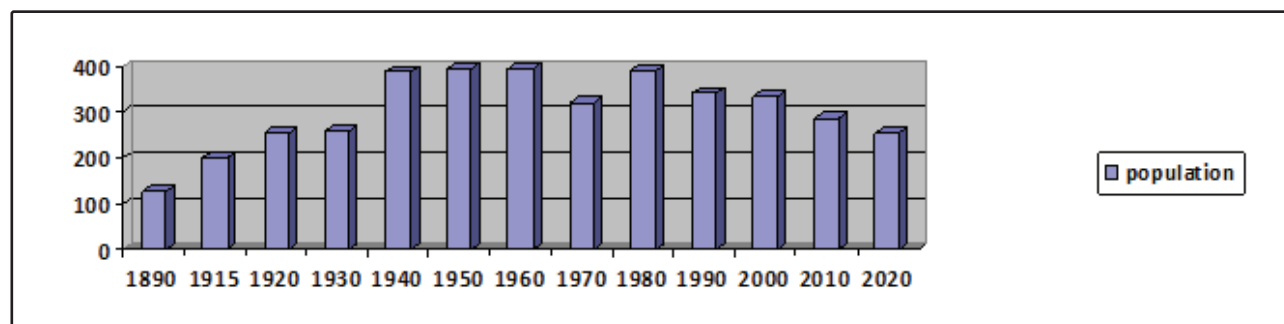
By 1890-91, the population was 125 and the *Chambers Eagle* newspaper was purchased and the name changed to *The Bugle* in 1891. By 1892, the "Harvest Home Festival" became the South Fork Fair. There were stage coaches out of O'Neill with connections to Turner (18 miles north) and Chambers (about 20 miles to the southwest). The fare to Turner was \$1.50 and to Chambers was \$1 with hand baggage carried for free. The town band hall building was built in 1911 and Chambers High School District #137 had a high school up to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

By 1915, the population was 200 and the town hall was destroyed by fire in 1916. A four-year high school was started in 1917 with the first graduates in 1919.

The population held steady at 256 in 1920 and 259 by 1930. In the 1930s, the village had Works Progress Administrations (WPA) projects underway, one of which included an addition to the school. The elementary school was built in 1935, the South Fork Fair was designated as the Holt County Fair and the electric distribution system was operated by the Chambers Light & Power Company in 1936. One of the claims to fame for the community was its association with the great flying machine advent in the 1930s. With veterans returning from the war and a young Iowa flight instructor, Chambers was able to establish an airport. In fact, it was noted that Chambers had more airplanes per capita than any other town or city in the world at that time.

The population increased to 388

*Continued on page 6*





## **Nebraska utilities history – Chambers**

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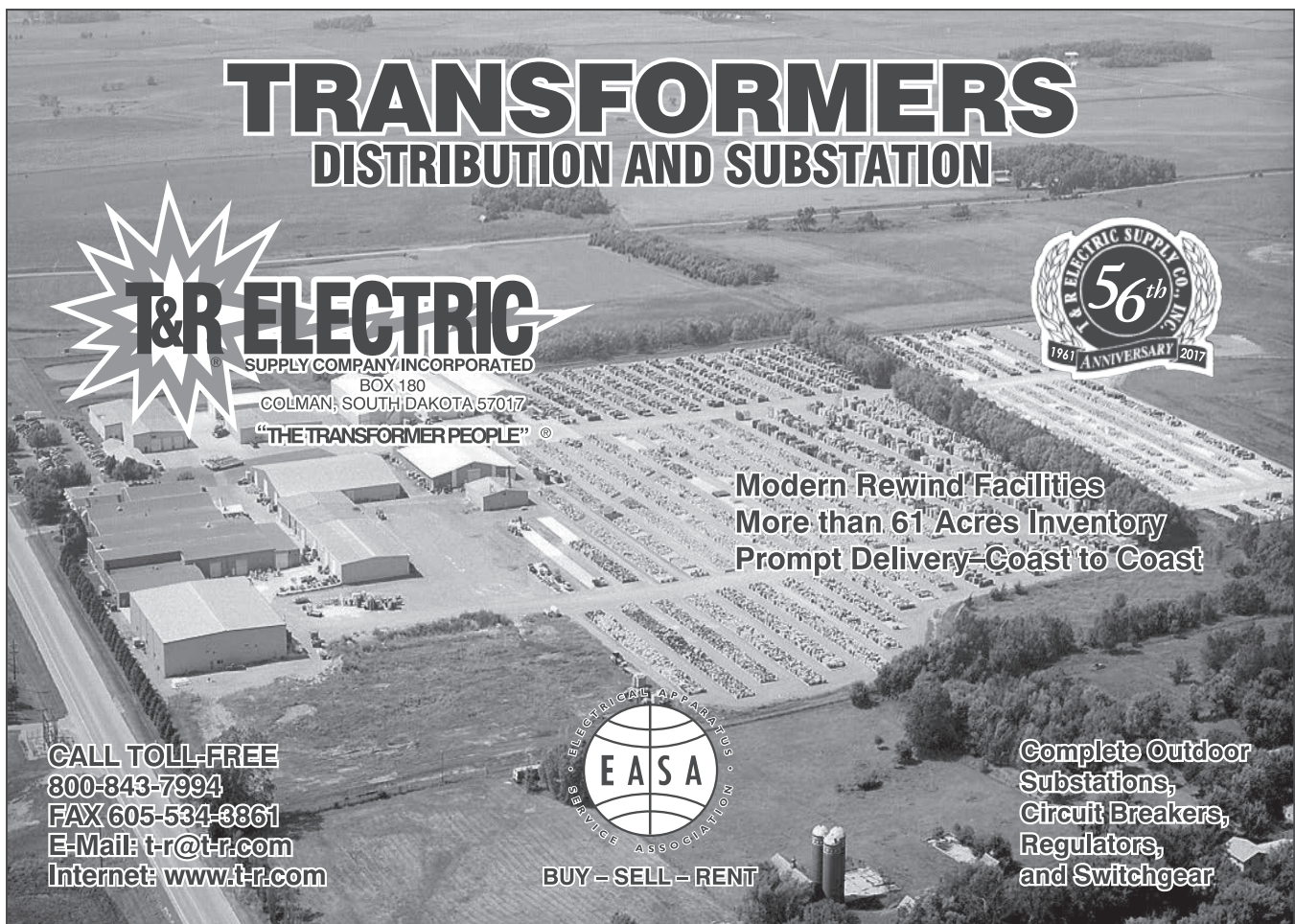
by 1940, and a new high school was constructed in 1944 (orange/black coyotes). In June 1949, authorization was given to complete the purchase of existing facilities in Naper and Verdel. In June 1949, the Niobrara Valley EMC was given authorization to purchase the existing electric facilities in Naper and Verdel. In July 1951, authorization was given for the Niobrara Valley Electric Corporation to purchase the Chambers Light and Power Company. In 1956, the

electrical current supplied by the REA had a deposit of \$5, with a street lighting cost of \$101 per month. Electric rates for the first 40 kilowatt hours (kWh) were set at \$0.10, next 40 kWh at \$0.085, next 40 kWh at \$0.05, next 130 kWh at \$0.03, a minimum of \$1 and all above 250 kWh at \$0.02. In 1956, an improvement project was in progress at the Perkins Memorial Airport, the fire department had 20 volunteers and the village cemetery was maintained from assessments on lots.

The population held steady from 395 in 1950 to 396 in 1960. Following the consolidation of schools in the 1960s, a new high school was erected (1963). A new two-cell lagoon wastewater treatment system was installed in 1967 and the electric system was supplied by the Niobrara Valley Electric Membership Cooperative (EMC).


By 1970, the population decreased to 321 and by 1974, the electrical system, owned by the

*Continued on page 7*




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## Nebraska utilities history – Chambers

*Continued from page 6*  
village, was operated/supplied by Niobrara Valley Electric Membership Cooperative (EMC). The school colors changed from orange/black to orange/white in the 1970s. The population was 390 by 1980 and individual propane tanks provided (LP) gas supplied by the Great Western Gas Company. In 1985, another lagoon cell was added to the lagoon treatment system. By 1990, the population decreased to 341 and the village operated a water system and a wastewater treatment facility consisting of a facultative retention lagoon system designed for 0.042 million gallons per day (mgd).

From 2000-2010, the population decreased from 333 to 287 and the water/fire department insurance rate went from 7/9 to a 5 and 8/10. In 2009, a new metal eight-door fire hall was built and by 2010, the village had 30 volunteer firefighters. Sanitation collection was provided by a private collection service, hauled to the transfer station in O'Neill and then hauled to the Butler County Landfill near David City. Rates for residential service were \$16.55 per month,

seniors \$12.90 per month. Commercial rates were \$24.70 for small business and \$34.45 for regular business. Playground equipment was installed in the park (2008) with a sandbox base, swings, jungle gym, slides, scaling wall and more.

Along with maintaining the streets, the village maintained a six-acre Perkins Memorial Park. By 2010, the village had 5.8 miles of streets of which 4.99 miles were hard surfaced; 10 percent had curbs and sidewalks. The water system received a \$17,600 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in 2010 for a water system study. By 2011, Chambers received a CDBG grant for \$350,000 to rehabilitate the existing lagoon and collection system. Rip Rap was added to prevent dike erosion, decrease inflow into the lagoon facility and improve efficiency of land application practices. Water meters and mains were installed and additional funding of \$440,000 was received from USDA to complete the project. The water system consisted of three wells (average depth of 250 feet), a combined pumping

capacity of 1,350 million gallons per day (mgd), an overhead storage capacity of 50,000 gallons, an average daily demand of 60,800 mgd, a historic daily demand of 130,000 mgd, and a maximum capacity of 770,000 gallons per day. The water rates were a flat rate of \$24.50 per month and sewer rates were \$20 per month with a minimum bill of \$21.40.

By 2018, the Chambers Volunteer Fire Department consisted of 30 firefighters, including 11 EMTs and one paramedic. There were 26 fire hydrants in Chambers and the fire insurance classification inside the corporate limits was 5; outside it was 8/10. The Chambers Rural Fire Department equipment included a 2008 Ford Grass unit, 2008 Ford Type 3 ambulance, 1998 Ford Type 3 ambulance, 1998 IH 2,000 gal. pumper 1,200 gpm, 1998 IH Mini pumper 750 gal., 1998 IH Tanker/crash truck, 1996 Chevy Grass unit/crash truck, 1992 KW Tanker, 2,000 gal., and a 1991 Chevy Grass unit. The population decreased from 287 in 2010 to 254 in 2020 and the village community center was

*Continued on page 8*



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## Nebraska utilities history – Chambers

*Continued from page 7*  
maintained by rental fees. The Perkins Memorial Park facilities included camper hook-ups, a park house, shelter, picnic tables, grills, water, playgrounds with equipment, tennis courts, three ball diamonds and a sand volleyball court.

Today, Chambers has a population of 254 and is a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and the Utilities Section.

### Solid Waste Screening Workshop held

A Solid Waste Screening Workshop was held Feb. 3, 2022, in Holdrege, sponsored by the Utilities Section. Nine landfill/transfer station employees attended.

The workshop covered hazardous waste/material identification, random load inspections and heavy equipment/traffic control safety.

The next Solid Waste Screening Workshop is scheduled for April 26, 2022, at the Scottsbluff Library.

Electricity is provided by the Niobrara Valley Electric Membership Corporation (EMC), a wholesale power customer of NPPD.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956-1958, 1962, 1968-69, 1974-1996, 1998, 2000, 2003-2011, 2015, 2020-2021; Nebraska Municipal Review Magazine, 1925, 2010; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; Water Resources of Nebraska, 1936; Nebraska Our Towns...North Northeast,*

### Milestone celebration recognition

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

*1990; Pages of History Nebraska High Schools, Present and Past-Public and Private, 1854-1994; Before Today; The History of Holt County, Nebraska, 1976; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Chambers website, 2018-2019; Wikipedia website, 2017-2019; Home for 100 Years Spencer, Nebraska 1891-1991, 1991; Nebraska State Gazetteer & Business Directory, 1890-91; Community Facts Holt County, NPPD, January 2011; Niobrara Valley Electric Corporation website, 2010; NPPD Website, 2011; Holt County Town Histories, US-Gennet.org website, 2011 and the Nebraska Blue Book, 1928, 1942, 1946, 1978.*

### “Just For Fun” Answers

- A-1. Fairbury.
- A-2. Benkelman.
- A-3. Sidney.
- A-4. Two – Butte is located on Highway #12 and Clearwater is located on Highway #275.



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## Nebraska utilities history – Eagle

*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 [robhp@lonm.org](mailto:robhp@lonm.org).*

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

**E**agle, located in Cass County, as (one source) noted a proposed town was filed for recording in 1857. A townsite called “Sunlight” was apparently started about 1867-69 and in 1872 a meeting was held to establish a post office (3.5 miles northeast of present Eagle townsite). On Jan. 26, 1876, the Sunlight Post Office was established, located three miles east and two miles north (of current Eagle). On July 1, 1886, the townsite was platted by the railroad with a Main Street running north to south. By August, the Missouri Pacific line was completed with land being sold by Sam McClintic. The railroad designated for a depot offered to use McClintic as the town name. The community name selected was “Eagle” for the wild eagles noted in the area. The population was about 200 by 1887 as businesses included a bank, a furniture store, a grist mill, two lumberyards and soon, six trains a day began arriving. On Oct. 7, 1887, the post

office name was changed from Sunlight to Eagle. The Bank of Eagle opened in 1889 with capital of \$5,000 and a United Methodist Church was started.

The population by 1890 was 175 and the Eagle *Eaglet* newspaper was being published. Some businesses by 1890-91 included a Bank of Eagle, a newspaper, two hotels (Eagle Hotel, Eagle House), a confectionery, a hardware store, a lumberyard, a meat market, an ag implement dealer and a number of small businesses. By August (4 or 11), 1891, Eagle was incorporated as a village with the population estimated at 205 by 1892. The first Mayor/Chairperson appointed was Sam English (1892). A new Opera House/Dance Hall soon was built on the northeast corner of 4th and E Streets, which also served as the city hall.

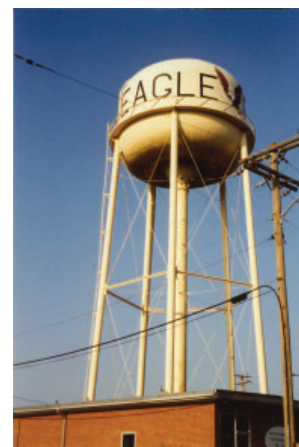
From 1900-1910, the population increased from 297 to 360, the Eagle Telephone Company was established in 1901 with lines erected in 1907 and the dirt streets of the business district were lined with boardwalks (later cement walks). George Trunkenbolz

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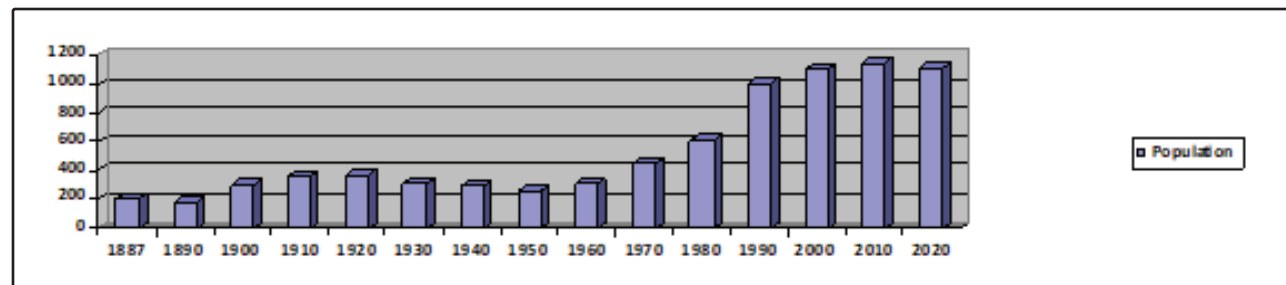
On  
Oct. 1,  
1914,  
a water  
project using bonds of \$8,500 at 6  
percent interest initiated the con-  
struction of a water system. The  
population in 1920 was 368 and  
on Sept. 3, a new two-story brick  
school building was dedicated.

Streets were graded and grav-  
eled in 1925 and by 1927, the  
Nebraska Power Company was  
authorized to construct trans-  
mission lines between Alvo and  
Eagle, including new lights/power  
system in Eagle.

*Continued on page 10*



*Eagle water tower. 2000  
photo.*



## **Nebraska utilities history – Eagle**

*Continued from page 9*

The population decreased to 309 by 1930 as Highway #34 was paved from Lincoln to Eagle in 1934 and the electric distribution system was provided by Nebraska Power Company (1935). The population decreased to 289 by 1940, a WPA project was underway as street and alley improvements were made (cost \$3,138) and the Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) acquired the property of the Nebraska Power Company in 1946. By 1950, the population was 255 and the fire department consisted of 25 volunteer fire-fighters by 1956. A sewer system project in 1956 consisted of lines being laid with a disposal plant completed in 1958. In 1958, a natural gas system was operating, the Eagle Railroad Depot closed and a park project was being discussed.

The municipal water plant in 1960 had 110 meters in service (owned by consumers) with a meter deposit of \$3 and rates of the first 3,000 gallons at \$2.50 per quarter, 4,000 gallons at \$0.35 per 1,000 with excess at \$0.20 per 1,000. The sewer system and disposal plant were maintained from a sewer charge of \$2 per month and a tax levy. Peoples Natural Gas Company operated the natural gas system. The electrical system supplied by OPPD had costs of \$74.40 per month for street lighting and about \$35-\$40 per month for current to pump water. In April 1960, 12 missile silos were built in southeastern Nebraska. Construction was completed in June 1962. By late 1962, the Atlas missiles were deemed obsolete and were

replaced with the minuteman missiles. In 1962, the Alvo and Eagle School Districts merged and in 1966, the school district merged with District #145 at Waverly with K-6 attending school in Eagle and the high school was held in Waverly. Streets were blacktopped in the 1960s and the population increased from 302 in 1960 to 441 by 1970.

In 1974, the Eagle State Bank was established and a new post office building was erected. A new park was dedicated in 1975 and the population was 625. In 1978, an updating project was underway at the wastewater treatment facility. A new 250,000-gallon water tower was built in 1980 and eight-inch transmission mains from municipal water wells were installed. The population increased from 832 in 1980 to 1,008 by 1990. In 1984, the rescue squad was added to the fire department and a new fire hall was built in 1985. The electrical system, owned by village, was supplied wholesale by OPPD and the wastewater system was operated by PeopleService in 1993. The wastewater facility consisted of a rotating bio-contactors gravity flow wastewater system designed for 0.12 million gallons per day (mgd) chlorine disinfection and a single-stage anaerobic digester. The Woodland Hills Golf Course, located south of Eagle, was built in 1995.

By 2000, the population was 1,105 and a wastewater system study in 2001 noted that the current average flow was 137,000 gallons per day, which exceeded the capacity of the current facility. A proposed \$2.2 million project was discussed, which included up-

grades to the current facility and a projected population increase to 2,050 in the next 20 years. The natural gas system was operated by Aquila until 2009 when Black Hills Energy Inc. operated it. In 2011, the village was discussing a water tower cleaning/painting project and in November 2018, the village launched its website. Private companies provide solid waste collection service (Cass County Refuse, Rock Creek Refuse and Allied Refuse).

Today, Eagle has a population of 1,110, has been incorporated since 1891-92 and is a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and the Utilities Section.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1967-75, 1977-1987, 1990-2021; Municipal Review magazine, 2018; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; History of Cass County, 1989; Nebraska Traveler Magazine, 2003; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2006, 2008; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; Lincoln State Journal, June 1887; NPPD Website, 2011; Eagle village website, 2019-2021; Wikipedia website, 2020; Nebraska Blue Book, 1928, 1942, 1946, 1978; Annual Report of Nebraska State Railway Commission to the Governor, Issue 15, 1922; Annual Report of Nebraska State Railway Commission to the Governor, Issue 23, 1930; Annual Report of Nebraska State Railway Commission to the Governor, Issue 20, April 15, 1928; Annual Report of Nebraska State Rail-*

*Continued on page 11*

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

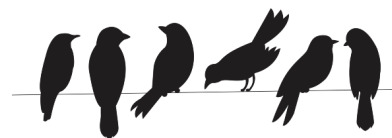
**Incorporation Anniversary Recognition:** 135 years – **Bassett** (Feb 8, 1887-village), **Ohiowa** (Feb 17, 1887-village) and **Clay Center** (Feb 19, 1887-village); 165 years – **Omaha** (Feb. 1857-village) and **Louisville** (Feb. 1857-village). Congratulations!

**Gretna** and **Superior** were recognized as “Leadership Certified

Communities” by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Congratulations!

*Utilities Section members and associate members are bolded.*

Do you, your department or facility have something to crow about? Received an award, had an article written highlighting an event or person? Do you have a project worthy of acknowledge-



ment in the Utilities Section Newsletter? If so, please send your information to us so we can share your excitement with other members.

## **Red Cross steps on using an AED**

*Continued from page 4*  
sure no one is touching the person. Say, “CLEAR!” in a loud, commanding voice. Push the “shock” button to deliver the shock.

7) After the AED delivers the shock, or if no shock is advised, immediately start CPR, beginning with compressions.

*Reference: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)*

*Checkout the League’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/leaguene](http://www.facebook.com/leaguene). Be sure to “Like” us.*

## **Need a water operator licensed?**

Water operator (license) training courses, provided by the Drinking Water Program, are scheduled for the remainder of the year.

The registration form for water operator training courses can

be found on the Drinking Water Program webpage at [dee.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/PWS](http://dee.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/PWS).

### **Grade IV Courses**

March 21-23 in North Platte

May 24-26 in Beatrice

July 12-14 in Scottsbluff

Sept. 7-9 in Fremont

Dec. 6-8 in Grand Island

### **Grade III Courses**

April 11-15 in Norfolk

Oct. 3-7 in Beatrice

### **Grades I & II Courses**

Aug. 22 – 26 in Grand Island

## ***Nebraska utilities history – Eagle***

*Continued from page 10*  
way Commission to the Governor, Issue 21, April 29, 1929; Annual Report of Nebraska State Railway Commission to the Governor, 1910; Biennial Report of Audits of Public Accounts to the Governor, 1935; U.S. Congressional Serial Set, House Document, Vol. 238, April 14, 1936; Utilities Section

solid waste survey, 2015; Federal Power Consumers Electric Rate Survey, Domestic and Residential Electric Rates in Effect January 1, 1935 in the state of Nebraska, 1935; and the Electric Rate Survey: Domestic and Residential Electric Rates in Effect January 1, 1935 by U.S. Federal Power Commission, 1935.

**Upcoming Snowball Conferences at the Kearney Holiday Inn**  
Jan. 25-26, 2023  
Jan. 24-25, 2024  
Jan. 22-23, 2025



## Nebraska utilities history – North Platte

*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 [robnp@lonm.org](mailto:robnp@lonm.org).*

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

Shorter County was organized in 1860 with Fort McPherson established in 1863 near the settlement of Cottonwood Springs. In 1866, the county was reorganized as Lincoln County and **North Platte** was laid out in November of that same year by General G.M. Dodge for the Union Pacific Railroad. The railroad arrived in 1866 and began building its shops and two roundhouses, which were completed the next year. That year saw the start of a volunteer fire brigade. The first structure – a cedar log store was built and a building was moved from Cottonwood Springs for use as a hotel. On Feb. 13, 1867, a post office was established with the first postmaster William Healey. On Nov. 12, 1867, county records were transferred from Cottonwood Springs to North Platte. One source noted about this time, there were 300 buildings and an estimated 5,000 residents, many railroad laborers, gamblers and adventurers in this frontier town,

which was becoming known for violence and disorder. By 1867, the railroad reached Julesburg, Colo., and many residents moved with the rail construction. In 1868, a log school was built (District #1) and frame houses were replacing the earlier log homes. In 1869, a large depot/hotel was built and the *Platte Valley Independent* newspaper was established. In the 1870s, the *North Platte Democrat* newspaper was established (1871) along with a brickyard in 1873. Many buildings were built with brick in 1973, including a school for \$16,000. On Sept. 13, 1873, North Platte was incorporated as a village and that same year, the North Platte Cemetery Association was formed. By Dec. 28, 1875, North Platte was declared a city of the second class and a brick courthouse was built for \$20,000. By 1878, a banking house was established and by 1880, the North Platte Cemetery was established.

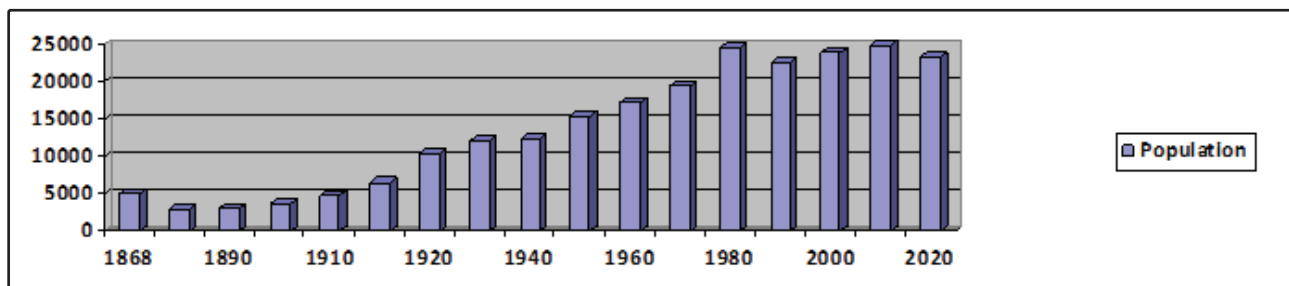
On April 14, 1881, the *North Platte Telegraph* newspaper was established. On July 4, 1882, the "Old Glory Blowout" was held northwest of town, which was



*North Platte water tower.*

considered the first organized rodeo in the United States. In 1887, construction began on a waterworks system by the North Platte Waterworks Company. In 1890, the population was 3,055, a two-story brick jail was built and in 1892, the Electric Light Company was organized with residents as the shareholders. A plant was built north of the railroad yards, poles

*Continued on page 13*



## **Nebraska utilities history – North Platte**

*Continued from page 12*

were erected and wire was strung. The change from coal oil to electricity was slow and expenses were higher than income and the company went out of business in 1895. The plant for several years lay in ruinous conditions, but the powerhouse was ultimately moved to the fair grounds. In 1899, a new fire brigade was organized; a high school was built and by 1900, the population increased to 3,640. In 1901, electric lights were installed in the Lutheran Parsonage and in 1910, a brick Carnegie Library was built. In October 1907, the city council granted an electric company a 20-year franchise to operate. By special election in September 1915, the citizens authorized the council to enter into a contract with the North Platte Electric Company to light the city streets for a period of five years. By 1915, the privately owned power plant, which cost about \$65,000 to build, had rates of \$0.15 per kilowatt hour (KWH). In 1915, a municipal water works was installed for \$85,000 with rates at \$0.25 per 1,000 gallons. In 1917, a gas plant was in operation and a new railroad depot was built. That same year, construction was started on the eight-story Yancy Hotel, but due to financial issues, was not completed until October 1923. In 1918, a new two-story brick fire hall was completed.

Construction began in 1920 on an airport with private funds to serve the needs of the U.S. Air Mail Service.

On Feb. 22, 1921, the airport was the site of the nation's first night airmail flight (using fuel-

burning barrels to outline the perimeter of the North Platte field. The flight originated in San Francisco and the field soon was among the first airfields in the country to be lighted using gas beacon lights (1923). About 1925, a city utility building was built. In 1925, Middle West purchased the Northwestern Public Service Company, which served North Platte electricity and electric rates were \$0.125 down per kilowatt (kW). A pavilion was opened in 1928 for dances/roller skating and in 1929, the Fox Theater opened and the city purchased the airport.

In 1930, classes were moved to the new brick high school on West Street, which replaced the downtown high school. The natural gas system was provided by the Northwestern Public Service Company (1931) and by 1932, was provided by the Northern Public Service Company. A meeting was held in September 1932 to lower the gas rates to what Kearney, Hastings, Nebraska City and Grand Island had for rates. In 1934, North Platte was a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and in 1935, a large brick Art-Deco city auditorium was constructed as a WPA project. A two-story Platte Valley Public Power Plant was operating in 1935 and in 1936 the Northwestern Public Service Company was operating a 3,100-kW steam power generation plant. The railroad built a new machine shop in 1937 and that year, the Jeffers overpass opened. The North Platte NPPD hydroelectric plant was operating with two Allis Chalmers turbines (12,000 kilowatts each).

Consumers Public Power Plant

purchased the Northwestern Public Service Company's North Platte properties for \$1.5 million in 1939 and later sold the property to the City of North Platte. By July 1940, Consumers Public Power District purchased all Northwestern Public Service Company properties in Nebraska. The population increased slightly from 12,061 in 1930 to 12,429 in 1940. By Nov. 1, 1940, Consumers Public Power District had a lease/purchase agreement (\$1,800,000) with the City of North Platte for the North Platte division of the Northwestern Public Service properties. In 1941, the airport field was renamed the Lee Bird Field and the North Platte "Canteen" opened with some three to eight million troops passing through until the closure in 1946. The Pawnee Drive-In Theater was operating by 1947 and in 1948, a \$3.5 million project for a new retarder yard at the Union Pacific hump yard was built.

The population increased to 15,433 by 1950 and an attempt was made to establish a UNL branch campus in the 1950s. In the mid 1950s, the pavilion grandstand, fence and bleachers were destroyed by fire – arson was suspected. The city operated a public swimming pool (50 feet by 100 feet), which cost \$135,000 financed by bonds. The municipal water plant had 4,529 meters in service, a deposit of \$5-\$10 with rates of the first 10,000 gallons (gals.) at \$0.15 per 1,000 gals., next 15,000 gals. at \$0.14 per 1,000 gals., next 30,000 gals. at \$0.12 per 1,000 gals., next 50,000 gals. at \$0.11 per 1,000 gals.,

*Continued on page 14*



## **Nebraska utilities history – North Platte**

*Continued from page 13*  
next 50,000 gal. at \$0.10 per 1,000 gals., and the next 145,000 gals. at \$0.09 per 1,000 gals. A new filter and water plant was under construction in 1958 and the fire department had 35 volunteer firefighters. The natural gas, owned by the Northwestern Public Service Company, had rates of first 500 cubic feet (cuft) at \$0.75 per 1,000 cuft, the next 1,500 cuft at \$0.95 per 1,000, next 3,000 cuft at \$0.75 per 1,000, next 10,000 cuft at \$0.65, next 35,000 cuft at

\$0.45, next 50,000 cuft at \$0.40 per 1,000 and over at \$0.35 per 1,000 cuft. The electric distribution system had 35 miles of rural lines, 8,144 meters in service operated by the city and supplied at the wholesale cost of \$0.008647. A meter deposit was \$5 or higher and the residential rates were first 60 kilowatt hours (kWh) at \$0.04, next 90 kWh at \$0.0225, the balance \$1.50, with a minimum of \$0.75. Commercial rates were first 100 kWh at \$0.04, next 200 kWh at \$0.03, next 700 kWh at \$0.02,

next 4,000 kWh at \$0.015, a minimum at \$0.75. Power rates were first 200 kWh at \$0.035, next 800 kWh at \$0.025, next 9,000 kWh at \$0.02, next balance at \$0.015, minimum of \$0.50 per horsepower (HP) but not less than \$1.

By 1960, the population was 17,184, the utilities were managed by a Board of Public Works and the natural gas service was owned by Northwestern Public Service Company. The water plant had 4,933 meters in service, a deposit

*Continued on page 15*



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## **Nebraska utilities history – North Platte**

*Continued from page 14*

of \$5 per residence with rates of the first 10,000 gallons (gals.) at \$0.15 per 1,000 gals., next 15,000 gals. at \$0.14 per 1,000 gals., next 30,000 gals. at \$0.12 per 1,000 gals., next 50,000 gals. at \$0.11 per 1,000 gals., next 50,000 gal. at \$0.10 per 1,000 gals, a minimum of \$0.75 per month. The cost of current for pumping water was \$0.01 per kWh. The electric distribution system in 1960 had 8,377 meters in service operated by city with a meter deposit of \$10 for residential and commercial 1 1/2-monthly average. Residential rates of first 60 kWh at \$0.04, next 90 kWh at \$0.0225, excess at \$0.015 kWh minimum of \$0.60. Power rates were first 200 kWh at \$0.035, next 800 kWh at \$0.025, next 9,000 kWh at \$0.02, next balance at \$0.015, minimum of \$0.50 per horsepower. Garbage was collected by the city and a private collector was paid for business collection. The cemetery was owned and maintained by the city from a tax levy and sale of lots and the Scouts Rest Ranch became a state historical park (1960). On Jan. 1, 1961, the North Platte Electric and Water Departments started operating on a 40-hour work week (closed on Saturdays). In December 1960, a junior college was organized and on July 3, 1961, the Junior College District was declared and the former Post Office/Federal building was used as its school, which opened in 1965. A \$12.5 million railroad project was spent on a new railroad "hump" in the 1960s and in 1966, Interstate 80 opened to North Platte. In 1967, an explosion disabled North

Platte's electric generating plant with repairs to take several weeks, substitute power was obtained from the Nebraska Public Power System.

In 1971, a new railroad diesel repair shop was built, a new shopping mall (now the Platte River Mall) and by 1972-73, the Union Pacific Railroad depot and the WWII Canteen were gone. The new Mid-Plains VocTech Campus was dedicated May 16, 1971, and on Feb. 23, 1975, the McDonald-Belton Campus was formally dedicated. A new "Regional" Great Plains Medical Center was dedicated in 1975 and the population increased from 19,447 in 1970 to 24,509 by 1980. The Willow Street overpass construction began in 1981 and in 1989, the Buffalo Bill overpass was opened. The natural gas system was operated by Northwestern Public Service Company and supplied by Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company. The electric distribution system, operated by the city with 13,107 customers by 1993, was supplied by Nebraska Public Power District. By 1990, the population was 22,605 and in 1992, the airport was renamed the North Platte Regional Airport Lee Bird Field. In 1997, the Flying J Truck Plaza opened and in 1998, a British sculptor donated a bronze statue of Buffalo Bill to the city and it was placed in Cody Park.

In 2001, Wal-Mart built a \$40 million distribution center and the city constructed a new water storage tank, both located south of town, south of the interstate. A new \$29 million school was built in 2003 and a Memorial Day dedication was held for the

20<sup>th</sup> Century Veterans Memorial, located in Iron Horse Park. The railroad in 2004 employed about 2,600 employees and 135 trains passed through each day. The city maintained about 300-acres of parks, which included the 100-acre Cody Park on the north side of the city. In 2005, it was noted that the railroad yard had 10,000 railcars pass through every 24 hours and by 2006, the Golden Spike railroad museum was operating. The fire department had 36 active members (41 career firefighters and 25 active volunteer firefighters) at the three stations. Residential garbage was collected by the city with business collection by a private collection company. In 2009, the city was constructing a new well field and transmission mains to remedy a uranium issue. The population increased from 23,878 in 2000 to 24,733 in 2010.

Today, North Platte has a population of 23,303, has been incorporated for about 149 years and is a city of the first class. North Platte is a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and the Utilities Section. The city maintains about 300 acres of parks, operates an electric system, water and sewer systems and several miles of streets.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956-2021; Nebraska Municipal Review Magazine, 1925, 1931, 1971, 1982, 1989; Utilities Section Newsletter, 1961; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007; Public Power Magazine, Vol. 51,*

*Continued on page 16*

## **Nebraska utilities history – North Platte**

*Continued from page 15 Number 1, January-February 1993; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place-*

*Names, 1960; www.nptraveler.com; Maps Tell Nebraska's History, 1936; Andrea's History of the State of Nebraska,*

*1882; Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th Edition, 1982; North Platte Internet site, 2006-2021; North Platte & Its Asso-*

*ciations, 1910; Nebraska State Gazetteer & Business Directory, 1890-91, 1917; Engineering and Contracting, 1915.*

## **Electric Rubber Gloving Workshops Scheduled**

The Utilities Section and the Nebraska Rural Electric Association have two Rubber Gloving Workshops scheduled for May 17-19 in Norfolk and Aug. 30-Sept. 1 in Sidney.

The workshops will be held at the Northeast Community College Training Field in Norfolk and the Don Winkelman Training Field (Wheatbelt Public Power District) north of Sidney.

We also are looking for volunteers for

instructors and systems that can help with providing bucket trucks for the school.

If someone at your facility would like to help out as an instructor, contact Rob at the League office or Larry Oetken (402-640-1689) at Northeast Community College.

The Electric Underground School is scheduled for Sept. 7-8, 2022, in Sidney. This school is rotated every other year with the Norfolk location.

## **Electric safety training**

The Utilities Section contracts with Northeast Community College to provide regional electrical safety training to members that sign up. This year, some of the topics planned for these monthly meetings include:

**April and May 2022** – Digger Derrick Requalification

**June and July 2022** – Noise Hazard Assessment/Hearing Protection

**August and September 2022** – Pole Top and Bucket Rescue

**October and November 2022** – GHS Hazardous Communication/Em-

ployee Right to Know  
**December 2022 and January 2023** – Tree Felling/Trimming and Chipper Safety

When CPR/First Aid is covered, this topic would count as two meetings because of the presentation time. This also may apply for Forklift Training, which would count as two meetings also because of the presentation time.

If your electrical department or your designated electric line worker is interested in this program, contact the League office to sign up.

## **Backflow Workshops scheduled**

Five Backflow Workshops are scheduled for Aug. 16 in Beatrice, Aug. 17 in Wayne, Aug. 18 in Stuart, Aug. 23 in Ogallala and Aug. 24 in Grand Island. Be sure to mark these days on your calendar if you plan to

attend.

There may be more workshops scheduled as the five scheduled dates will have limited space. If you plan to attend, be sure to sign up in advance to ensure getting into a class.

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## Classifieds

**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, maintain city infrastructure, clean-up of job sites, and assisting other departments as needed. Multiple skill levels are needed. Department of Health and Human Services certification and NDEE certification preferred, 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 of Broken Bow located on the main floor at 314 S 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue or [www.cityofbrokenbow.org](http://www.cityofbrokenbow.org). Submit application and related information to the City of Broken Bow, 314 S 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, PO Box 504, Broken Bow, NE 68822, or via email at [ccranwell@cityofbrokenbow.org](mailto:ccranwell@cityofbrokenbow.org). Broken Bow is an EOE. For more information, please contact Water/Wastewater Superintendent Craig Cranwell at (308) 870-1203.

**Wastewater Treatment Plant Director.** The City of Minden, NE is accepting applications for a full-time Wastewater Treatment Plant Director to manage the wastewater treatment plant and infrastructure. Successful applicant must be highly motivated, possess a Grade 2 Wastewater License and a NE class B CDL license. Primary duties include managing the city's wastewater treatment plant, lift stations and

collection system. Candidate must be experienced and dependable, able to motivate and train the utility team and supervise plant efficiency and quality control. Candidate also is required to assist with the city's water and electrical systems. Additional requirements necessary for the position include strong mechanical skills and ability to operate heavy equipment such as loader, backhoe, tapping machines, dump trucks, aerial lift equipment, etc. Position also includes on-call responsibilities. Wage is commensurate with experience and qualifications with wage rate of \$24-\$32 per hour depending on qualifications. The successful applicant will receive a highly competitive benefits package including full family health



insurance and retirement plan. Please submit a resume and references to the City of Minden at PO Box 239, Minden, NE 68959 or email to [info@mindennebraska.org](mailto:info@mindennebraska.org). For further information, call the City at (308) 832-1820. Resumes will be accepted until the position is filled. The City of Minden is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or disability and the position is subject to a veterans preference.

## Writing an article for the Utilities Section Newsletter

Are you interested in writing an article for the *Utilities Section Newsletter*? We are interested in articles on the past, present, and future of your municipal utilities.

Articles can be written on a specific department or an overview of the history of the entire utilities department. Items of interest may

be information on the first well in your community, number of services, service fees, the equipment used, and also the employees that worked in the various utilities departments. Photos would enhance the articles and will be returned unless otherwise instructed.

## LARM safety grants

Over the last four years, LARM has awarded nearly 300 Lean on LARM Safety Grants to LARM members. These \$500 grants enabled communities to purchase safety items such as traffic

cones, protective apparel, security cameras, gas monitors, first aid kits, playground surfacing, fire extinguishers, barricades, safety harnesses, AEDs, eye protection and much more.



## **2022 Training calendar**

**Visit our website at [www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org)  
for a complete list of workshops and conferences.**

**Due to COVID-19 guidelines, future workshops and conferences  
may have to be rescheduled, cancelled or held virtually.**

### **April**

April 26 ..... Solid Waste Workshop ..... Library, Scottsbluff  
April 28 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Fire Hall, Burwell

### **May**

May 17-19 ..... Rubber Gloving Workshop ..... NECC Training Field, Norfolk  
May 25 ..... Wastewater Workshop ..... City Hall Council Chambers, Sidney

### **June**

June 9 ..... Wastewater Workshop ..... Community Center, Atkinson  
June 15-17 ..... Municipal Accounting & Finance Conference ..... Younes Conference Center, Kearney

### **August**

Aug. 9 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... McCook  
Aug. 10 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Holdrege  
Aug. 11 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Hebron  
Aug. 16 ..... Backflow Workshop ..... Beatrice  
Aug. 17 ..... Backflow Workshop ..... Wayne  
Aug. 18 ..... Backflow Workshop ..... Stuart  
Aug. 23 ..... Backflow Workshop ..... Ogallala  
Aug. 24 ..... Backflow Workshop ..... Grand Island  
Aug. 25 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Grand Island  
Aug. 30-Sept. 1 ... Rubber Gloving Workshop ..... Don Winkelman Training Field, Sidney

### **September**

Sept. 7-8 ..... Electric Underground School ..... Sidney  
Sept. 14-16 ..... League Annual Conference ..... Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln  
Sept. 27 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Lexington  
Sept. 28 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Broken Bow  
Sept. 30 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Norfolk

### **October**

Oct. 11 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... York  
Oct. 12 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Red Cloud

### **December**

Dec. 7 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Lincoln  
Dec. 8 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Hastings