Utilities Section
Newsletter
League of Nebraska Municipalities
September 2021

# FEMA accepted, approved Plattsmouth plan to build new wastewater facilities

*by Erv Portis,*
*Former City Administrator*
*of Plattsmouth*

*Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the July 2021 Nebraska Municipal Review.*

Aptly named, Plattsmouth, incorporated in 1854, is located near the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers. Plattsmouth's early development was heavily influenced by the two rivers and railroads. The Plattsmouth Water Company was founded in the late 19th century and facilities were built east of the community near the Missouri River. Years later, the municipality accessed federal, state and local funds to construct a potable water treatment plant (1972) and wastewater treatment plant (1978) near the Missouri River floodplain.

*The above photo of the city wastewater plant is from June 13, 1984. Photo provided by Erv Portis, former City Administrator of Plattsmouth.*

**Flooded multiple times**

Both plants have flooded multiple times. A photograph used to hang in the office of the water treatment plant. The photo depicted the 1984 Missouri River flood surrounding the wastewater plant and included a handwritten phrase "June 13, 1984, worst flood so far." Flood stage on the Missouri River at Plattsmouth is 26 feet. In 1984, the river reached 34.66 feet. Since 1984, the river went above flood stage 37 times with the highest crest of 40.62 feet on March 16, 2019.

**2019 flood decimated plants**

The March 2019 flood event completely decimated Plattsmouth's drinking water and wastewater plants. Both facilities were off line for many months. The drinking water plant was off line from March 14 through Labor Day of 2019. The wastewater plant was not fully operational until November 2020.

Like so many other Nebraska communities affected by that flood event, Plattsmouth was eligible for disaster assistance under the federally declared disaster DR 4420 NE. Working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Plattsmouth's first actions were to get both plants operational. While doing so, city staff and Olmsted & Perry Consulting Engineers and Fox Engineering Associates began studying long-term options. For wastewater, permanent repairs and flood proofing the existing plants was determined not feasible. As originally designed, the existing structures and floor slabs were not designed to withstand the buoyant forces of the current 500-year flood elevation. To remain at this location, the entire wastewater facility would have to be decon-

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*The above photo is of the city wastewater plant from 2011. Photo provided by Erv Portis, former City Administrator of Plattsmouth.*

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UTILITIES SECTION

Lash Chaffin
Utilities Section Director
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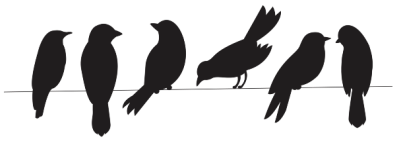
Utilities Field Representative

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

**Congratulations!** Incorporation Anniversary Recognition: 140 years – **Norfolk** (1881-village); 150 years – **Beatrice** (1871 by state, 1858 by Territory, if using territory incorporation – 163 years)

**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 acknowledgement in the Utilities Section Newsletter? If so, please send



your information to us so we can share your excitement with other members.

# Nebraska Breaktime Trivia "Just For Fun"

**Q-1.** What Utilities Section member's water tower was featured on the front cover of the Nebraska Rural Water Association magazine (Issue 3/2021)?

**Q-2.** Where in Nebraska is the Bess Streeter Aldrich Home and Museum located?

**Q-3.** The Prairie Schooner Museum is located in what Nebraska village?

**Q-4.** The Willow Point Gallery is located in Nebraska city?

**How well do you know Nebraska?**

**Q-5.** Do you know where and when this electric shop was built?

**Answers on page 17.**

# 2021-2022 Executive Board

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# FEMA accepted, approved Plattsmouth plan to build new wastewater facilities

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structed, raised and rebuilt with new flood protection walls three feet above the historic crest. Repairs of this magnitude were estimated to be $39,919,500 and the facility would have remained in the floodplain.

**Another option**

Another option was studied and presented to FEMA: relocate new facilities out of the floodplain. This alternative would involve construction of a new wastewater treatment plant, onsite sludge storage tanks, a sludge loadout station, 4.2 miles of 18-inch diameter sewage force main, two pump stations and a new discharge pipe to Fourmile Creek rather than discharging to the Missouri River. Estimate of construction costs is $60,393,422. An environmental assessment conducted for the city by Terracon Consultants clearly proved the new facility was the best option for eliminating repetitive flood events and best environmental solution for the Missouri River at Plattsmouth.

After months of study, discussion and research on mitigation options, FEMA has accepted and approved Plattsmouth's plan to construct the new wastewater facilities. Multiple stage regulatory entities, particularly NEMA, the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE), and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, played key roles in gaining FEMA approvals and securing financing.

*The above photo is of the city wastewater plant from March 17, 2019. Photo provided by Erv Portis, former City Administrator of Plattsmouth.*

As with other DR 4420 approved projects, FEMA will fund 90 percent of the cost. The remaining 10 percent will be shared equally by the State of Nebraska and City of Plattsmouth. With long-term SRF financing provided by the state, cost to the customer will be approximately $3 per month for 30 years.

## Webinar online training available

The 16 Utilities Section webinar sessions still are available for viewing and credit hours. Contact the League office to get registered and to receive the verification form if water (grades 1-4 or 6) and wastewater credit hours are needed.

Grade 6 credit hours can be obtained by viewing the "backflow bundle" of four sessions (two one-hour and two 1.5-hours sessions) are available for members and nonmembers. This group can be viewed individually or as a bundle with all four sessions.

# Nebraska utilities history – Wausa

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

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

**Wausa**, located in Knox County, had an early settlement site initially called Thorson, after settler Theodore T. Thorson (1882) who established a post office in his home June 13, 1884. By 1885, 12 new families moved to the area and the settlement was renamed "Vasa" after the Swedish King Gustaf Vasa. School sessions were first held in 1886 with a school district organized and a two-story frame hotel built by 1887. By 1890, a townsite was platted and on Nov. 24, 1890, the post office name changed from Thorson to Wausa. On Nov. 27, the Randolph & Northeastern Railway Company arrived through Vasa and the community was renamed Wausa, a combination of the king's name and USA.

On July 16, 1891, Wausa was incorporated as a village and a community well was drilled (33 feet deep) for $40. Note: water would seep into the well slowly and after someone broke the handle, Mike Callahan would put the handle away each night. By 1892, the first high school, a four-room frame building, was built for $5,000. An addition as built on School District #76 building in 1895. In 1897, the school had two 9th grade graduates and by 1898, added a 10th grade.

The population by 1900 increased to 441 and a city hall was built for $350. In 1901, a telephone system was connected and by 1902, the streets were lit by gas lights with a gas plant extending mains to parts of the village. A school library was started and by 1903, an electric generation plant was built replacing the gas lighting. That year, the first water system was installed as the village was deciding on an air pressure or standpipe system. A fire company was formed in 1904 and a roller-skating rink was opened at city hall. In 1907, the school added an 11th grade and a two-story brick hotel was built by 1909.

The population was 604 by 1910 and a new water well was drilled. Streetlights were installed in 1913 and a new two-story brick high school was built (now a four-year program). In September 1915, a special election was held to vote on a $12,000 sewer bonding proposition for the construction of a sewer system with the remaining $20,000 to be raised from a frontage tax on all properties inside the corporate limits of the village. The vote carried 81-69 and by Feb. 1, 1916, sewer project bonds of $12,000 at 5 percent interest were issued and a complete sewer system was installed. In 1918, an electric light plant was operated by C. J. Murner & Son, which was in the building later occupied by the *Gazette* newspaper. This plant was later traded for real estate in Minnesota. Later, when the village was hooked up to a high line, the system was converted from a direct current DC system to an AC.

By 1920, the population was 688, the White Palace Restaurant was operating and in 1921, a new water well was drilled. On March 16, 1922, an application was filed to construct a transmission line

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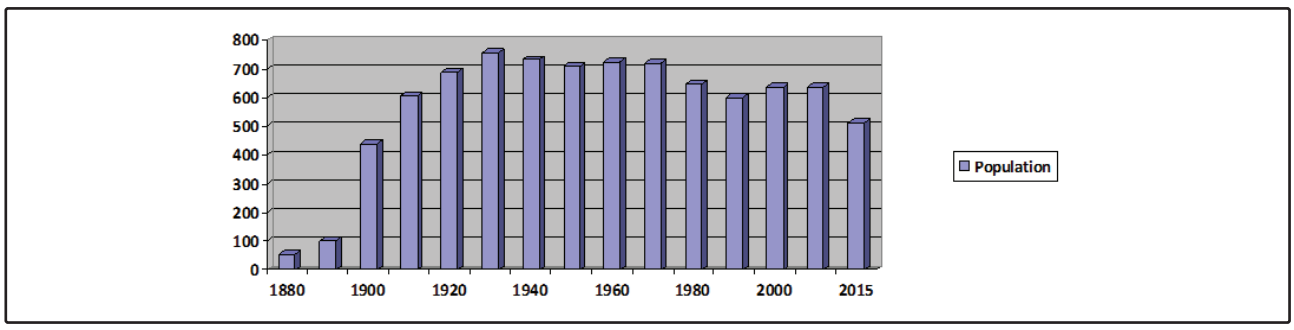

# Nebraska utilities history – Wausa

*Continued from page 4*

from Magnet to Wausa.

The water plant and distribution system was publicly owned in 1925 with rates of $0.15 per 1,000 gallons.

With federal assistance in 1927, the Main Street was paved. The Western States Utilities Company was granted for a franchise to build/maintain an electric light system in 1928. A power plant was built on West Broadway and when completed, Interstate Power Company purchased the interests of Western Utility. In February 1929, the village had discussions with Interstate Power Company concerning its electric service. The diesel generators were moved out of the power plant when the system was tied directly to the Belden substation that ties with Gavins Point.

The population by 1930 increased to 754 and land was purchased north of the village for a golf course. Paving projects in 1931 consisted of District #4 ($64,708.66) and District #5 ($39,671.14). A total of 57 blocks were paved for $104,380.80 or $2.44 per running feet. Streets were graveled in Districts #2 and #3. A miniature golf course was built in 1931, but in 1932, was turned into a tennis court. In 1934, ten 85-feet light poles and 120/180 kW lamps were installed in Athletic Park. The Western States Power Utility Company plant in 1936 had a capacity of

*Continued on page 6*

# Nebraska utilities history – Wausa

*Continued from page 5*

315 kilowatts (kW) internal combustion power generation. Some 200 area farmers had electricity installed by the rural electric district. In 1939, the rural fire department was formed and the first pumper truck was purchased by 1940. Electricity was supplied retail by Interstate Power Company until its properties were purchased by Consumers Public Power District. A Community Hall building was built in the 1940s for $78,250 with an amplifying system installed in the auditorium by 1948. The first game under the lights in Athletic Park was Aug. 10, 1948. Twenty-four 20-feet streetlights were installed in 1949. From 1940-1950, the population decreased from 732 to 708. The gas system was operated/supplied by the Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company and the electric system was owned by Consumers Public Power District. The municipal-owned water plant (1958) had 240 meters in service owned by the consumers. The cemetery was owned by the village and maintained from a tax levy. In August 1958, a 105-foot by 28-foot swimming pool was built with a $47,000 bond issue. Rural school (12 Knox County and 2 Cedar County) districts were consolidated in 1958 to form Wausa District 76R.

By 1960, the population was 724 and the public-owned sewer system and disposal plant was maintained by a charge of $0.50 per month. The municipal water plant had 275 meters with rates of first 10,000 cubic feet (cuft) at $0.50 with the balance at $0.35. The garbage collection was provided by the village and the gas system was operated/supplied by the Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company. The fire department in 1962 consisted of 25 volunteer firefighters, a 1955 ford truck, 1961 rural tanker and a 1950 chevy water truck. The cemetery, owned by the village, was maintained from a tax levy, perpetual care and lot sales. Electric system current was purchased from Consumers Public Power District (1962) with the cost of street lighting at $1,913.77 and the cost of pumping water was $1,479.10. A new high school gym was built in 1964 and a recreation center was opened. In the summer, about 17 blocks of streets were paved ($60,000 project).

The population from 1970-1980 decreased from 720 to 647 and the electric system was leased to Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). In 1985, work began on a new wastewater treatment facility. By 1990, the population was 598 and the natural gas system was operated/supplied by KN Energy, Inc. In 1995, Wausa received a $131,900 CDBG grant for a new water well, distribution and storage project to total $253,800. The village operated an activated sludge, oxidation ditch system designed for 0.07 million gallons per day (mgd) with an aerobic digester single-stage sludge treatment.

The population by 2000 was 636 and the electric system was operated by Nebraska Public Power District.

Police protection was provided by the Knox County Sheriff department and the city maintained a 28-acre municipal park. The electric system in 2001 was operated by Cedar Knox Public Power District. A nine-hole Rolling Hills

*Continued on page 7*

# Nebraska utilities history – Wausa

*Continued from page 6*

Country Club Golf Course is located west of town. In 2009, the natural gas system was operated by Black Hills Energy and supplied by ACE. The population in 2010 was 634 and in 2012, a new 200,000-gallon water tower (200-210 feet high-tallest in the state), which was a part of the Wau-Col Regional Water system #1. Wausa owns 40 percent of the water tower and the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District (NRD) pwns 60 percent. The new water system is owned by the NRD per state law and McLean, Magnet, Osmond and Wausa gets water from the system which costs approximately $500,000.

Today, Wausa has a population of 592, has been an incorporated village for 130 years and is a League of Nebraska Municipalities and a Utilities Section member. The village has two active and two inactive municipal wells with 55 commercial, one industrial and 225 residential customers – all metered, serving a population of 592.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1967-74, 1980-1993, 1995-2020; Nebraska Municipal Review Magazine, 1925, 1989, 1995; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place-Names, 1925, 1960; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Wausa 1890-1965 Diamond Jubilee 75 Years, 1965; Neligh Leader newspaper, 1939-41; Sargent Leader newspaper, 1913, 1915; Nebraska Traveler Magazine, 2003; Nebraska Our Towns... North Northeast, 1990; NEDED Website, 2005; Wikipedia website, 2018; Wausa Website, 2005; Engineering and Contracting, 1915; Nebraska Blue Book, 1928, 1946, 1978; American Municipal, 1915; Annual Report of Nebraska State Railway Commission to the Governor, Issue 15, 1922; Biennial Report of Audits of Public Accounts to the Governor, 1935; and U.S. Congressional Serial Set, and House Document, Vol. 238, April 14, 1936.*

## Reminder: Water, wastewater license renewal year

All water (1-4 and 6) and wastewater licenses are due for renewal by the end of this year. Water licenses are due by Dec. 31, 2021 and wastewater licenses are due two years from the date the license was issued. Water licenses require 10 hours of continuing education hours and wastewater licenses require 20 hours of continuing education hours.

Schedules of remaining classes can be found on the sponsoring entities websites or the schedule insert operators received in December 2020 with the list of available classes. **Be sure to keep all certificates from the classes you attended in case you are audited.**

## Water Operator Training Workshops

Water Operator Training Workshops were held Sept. 14 in McCook, Sept. 15 in Alma and Sept. 16 in Tecumseh. These workshops were sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section and the Nebraska Section of American Water works Association. There were 69 participants from 46 water systems in attendance. Topics included source water management, loss control programs, system security, safety and a regulatory/industry update.

Additional Water Operator Training Workshops are scheduled in 2021: Dec. 7 in Fremont and Dec. 8 in Lincoln.

## Milestone celebration recognition

Is your municipality or utility celebrating a historic milestone? We are encouraging members to provide any information on major milestones being celebrated, such as 75 years of operating the electric system. About 1942, the private electric systems were being phased out in Nebraska and several municipalities took over their systems in the early 1940s. OPPD took over the electric system in 1946 (74 years ago) from Nebraska Power Company.

# Nebraska utilities history – Elmwood

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

**Elmwood**, located in Cass County, had settlers in the area by 1866 and on April 10, 1868, a post office was established as Elmwood (named for a grove of elm trees), originally sited on Stove Creek in 1868 approximately two-and-one-half miles northeast of the present village site. A cemetery was being used by 1869 and about 1870, the post office was moved from McCaig's log cabin to a store operated by Charles Walker. By 1871, the railroad tracks were laid and Walker's store and the blacksmith shop were relocated to a point about one-half mile south of the confluence of Stove and Weeping Water Creeks. The Military Road was relocated after railroad tracks were laid and in 1872, a store was opened by Eli Lane. Walker's new store was built (1872) on Stone Creek near a ford one-half mile east of Elmwood. The population was about 38 in 1880 and the site consisted of two stores, a blacksmith shop and about a dozen homes in 1882. A 40-acre addition was added to town and in 1885 a 30-square block was surveyed/platted northwest along the curve in the Missouri Pacific Railroad line with a street running parallel. By 1886, the population was estimated at 100-200 and on July 18, an excursion train arrived in town with service established by August. The *Elmwood Echo* newspaper and the First National Bank was established. Coal was discovered on the Charles Clapp farm. The first school was built, replacing the Stove Creek school (located one mile east of town), which was used until 1871. By 1887, the population was estimated at 350 and the village was incorporated (either in 1886 or 1887) and School District #95 was organized. A two-story four-room frame school with belfry was built (1889) to house K-10th grades. A school called Sodom (Sodom College and Woodpecker College) was located two miles northwest of town. A brick factory began operation (1887) and businesses included three general stores, a lumberyard, a druggist, a dressmaker and a blacksmith shop. By 1888, there were 32 businesses including a bank, two hotels and a newspaper. The main business district was lined with boardwalks and the Elmwood American Exchange Bank was established in 1889.

*Elmwood water tower. 2014 photo.*

The population by 1890 was 303 and some of the businesses included a Union Hotel, general

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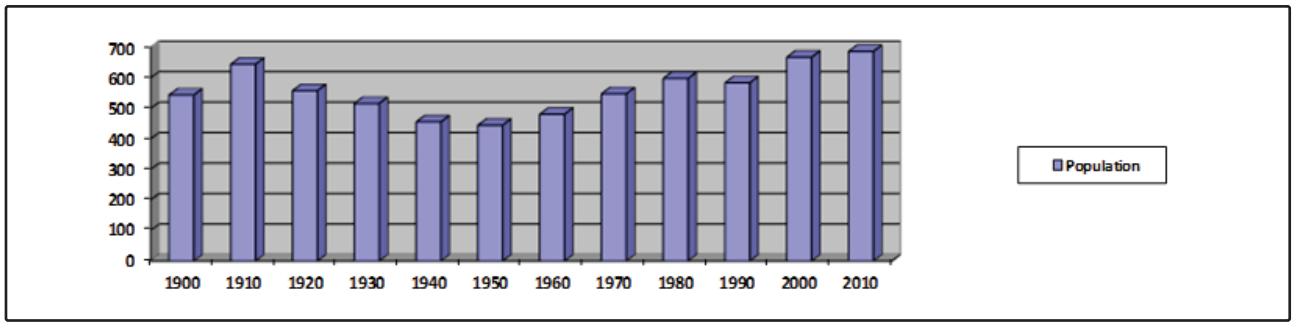

# Nebraska utilities history – Elmwood

*Continued from page 8*
merchandise stores, wagon makers, liveries, a millinery, an ag implement business, a furniture store, a grain elevator, a billiard hall, a lumberyard, a meat market, a hardware store, the *Elmwood Echo* newspaper and a harness/shoemaker business. The Dobbs Opera House opened above Langhorst's General Store. In 1891, the *Elmwood Leader* newspaper was established and the Ferguson addition was added in 1892. The two newspapers merged (1896) and the first municipal well was dug by Wilson Supply Co. of Omaha in 1896. Initially only servicing water to businesses, the main started at the north end of the business district and went south to the lumberyard then east to the Christian Church. Two area brickyards were in operation, one east in Clapp's pasture and one south of the present (1967) Farmers Union. A fire on Dec. 9, 1899, destroyed the furniture store, a harness shop and a hotel on Main Street.

By 1900, the population was 544, businesses totaled 23, including two banks, two grain elevators, five churches, a newspaper and an Opera House. By 1902, the first cement sidewalks were installed by Woodward and Dettman. By 1907, a second brick factory began operation, a waterworks was in operation, which included a 100-foot standpipe with water mains laid in trenches down the middle of the street. A circulating library was started and a gas plant provided light for the village (1907). The original acetylene (carbide) lighting was owned by J. E. Noyes (later owned by Stark and Dick, Louis Tyson and then businessmen of Elmwood). Twenty-four private dwellings, 23 places of business and 25 streetlights were supplied by the plant capable of running 2,000 lights. Night watchman John Lynn went around at dusk to light the streetlights with a long pole. The fire department by 1909 included a hose cart and streets were lined with sidewalks with four miles of concrete walkway. In 1910, the population was 645 (one source claimed 900 residents at this time) and the first electric plant installed at the Elmwood Mill (managed by Olsen & Ring) in 1911. Lights were turned on at 6 a.m. and turned off at midnight. In September 1914, electric lights were installed at Elmwood and a franchise was granted to Elmwood Mill & Elevator Company. In 1916, a fire destroyed the railroad depot and the population decreased to 558 in 1920. Fires destroyed businesses, including a general store and drug store in 1922, and the Opera House and Langhorst store about 1927. In 1927, the Nebraska Power Company bought the electric system and 24-hour power was installed as most homes were electrified. Electric current was provided via transmission lines with rates at: 18 cents per kWh in 1928. The municipal water plant/distribution system had rates of 60 cents per 1,000 gallons.

By 1930, the population was 516, natural gas was available (1932) and another fire destroyed a hardware business. The population decreased to 456 by 1940 and in 1946, the Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) acquired the property of Nebraska Power Company from the Omaha Electric Company for $42 million. By Dec. 2, 1946, OPPD purchased the Nebraska Power Company, which was a subsidiary of the American Light & Power Company. The population dropped to 445 by 1950, the electric system was owned/operated by OPPD and the natural gas system was serviced by a private company. By 1954, local school districts merged, the fire department had 24 volunteer firefighters and a sewer project was underway (1956). Before 1956, every home using city water had individual cess pools or septic tanks. Before water was available, each home had individual outhouses.

By 1956, the cost of current for streetlighting was about $105 per month and cost of pumping water was $100 per month.

From 1960-1970, the population increased from 481 to 548 and a new school was built in 1960-61 (auditorium completed in 1962). Some 12 missile silos were built in southeastern Nebraska (completed in 1962). The cost of street lighting was $94.70 per month and cost of pumping water averaged $60 per month.

The municipal sewer system and disposal plant were maintained from a sewer charge of $2 per month in 1960.

The water plant and 150 meters in service had rates of $2 minimum per month up to 4,000 gallons and then 20 cents per 1,000 gallons. On Jan. 27, 1963, a new post office building was dedicated and in 1964, new mercury vapor streetlighting was installed. The

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# Nebraska utilities history – Elmwood

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municipal water plant had 210 meters in service and rates of $2 per 4,000 gallons and then 20 cents per 1,000 gallons. The sewer system was maintained from a sewer charge of $2 per month and an 8-mill tax levy (bond issue of $68,000). In the late 1960s, streets were blacktopped with asphalt and in 1969, the railroad depot was closed. A historical marker was erected in the park for Mrs. Aldrich (across the street from her home) in 1966. City Hall was renovated in 1974 (former fire hall building) and the natural gas system was supplied by Peoples Natural Gas Company. A service station was destroyed by fire (1974) and a Ford fire truck was purchased in 1977. The old railroad depot was razed in 1977 and two new water wells were drilled in 1979. A new sewage plant was constructed in 1979.

In 1980, the population was 598, the Union Pacific acquired the Missouri Pacific line in 1982 and the last railroad cars went through the village Aug. 2, 1986. In 1985, a new 130-feet, 125,000-gallon water storage tower was erected. The population by 1990 was 584 and the Elmwood school merged with Murdock with elementary school children attending classes in Elmwood and junior/senior high students going to Murdock. The village operated a wastewater treatment facility, which consisted of an activated sludge extended aeration system designed for 0.06 million gallons per day (mgd) with aerobic digester sludge treatment.

By 2000, the population in-

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# Nebraska utilities history – Elmwood

*Continued from page 10*
creased to 668, natural gas was supplied by Aquila (2005) and a welcome sign was installed that told time/temperature, which cost $13,000. The old railroad tracks were part of the MoPac trail system and the fire department received a new Chevrolet one-ton fire truck ($86,000) in 2006. The department had 21 firefighters and six rescue personnel. A wastewater project was completed in April 2010 for $165,900. The village received a $250,000 CDBG grant for the wastewater upgrade with a leveraged amount of $2.1 million in U.S. Dept of Agriculture and village funds. In November 2010, the village completed the oxidation ditch project with a wet well with auger screen, wet/dry well lift station (42-feet diameter), jet aeration oxidation ditch, with two 26 feet diameter circular clarifiers, UV disinfection and an aerobic digester. A building was constructed with lift station, laboratory, rest room, blowers and an emergency generator. In 2008, voters approved water rates increasing by $2 per basic service and 50 cents per 1,000 gallons. In October 2011, new water meters were ordered and new soft-start pumps were installed in 2015. On March 4, 2015, sewer lines were jetted on North 5th Street with findings of grease and tree roots along with repair to a plugger lift screw with findings of a tea towel and socks. Solid waste collection was provided by a private collection company.

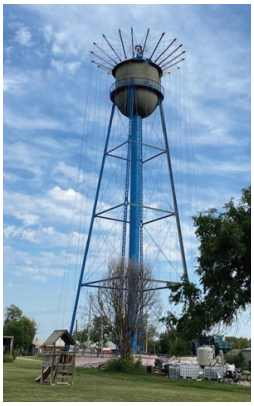
Today, the village population is 667. Elmwood has been incorporated for about 125 years and is a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and the Utilities Section. Electric service has been supplied by OPPD since 1946 and the gas system supplied by Black Hills Energy since 2008. The village maintains a water distribution system, a wastewater collection and disposal plant along with several blocks of streets.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1965-75, 1977-87, 1990-1999, 2001-2018; Nebraska Municipal Review Magazine, 1928, 2011-2012; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Elmwood Centennial, 1886-1986; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2005, 2006, 2017; Train Time in Nebraska The Post Card Era, 2005; History of Cass County Nebraska, 1989; Cass County History, 1967; Pages of History-Nebraska High Schools, 1854-94; Nebraska Our Towns... East Southeast, 1992; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Lincoln State Journal, June 1887; The Effluent Line Magazine, 2011; Nebraska Blue Book, 1942, 1946 , 1978 and the History of Hamilton & Clay Counties, Nebraska, 1921.*

# Construction Zones: A Collection of orange cones!

The four-lane Highway 77, south of **Lincoln** and south of **Cortland**, has road construction projects underway. There are bridge reconstruction projects along Highway 136 between **Alma** and **Oxford**.

Construction projects have been underway in **Milford** the past three years as a $1.4 million water system improvement project was completed (December 2018). A park improvement project, which included the installation of a splash pad was completed (September 2021). A new Meadow Residence Hall on the SCC Milford campus opened with a ribbon cutting Aug. 25, 2021.



*Edison water tower. September 2021 photo.*

The water tower in the Village of **Edison** is getting refurbished with lead removal, maintenance and repainting.

*Beatrice Fire Hall. September 2021 photo.*

A new **Beatrice** Fire Hall is being constructed.

A new wastewater treatment facility in **South Sioux City** is being constructed. South Sioux City also received a $2.2 million grant for a 2.5 million-gallon water storage tank.

# Nebraska utilities history – Ashland

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

**Ashland**, located in Saunders County, had white settlers in the area first called "Saline Ford" about 1856-57. At that time, Ashland Precinct was a part of Salt Creek Precinct (1857) of northwest Cass County, which was formed in 1855 (a part of the Nebraska Territory). A brush dam was built across the creek for a mill by T. M. Marquette about 1857 and in 1858-59, a depot was established for freighters. A military supply post was established (18th & Clay Streets), a general store was operating (1863) and a mill was constructed in 1864 by Dennis Dean. During the Civil War years, a portion of the county changed its name to Saunders County. A two-mile strip of land was detached from the six-mile square Salt Creek Precinct of Cass County and was set into Saunders County as an act of the Nebraska Territorial Legislature in 1866. On March 21, 1866, the settlement was platted with School District #1 established in November and a post office established Nov. 13, 1866. The old name of Saline Ford was changed to Flora City and then in 1866, to Ashland. The name Ashland was said to have been given to the town by Mr. Argyle, an admirer of the statesman, Henry Clay. Ashland was the name of Clay's home in Kentucky.

Ashland was designated the first county seat by October 1867 with a population of 150. A general store was in operation and the first frame building was erected by 1868. Ashland was an overnight stop-over on the stage line from Plattsmouth to Lincoln (1867-70). In 1869, the Snell House and the Munhall House were built with telegraph lines installed throughout Saunders County in May 1869.

The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad arrived through town enroute to Lincoln in 1870. Two early cemeteries were abandoned, leaving the Ashland Cemetery. The community had a population of 653. On Feb. 2, 1870, Ashland was incorporated as a village. The first Saunders County Courthouse (two-story stone) was built on the block potentially sited for the State Capitol between 9th, 10th, Dey and Silver Streets (now 19th, 20th, Silver and Adams). March 4 marked the first formal council meeting. On April 8, 1870, the

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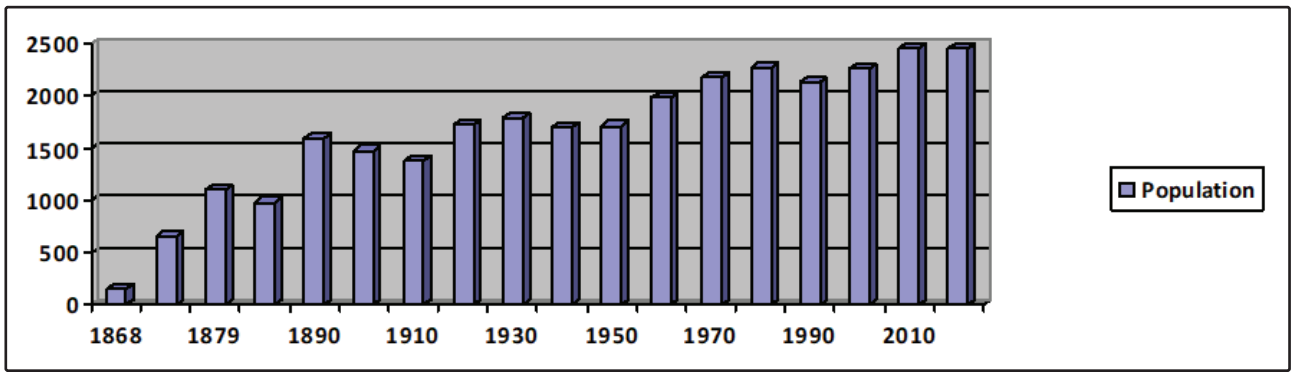
*Ashland water tower. 2000 photo.*



# Nebraska utilities history – Ashland

*Continued from page 12*

*Ashland Times* newspaper was established along with a lumberyard and bank by 1871. A vote removed the county seat from Ashland to Wahoo Oct. 14, 1873. Early businesses included two flour mills, a limestone quarry, sand and gravel pit, harness factory, broom factory, brick kiln, cigar factory, piano company and an ice plant. A January 1878 vote to purchase fire equipment resulted in the village acquiring three chemical engines and a hook and ladder truck for $1,700. A lawsuit caused the equipment to be sent back to the Louisville Company. On April 16, 1878, Ashland was incorporated as a city of the second class with Ben S. Derk as mayor. By 1879, the population was 1,100 and the *Ashland Gazette* newspaper was started.

The Nebraska Legislature passed an act in 1879 that a city of the second class must maintain a population of 1,500 or greater. Since Ashland only had a population of 978, on April 8, 1880, they were reorganized as a village. In 1883, the National Bank of Ashland was organized with a building constructed on the corner of 15th & Silver Streets in 1889. By 1886, the population was about 1,500 and Ashland again became a city of the second class. The Exchange House, which opened July 4, 1880, was destroyed by fire in 1887. A public water system was installed with water mains laid. By November 1889, the waterworks, a direct pressure system, had a 2,500-barrel water tank located on the hill near the railroad depot above the corner of Silver & 5th Streets. It also consisted of one Cook and one Deane pump with a capacity of 125 gallons per minute (gpm) each. The average daily domestic pressure was 45 pounds per square inch (psi) and fire at 100 psi. The system had three-and-one-half miles of mains, 28 double fire hydrants, a pump shop, coal storage and a 65-foot (ft) chimney located on Silver Street. A fire building located on Day Street housed a hook/ladder truck with 42 volunteer firefighters on the roster. The Ashland Mill and Electric Light Plant located three-quarters of a mile north of the post office was established (1889), which consisted of three dynamos and lighted 30 arc lights. By November 1889, a Platte Valley Hotel and a Clifton Hotel were operating with the public lights lit by electricity and coal oil.

By 1890, with a population of 1,601, the city had a streetcar line owned by E. C. Dean. The incandescent street lighting was furnished by the Ashland Mill and Electric Light Company. The Swift Ice Plant, located north of Ashland in Memphis, was started and employed 150-300 men in the winter months. Businesses (1890) included a furniture store, a drug store, a restaurant, a barber, a lumberyard, general stores, a meat market, a Farmers & Merchants Bank, hotels (Hotel Selma, Depot Hotel), a blacksmith, grain elevators, a wagon maker, a hardware store, a brick manufacturer (Mallory & Knight) and others. A traveling library was established in 1875 and by 1895, a "Woman's Club" was organized to establish a library. The Ashland Mill & Electric Light Plant (1897), located south along the Wahoo Creek with a race, was water powered with a dynamo, a boiler and a water tank. The streets were said to have varying levels of grading and were unpaved. A stone jail building was located behind the water pump station on back of the lot.

The population was 1,477 by 1900 (one source noted about 1,900) and most businesses on Silver Street (main business street) were made of brick by August 1902. The fire department had 22 volunteers, a frame building with two hose carts with 500 feet of two and one-half inch hose each along with a hook/ladder truck. Fire alert devices consisted of an alarm bell on the First Baptist Church and a whistle at the water works. A telephone exchange was in operation and water was supplied from two wells using two pumps (Cook and Deane) with a capacity of 190,000 gallons each in a 24-hour period. The system had a 65,000-gallon water tank located on a hill near the railroad depot and about four and one-half miles of four-, six-, and eight-inch mains and 28 double fire hydrants. In 1904, a library opened and was housed in Fowlers Barber Shop. By 1910, the population was 1,379 and in 1911, $5,500 was received from the Carnegie Foundation to construct a library for $7,000. A 960-feet lattice-style wagon bridge was built (1911) over the Platte River for $17,000 and one source noted the population was 1,500 by 1912. The brick Carnegie Library was completed by December 1912. The fire hall on 3rd Street had 30 volunteers, three hose carts with 1,500 feet of two and one-half-inch hose and a

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# Nebraska utilities history – Ashland

*Continued from page 13*

hook/ladder cart. The frame fire hall building, located just west of the water pump house, had a hose cart and 500 feet of hose. From 1913-1919, fires destroyed the Commercial Hotel, the high school, the Maharg Hotel and adjoining buildings. By December 1912, the city waterworks had two wells (seven- and eigh-inch diameter), which were 70-feet deep. The pumps had a combined capacity of 300,000 gallons per day with a 56-foot, 81,000-gallon standpipe on the hill, 100 feet above the business district. The water system had an average pressure of 55 psi with four miles of four-, six- and eight-inch water mains. The streets were unpaved and the electricity was provided by the Ashland Light, Mill & Power Company using 100 horsepower (HP) water, 75 HP boilers, 100 HP steam engines and a generator with 125 kilovolt amperes (kVA). Electric rates were 7-14 cents per kilowatt per hour (kWh) and power rates between 4-6 cents per kWh.

The population increased slightly from 1,725 in 1920 to 1,786 in 1930. By 1924, the Nebraska Power Company provided current to the electric system. By 1940, the population decreased to 1,709 and the electrical distribution system was supplied by Consumers Public Power District. In December 1946, the newly created Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) acquired the property of the Nebraska Power Company, a subsidiary of the American Light and Power. The population in 1950 was 1,713 and the electric system was supplied by Consumers Public Power District. The fire department by 1956 had 35 volunteer firefighters and garbage was collected by a private company at a rate of $1.50 per month. The public sewer system was owned and maintained by a tax levy and the cost of the electric streetlights was $214 per month with the cost of pumping water at $200 per month. Gas rates in 1956 were first 500 cubic feet (cuft) at $1, next 1,500 cuft at $1.50, next 3,000 cuft at $2.55, all over 50,000 at 6 cents per 100 cuft. The water system had 500 meters in service in 1956 with a $5 meter deposit and a fire hydrant rental charge of $10 per year. In 1957, the school merged with Greenwood with a new school built at 1200 Boyd Street in Ashland. The population by 1960 increased to 1,989 and garbage service was provided by a private collector, charging residents $2 per month and businesses $8 per month. A storm sewer project and a sewage disposal facility were underway (1960) along with a paving project. In 1965, bids were let for a 20-block paving project with the low bid at $175,103.37. The natural gas system was owned/operated by Peoples Natural Gas Company. By 1962, the water system had 590 water meters with a fire hydrant rental charge of $500 per year. In 1962, a new well was dug and the plans and construction of a new wastewater treatment facility at a bid of $145,551. The electrical system in 1962 was supplied by Consumers Public Power District, the cost of street lighting was $239.90 per month and the cost of pumping water averaged $165 per month. The public sewer system was maintained by a tax levy amounting to $1,000 and a sewer charge of 50 percent of the January water bill (1962). In 1965, a primary

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# Nebraska utilities history – Ashland

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clarifier was added to the wastewater treatment facility and work by 1967. By 1970, the population was 2,176 and the electrical system was owned and operated by the Omaha Public Power District. By 1974, aeration tanks were added as a secondary clarifier at the wastewater treatment facility. The plant capacity was 300,000 gallons with a peak of 330,000 gallons and an average of 240,000 gallons per day flow.

By 1980, the population decreased from 2,274 to 2,126 in 1990. In 1992, renovations in the downtown area included new banners, new sidewalks and the installation of a new lighting project with an overall cost of $800,000. In 1996, the wastewater treatment facility added ultra-violet light disinfection and the operation was contracted out to PeopleService Inc. The wastewater treatment facility consisted of an activated sludge, extended aeration with an Imhoff tank/spiragester/clarigester sludge treatment and ultra-violet light disinfection. New water mains were installed with the water system operation by PeopleService Inc.

The population in 2000 was 2,262 and new sewer lines were extended in the new 275-acre Iron Horse development area for $350,000. Water rates in 2002 were $8.60 per month base rate with 20 cents per 1,000 gallons. In 2003, the council passed new water/wastewater rates of $10.10 per month base rate, $1.05 per 1,000 gallons (gal.), if less than 1,000 gal. used, then the user will pay a fraction of the rate. Ashland was a Tree City USA Member and by 2003, the natural gas system was owned and operated by Aquila. In 2003, there were four golf courses operating in the area: Ashland Country Club, Quarry Oaks, Iron Horse and the Country Drive Golf Course. In 2004, the water and sewer systems were extended on the northwest edge of town along 30th Street and Furnas Street. The 18-block sanitary sewer project started, near the high school and Furnas Street (due to residential construction) and the estimated cost was $932,167. Water rates increased in 2007 to help cover the cost of a $5 million sewage treatment facility. The monthly residential base fee was $50, commercial was $100, institutional (schools) was $400 and industrial was $1,500, with amounts ranging from $1.75-$4.50 per 1,000 gallons used. In 2008, a vote passed concerning the addition of fluoride to the community's drinking water. A street paving project was underway in 2008 and the natural gas system was operated by Black Hills Energy. By 2008, the fire department had an ISO insurance rating of 4 and 9. A vote was held in May 2011 to construct a community center/library.

Today, Ashland has been an incorporated village/city for 151 years and a longtime League/Utilities member. The population is about 2,453 and the city maintains a park system, cemetery, water, wastewater, streets and municipal buildings.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964-75, 1977-87, 1990-2021; Ashland Internet Site, 2004; Pages of History Nebraska High Schools, Past & Present, 1884-1994; Nebraska Traveler Magazine, 2003; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; A State of Readers, Nebraska's Carnegie Libraries, 2005; Omaha World Herald, 1997; The First 100 Years, Ashland Nebraska 1857-1957, 1957; The First 150 Years, Ashland Nebraska 1857-2007, 2007; Looking Over Our Shoulders Volume I, II & III: The Saline Ford Saga: Ashland History; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007-2008; Nebraska's Forest Service Newsletter, April 2002; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Past and Present of Saunders County Nebraska, 1915; Saunders County NEGen Web Project, 2010; Nebraska State Gazetteer & Business Directory, 1890-91; Who's Who in Nebraska, 1940; Electric Power Development in the United States, Dept. of Agriculture, January 1916; Department of Labor and Department of Compensation, 1917-18; Nebraska Blue Book, 1920, 1928, 1942, 1946, 1978; BLS Report 1905-06, 1907; and the Sanborn Maps, November 1889, June 1897, August 1902, December 1912.*

**Upcoming Snowball Conference dates:**
Jan. 26-27, 2022
Jan. 25-26, 2023
Jan. 24-25, 2024
Jan. 22-23, 2025

## Western Nebraska 'Rubber Gloving' School held

The Western Nebraska Rubber Gloving School was held Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 2021, at the Don Winkelman Training Field on the north edge of Sidney.

A total of 52 linemen were in attendance with 15 from municipalities and 37 from the rural electric systems. Six municipal systems participated this year with linemen from Alliance, Bridgeport, Broken Bow, Cozad, North Platte, Polk, Sidney, Stuart and Haxton, Colo.

The participants were split into hands-on work groups, with two advanced (11), three intermediate (25) and three beginner or basic groups (16). One station was held inside with Cory & Derek covering regulators and reclosures.

A special thanks to the instructors and their respective companies. Instructors this year for the advanced stations included: Bart Schroll of North Platte, Darren Drabbels and Denny Thorson. Instructors for the basic sessions included Justin Huston, Jordan Stull and Doug Beebe.

On behalf of the Utilities Section and the Rural Electric Association, a special thanks to the companies that provided trucks, demo trailers, material and their input of knowledge when performing rubber gloving techniques.

(Listed alphabetically by company name) Altec Direct, Border States, Dutton Lainson, ESI, Evans Lipka and Moehn Electrical Sales. The following systems provided bucket/Digger Trucks: Altec (3), Chimney Rock, Dawson PPD, Midwest ECC, Niobrara Valley EMC, Northeast Nebraska PPD (2), City of Sidney (2), Southwest PPD, Telex (2), Roosevelt PPD and Wheatbelt PPD.

The next Rubber Gloving School is scheduled for May 17-19, 2022 in Norfolk and in Sidney Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2022. Be sure to watch for registration flyers/brochure to attend. The past few years, we have been limited to 15 for attendance, so be sure and register early. Again, a special thank you to the companies that provided trucks, expertise, and information on tools/equipment in the electrical trade.

## 2021 Backflow Workshops Held

Backflow Workshops were held Aug. 17 in Beatrice, Aug. 18 in Wayne, Aug. 24 in Grand Island and Aug. 26 in Ogallala with 142 operators in attendance.

Operators received five hours recertification for water grades 1-4 and grade 6 along with five hours toward wastewater licenses.

These workshops were sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities – Utilities Section and the Nebraska Section of American Water works Association.

Speakers included Rich Koenig and Rob Pierce with input from the local backflow operators.

The next Utilities Section/AWWA Backflow Workshops are scheduled for August 2022.



**Remember to recognize your employees' anniversary milestones.** The Utilities Section provides certificates for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60 and 65.

You can request them by contacting the League office by email brendah@lonm.org, fax 402-476-7052 or call 402-476-2829.

# SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

## Stroke recognition

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

Basically, there are two types of strokes. The most common is a ischemic stroke, which comprises more than 90 percent of all strokes. This type is due to lack of blood flow to the brain, often by a blockage in a blood vessel. The less common type of stroke is from bleeding in the brain, a hemorrhagic stroke, results from a blood vessel or collection of vessels called an aneurysm (these strokes are rare).

In 1998, a group in the United Kingdom consisting of stroke physicians, ambulance personnel and an emergency department physician came up with the "FAST" acronym for recognizing if someone is having a stroke.

The acronym stands for facial drooping, arm weakness, speech difficulties and time to call emergency services (911). Other common stroke symptoms may include the sudden onset of numbness of the face, arm or leg, confusion, trouble speaking or understanding, vision problems, dizziness, loss of balance and severe headache.

Strokes can occur anytime to anyone, regardless of sex or age. Each year, nearly 800,000 people in the United States have a stroke and 130,000 people die from them. Getting quick treatment is crucial because clot busting medication can dissolve clots. The catch is that medicine needs to be given within three to four hours of the onset of stroke symptoms for best results.

For a hemorrhagic stroke, surgery is needed to repair a broken vessel. One source noted that 80 percent of strokes are preventable as half of the strokes are due to high blood pressure. Preventative steps can be taken such as not smoking, exercising, losing weight and taking doctor recommended medications.

## General chain saw safety

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

First thing you should do is read the owner's manual and learn or understand what it says. Not all chain saws are the same. Know your physical, mechanical and equipment limits. Lack of proper tools, equipment, abilities and knowledge can hinder a job and result in an accident. Always wear your personal protective equipment (PPE), which includes hand, foot, leg, eye, face, hearing and head protection. Avoid loose clothing, wearing of jewelry and tie back long hair.

Prepare by having all proper equipment, fuel, first aid kits and emergency phone or radio handy. Transport your saw safely and always inspect it before use. When starting, make sure the chain brake is engaged and working. Always hold the saw with both hands when operating.

Have a game plan on how the project will be accomplished and never rush a job. It is not a good policy to be cutting alone, always have someone nearby and stay in communication with them. Never cut with the nose or tip of your saw. Kick back can occur and often results in an accident. It also is not recommended to use a chainsaw over your head or off a ladder. When moving from tree to tree, either turn off the saw or check to see that the chain brake is engaged. If you have a grounds person or someone hauling brush or stumps, know where they are at all times. If working in or around the streets, make sure adequate traffic safety practices are incorporated into the jobsite. Be sure to refuel after the saw has cooled down. If working in hot environments, be sure to take adequate breaks and drink plenty of water.

Fatigue can be a problem, especially if you are not used to lugging a saw all day. By taking adequate breaks, you can ensure fatigue, cramping or saw vibration are not a factor. Safety is a number one priority.

## *"Just For Fun" Answers*

**A-1.** Cozad.
**A-2.** Elmwood.
**A-3.** Dalton.
**A-4.** Ashland.
**A-5.** Kimball in Summer 2001.

# 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 10th Avenue or www.cityofbrokenbow.org. Submit application and related information to the City of Broken Bow, 314 S 10th Avenue, PO Box 504, Broken Bow, NE 68822, or via email at ccranwell@cityofbrokenbow.org. Broken Bow is an EOE. For more information, please contact Water/Wastewater Superintendent Craig Cranwell at (308) 870-1203.

**Power Plant Production Manager.** The Auburn BPW (www.Auburnbpw.com) is looking to hire a Power Plant Production Manager. This position will be responsible for the operation, maintenance and repairs of the Auburn BPW Diesel/Gas Generation Plant and substation equipment. Duties will include repairs maintenance, operation, monitoring and control of the power plant generation equipment, monitoring of the electrical distribution and SCADA systems. For a full job description, please contact Auburn Board of Public Works, 1600 O Street, Auburn, NE 68305, email dhunter@auburnbpw.com or call 402-274-4981. Interested applicants can send resume to the above address, attention General Manager, or email. Position open until filled.

**Utility Superintendent.** The City of Newman Grove is accepting applications for a full time Utility Superintendent. The position is responsible for all city maintenance, including but not limited to: snow removal, water quality testing, maintenance of city water well/water tower system, maintenance of water main, water shut-offs, water meters, maintenance of city sewer system, coordinating with city engineer and city council for street maintenance, maintenance and grounds keeping at city park, city pool, city golf course, routine testing/ maintenance of emergency/tornado siren, maintenance of city tree dump, maintenance and upkeep of city equipment and vehicles, and all utility locates. Qualifications include: possession of or ability to obtain a Nebraska Class L Wastewater Certificate and Grade IV Water Operator's Certificate. Benefit package includes health, dental, vision, retirement, paid vacation, holidays, and sick leave. Experienced preferred. Applications are available at the City Clerk's office, 606 Hale Avenue, Newman Grove, NE 68758 and must be returned by September 22, 2021. Please contact Jarod Adams at (402) 630-1741 for additional information.


## *Water Operator Workshops scheduled*

Upcoming Water Operator Training Workshops for December will be held in Fremont and Lincoln. Operators attending these workshops will receive five hours toward grades 1-4 water operator licenses and five hours toward wastewater licenses.

Water license renewals will be due December 2021, so be sure to have your required 10 hours to renew your license. If you still need hours, be sure to check the upcoming schedule of workshops in this newsletter or the coalition training calendar (insert) for upcoming 2021 fall workshops.

It is a good idea to contact the entity sponsoring the workshop as walk-ins may not be accepted due to class size, availability, room capacity, meals or special requirements to attend.

# 2021-22 Training calendar

**Visit our website at 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.**

**December**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dec. 7 | Water Operator Training Workshop | Christensen Field, Fremont |
| Dec. 8 | Water Operator Training Workshop | Joe Hampton Conference Center, League Office Building, Lincoln |

**January**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Jan. 12-14 | Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference | Embassy Suites, Lincoln |
| Jan. 19 | Water Operator Training Workshop | Fire Hall, South Sioux City |
| Jan. 20 | Water Operator Training Workshop | Library, Blair |
| Jan. 25 | Water Operator Training Workshop | Holiday Inn, Kearney |
| Jan. 26-27 | Snowball Conference | Holiday Inn, Kearney |

**February**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Feb. 8-9 | Meter Conference | Holiday Inn, Kearney |
| Feb. 28-Mar. 1 | Midwinter Conference | Cornhusker Mariott, Lincoln |