

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

January 2018

## 2018 Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference Highlights

Municipal utility and public works officials from across Nebraska attended the 2018 Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference, which was held Jan. 17-19 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. Those attending the conference participated in sessions covering a wide variety of topics, including: Asset Management; Engaging the Public in Complex Infrastructure Decision Making; Aurora Solar Project; and, How to Handle a Major Infrastructure Project.

**Paul Markowski**, Ord Utility Superintendent, became President, taking the reins from **Tony Jelinek**, Kearney Director of Util-

ities. Jelinek will continue to serve as Past President on the Utilities Section Executive Board.

Other officers elected are:

**1st Vice President**  
– **Bob Lockmon**, Stuart Utilities Superintendent;

**2nd Vice President** – **Larry Brittenham**, Superior Utility Superintendent.

Board members – **Eric Melcher**, Aurora City Administrator; **Dallas Nichols**, Cozad Water Superintendent; **Brian Newton**, Fremont City Administrator.

**Tobias Tempelmeyer**, Beatrice City Administrator and General Manager, is an ex officio member of the board.



*From left: Incoming Utilities/Public Works Section President Paul Markowski, Utility Superintendent, Ord, presents plaque of appreciation to outgoing President Tony Jelinek, Kearney Utilities Director.*



*From left: Denise Peterson, Ponca City Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer; Linda Carroll, Fairmont City Clerk/Treasurer.*



*Marty Stange, Civil/Environmental Engineer, Hastings.*

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Lash Chaffin  
Utilities Section Director  
Rob Pierce  
Utilities Field Representative

## 2018 Asset Management Workshop held

An “Asset Management” Water Workshop was held Jan. 23, 2018, at the Kearney Holiday Inn. Blizzard conditions didn’t deter the

participants who attended the five-hour workshop. Topics included an asset management overview and the five core components:

1) Current State of the Assets; 2) Level of Service; 3) Critical Assets; 4) Life Cycle Costing; and, 5) Funding and Long-Term Strategy. The instructor for the workshop was **Michele Pugh**, Director of the WSU Environmental Finance Center. Winter weather affected the attendance somewhat, but the topics and attendee interaction made the workshop a success.

## Solid Waste Screening Workshop held

A Solid Waste Screening Workshop, sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section, was held Jan. 30, 2018 in Hastings at the Airport Terminal building. The workshop covered hazardous waste identification, the screening process, recordkeeping and common safety issues at a landfill, transfer station and providing collection service.

The workshop met the State of Nebraska requirements covering hazardous waste screening for employees of transfer stations and landfills. Participants received certificates of attendance for their training records.

Two more Waste Screening Workshops may be scheduled for 2018, depending on interest or need.

Water (grades 1-4) and wastewater operators who attended this workshop received five renewal credit hours toward both their water and wastewater licenses. This workshop was sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities in cooperation with Wichita State University.

## 2018-2019 Executive Board

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**Paul Markowski**  
Utility Superintendent  
Ord

*1st Vice President*

**Bob Lockmon**  
Utilities Superintendent  
Stuart

*2nd Vice President*

**Larry Brittenham**  
Utility Superintendent  
Superior

*Past President*

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Director of Utilities  
Kearney

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**Eric Melcher**  
City Administrator  
Aurora

*Board Member*

**Dallas Nichols**  
Water Superintendent  
Cozad



*Board Member*

**Brian Newton**  
City Administrator  
Fremont

*Ex Officio Member*

**Tobias Tempelmeyer**  
City Administrator and  
BPW General Manager  
Beatrice

# Classifieds

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

Applications and complete job descriptions, are available at the City Offices, 1280 Center Avenue, Mitchell, NE 69357, 308-623-1616, or [cityadmin@mitchellcity.net](mailto:cityadmin@mitchellcity.net). AAA/EEO.

**Services Foreman and Heavy Equipment Operator.** The City of Mitchell is accepting applications for the positions of Services Foreman and Heavy Equipment

Operator until the positions are filled. The successful applicant must establish residency within a 15-minute response time of Mitchell and must possess or be able to obtain a mosquito spraying certification.

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

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

**Utilities Assistant.** The Village of Elwood is accepting ap-



plications for a full-time Utilities Assistant. Duties include assisting with maintenance and upgrade of streets, operation of sewer and water systems, park and swimming pool. State certification is required for the operation of the drinking water and waste water systems and must be obtained within a timeframe set by the Village Board. Drug testing and a valid Nebraska driver's license are required. Salary is negotiable. A benefit package is offered with the position. Applications may be picked up at 304 Calvert Avenue, Elwood, NE 68937 or call 308-785-2480 for more information. E-mail requests for applications to [villwood@atcjet.net](mailto:villwood@atcjet.net). Include a resume with your application. All applications/resumes are due in the Village Office by 4 pm on Tuesday, March 13, 2018. The Village of Elwood is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

- Q-1. What Nebraska community post office was first known as Niota?
- Q-2. What incorporated city/village is listed fifth alphabetically in the 2016 Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials?
- Q-3. What municipality in

Nebraska was home of “Polar Maid” ice cream, the Golden Rod Creamery, the Excelsior Roller Mill and a sugar beet factory?

- Q-4. Whose portrait was featured on the first U.S. dollar bill?

**Answers found on page 8.**



## Hello Progress

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# Nebraska utilities history

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

By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./  
Training Coordinator

**V**erdon, located in Richardson County, was platted Feb. 22, 1882. A post office was established March 4, 1882.

In 1882, the Missouri Pacific Railroad built through the area followed by the Burlington Railroad in 1883. Verdon became the second station north on the Missouri Pacific Railroad line, the intersection of the Missouri Pacific and Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroads. When nearby Cottage Grove was bypassed by the railroad, many of its residents moved to Verdon. About 1883-85, a two-story frame school was built at a cost of \$3,000 and by the late 1880s, provided high school classes. On Oct. 6, 1884 and Sept. 1, 1885, additions were surveyed and platted. By 1886, 19 businesses were in operation, but that year, many were destroyed in a fire. By 1887, the population was 300 and two hotels were operating and the Verdon *Vedette* newspaper was published. On June 10, 1887,

Verdon was incorporated as a village (one source noted 1882).

On Jan. 21, 1890, a plat was filed on the cemetery and Verdon's population was 253. By 1890, two grain elevators, a confectionery, the Verdon House Hotel, three general stores, furniture store, harness maker, carriage/ag implement business, dress maker, livery, hardware/Ag Implement, jeweler, a druggist, meat market and a Farmers State Bank were in operation. In 1890-91, a telegraph was operated from the railroad and one source noted the population between 1890-1895 to be 450.

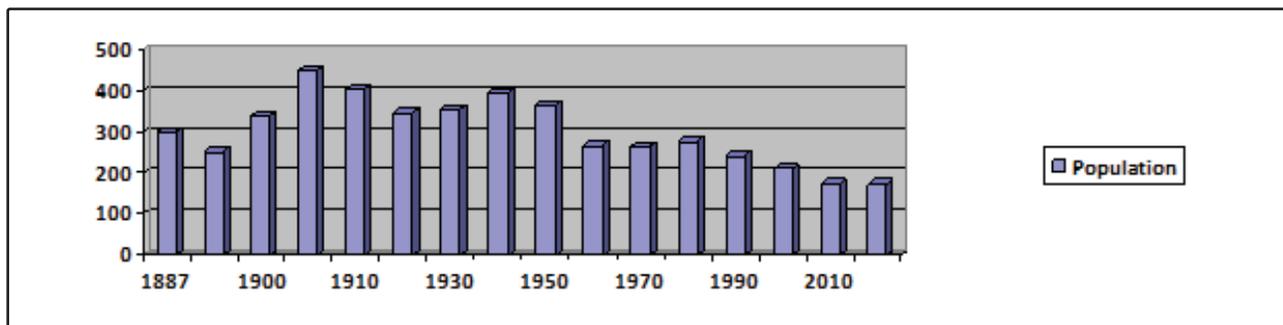
In 1900, the population was 340 and in 1904, an Opera House was built. Following a fire, which destroyed the east side of Main Street in 1907, a well with a pump and trough were located, which were used for horses and for bucket brigades during a fire. Early gas lights lit the village streets. By 1910, the population increased to 406 and the railroad depot offered passenger service. An elementary school was built separate from the high school and



Verdon water tower. 2008 photo.

in 1911, the school added an 11<sup>th</sup> grade with 120 students in grades K-11. In 1912, a fire again destroyed businesses on the east side of Main Street. The local meat market hauled ice from Hardens Lake north of town, which was preserved in sawdust. In 1915,

*Continued on page 5*



## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 4*  
the 12<sup>th</sup> grade was added to the school curriculum and in 1916, a new two-story white frame school with a two-tier steeple was built. An electric system was operating by 1915 with 42 street lights furnished by the Stella power plant with a gross income of \$387 per year and a six-year franchise. In 1918, the Southeast Nebraska Telephone Company had an exchange in Verdon.

The population in 1920 was 347, but in November, the Farm-

ers Bank and the harness shop closed. In 1922, a new two-story brick school building was erected by Boher Brothers from Falls City for \$40,000. The former 1910-11 elementary school was discontinued and sold in 1922. Area electric current in 1922 was supplied by the Nebraska Gas & Electric Company. By 1925, 68 students attended the public school. The *Verdon Visitor* newspaper was published in 1926 and the Main Street was graveled for the first time. By 1930, the popu-

lation increased to 355 and west of Muddy Creek, the village built a man-made lake (Verdon Lake). The bank closed in the 1930s and by 1940, the population was 397. In 1942, the Burlington Railroad removed its tracks and the depot building was sold and moved to a farm. In 1942, many private electric companies operating in Nebraska were purchased by Consumers Public Power District. By 1944, an alfalfa dehydration plant was operated by the Moray

*Continued on page 6*

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56<sup>th</sup>  
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## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 5*

Processing Corporation (noted as the first pellet plant in the United States). In 1946, Raymo Manufacturing was operating (alfalfa grinders).

The population decreased in 1950 to 366 and the dehydration plant was shut down in 1955. In 1958, the water plant and distribution system and the 96 meters in service were owned by the village. Water rates were 3,000 gallons at \$1, next 3,000 gallons at \$0.35, next 6,000 gallons at \$0.30, with the balance at \$0.20. The water meter deposit was \$10. The cost of current for pumping water amounted to about \$15 per month. Electric current was supplied by Consumers Public Power District with 160 meters in service and the cost of street lighting at \$71 per month. Electric rates were: first 12 kilowatts (kWh) at \$1, next 38 kWh at \$0.065, next 100 kWh at \$0.033, next 400 kWh at \$1.25 with a minimum of \$1. In 1959, the high school closed following the graduation of the last 12 seniors. That year (1959), the Dawson (District 15C) and Verdon (District 32) schools merged

forming Dawson-Verdon District #515 with an enrollment of 230. The old red and white colors of the Dawson Lions and the blue and white colors of the Verdon Bulldogs were combined to use the colors red, white and blue under the new mascot name, the Jets.

By 1960, the population was 267, the water plant and distribution system with 104 meters in service were owned by the village. The electrical system was supplied by Consumers Public Power District and the power rates were: first 12 kWh at \$1, next 38 kWh at \$0.065, next 100 kWh at \$0.055, next 350 kWh at \$0.033, next 2,500 at \$2.75. In 1960, the fire department had 25 volunteer firefighters and by 1965, the school enrollment peaked at 290. In 1970, the population was 265 and June 2, 1971, the cemetery was deeded to the village. A board was appointed and more land needed to be purchased. The electric system was operated/supplied by Nebraska Public Power District. A new fire hall was built in the 1970s and the gas system consisted of individual propane tanks. In 1976, a mini

park project included playground equipment. In 1977, the Verdon K-6 Elementary School closed. The population decreased to 278 by 1980 and in 1983, the old jail, located by the alley behind Lum's Lumberyard, was removed. The former barber shop housed the public library in 1985. In 1987, construction began as the lagoon system was upgraded with a new cell and lift station. The sewer lagoon project was completed in 1991 and that year, the Verdon school building closed. By 1999, the two-cell lagoon system was a facultative controlled discharge lagoon system designed for 0.016 million gallons per day (mgd). From 1990-2000, the population decreased from 242 to 211. From 2000-2003, the village was under water restrictions. Through grants and loans new water mains and service lines were installed and were connected to the Richardson County Rural Water District #2. In 2004, the village had newer Kennedy fire hydrants installed and painted the water storage tower white with a black railing. On Aug. 1, 2004, the Dawson-Verdon

*Continued on page 7*



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# Nebraska utilities history

Continued from page 6  
school closed with the property value split between Humboldt/ Table Rock/Steinauer Districts to the west and to Falls City to the east. Dawson students went to Humboldt. Verdon students went to Falls City.

Today, Verdon has a population of 172 and is a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and the Utilities Section. The electrical distribution system is owned by the village and operated/supplied by Nebraska Public Power District. The village main-

tains the streets, which are mostly blacktopped with some gravel and/or rock covered. The village maintains a mini park, ball field and cemetery. A private company maintains the individual propane tanks. The water system is maintained by the village and is supplied by the Richardson County Rural Water District #2. In 1982, Verdon celebrated its centennial and has been incorporated for over 130 years.

References: *Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956-1960, 1965-1970, 1972-78, 1980-2017;*

*Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place-Names, 1960; Lincoln Journal-Star Newspaper, 2003, 2004; Pages of History, Nebraska High Schools, 1854-1994; History of Richardson County, The Heritage Collection-Edwards, Part 1 & 2, 1917; Nebraska Our Towns...East Southeast, 1992; Maps Tell Nebraska's History, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Nebraska Blue Book, 1915, 1928, 1946, 1978; Sanborn Map, August 1909 and Nebraska Gazetteer & Business Directory, 1890-91.*



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**Congratulations to Kevin Kuhlmann of the Auburn Public Works, recipient of the “Outstanding Electric Lineman Award.”** Kevin received the award at the Auburn safety and service awards dinner.

Kevin has been employed with Auburn since 1990 when he became employed part-time. Kevin was promoted to Apprentice Line Tech in 2003, promoted to Lead Line Tech in 2012 and in 2016, was promoted to Line Tech Supervisor. The past few years, Kevin has volunteered as an instructor at the League/NREA sponsored Rubber Gloving Schools (Norfolk). He has been an asset to the electric industry by providing education to new line workers in the electric field. His supervisor, Dave Hunter, stated that Kevin is a valuable asset to his employer, the public and the electrical field. Dave also said Kevin was a wonderful family man, outdoors

person and a great and giving person. Again, congratulations, Kevin!

**Service Awards presented to Cozad workers in 2017:**

- Dallas Nichols – 40 years
- Bernie Morse – 40 years
- Jim Johnson – 35 years
- Dave Worthman – 15 years
- Mel Valenzuela – 5 years

Congratulations to these employees for their dedicated years of service!

**Congratulations to Franklin for being a finalist in the Reader's Digest “Nicest Place in America” contest.** Franklin was one of 10 finalists out of more than 250 applications. The *Kearney Hub* reported that Franklin was nominated by Michelle Bruce. The winner was Gallatin, Texas, which was featured on the *Reader's Digest* cover of the November 2017 issue.

Do you think you live in the nicest place in America and want it to be featured on the *Reader's Digest* cover? The *Kearney Hub* noted that Reader's Digest is accepting



nominations for 2018 at [www.rd.com](http://www.rd.com). Again, congratulations to Franklin for being chosen as a top 10 finalist.

Do you, your department or facility have something to crow about? Received an award, had an article written highlighting an event or person? Have a project worthy of acknowledgement in the *Utilities Section Newsletter*?

If so, please send your information to any of the League/Utilities staff so we can share your excitement or pride of an award, noted article or project with other members. Too often we read about negative news in our local newspaper, but the positive should be celebrated, embraced and shared. Optimism can be contagious and others may find positive ways to use your success to enhance a project or event in their municipality, department or facility.



*From left: Kevin Kuhlmann, Auburn Line Tech Supervisor, is presented the Outstanding Electric Lineman Award from Rob Pierce of LNM.*

**“Just For Fun” Answers**

- A-1. McCool Junction (Named for Daniel McCool, General Manager of the Kansas City/Omaha Railroad, was the junction point of the Burlington Railroad).
- A-2. Alda.
- A-3. Fremont.
- A-4. U.S. Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase.

## SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

### Working in cold weather

By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./  
Training Coordinator

As winter has its typical cold weather ups and downs, those who work outside need to be aware of the hazards. Workers need to take precautions for cold stress issues such as trench foot, frostbite and hypothermia. Awareness of slips, trips and falls and defensive driving safety should be addressed. Wearing adequate clothing and the proper personal protective equipment can be crucial when preventing injury or life-threat-

ening conditions. Recognizing and understanding symptoms of cold stress needs to be discussed at safety meetings and tail gate sessions.

Work scheduling may have to be adjusted when working in extremely harsh conditions. High winds, low temperatures and poor visibility are a few conditions that may warrant scheduling adjustments, especially as they change. Monitoring the weather forecasts and up-to-date reports can aid in making safety-related decisions. We are creatures of habit

and sometimes resist change, but when environmental conditions change, we need to be adaptable to eliminate safety concerns. Prevention should always be a higher priority than having to manage after having a safety or health issue. Having to deal with equipment damage issues, a medical situation or a fatality always cost more in the long run. There is a no-win situation with the loss of life, limb, time, service or even financially.

Take care and be safe this winter!

### OSHA Most Cited Violations for 2017 (ending September 30)

The topics below are listed in order of the highest violations to the lowest.

1. Fall Protection, general requirements – 6,072
2. Hazard Communication – 4,176
3. Scaffolding – 3,288
4. Respiratory Protection – 3,097
5. Lockout/Tagout – 2,241
6. Ladders – 2,241

7. Power Industrial Trucks – 2,162
8. Machine Guarding – 1,933
9. Fall Protection-training requirements – 1,523
10. Electrical, wiring methods – 1,405

If your system has not had an accident and are looking for topics for your next safety meeting, any of these 10 could be an option.

### APPA Safety Manual correction

If you purchased the blue 16th Edition Safety Manual from the American Public Power Association (APPA), an error needs to be corrected.

**In Section 406 Clothing, Paragraph A, Line 4 (p. 100): OSHA regulation reference “29 CFR 1910.165” should read “29 CFR 1910.135”.**

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**2018 Electric Training Workshops**

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Sept. 11-13 – Sidney

Electric Underground  
Sept. 5-6 – Sidney

# Training calendar

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

## March

- March 6 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... City Hall, Chadron
- March 7 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Fire Hall, Gering
- March 8 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Water Facility, North Platte
- March 29 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Fire Hall, Tecumseh

## April

- April 3 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Civic Community Center, St. Paul
- April 4 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Utilities Building, Hastings
- April 5 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... York



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