Trees in the Great Plains really take a beating when we consider all that Mother Nature throws at us. Nebraska community forests are no exception and are under growing stress from a wide range of environmental and human caused factors. Given the impact of a variable and extreme climate, invasive species and the increasing reliance on volunteer management support, Nebraska Forest Service (NFS), in working with community leaders across the state, identified an opportunity to develop training and resources to better support local forestry management operations.

In an effort to address these threats, NFS developed and hosted a series of three tree risk assessment and management workshops throughout the state. These “hands-on” workshops were developed to assist those who manage trees in their community to better understand potential risk, how to address it and how to proactively manage the community forest.

Funding for the workshop series was provided via a Landscape Scale Restoration grant. The series featured speaker Mark Duntemann, owner of Natural-Path Urban Forestry Consultants. Duntemann has traveled internationally speaking on tree risk and urban forestry policy development and has served as an expert witness on tree litigation cases. Workshop participants benefited from Duntemann’s diverse perspectives on tree risk management.

Major concepts covered during the workshop series included: Concepts of Risk Management; Defining what is “Reasonable and Practical” in the eyes of the law; Risk Analysis – an outdoor session on identifying tree defects and measuring the risk they present; Defining Risk Reduction Goals, Refining Operations to Identify and Mitigate High-risk Trees; and Long-Term Policies and Management Implications.

Nearly 100 participants representing 28 communities participated in these full day, hands-on learning workshops. Community leaders and managers who attended the seminars saved significant time and money developing proactive response plans to invasives and extreme weather events. When educated on the methods of active community forest management, community volunteers have tremendous potential to assist and support operations and provide long-term health benefits to both the forests and the people.

To further leverage the experience...
Crow Line: A line of positive communication that all can share

Congratulations to the following Water Systems that were selected as “Best Tasting Water in Nebraska” at the 2018 Annual AWWA Conference. Overall Best Tasting Water Competition winner was North Platte (for the second year in a row). The Fremont water sample was selected (second) for the top treated water sample. The 12 systems that submitted samples for this year’s competition included Auburn, Beatrice, Blair, Columbus, Fremont, Lincoln, MUD, North Platte, Norfolk, Papillion, Plymouth, and Schuyler.

NWEA Wastewater Systems Receive Awards

Congratulations to the following wastewater systems and individuals that received awards at the Annual NWEA Conference banquet on Nov. 8, 2018 in Kearney. Safety Awards are listed by category (number of operators), rating and system.

1-4 operators: Gold – Scottsbluff
1-4 operators: Silver – Minden and Fremont WWTP
5-9 operators: Gold – Norfolk and Columbus
5-9 operators: Silver – Chadron
5-9 operators: Bronze – North Platte
10+ operators: Bronze – Grand Island

Industrial: Gold – Tyson Fresh Meats of Lexington
Congratulations to Keith Kontor of Fremont for receiving the Arthur Sidney Bedell Award and the late Jim Condon (Olsson Associates) whose wife was presented his William Hatfield Award. Jim was very active with the various water/wastewater trade organizations, including the League of Nebraska Municipalities/Utilities Section. Olsson Associates is a longtime supporter and member of the Utilities Section.

2018-2019 Executive Board

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Continued on page 3
SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

Responsible driving

By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./Training Coordinator

A few years back, I read an article that gave tips on responsible driving. The tips were simple, but stuck in my mind as good advice. No matter what your job is or if you are just commuting to work, these tips apply. If you take a bus or ride with someone else, they apply to the person driving. The 10 steps to responsible driving start with: 1) plan the route; 2) maintain the vehicle you are driving (inspection checklist); 3) focus your attention on driving and the environment; 4) eliminate, or at least minimize, distractions (eliminate cell phone use unless stopped); 5) know your surroundings or know when something has changed; 6) share your space – this may mean being a courteous driver when others are not; 7) watch your speed especially when the weather (ice) changes – hurrying or the thought of being late can cause an accident; 8) keep your distance as slick roads, inadequate tires, hauling loads, towing, fatigue and other factors can drastically change the rules of vehicle operation; 9) signal your intentions as other drivers may not have ESP on what you plan to do – be sure to check the signal and brake light condition when doing an inspection; and 10) always wear your seatbelt when driving, because they do make a difference in an accident. Stay safe all year and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Common safety incident errors

The following are all errors that can cause an accident:
• Eyes or mind not on the task at hand;
• Lack of attention and putting yourself in the line of fire
• Loss of balance, poor footing or lack of reaction times;
• Not using adequate personal protective equipment.

2019 Solid Waste Screening Workshop scheduled

A Solid Waste Screening Workshop is scheduled for Jan. 29, 2019, in Hastings at the Airport Terminal Building. The workshop will cover three hours of hazardous waste screening and two hours of safety and transfer station/landfill operations. This workshop meets the state of Nebraska requirements covering hazardous waste screening for employees of transfer stations and landfills. Possibly two more of these workshops will be scheduled for 2019, depending on interest or need. This workshop is sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section.

Tree risk analysis and management

Continued from page 1

ential learning opportunities, one of the workshop sessions was recorded and promoted via social media platforms as well as to memberships within green industry organizations. All eight topic specific seminars are available for sharing and distribution. The recordings can be found online at https://mediahub.unl.edu/channels/18735.

To learn more, contact Eric Berg, Community Forestry & Sustainable Landscape Program Leader, Nebraska Forest Service, at eberg2@unl.edu or 402-326-3017.

Mark your calendars on Jan. 23-24, 2019, for the Snowball Wastewater Conference at the Kearney Holiday Inn. The room block will be released Dec. 27, so be sure to get your room reserved before then to get the conference rate.
Crow Line: A line of positive communication that all can share

Continued from page 2

Other recipients of the Scott Wilber Award for 2018 included Fremont, Grand Island, Lincoln Northeast Facility, Norfolk WPC, North Platte, and Wilber.

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.

Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

Q-1. What Nebraska city was named after a city in Italy?

Q-2. What Nebraska village was named after the capital of Egypt?

Q-3. What Nebraska village was initially named Harbine (1889), but since the name was already taken, was named after a local resident who was a descendant of a Lord?

Q-4. Do you know where in Nebraska this courthouse is located?

Answers on page 10.

Classifieds

Utilities Assistant. The Village of Elwood is accepting applications for a full-time Utilities Assistant. Duties include assisting with maintenance of streets, operation of sewer and water systems, park and swimming pool. 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 villelwood@atcjet.net. Please include a resume with your application. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The Village of Elwood is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Journey Line Worker. The City of Alliance is accepting applications for the position of full-time Electric Journey Line Worker with a starting pay range of $24.76-$31.95 per hour DOQ. This individual will perform skilled line work in the operation, construction, maintenance and repair of overhead and underground electric urban and rural distribution and transmission systems. The City is offering a hiring bonus of $3,000 after the successful completion of probation and relocation reimbursement up to $2,000. The position includes an excellent benefit package including health, dental and vision insurance, retirement, vacation, flex time, sick leave and paid holidays. The City of Alliance Electric System includes

Continued on page 5
Classifieds

Continued from page 4

115 miles city and 200 miles of rural overhead and underground lines with a service area of over 150 square miles, which includes 10 miles of trans and sub-trans lines. The system operates with a transmission substation (115 KV) and three distribution substations (7.2/12.5 KV). The Department services approximately 5,000 customers, over 1,700 street lights, 220 irrigation wells and operates out the Public Works Facility, which was constructed in 2002. The Department maintains 10 vehicles, including a 60-foot and two 50-foot bucket trucks. A complete job description and application is available on the City of Alliance’s Website at www.cityofalliance.net. Applications with resumes will be accepted until the position is filled.

Water/Wastewater Utility II.
The City of Schuyler, Department of Utilities is accepting applications for the position of Water/Wastewater Utility II. Nebraska State certification Grade IV Water and/or Sanitary Sewer Grade I is required. Pay rate $18.18-$22.83 per hour depending on experience and qualifications, with benefits. Drug test required. Applicants must be 18 years of age and hold a valid Nebraska driver’s license. Candidates must mail a cover letter, resume and three references to the Schuyler Department of Utilities. Application and job description available at Seward City Hall, 537 Main St.; PO Box 38; Seward, NE 68434 (402-643-2928) or can be downloaded at the City’s website: www.CityofSewardNE.gov. Reasonable accommodations are available for persons needing assistance in completing application and should be made at time of application. All positions of employment with the City of Seward are subject to a Veteran’s Preference. The City of Seward is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Public Works Director.
The City of Plattsmouth, NE seeks qualified applicants for Director of Public Works. Department head with responsibility for fiscal management, administration and operational direction of the City’s public works and utilities activities and functions; provides expert professional assistance to City management in areas of expertise, including engineering, municipal water, wastewater collection, and street and landscape maintenance; and performs related duties as required. Job description and application available at www.plattsmouth.org. Open until filled. EOE with veteran’s preference.

Maintenance Worker.
The Village of Wausa is accepting applications for full time Village Maintenance. Performs a variety of duties in the operation and maintenance of the streets, water, wastewater, parks and more. High school diploma or equivalent and valid NE driver license. Applicant must be able to obtain a CDL. The individual must have a Certification in wastewater and water or be willing to take classes and pass the certification test. Wages will depend on level of experience. Applications can be obtained at the Wausa Clerk’s Office, 406 E. Broadway, or call 402-586-2311. Open until filled. EOE.

Street Maintenance Worker I.
The City of Seward is accepting applications until filled for Street Maintenance Worker I - Duties to include manual labor in construc-
Utilities Section Newsletter

Classifieds

Continued from page 5

tion, maintenance & repair of streets, storm sewers, dike, build-
ings & grounds; drives trucks & operates light equipment;
may assist in parks, cemeteries, recreation & recycling center fa-
cilities; performs general vehicle maintenance; must possess Class
B Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) or acquisition within six
months of employment. Pay range: $14.08 - $18.59 per hour,
depending on experience. Application & job description avail-
able at Seward City Hall, 537 Main St.; PO Box 38; Seward NE 68434-0038; (402-643-2928)
or may be downloaded at City’s website: www.CityofSewardNE.
gov. Reasonable accommoda-
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positions of employment with the City of Seward are subject to a
Veteran’s Preference. The City of Seward is an Equal Opportunity
Employer.

Remember to recognize your employees’ anniver-
sary milestones.
The League 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
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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.

By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./Training Coordinator

Beemer, located in Cuming County, started with the construction of a flour mill on Rock Creek in 1865. The area was settled by 1871 as the Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad lines were being built. Around May, a settlement was platted called Rock Creek. The Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad had a siding located southeast of the newly platted settlement of Rock Creek by 1884. The railroad depot later was built by A.D. Beemer and a blacksmith shop soon opened. On Sept. 29, 1884, a post office was established as Rock Creek and the railroad depot was located southeast of Rock Creek. A school and a saw mill were built on the village side of the creek. In May 1885, the village again was platted and soon the post office name was changed from Rock Creek to Beemer. By 1886, businesses began to open, which included the Elkhorn House Hotel. A brick Beemer State Bank was built and a shoe repair shop, saloon, grain elevator, roller mill, livery stable and brickyard were soon in operation. On July 15, 1886, with a population over 200, Beemer was incorporated as a village. A plow factory and a canning factory were in operation as the village population increased to 350 by 1890. In 1891, the lumber and grain mill was relocated from the south side to the north side of the Elkhorn River and was converted to steam power. In 1892, a new $10,000 two-story schoolhouse was built. By 1897, funds were raised to fund a water works system and water soon was being pumped using the coal-fired steam power plant at the flour mill. On Oct. 29, 1897, the fire department was organized with 20 members. On Feb. 25, 1898, the water works was completed, with three wells (north of steam flour mills) pumped through four-inch pipe to the main business district. A 16 x 20-foot cylindrical tank with vertical wooden staves and iron bands was atop a 23-foot tower located at 4th & Main Street. A six-inch main ran from the reservoir on the hill to the businesses, which was completed in March. In June, the tank swelled and the rivets on the bands broke, collapsing the tower. By August 1898, the storage tank was rebuilt.

By 1900, the census reported the population at 455, although one source noted about 700. In 1902, the village installed a 12-horse power (HP) engine to pump water and installed a new well. The village population increased to over 1000 by 1910. In 1920, the village had a population of 1672, with a hotel, bar, saloon, general store, barber shop, blacksmith shop, and several other businesses. In 1930, the population dropped to 1564, with a few businesses still open.

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Nebraska utilities history

Continued from page 7 also purchased a new fire engine house, which was located north of Third & Main Streets. New water main and additional fire hydrants were installed and a large water standpipe (10 feet in diameter and 85 feet high) was erected. By 1910, the population increased to 494 and a three-story brick school was built by 1918. William A. Beemer was the operator of the Beemer & Beemer Electric Company (1918-36) and in 1919, a concrete-railed bridge was built on 3rd Street. From 1920-1930, the population increased from 548 to 571 and in 1934, Beemer became a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities. In 1936, William Beemer was the owner/manager of the Beemer Electric Company, providing electricity to the village. By 1940, the population was 585 and the Consumers Public Power District was acquiring private electric companies in Nebraska.

By 1950, the population was 613, the village maintained a cemetery and had 22 volunteer firefighters. The wastewater treatment facility, which cost $46,650, was a Housing and Home Finance Agency Project. In 1956, sewer extensions were estimated to cost about $7,000. The natural gas system was operated by the Central Electric and Gas Company and electric current was supplied by the Consumers Public Power District. The cost for pumping water amounted to about $60 per month and street lighting was $102 per
Nebraska utilities history

Continued from page 8

month. By 1960, the population increased to 667 and by 1962, the water plant, owned by the village, had water rates for residents ranging from $12-$15 per year. Business rates varied from $12-$50 per year, depending on the nature of their business. The cost of pumping water was $60 per month. The natural gas system was supplied and operated by the Western Power & Gas Company. A $29,800 federal grant was awarded in October 1967 to build a wastewater treatment plant. The sewer plant was constructed in 1968, which was located one-half mile south of town. The electric system was owned by Consumers Public Power District and the cost of street lighting was $170.13 per month.

In 1970, the population increased to 699 and by 1971, 16 new mercury vapor streetlights were installed. The electric distribution system was owned by the village and operated by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). The population increased to 839 by 1980 and the natural gas system was operated and supplied by Cengas (1982-87). In 1986, the railroad tracks were abandoned (depot closed in 1963) and by 1989, a sewer system project was underway. The population slipped slightly to 672 in 1990 and the natural gas system was maintained by Minnegasco. By 1994, the natural gas system was operated and supplied by Peoples Natural Gas Company. The electric system was operated by the Nebraska Public Power District. In 1996, a water project was planned and by 1997, a water study was conducted, finding low water pressure, the storage facility needed repairs and additional wells were needed.

The village received a CDGB grant and a USDA loan as improvements were made to the system, which included two new wells, updating a third and the installation of new water meters. Since implementation, the village reduced water usage by 35 percent, but improved the pressure and quality of the water supply. By 1999, the village operated an activated sludge extended aeration treatment system designed for 0.118 million gallons per day (mgd) with aerobic digester sludge treatment.

By 2000, the population was 773 and in 2001, the electrical system was owned by the village and operated by Cuming County Public Power District. By 2003, the natural gas system was operated by Aquila. In 2009, Black Hills Energy purchased the SourceGas properties in Nebraska and took over operation of the gas system. The fire depart-

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Nebraska utilities history

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ment had 27 volunteer firefighters and an ISO rating of 5 inside and 9 outside the village limits. An 18-hole Indian Trails Country Club golf course, located along the Elkhorn River Valley, was operating, the Beemer school merged with the West Point school system and the population in 201 was 678.

Today, the village has a population of 678 and has been an incorporated village since 1886 (132 years). The village maintains two parks, a cemetery, a water system and wastewater collection/disposal system. Most streets are paved/curbed and the village has the Karlen Memorial Library. The electrical system is owned by the village and operated by Cuming County Public Power District. The natural gas system is owned and operated by Black Hills Energy Corporation. Beemer has been a League of Nebraska Municipalities and Utilities Section member for over 30 years.


“Just For Fun” Answers

A-1. Ravenna, Also many of the street names commemorate other Italian places. Reference: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ravenna,_Nebraska

A-2. Cairo, also many of the town's street names reinforce the "Egyptian" theme. Reference: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairo

A-3. Byron – apparently named after a local resident Frank James Byron, a descendant of Lord Byron. Frank was said to have lived on the west side of town in a ravine named “Scorpion Gulch.” George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron FRS (22 January 1788 – 19 April 1824), known as Lord Byron, was a British nobleman, poet, peer, politician and leading figure in the Romantic movement. He is regarded as one of the greatest British poets and remains widely read and influential. Reference: https://www.bing.com

A-4. Minden, This Kearney County Courthouse is known for its Christmas lights in December.
Looking back at 2018

Once again, this was a busy year for the Utilities Section staff. More than 50 workshops, conferences and safety meetings were held in 2018. In the last 15 years, more than 15,000 attendees have participated in training workshops and conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by the Utilities Section.

The monthly Utilities Section Newsletter featured the following topics in 2018: Annual Utilities Conference highlights and sessions (passing of the gavel); messing with the meter: what to do; Snowball Conference highlights; Howard Isaacs’ retirement at DHHS; CDL license changes; 8th Annual “Common Ground Safety Summit” safety presentation overview; purchasing off the state contract; water proclamation by Gov. Ricketts; proprietary function budget; electric shuttle demo in Lincoln; numerous legislative bills affecting utilities/public works departments; state mileage reimbursement changes; county highway/city street superintendent licensing training; solid waste management study; cardboard banned from Lincoln landfill; proprietary function budgets; decaying infrastructure; Kelleyville education with schools; and tree risk analysis and management.

Safety items/articles featured in the Newsletter included working in cold weather, Osha top 10 cited safety violations for 2017, APPA safety manual, safety awards reminder, excavation summit summary, celebrations of safety weeks (work zone, playground and construction), safety awards reminder, chain saw safety, sunscreen and sunburn prevention, fall prevention, safety with vehicle batteries, office safety tips, fire prevention, and driving safety practices.

Monthly member history articles highlighted several municipalities with an emphasis on their utilities, including: Verdon, Blue Hill, Lewellen, Gurley, Odell, Gresham, Hebron, Fremont, Louisiville, Shelby, Murray, Exeter and Beemer. As of this issue, 128 history articles on municipal “Utilities Section” members have been featured in the Utilities Section Newsletter. The first history article, which featured David City, was in the November 2006 Newsletter.

Thank you to 2018 hosts

A special “thanks” to the 2018 workshop/conference host cities and villages. The Utilities Section would like to take this opportunity to thank the communities, management and staff for their dedication, hard work and hospitality in efforts to host Utility Section sponsored seminars, workshops and conferences in 2018: Blair, Beatrice, Broken Bow, Chadron, Columbus, Crete, Kearney, Fairbury, Franklin, Fremont, Gering, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Lexington, Lincoln, McCook, Nebraska City, Norfolk, North Platte, Ogallala, Omaha, St. Paul, Sidney, Superior, Tecumseh, York, and Wayne.

If your system (Utilities Section members) would like to host a workshop, contact Rob at the League office 402-476-2829 or email robp@lonm.org.

Hello Progress

The greatest accomplishments start with the smallest details. This is where great begins.
Training calendar

Visit our website at www.lonm.org
for a complete list of workshops and conferences.

January
Jan. 9 .......... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. Fire Hall, South Sioux City
Jan. 10 .......... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. Fire Hall, West Point
Jan. 16-18.... Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference .... Embassy Suites, Lincoln
Jan. 22 .......... Water Operator Safety Training Workshop .............. Holiday Inn, Kearney
Jan. 23-24 .... Snowball Conference ............................................. Holiday Inn, Kearney
Jan. 29 ........ Solid Waste Screening Workshop ......................... Airport Terminal Building, Hastings

February
Feb. 5.......... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. DHHS Facility, Norfolk
Feb. 6.......... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. City Library, Blair
Feb. 7.......... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. BPW Facility, Beatrice
Feb. 12-13 .... Meter Conference ............................................... Holiday Inn, Kearney
Feb. 25-26 .... Midwinter Conference ........................................ Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

March
March 5 ...... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. Fire Hall, Sidney
March 6 ...... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. Water Shop, North Platte
March 7 ...... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. City Building, McCook

April
April 10 ...... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. Glenn Hawks Service Center, Lexington
April 11 ...... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. Fire Hall, Ord
April 24-25.. Electric Underground ........................................ NECC Training Field, Norfolk
April 30-
March 2 ..... Rubber Gloving Workshop .................................... NECC Training Field, Norfolk

July
July 11 ...... Water Operator Training Workshop ............................. City Hall, Sutherland

August
Aug. 20....... Backflow Workshop .............................................. Ogallala
Aug. 21....... Backflow Workshop .............................................. Grand Island
Aug. 22....... Safety Workshop .................................................. Fire Hall, Aurora
Aug. 27....... Backflow Workshop .............................................. Beatrice
Aug. 28....... Backflow Workshop .............................................. Wayne

September
Sept. 10-12 ... Rubber Gloving Workshop ................................ Wheatbelt Training Facility, Sidney
Sept. 18-20 ... League Annual Conference .................................. Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln