

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

January 2019

## 2019 Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference Highlights

Municipal utility and public works officials from across Nebraska attended the 2019 League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference, which was held Jan. 16-18 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln. Those attending the conference participated in sessions covering a wide variety of topics, including: Municipal Construction Project Management; Stress Management; Drainage Law 101; Communicating Infrastructure Issues to Elected Officials; Financial Indicators for Short & Long Term Utility Success; Basics of Preventing Cyber Attacks; Asset Management for Small Water Systems, Vehicle Safety, Water System Partnerships from Borrowing Tools to Mergers; WARN Update, the Importance of High Quality Infrastructure Inspections;



*David Young, Fiber Infrastructure and Right of Way Manager, Lincoln Public Works.*

Safe Drinking Water Act Update; NDEQ Wastewater Collection System Update; along with Municipal Utility and Public Works Legislative and Regulatory Update.

**Bob Lockmon**, Stuart Utilities Superintendent, became President, taking the reins from

**Paul Markowski**, Ord Utility Superintendent. Markowski will continue to serve as Past President on the Utilities Section Executive Board.

Other officers elected were:

**1st Vice President – Larry Brittenham**, Utility Superintendent, Superior; **2nd Vice President – Eric Melcher**, City Administrator, Aurora; **Past President – Paul Markowski**, Utilities Superintendent, Ord; Board Members – **Dallas Nichols**, Water



*From left: Incoming Utilities/Public Works Section President Bob Lockmon, Stuart Utilities Superintendent, presents plaque of appreciation to outgoing President Paul Markowski, Ord Utility Superintendent.*

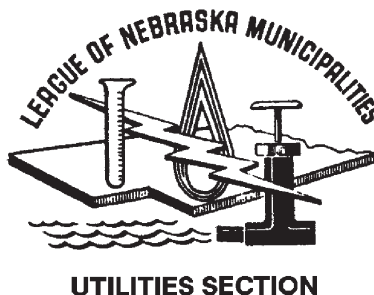
& Street Commissioner, Cozad; **Brian Newton**, City Administrator, Fremont; and **Bill Bischoff**, Utility Superintendent, Wauneta.

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

Those operators attending (scanning or signing in) the Preconference Seminar and the preapproved designated sessions can receive up to 16 hours of wastewater and up to 16 hours of water credit toward their license recertification. Hours will be posted on the League's website [www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org).

*Continued on page 3*

1335 L Street, Lincoln, NE 68508  
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Lash Chaffin  
Utilities Section Director  
Rob Pierce  
Utilities Field Representative

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

### **Infrastructure 110 Years Old!**

The bridge located just south of Sargent that spans the Middle Loup River turned 110 years old. The bridge was to be completed in October 1908 by the Standard Bridge Company. Due to delays, the bridge was not completed until the first week of January 1909. The bridge was closed to vehicle traffic and later listed on the Historic Register in 1992. This was the first steel bridge built in Custer County.

**100 Years of Service!** On April 3, 1909, the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's office was organized by Legislative Act known as the Fire Commission Law. A. U. Johnson is listed as the first state fire Marshal of Nebraska, according to a website reference.

**Rob's Records.** According to

"Rob's records," 2019 might be the 75<sup>th</sup> year that the *Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials* has been published by the League of Nebraska Municipalities.

The League of Nebraska Municipalities was officially incorporated in 1910 (107 years ago) and the Utilities Section was established in 1931 (88 years ago). If printed annually, the *Utilities Section Newsletter*, according to the May 1967 which was listed as Vol. 17, No. 5, would put the first *Utilities Section Newsletter* at about 1950 (68-69 years in print).

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.

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

## **2019-2020 Executive Board**

### *President*

**Bob Lockmon**

Utilities Superintendent  
Stuart

### *1st Vice President*

**Larry Brittenham**

Utility Superintendent  
Superior

### *2nd Vice President*

**Eric Melcher**

City Administrator  
Aurora

### *Past President*

**Paul Markowski**

Utility Superintendent  
Ord

### *Board Member*

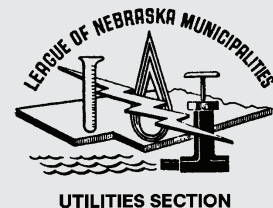
**Dallas Nichols**

Water Superintendent  
Cozad

### *Board Member*

**Brian Newton**

City Administrator  
Fremont



### *Board Member*

**Bill Bischoff**

Utility Superintendent  
Wauneta

### *Ex Officio Member*

**Tobias Tempelmeyer**

City Administrator and  
BPW General Manager  
Beatrice

## Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

**Q-1.** The first producing oil well in Nebraska was located west of what city/village in Nebraska?

**Q-2.** Which of these Nebraska villages/cities are not county seats: Center, Brewster, Chappell, Taylor, Curtis, Stapleton, Bassett, or Geneva?

**Q-3.** What incorporated city/village



is listed fifth alphabetically in the *Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials*?

**Q-4.** This auditorium is located in what city/village in Nebraska?

**Answers on page 9.**

## Utilities Section members

Do you have equipment to sell or a position to fill? Place your free ad in the Classifieds section of the *Utilities Section Newsletter*. This service is a membership benefit.

Contact Brenda Henning at the League office at 402-476-2829, fax to 402-476-7052 or email your ad to [brendah@lonm.org](mailto:brendah@lonm.org).

## 2019 Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference Highlights

*Continued from page 1*  
A special “Thanks!” to the sponsors of the 2019 Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference. *Please note: League or Utilities Associate Members are in bold.*



*From left: Derek Zeisler, Director of Marketing and Energy Supply, Hastings; and Brian Strom, Manager of Customer Accounting, Hastings.*

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- The 2020 Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference will be held Jan. 15-17 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln. Be sure to mark your calendars and attend!



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## **SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER**

### ***Working in cold weather***

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

As winter weather 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-threatening conditions. Recognizing and understanding symptoms of cold stress needs to be discussed at safety meetings and tail gate sessions.

Schedules 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.

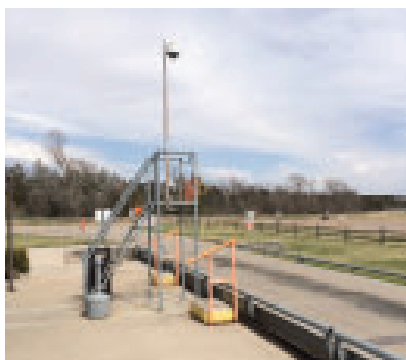
We are often creatures of habit and sometimes resist change, but when environmental conditions change, we need to be adaptable to eliminate safety concerns. Prevention should always be a higher priority than having to manage after having a safety or health issue. Dealing with equipment damage issues, a medical situation or a fatality always costs more in the long run. It is a no-win situation with a range of bad outcomes, including everything from financial losses to injuries and loss of life. Take care and be safe this winter!

## **2019 Solid Waste Screening Workshop held**

A Solid Waste Screening Workshop, sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section, was held Jan. 29, 2019, at the Airport Terminal Building in Hastings. The workshop covered hazardous waste identification, the waste screening process, a confined space safety refresher and a solid waste management industry update.

Safety is a major concern in our landfills, transfer stations and those who provide collection service. The solid waste industry is ranked in the top five most dangerous industries due to the number of fatalities, injuries and incidents.

This workshop met the State of Nebraska requirements covering hazardous waste screening for



employees of transfer stations and landfills. There were 22 participants from 10 different facilities in attendance. Participants received certificates of attendance for their training records. Two more Solid Waste Screening Workshops may be scheduled for 2019, depending on interest or need.

## ***Safety Awards reminder***

AWWA and NWEA has safety applications to recognize water and wastewater departments/facilities for their safety program for the calendar year 2018.

The 2018 application forms can be found on their respective websites (AWWA, NWEA) via a link on the League's website at [www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org).

For wastewater applications, contact Safety Chairman Jeremy Walker at [jwalker@olsson.com](mailto:jwalker@olsson.com) and for water (AWWA) applications, contact Rob at [robp@lonm.org](mailto:robp@lonm.org). Recipients will be recognized at the Annual Conference banquet held in November at the Younes Convention Center in Kearney.

If you wish to recognize your facility for its safety program and activities, be sure to fill out an application.



## Milestone celebration recognition

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

When was your water, wastewater, electric, power generation system established? When were facilities built, improvements made,

etc. If your utility is celebrating a 25, 50, 75, 100-year milestone, let the Utilities Section help you celebrate by recognizing it in the newsletter.

**Remember to recognize your employees' anniversary 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](mailto:brendah@lonm.org), fax 402-476-7052 or call 402-476-2829.

## Credit hours reminder

For those who attended the 2019 Snowball Conference and the 2019 Annual Utilities Conference, your water and wastewater hours are posted on the League of Nebraska Municipalities website at <https://www.lonm.org/utilities/water-and-wastewater-credit-hours.html>.



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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*

**L**oomis, located in Phelps County, had settlers in the area by 1876 and about 1885 was laid out with the Burlington and Missouri Valley Railroad line through the settlement by 1886. On Jan. 21, 1886, a post office was established, school sessions were held and a bank and the Swedish Evangelical Free Church was built. Loomis was incorporated as a village in 1886 and was named for N. H. Loomis, a railroad official. The railroad depot was built in 1887 and a flour mill was in operation in 1888. In 1889, the *Home Guard* newspaper was in circulation and by 1890, a cemetery was established. In 1890, a three-story Monitor House Hotel was operating and the population in 1895 was listed at 100. In 1894, a high school was started with the first 10<sup>th</sup> grade graduates in 1896.

In 1900, the Farmers State Bank was established and a roller mill was operating. In 1909, a brick

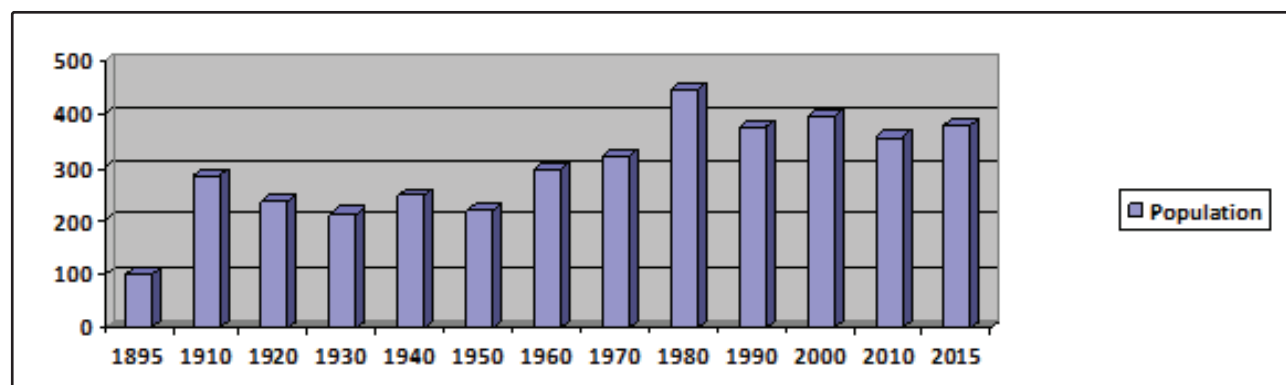
school was built for \$10,000. By 1910, the population was 284 and the Loomis Brickyard was operating. In 1912, a system of cisterns was installed for fire protection, which was supplied by a tank wagon from a pump and windmill. The original source of water was a deep well pumped by a windmill. A wooden tank was erected at the rear of the livery barn in the middle of the east side of the business district. In November 1914, a fire destroyed six frame buildings in the main business district with a loss of \$30,000-\$40,000. The roller mill also was destroyed by fire in 1914. On June 16, 1915, the tank collapsed with all 100 barrels of water spilling over the east side of Main Street. Distribution lines were fed to houses and water rates were \$0.50 per month until the laundry was automated. In 1917, bids for \$3,600 were voted on for the installation of an electric lighting system. The energy was to be obtained from the Intermountain Railway Light and Power Company located in Holdrege. That



*Loomis water tower. July 2001 photo.*

year, a contract was given to the Intermountain Railway Light and Power Company of Holdrege to construct 11 miles of lines to Loomis and Upland with electricity to be transmitted at 11,000 volts. In 1918, street paving projects were underway replacing the dirt

*Continued on page 7*





## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 6*  
streets. From 1920-1930, the population decreased to 213. The brick school was destroyed by fire in 1928 and a new school quickly was rebuilt. Many of the business district buildings were now brick and by 1934, electric street lights were located in the middle of Main Street. In the 1930s, a Public Works Administration (PWA) project was underway (Docket #1061) using a \$10,756 grant with a total project cost of \$24,345.

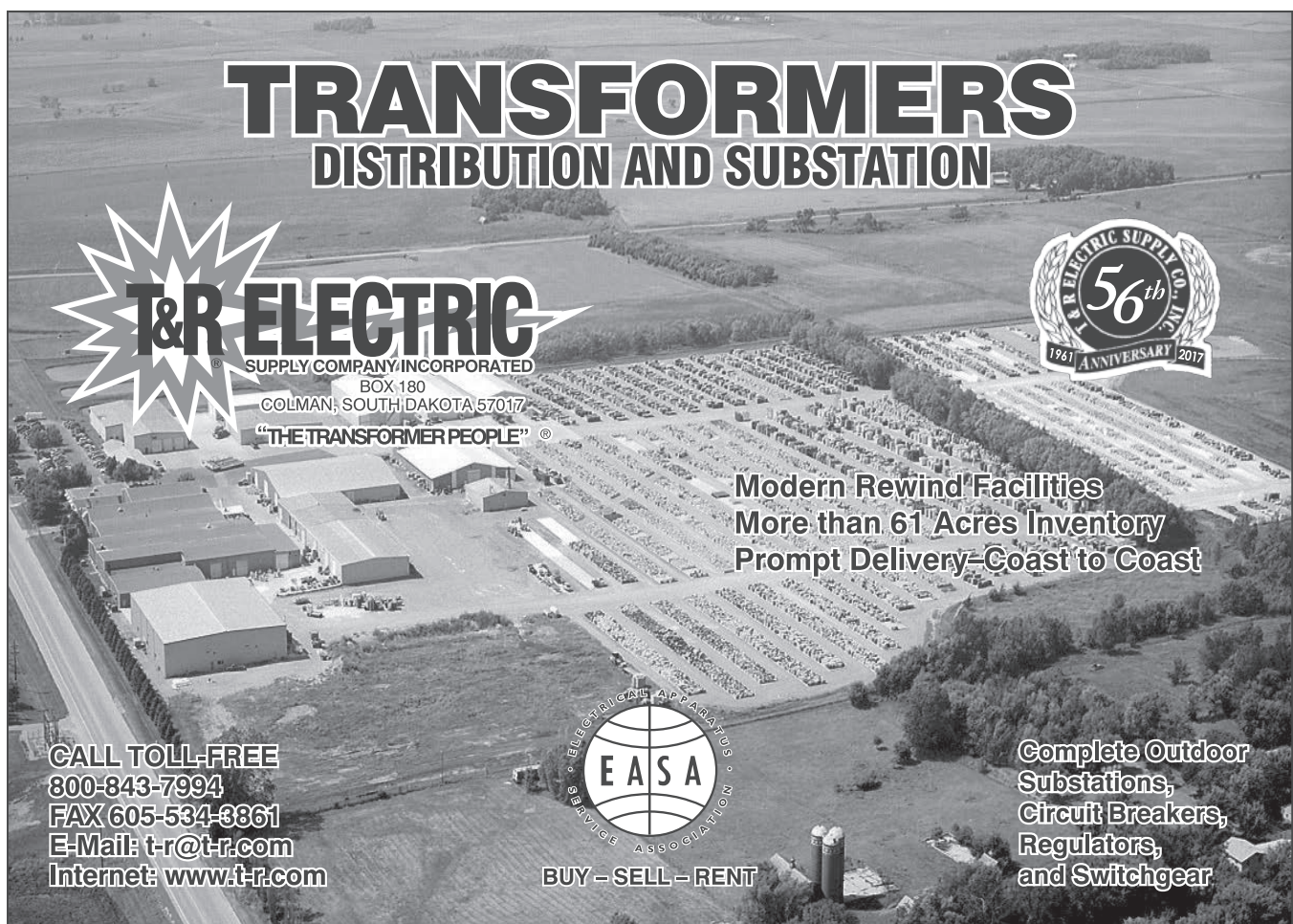
By 1940, the population was

249 and an Egg Cooperative was formed. In 1942, the city auditorium was built on Commercial Street. The Osborn Potato Company (potato dump) was closed in 1946. Although the population dropped to 218 in 1950, an addition was made to the school in 1954. In 1955, bids were let for the construction of a sanitary sewer system with an estimated cost of \$52,000. Construction on the sewer system began in 1956.

By 1960, the village was operating a municipal sewer collection


system and disposal plant with a population of 299. The village also provided garbage collection for residents and businesses. The volunteer fire department had 27 volunteer firefighters and the village auditorium was maintained from a 1/2-mill levy. The natural gas system was operated/supplied by the Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company. The electric distribution system was owned by the village and operated/supplied by Consumers Public Power District.

*Continued on page 8*




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## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 7*

Electric rates were: residential – first 35 kilowatt hour (kWh) at \$0.07, next 35 kWh at \$0.06, next 30 kWh at \$0.04, 100 or more at \$0.025. Commercial rates were: first 50 kWh at \$0.07, next 50 kWh at \$0.06, next 300 kWh at \$0.04, with the balance at \$0.02. For power rates, the first HP was \$1 with additional at \$0.50 and the meter deposit was \$7.50. A new village hall was erected in the 1960s and a school addition was built in 1964. Water rates were a minimum charge of \$2.25 per quarter for the first 13,000 gallons (gals.), the next 4,000 gals. at \$0.20 per 1,000 gals., with the balance used at \$0.15 per 1,000 gallons and a meter deposit of \$5. The population was estimated to be 350 in 1967 and by the 1970 census, it was 323. The electric system by 1970 was served by the Nebraska Public Power District. The population by 1974 was estimated to be 340 and in 1976, a new First State Bank was built.

The population by 1980 was 447, but decreased to 376 by 1990. A new water storage tower was built in 1997, replacing the

old cone topped water tower on Main Street. The village operated two-cell facultative retention lagoon systems located west of town.

The population by 2003 was about 397 and in 2004, the village asked for \$412,500 for a new well, piping, treatment and meter installations. In 2006, *Business Week Magazine* listed Loomis as one of the top 25 places in the United States to raise children. In Spring 2009, an addition was constructed at the school and by 2010, the population was 358. The natural gas system was operated/supplied by SourceGas and ACE. By 2015, the gas system was operated/supplied by Black Hills Energy and Loomis dropped membership with the Utilities Section after being a member since 1978.

Loomis has been an incorporated village for about 133 years (1886-2019) and was a Utilities Section member from 1978-2015. The village maintains a city hall/library building, a park with tennis courts, a water and wastewater system and hard-surfaced streets. The electrical distribution system



*Loomis water tower being built. March 2000 photo.*

is owned by the village and operated/supplied by Southern Power District and the natural gas system is operated by Black Hills Energy.

*References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1964-67, 1970-74, 1977-78, 1982-87, 2000-2018; Water Resources*

*Continued on page 9*

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## Nebraska utilities history

*Continued from page 8 of Nebraska, December 1936; Holdrege Centennial 1883-1983 Commemorative, 1983; Phelps County Nebraska History 1873-1980, 1981; Loomis Nebraska 1886-1986: Life During Our*

*First 100 Years, Loomis Centennial Book 1986; Pages of History Nebraska High Schools Public & Private, 1854-1994; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Phelps County Website, 2009; Electrical World, 1917;*

*Wikipedia 2017-2018; Nebraska Historical Survey Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Phelps County, Nebraska, August 1, 1991; Sargent Leader Newspaper, 1914 and Nebraska Blue Book, 1942, 1946, 1978.*

## Postal rate increase 2019 Backflow Workshops scheduled

The first-class mail letter (1-ounce) rate for postage increased five cents – from \$0.50 to \$0.55 effective Jan. 27, 2019. Shipping services price increases vary by product.

Be sure to adjust your budgets to match the increases. Many municipalities bill via postcard and mail water samples to labs for analysis. The past few years, there have been scheduling and routing changes, which have affected some “time” dependent water samples mailed to the lab. The cost increases are relatively low, but can add up. For more information on changes that may affect your system, be sure to contact your local post office on any changes of schedules, routes and/or costs.

Four Backflow Workshops are scheduled for 2019 to be held in Ogallala (Aug. 20), Grand Island (Aug. 21), Beatrice (Aug. 27), and Wayne (Aug. 29).

The date for the Wayne workshop was listed as Aug. 28, but has

been changed to Aug. 29 in the calendar insert mailed in December.

Watch for workshop brochures in the mail or check on the League or AWWA websites for registration information and agenda.

### “Just For Fun” Answers

**A-1.** Falls City – the first producing oil well was drilled (1,000 ft) on Nov. 1, 1939.

**A-2.** Curtis – Stockville has been the county seat of Frontier County since

1872-73 with numerous challenges throughout the years.

**A-3.** Alda.

**A-4.** York – this auditorium was built in 1940 for \$212,000.



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## Training calendar

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

### 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-  
May 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. 29..... Backflow Workshop ..... Wayne

### September

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

### October

Oct. 1 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Fremont  
Oct. 2 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Plattsmouth  
Oct. 3 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Seward  
Oct. 24 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Tecumseh



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