

Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

April 2020

Office safety in the time of COVID-19

*By Lash Chaffin,
Utilities Section Director*

Most Nebraska cities and villages understand that they are not governed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). However, OSHA standards are an extremely helpful guideline in establishing a safe municipal workplace that would be defensible in a tort claim against the municipality. OSHA recently put out some very helpful guidance on preparing your workplace for COVID-19. That guidance document can be accessed at [OSHA COVID](#).

Among the many relevant recommendations are those that seem specific to office places that accept payments such as municipal offices. In addition to numerous other guidelines, OSHA recommends Administrative Controls, Engineering Controls and some additions to typical Workplace Safety Guidelines.

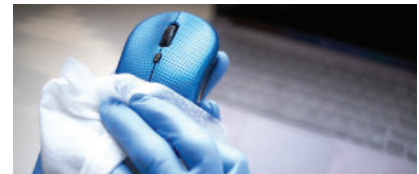
Engineering Controls

- Installing high-efficiency air filters.
- Increasing ventilation rates in the work environment.
- Installing physical barriers such as clear plastic sneeze guards.
- Installing a drive-through window for customer service.

Administrative Controls

- Encouraging sick workers to stay at home.

- Minimizing contact among workers, clients and customers by replacing face-to-face meetings with virtual communications and implementing telework, if feasible.
- Establishing alternating days or extra shifts that reduce the total number of employees in a facility at a given time, allowing them to maintain distance from one another while maintaining a full on-site work week.
- Discontinuing nonessential travel to locations with ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks. Regularly check CDC travel warning levels at the CDC website.
- Developing emergency communications plans, including a forum for answering workers' concerns and internet-based communications, if feasible.
- Providing workers with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviors (e.g., cough etiquette and care of PPE).
- Training workers who need to use protective clothing and equipment how to put it on, use/wear it and take it off correctly, including in the



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context of their current and potential duties.

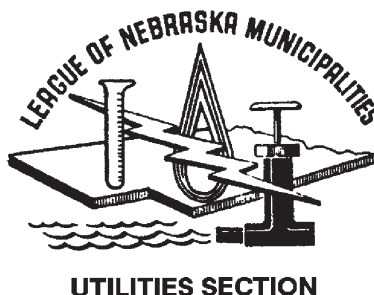
- Training material should be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all workers.

Safe Work Practices

- Providing resources and a work environment that promotes personal hygiene. For example, provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfectants and disposable towels for workers to clean their work surfaces.
- Requiring regular hand washing or using alcohol-based hand rubs. Workers should always wash hands when they are visibly soiled and after removing any PPE.
- Post handwashing signs in restrooms.

These are just some of the highlights in the document. It is important that a municipality read the entire OSHA document to find sections relevant to their specific workplaces. [OSHA COVID](#).

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Lash Chaffin
Utilities Section Director
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Utilities Field Representative

LARM rolls out innovative COVID-19 grant program

Last month, the League Association of Risk Management (LARM) rolled out an innovative grant program to provide funds to LARM members whose volunteer firefighters and rescue squad members are required to quarantine from possible COVID-19 exposure.

This program is for volunteer firefighters and rescue squad members, which mean persons who have been approved and enrolled in those capacities by a LARM member, acting as the duly constituted authority in control of a volunteer department, in accordance with state law.

Any LARM member is eligible for a grant under this program if all of the following are true:

1. The member is a member of LARM in good standing and the volunteer firefighter or member of

the rescue squad is covered under LARM's Workers' Compensation Coverage.

2. The volunteer firefighter or member of the rescue squad has been quarantined or required to self-quarantine by the LARM member, a law enforcement or governmental health authority or a physician as a result of his or her exposure to COVID-19.

For each individual providing firefighting or rescue squad services to a LARM member who meets these criteria, LARM will pay \$120 per day while the individual is actually quarantined, for a total of up to 10 days. Grant funds distributed must be paid by the member to the volunteer firefighter or rescue squad member. Proof of such payment may be required by LARM.

Any member who wishes to



request assistance under this program must do so through an online application made through the LARM website with sufficient detail to show eligibility for assistance and proof that the volunteer firefighter or rescue squad member was on the rolls of the member at the time of the exposure. A member may apply for the grant at any point after the volunteer firefighter or rescue squad member has been quarantined. A member may apply for this grant more than once in order to provide

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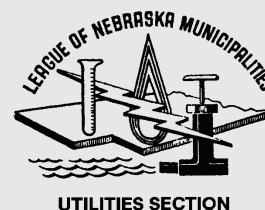
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COVID-19: Governor recommends NOT opening pools until July 15, with no commitment (at this time) that pools can open after July 15

Many municipalities already have decided NOT to open their pools this summer; others are waiting for further “guidance” or a Directed Health Measure (DHM) from Gov. Ricketts. The Governor stated several times during the League’s “Governor/State Briefings” on Wednesday afternoons that he does NOT recommend opening swimming pools before July 15. Although it is not a DHM, the Governor said he will issue further “guidance” by mid-May. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (DEE) issued a memo on April 15, 2020, entitled “Indoor/Outdoor Pool Opening Guidelines and Recommendations during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” The memo (included with this *Newsletter*) emphasizes that at this time, there can be groups no larger than 10 people with a “social distancing” requirement of at least six feet. The memo indicates that some facilities “may be able to meet

these difficult COVID-19 requirements and not contribute to the further spread of the virus through community contact.” Even if the rules change, many municipalities have determined that it would not be economically feasible to open swimming pools and allow only 10 individuals at a time or whatever restriction on the number of individuals in a group may be from month to month. The memo from DEE also “recommends pools, spas and spray parks carefully evaluate these requirements and close or delay opening until the social distancing requirements and the DHM are lifted.” The Governor stated he will keep in place the six-foot distancing requirement with a DHM throughout the fall, even if the number allowed in a group is raised from 10 individuals to a higher number.

Since a few municipalities may consider opening their pools for swimming lessons and/or aquacizing, a **League Swimming Pool**



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Committee suggested several ways to limit the spread of COVID-19, including but not limited to: 1) requiring and recording temperature checks before any individual or employee enters the pool; 2) requiring masks while individuals wait in line for their turn to enter the pool while complying with the six-foot social distancing requirement; 3) limiting the number of individuals allowed in the pool at one time while complying with the six-foot social distancing requirement; 4) maintaining a log with the names of when individuals enter or exit the pool for “contact tracing” if an individual in the pool was exposed to or contracted COVID-19; and 5) disinfecting benches, restrooms and surfaces every hour. Even though the CDC states that chlorine in the water kills COVID-19, social distancing requirements at the pool are still necessary to prevent the spread of the virus. In addition, COVID-19 can stay alive on plastic, metal and other surfaces for two to three days.

Dave Bos, Loss Control Manager for the League Association of Risk Management, recently

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LARM rolls out innovative COVID-19 grant program

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assistance to multiple volunteer firefighters or rescue squad members of the LARM member. The total amount allotted by LARM to this program is \$1 million. Once those funds are paid, the program will be closed to further grants. Grants will be processed and paid in the order that applications are

received and approved by the LARM Administrator.

If you have any questions about the program, please contact Dave Bos at dave.bos@larmpool.org or 402-853-1055, Fred Wiebelhaus at fred.wiebelhaus@larmpool.org or 402-440-9129 or Diane Becker at diane.becker@larmpool.org or 402-314-6827.

COVID-19: Governor recommends NOT opening pools until July 15, with no commitment (at this time) that pools can open after July 15

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opined about opening swimming pools:

"Elected and appointed officials have tough decisions to make. This one is about a trade-off of our kids having a fun place to spend their summer afternoons or potentially saving lives in our communities. While swimming pools are a quality of life issue, they are unfortunately outweighed at this time by COVID-19, which is a quantity of life issue. Some officials had expressed hope that social distancing would keep kids safe in pools. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Preven-

tion (CDC), there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread through properly treated pool water. However, there is a definite concern the virus would spread in the pool bathhouses, restrooms, on pool ladders, slides, and pool lounge chairs. There is always a contamination factor when you put several people in a relatively small area. It would be difficult to maintain social distancing in most swimming pools, especially with a group of children. We'd like to think that swimming pools are a safe place for kids to spend time, but we're dealing with a pandemic with a lot of unknowns. From the

Governor's office to city and village officials and citizens alike, Nebraskans have done a great job thus far in establishing and following DHMs to limit the spreading of COVID-19. But, the fact of the matter is, the virus is still making its way across Nebraska and putting lives in danger. For this reason, schools, businesses, and playgrounds have been closed and many social events have been cancelled across the state. There currently is no vaccine for COVID-19 and not opening public swimming pools for the season is a way our communities can help stop the spread."

CANCELLED, POSTPONED!

The words "cancelled," "postponed," "now closed" and the phrases "until further notice" and "open with conditions" are the new normal, or at least at the time as the COVID-19 virus has altered what we knew as normal. The normal will be constantly changing until a vaccine can be found and/or the virus can be contained. Social distancing practices will likely be in place until a vaccine is determined to be effective.

Internet connections (smart phone/laptop) are getting flooding with a multitude of virtual events of conferences, webinars and meetings. The new norm or at least for a while. For those who drag their feet amid change, it may take time to rely on everything being digital or accessed online. Many may need to re-evaluate or reassess their internet system (hardware, software) or lack of system for future changes

that may occur. Also, remember to upgrade or reassess the cyber security system challenges as scammers have been busy disrupting systems since many work from home.

Snowball Wastewater Conferences scheduled

The dates for future "Snowball" Wastewater Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed with the Kearney Holiday Inn:

Jan. 27-28, 2021
Jan. 26-27, 2022
Jan. 25-26, 2023

Drinking Water Week

Gov. Pete Ricketts proclaimed May 3-9, 2020 as Drinking Water Week.

Nebraska utilities history – Marquette

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*

Marquette is located in Hamilton County and had an Evangelical United Brethren Church started in 1873. On Aug. 19, 1875 a post office was established in the area called Avon. By 1879-80, the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad started work on a grade between Aurora and Central City. One source noted a plat was filed for June 29, 1881 and another noted land was purchased in 1882, which was surveyed and platted by the Lincoln Land Company. The settlement was named Marquette and an older depot building was moved from Dorchester to Marquette. On Dec. 2, 1881 or 1882, the post office called Avon was moved to the new town site. By Fall 1882, some of the businesses included: Farley Bank, First Bank of Marquette, a blacksmith, a drug store, a furniture store, a hotel, a general store and a railroad depot. School sessions were held in 1884 along

with the establishment of a meat market, livery, harness shop and the *Marquette Independent* newspaper. The population by 1885 was 184 and in 1887, the community had a brick First National Bank building. On March 2, 1889, Marquette was incorporated as a village (another source had Feb. 28, 1889). Possibly, a petition was filed in February and approved on March 2. The population was 261 in 1890, but decreased to 201 by 1900.

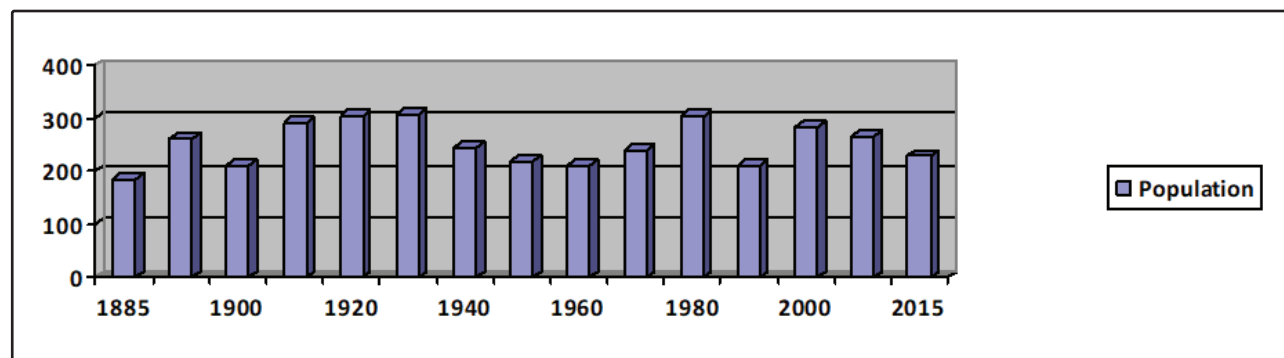
In 1904, an independent telephone company was incorporated. In 1909, a Farmers Elevator was built and the Sandin Auto Company was in operation. The population by 1910 was 290 and a fire destroyed buildings on Marquis Avenue in 1906 and 1910. The village's first hotel and the livery were destroyed by fire in 1910. The early water system consisted of a windmill at the end of Main Street and each house had its own water well with a windmill or cistern. In 1912, an election was held and the vote carried to issue



Marquette Water Towers. 2007 Photo.

\$12,000 in bonds for the installation of an electric light and waterworks system. In July, construction began on the electric light plant and the waterworks, which was using galvanized piping. In 1913, a new school was built and a Farmers State Bank was organized. In 1915, the power plant had a 25 horsepower (HP) gasoline engine with a generator rating of 17.5 kilovolt amperes (kVA). In 1916, the Continental Gas and Electric Corporation started to

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Nebraska utilities history – Marquette

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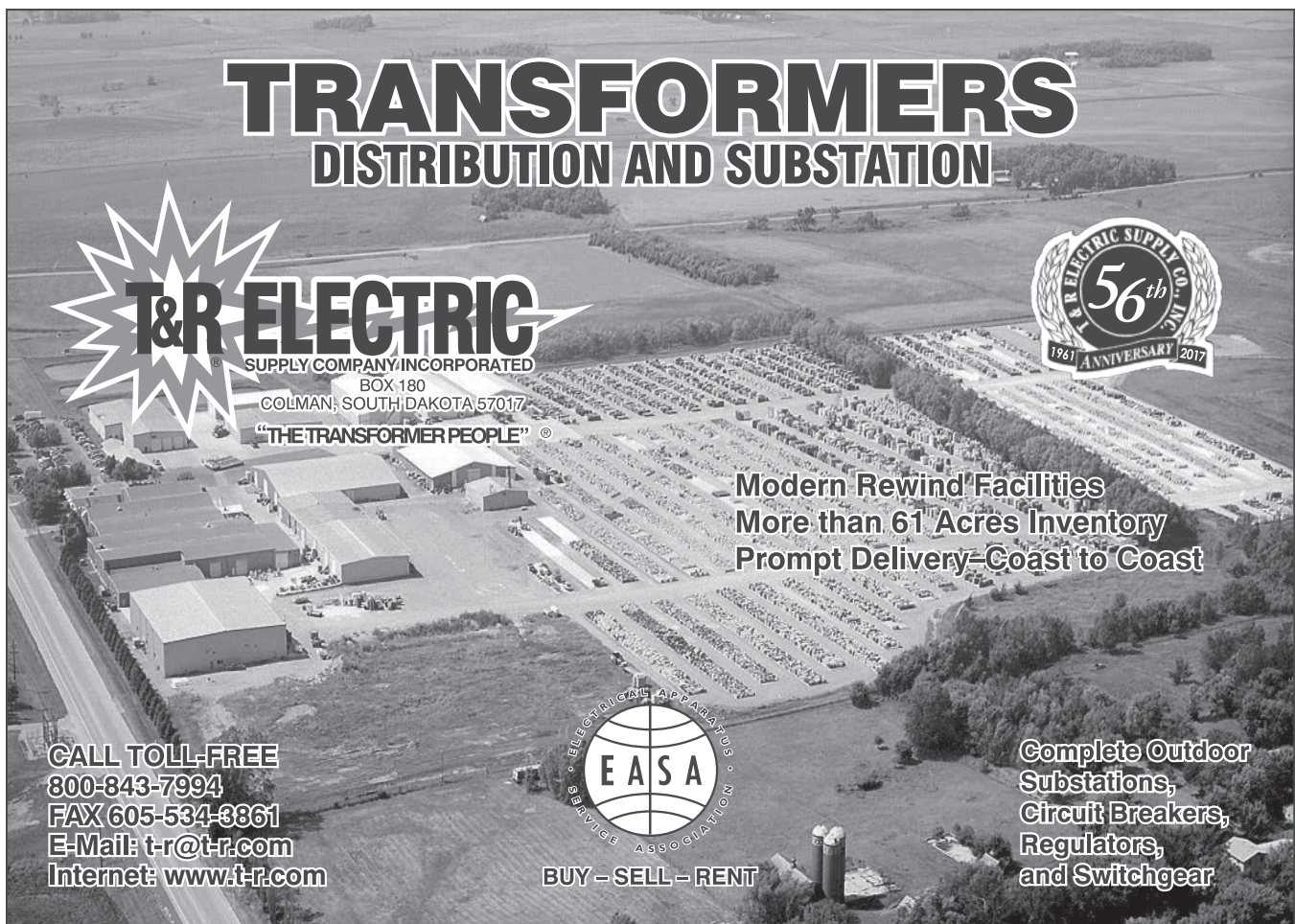
acquire the Marquette Electric Plant. In 1917, an election proposal to sell the municipal light plant to Public Service Company of York passed.

By 1920, the population was 305 and bids were let for transporting school children to and from school. The electric service in 1922 was supplied by the Public Service Company and the fire department acquired its first truck in 1929. In 1930, the population increased to 308 and Marquette

was a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities. The population in 1940 was 245 and in December 1942, the last general store closed. Consumers Public Power District took over the electric system about 1942. In 1947, a new pump and well house was installed along with a 25,000-gallon elevated water storage tank. By 1950, the population was 218 and the electric current was purchased from Consumers Public Power District. The electric system in 1958 had 120 meters in


service owned by consumers with a meter deposit of \$10. Natural gas was operated by Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas System. The municipal water plant had 115 meters (owned by consumers) with 1958 water rates of a minimum \$1 per 1,000 gallons then next 2,000 gallons at \$0.35, next 5,000 gallons at \$0.30, and all over 8,000 at \$0.20 per 1,000 gallons. The summer rates were \$0.20 per 1,000 gallons. The cost of current for pumping water was

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Nebraska utilities history – Marquette

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between \$450-\$600 per year.

The fire department by 1960 had 25 volunteer firefighters and the water system consisted of 100 meters in service. The fire hydrant rental charge was \$300 per year and the cost of pumping water was about \$15 per month. A sewer project was discussed in 1960 and construction started in 1962 with an estimated cost of \$83,146. In 1967, Marquette received a "Best Operation of a Mechanical Treatment Plant" award. The population increased slightly from 201 in 1960 to 239 in 1970. In 1972, the water system added a second well with a pump house and a motor for emergency use was installed. The electric system was served by the Nebraska Public Power District. By 1980, the population was 203 and the grocery store and café closed in 1986. By 1990, the population was 211 and the village was operating a facultative retention lagoon system designed for 0.024 million gallons per day (mgd), which was located on the southeast edge of town.

By 2000, the population was 282 and a new water tower was being

constructed to replace the 1947 tower. The new tower was painted in 2004 by LFW Sandblasting and Painting. The USDA funded the water project engineered by Snyder Engineering Company of Columbus, Caldwell Tank Inc., Reins Association and Castle Construction. The project included the new storage tower, new piping and fire hydrants. The electric system in 2000 was operated by Southern Public Power District. By 2005, the water system had a wellhead protection ordinance. The natural gas system in 2005 was operated by Kinder Morgan Inc., but in 2008, was operated by Source-Gas. Garbage collection service in 2007 was provided by Central Waste Disposal. The village had a community/fire hall with about 25 volunteer firefighters. In 2015, the natural gas system was operated by Black Hills Energy.

Marquette has been incorporated for 130 years and a Utilities Section Member for over 26 years. The village maintains a park, several miles of streets, a water system for the past 107 years and a facultative retention lagoon wastewater facility. The natural

gas system has been operated by Black Hills Energy since 2015.

The electric system has been operated by Southern Public Power District for the past 18 years.

References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1964-1979, 2001, 2003-2018; Nebraska Municipal Review, 1962; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; History of Hamilton County Nebraska, 1936; Nebraska Our Towns...Central Southwest, 1991; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; Maps Tell Nebraska's History, 1991; Wikipedia website, 2016-2018; Centennial History of Hamilton County 1867-1967, 1967; Andrea's History of the State of Nebraska, 1882; Johnson's History of Nebraska, 1880; Municipal Journal and Engineering, 1912; The Electric World, Vol. 59, January 1 to June 30, 1912; Moody's Manual of Railroads and Corp. Securities, Part 2, 1921; Electric Power Development in the United States, Dept. of Agriculture, January 1916; Hamilton County Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, July 2009 and the Nebraska Blue Book, 1942, 1946, 1978.



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Nebraska utilities history – Edgar

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*By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./
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Edgar, located in Clay County, had settlers in the area by March 1872 and a post office established that same year. The area was first called Eden and the first store was located just north in a log structure by June 1872. The St. Joseph & Denver City Railroad was built through Eden about June 1, 1872 and a depot and a section house were built. By May 1873, the townsite was laid out by A.R. Butolph with a plat recorded on April 14. In the fall of 1873, a (24 foot x 30 foot) one-room frame school was built for \$3,000. By 1873, the community had three general stores, a drug store, a livery, two blacksmith shops, a harness shop, a furniture store, a hardware store, a grain elevator, a mill, a flour and feed store and the organization of the Methodist Church. On June 27, 1874, the Baptist Church was organized and a furniture store opened as the settlement had a

population of about 75. On March 15, 1875, a petition was issued to incorporate as a village. A hotel was operating and in November, the *Edgar Exponent* newspaper was published. In August 1877, the "Edgar House" hotel was built and a jewelry store was opened. The *Edgar Leader* newspaper was established and the Edgar Mill was built in 1878, just across the county line in Nuckolls County, which later moved to town as the Edgar Roller Mill. In 1879, the *Edgar Review* newspaper was started and in September, the Edgar Bank was established with the population of about 550.

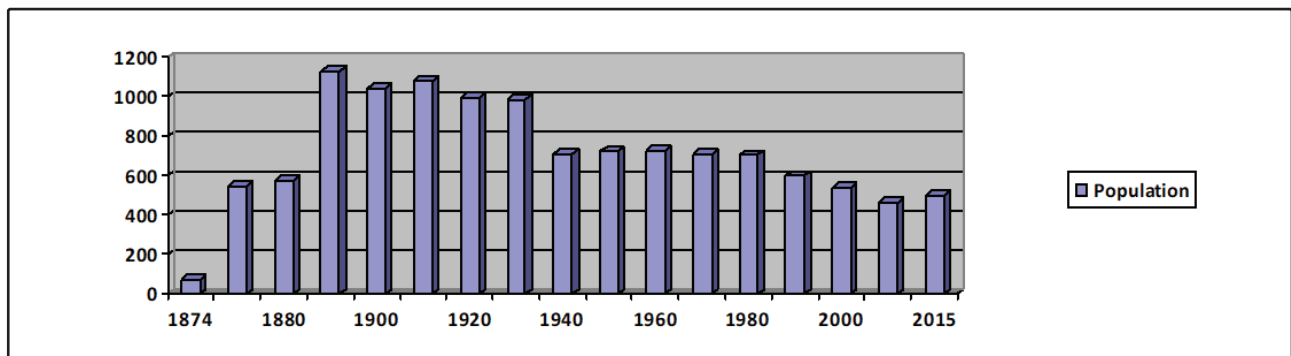
By 1880, the population was 577 (one source 600) and that summer, a new large two-story frame school was built for \$4,300-\$5,200. A millinery was opened, the Odd Fellows was established, and the village boasted a creamery, a cannery, a brick company and several mills. The Clay County Bank was erected in 1883 and by the fall of 1884, the Edgar roller skating rink was built by



Edgar Water Tower. 2000 Photo.

Charles Hansen. The Swedish Lutheran Church was built in 1884, a grocery store opened, and the school had 180 students (1884) with the first high school courses established in 1885. By 1886, the Burlington & Missouri (Nebraska

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Nebraska utilities history – Edgar

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& Colorado) Railroad built to town and the *Edgar World* newspaper was established. In 1887, the Edgar Brick & Tile Company was organized and when the plant was erected, it had a capacity of about two million bricks per year. In April 1888, the Edgar Creamery and a Sweet Corn factory were established. The village installed a waterworks system in 1888, which included a cylindrical water storage standpipe (1888-89). A fire department was organized in 1888 and by July 1889, had a fire house with fire bell, 24 volunteer firefighters, a hose cart with 500 feet (ft) of 2.5-inch hose and a hook/ladder truck. By July 1889, the waterworks consisted of a well with a Cook pump, a 33,057-gallon standpipe with a system water pressure of 50 pounds per square inch (psi) and an average daily consumption of 10,000 gallons. The Edgar Kraut and Pickle Manufacturing Company, which was organized in 1888, completed construction of buildings in 1889.

By 1890, the population increased to 1,105, a telegraph

office and a Commercial Hotel were operating along with two newspapers (*Edgar Post* and *Edgar Weekly Times*). By 1894, “the Stover” building was erected and in 1899, the brick Opera House was built. Water mains were installed in 1897, telephone service came to Edgar in 1899 and the population by 1900 was 1,040. By 1900, some businesses operating included the Union Pacific Depot Station, two grocery stores, a clothing store, two hardware stores, a jeweler, a hotel, a meat market, a shoe store, a livery stable, a millinery, a City Roller Mill, three lumberyards and a general store. In 1905, Edgar first had electricity provided by the Edgar Electric Light & Power Company. In 1909, a two-story brick school was built from locally fired bricks and white stones were hauled from Grand Island for the entrance to the cemetery (Stone Arch). The population was 1,080 by 1910 and in 1912, an experimental radio station built by students took to the air. A municipal power plan, which cost \$5,000, was operated by the Edgar Light & Power Com-

pany with a generator rating of 50 kilovolt-amperes (kVA) in 1915. The plant had a 100 horsepower (HP) boiler, a 60 HP steam engine with a lighting rate of \$0.09-\$0.12 per kilowatt hour (kWh). The village had a municipal water works system with a flat rate of \$0.50 per month, then \$0.25 per 1,000 gallons used. The two municipal wells (100-140 feet deep) were located at the center of the distribution system. The waterworks had a boiler, a horizontal tub, 30 HP Atlas hand stoking pumps, one 173,000-gallon Cook gasoline 10 HP Fairbanks-Morse pumping directly to the steel standpipe. The system had two miles of 4-12-inch cast iron pipe along with 19 Kupferle and Adams fire hydrants (2 ½-inch hose connection), 15 left hand Crane valves, 82 Pittsburg, Neptune and Buffalo water meters. The average daily consumption was 40,000 gallons with 210 service connections and an ordinary pressure of 46-100 pounds (lbs.).

By 1920, the population was 996, the village had a jail (1921)

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Nebraska utilities history – Edgar

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and the unpaved level streets were lit by electric lights operated by a municipal electric light plant company. The public water system consisted of two wells with pump station No. 4 on 3rd Street with one 6-inch diameter well (98 feet deep) pumped by an American well works pump run by a 15 HP motor with a capacity of 120 gallons per minute (gpm). Pump station No.122 on D Street had one 7-inch diameter well (98 feet deep) pumped by a Fairbanks Morse pump run by a 15 HP fuel

oil engine with a capacity of 80 gpm. The 93,000-gallon standpipe was located on Block 1, south addition and the system had a pressure of 47 psi. The distribution system had 3.5 miles of four, six and eight-inch mains and 38 double hydrants. The average daily consumption in winter was 30,000 gallons and in summer was 80,000 gallons. The village had two fire stations, one on C Street and the other on Third Street which had 22 volunteer firefighters (not organized into companies). The fire equipment consisted of two

hand reels with 1,000 feet of hose, one hand Hook/Ladder wagon, two hose houses and a hand fire alarm bell on the tower at city hall. In 1926, a public library was built and a privately owned power plant was operating with rates of \$0.045 per kWh and a minimum of \$1 per month. By 1929, natural gas became available in town and the population dropped to 987 in 1930. In 1937, a rock shelter was built at the South Park by a WPA project. Natural gas was supplied by a private company and by

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Writing an article for the Utilities Section Newsletter

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

Articles can be written on a specific department or an overview of the history of the entire utilities department. Items of interest may be information on the first well in your community, number of services, service fees, the equipment

used, and also the employees that worked in the various utilities departments. Photos would enhance the articles and will be returned unless otherwise instructed.

When writing an article, just answer the simple who, what, when, where, why and how questions. Some examples are:

- *When did the utility begin offering service?*
- *Who were the employees?*

- *Why was the utility/department started?*
- *Where is the facility, office, warehouse or utility located?*
- *What service does the utility offer to the public?*
- *How does the utility or department operate?*

These are just some of the questions to be answered in order to write an article highlighting your utility's past, present and future.

Future Meter Conferences

The dates for future Meter Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed with the **Kearney Holiday Inn**. Please mark your calendar with

the Meter Conferences:
Feb. 11-12, 2020
Feb. 9-10, 2021
Feb. 8-9, 2022
Feb. 7-8, 2023

Years of Service Awards

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 a certificate by emailing brendah@lonm.org at the League office.

Nebraska utilities history – Edgar

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1940, the population decreased to 708. A WPA project constructed a sanitary sewage disposal system in 1940 for \$67,191. By 1950, the population increased to 724 and by 1956, was estimated to be 850. Water rates by 1956 were: 2,000 gallons (gals.) at \$1 up to 10,000 gals. at \$0.25 per 1,000 gals., up to 100,000 gals. at \$0.15 per 1,000 gals., and all additional at \$0.10 per 1,000 gals. The electric system (300 meters) is owned by the village and supplied by Consumers Public Power District with rates for residential: first 30 kWh at \$0.06, next 30 kWh at \$0.04, next 140 kWh at \$0.03, and all over 200 at \$0.0125 with a minimum of 16 kWh at \$1. Commercial rates were: first 50 kWh at \$0.06, next 50 kWh at \$0.04, next 100 kWh at \$0.03, over 200 at \$0.015 with a minimum of 16 kWh at \$1. Power rates were: first 25 kWh or under \$1.50, next 35 at \$0.06, next 40 kWh at \$0.04, next 100 kWh at \$0.025, and minimum of 25 kWh for \$1.50 with \$0.50 per HP. The natural gas system in 1956 was operated by KN Energy Inc. with rates of 1,000 cubic feet (cuft) at \$0.20 per 100 cubic feet (CCF),

next 4,000 cuft at \$0.10 per CCF, next 4,500 cuft at \$0.055 per / CCF, next 50,000 cuft at \$0.05, and all over at \$0.04. The public sewer system and disposal plant in 1958 were maintained by a 1.6 mill tax levy.

The population in 1960 was 730 and the village-owned cemetery was maintained from a 1.5 mill levy. The municipal sewer system and disposal plant were maintained from a sewer charge of \$0.50 per month. The village-owned water distribution system had a meter deposit of \$5 with flat rate of \$1.50 for domestic and \$3 for large commercial users with the water storage standpipe to be painted in 1962. In 1962, the natural gas system was supplied by Kansas Nebraska Gas Company with rates at 1,000 cuft at \$0.20 per /CCF, next 4,000 cuft at \$0.10 per CCF, next 45,000 cuft at \$0.055 per CCF, next 50,000 cuft at \$0.05 and all over at \$0.04. In 1967, the last high school senior class graduated as the school system merged with other schools to form the Sandy Creek High School.

In 1962, the electric distribution system was owned by the vil-

lage and supplied by Consumers Public Power District with rates of first 30 kWh at \$0.06, next 30 kWh at \$0.04, next 140 kWh at \$0.03, remainder at \$0.015, with a minimum of 16 kWh at \$1. Commercial rates were: first 50 kWh at \$0.06, next 50 kWh at \$0.04, next 100 kWh at \$0.03, remainder at \$0.015, with a minimum of 16 kWh at \$1. Power rates were: first 50 kWh at \$0.06, next 50 kWh at \$0.04, next 100 kWh at \$0.025, remainder at \$0.015, with a \$1.50 minimum. By 1970, the population was 707 and in 1973, the Centennial Pool was dedicated. The electric system was owned and operated by the village and supplied by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). From 1980-1990, the population dropped from 705 to 600 and then to 539 by 2000. A sewer disposal project was underway in 1980 and the city was maintaining a facultative retention lagoon system designed for 0.093 million gallons per day (mgd). The natural gas system was owned and operated by KN Energy Inc. in 1990 and by 1999, the city maintained three parks (Centennial Park, Water Tower Park and South Park). By 2000, Edgar was a member of ACE and the natural gas system was operated by SourceGas by 2008. In 2010, the population was 465 and in 2014, Edgar became the 16th incorporated community to be served by Southern Central Public Power District. In 2015, the city received \$250,000 in CDBG funding to improve the water system by installing new water meters. An additional \$79,000 in funding came from the Nebraska

Continued on page 12

Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

Q-1. What was Arbor Day founder J. Sterling Morton's first name?

Q-2. What city of the first class in Nebraska was originally known as Shell Creek

Station?

Q-3. What city in Nebraska won the county seat over Red Willow, only to lose it in 1896 to McCook?

Answers on page 13.

Nebraska utilities history – Edgar

Continued from page 11

Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund to complete the project. In December 2018, another water improvement project was underway due to high nitrates with \$981,000 and \$2.3 million in (USDA) grant funds. A proposal to connect to the Village of Fairfield as tier wellfield lies in a natural drainage area with little farming in the area.

Today, Edgar has a population of 498, has been incorporated for 145 years and a member of the

League of Nebraska Municipalities and Utilities Section for over 40 years (records only to 1977). The electrical system today is owned by the village, operated by Southern Public Power District and supplied by Nebraska Public Power District. Since 2015, the natural gas system has been operated by Black Hills Energy Inc.

References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962-75, 1977, 2003, 2006-2020; Nebraska

Municipal Review Magazine, 1928, 1985, 1989, 2016; Edgar Internet Website, 2004-2010; Pages of History Nebraska High School, 1884-1994; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2008; Public Power Magazine, Vol. 51, Number 1, January-February 1993; Nebraska Out Towns... Central Southeast, 1991; 100 Years, 1872-1972, 1972, Maps
Continued on page 13



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

Congratulations for Incorporation Anniversaries! 115 Years – **Sutherland and Murdock** (1905); 125 years – Kennard (1895); and 135 Years – Diller (1885). *Note: Merna was listed in the January issue as 120 years but the correct time is 130 years, which was in the March issue of the Utilities Section Newsletter.*

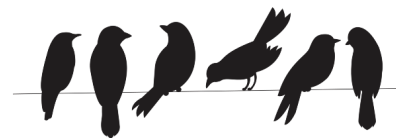
Congratulations for Utility Service Anniversaries! **Fremont:** 135 years water system (1885), 125 years electric system (1895) and 35 years natural gas system (1985); and **Superior:** 80 years of municipal electric service (1940).

Looking for new hires, promo-

tions, awards, certifications, anniversaries/milestones, accomplishments, grants/funding, and projects. Let us help you celebrate these activities, events, and accomplishments!

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 acknowledgment in the *Utilities Section Newsletter*?

If so, please send your information to any of the League/Utilities staff so we can share your excitement with other members.



(Note: Utilities Section Members and Associate Members are in bold type in this article.)

Arbor Day and Earth Day Celebrations

Both Earth Day (April 22) and Arbor Day (April 24) were celebrated a little differently this year due to the pandemic. Some had virtual sessions by computer, some used computer donations to order trees to be planted. This year recognized the 50th year since Earth Day was initiated. How do you or your municipality celebrate and/or honor Earth Day? Some activities could include roadside trash pickup or community wide cleanup days, promotion of recycle collection/drop off activities which can be done and still follow social distancing requirements. Much cleanup can be done without residents leaving their property with a curb side pickup. Aluminum cans and glass containers are apparently being used more at this time of voluntary staying at home. Might be a good time to promote a curb side pick of these items with special instructions on

packaging to protect those picking them up. Use reusable coffee cups, straws and water containers. Unplug the TV and computer for a day and picnic in the backyard with the family (social distancing). Leave the car at home for a day (not as hard with restrictions), take a walk or go cycling. Plant a tree, shrub or a garden. Take the day to look at how you recycle at home and at work and what could

Continued on page 14

“Just For Fun” Answers

- A-1.** Julius, he served as Secretary of Agriculture for President Grover Cleveland.
- A-2.** Schuyler. Originally, the railroad depot/post office called Shell Creek Station was designated as the Colfax County seat in 1869. About 1870, it was renamed Schuyler, apparently honoring U.S. Vice President Schuyler Colfax.
- A-3.** Indianola.

Nebraska utilities history – Edgar

Continued from page 12
Tell A Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Wikipedia website, 2018; Johnson's History of Nebraska, 1880; History of Hamilton and Clay Counties, 1921; The Centennial Sketch of Clay County Nebraska, 1969;

Andrea's History of the State of Nebraska, 1882; Nebraska Blue Book, 1915, 1928, 1946, 1978; Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Reconnaissance Survey Final Report, Clay County Nebraska, August 1, 1991 and the Sanborn Maps, July 1889, 1921.

Arbor Day & Earth Day Celebrations

Continued from page 13
be improved. Are earth friendly cleaning products an option such as those using lemon juice or vinegar water? Use reusable and/or recyclable bags (which are not an option at the grocery store right now). Our municipal landfills get entirely too much waste, which could be recycled such as newspaper, magazines, clean office paper, plastic water bottles, grocery bags, cardboard, etc., that are shortening the life of the landfills. Celebrating Earth Day should not only be a celebration of the environment, but also an economic bonus with

improved aesthetics of our communities.

Arbor Day was started in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska City. The observance date set was April 10, 1872, and it was estimated that one million trees were planted on the first Arbor Day. On March 12, 1874, Gov. Robert W. Furnas proclaimed April 10, 1874, as Arbor Day. By 1885, Arbor Day was named a legal holiday in Nebraska and later, the observance date was moved to April 22 (Morton's birthday). Today, we celebrate Arbor Day on the last Friday of April (this year

was April 24). Many municipalities are members of the Arbor Day Foundation as "Tree City USA" and "Treeline USA" members. The foundation works with tree planting projects, education and community tree recovery following storms. More information on Arbor Day activities can be found at www.arborday.org. Funding opportunities can be found at <https://nfs.unl.edu/documents/communityforestry/cfawards.pdf>.

The City of Norfolk announced in February the launching of 2020 in 2020 Tree Planting Initiative. This initiative of planting 2,020 trees in 2020 parallels the projected damage due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

Construction Zones: A Collection of orange cones!

A new 15,000-square-foot **Crete** Library and community room opened Jan. 30, 2020. The new \$7.4 million facility replaced the old Carnegie Library at 305 East 13th Street, which was built in 1915 with an addition in 1985. A new **Stratton** Village Hall/Library building will be located on 5th Street at the site of the former shop building.

Planning is underway for a new \$7.9 million fire hall facility in south **Beatrice** with plans to open in 2021. A new \$885,000 fire hall is to be completed by July 2020 in **Geneva**. **Giltner** approved in September 2019, construction of a 9,800-square-foot fire hall at an estimated cost of \$1.145 million, which replaced the 60-year old station. A new water tower is being constructed in the City of **O'Neill**, replacing the 100-year-

old 1920 water storage tower on 4th and John Streets.

Projects completed in the past few years include: fire hall facilities in **Columbus** (2019-2020), **Emerson** (2017-2018), **Oshkosh** (2016), **Scribner** (2018-2019) and **Te-cumseh** (2016-2017).

If your municipality has a project planned or construction is underway, let the Utilities Section know so we can help celebrate your growth and improvements.



O'Neill 1920 Water Storage Tower.

Governor proclaimed Public Health Week in Nebraska

On April 6, during the daily coronavirus press conference at the Capitol, Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts proclaimed April 6-12 as "Public Health Week in Nebraska." Gov. Ricketts stated public health workers are working around the clock to keep people safe and healthy.

National Lineworker Appreciation Day

Linemen were honored for their hard work and dedication as first responders and essential personnel on April 18, 2020, for National Lineworker Appreciation Day.

SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

Emergency planning

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

An emergency plan is a comprehensive documentation of procedures. These procedures are based on regulatory emergency standards, past experiences by your system and other utilities along with related educational training information. Emergency Action Plans (EAP) need to cover items such as reporting, evacuation procedures, communication, accounting for personnel, material, equipment needed along with rescue and medical issues. All municipalities/utilities should have written emergency procedures with standard operating procedures (SOP) pertaining to the basic handling of emergency situations. Outdated plans or procedures that are not tested/practiced can lead to damages, injuries and/or fatalities along with financial losses. The reason we need a documented program is to eliminate issues of memory loss,

first time confronted issues, along with rare unforeseen events which require a team, not an individual effort. These programs need to correlate with county and state emergency plans with all involved understanding the plan, the equipment and material along with their contributions. Due to the recent pandemic, during the past few months, many systems have met and worked with their local emergency managers and the local and state health departments.

When events, conditions or unforeseen disasters occur, we rely on our emergency procedures to aid in handling the situation. It seems no matter how good we think the plan is, a situation, event or occurrence comes along that may rock our confidence in the plan. Wind, rain, sleet, snow, tornados or flooding always have been events from which we have implemented emergency plans. Electrical outages, service disruptions, material supply disruption and personnel scheduling are

other items we have encountered but now the current pandemic has created a new set of situations.

Plans often reviewed annually also may need to be followed up directly after an event occurs. Much like firefighters, get together following an event to discuss what went well and what needs improvement the next time. A second follow-up meeting is often held later when individuals involved are in a calmer frame of mind, as one person noted when the “smoke clears.” The pros and cons of the situation are again reviewed with recommendations of changes to the emergency plan. Having some individuals at these meetings who may not have been directly involved can be advantageous. These individuals may be able to bring input outside the box, eliminating the common tunneling of thoughts.

An emergency plan should be a continual improving program. When events drag on over time, such as this pandemic, we may adjust by taking daily notes with weekly briefings or as needed. Documentation will come in handy when an overview of the plan is completed. Remember, nothing remains the same such as technology, equipment, material, personnel, regulations and standard practices are constantly changing.

Sometimes when a disaster or event does not occur often, we may forget the labor force has turned over resulting in loss of institutional knowledge, thus we need to rely on a written plan. At

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

Emergency planning

Continued from page 15
the 2007 Utilities Section Annual Conference, one of the track sessions included “Pandemic Flu Preparations: How to get along when nobody can come to work.” One question might be, did your system's emergency plan get updated using information provided at this session? I vaguely remember the session, so I wonder how many in attendance remembered or took notes. The personnel in the 2007 League *Directory* was compared with personnel in the 2020 League *Directory* and about 68 percent of the affected employees have changed. Of the 32 percent still with their systems, I wonder how many attended the conference? A trade magazine article once noted participants only retain 1-2 percent of the information provided. So, what are the odds an update or change occurred to the emergency plans? For this reason, informational guidelines and related material is often repeated in a variety of formats to different personnel. Barney Whatley had an article discussing “Emergency Planning vs. Contingency Planning” in the (Issue 4/2019) *Rural Water* magazine. Contingency plans are designed to take a possible future event of circumstance (fires, spills, etc.) and put together a backup plan. Actions taken in event of a disaster may disrupt production and put a municipality/company in danger. The goal is to safeguard data/records, minimize disruption and provide a safe environment for everyone as possible. List key risks, prioritize based on impact, create a plan for each event, share and discuss and maintain the plan. Water systems

are required to have an emergency plan, which is reviewed at a minimum of every three years. During the current pandemic situation, the League has been hosting weekly “call-in” updates with Gov. Ricketts, followed by a question/answer session with officials statewide.

Events such as the current pandemic situation require following our emergency plans, but continuously making changes due to triggers or situational changes that may occur. Has your system reviewed your current emergency plan and how has it fared? The best of written plans at this time have been stressed or exposed to different situations encountered the past few months. Last year, the flooding issues caused many to regroup and make additions or subtractions to their plans. Now, we have encountered a different situation stressing our communications and the ability to function “telework” or restricted contact

modes. Some have staggered the workforce schedules to meet the contact numbers and distancing formats. As in any emergency, the better the plan, the smoother the transition and recovery. A good plan aids in eliminating confusion, injury, property damage and hazardous conditions that may arise.

Listed are some links with guidelines for implementing safe, and efficient practices dealing with the current pandemic situation.

[COVID Library Resources](#)

[Older Adults and COVID](#)

[Reopening Guidelines](#)

*Checkout the League's
Facebook page at
www.facebook.com/leaguene.
Be sure to “Like” us.*

Digital Utilities Section Newsletter

The March 2020 issue of the *Utilities Section Newsletter* was the first time the newsletter went out in email (digital) form only. A copy was sent to all clerks and municipal officials' emails in our database.

Hopefully, everyone was forwarded the newsletter via email or a printed copy within

your municipality/company. A few years ago, we sent out a survey to see how many members wanted to receive the newsletter in digital form rather than paper copy. If you are interested in receiving an email copy rather than a printed paper copy, please send your email address to brendah@lonm.org.

Classifieds

Utilities Lineman. The City of Chappell is accepting applications for the position of an additional Utilities Lineman. This position works under the Utilities Foreman and in conjunction with current lineman. Assists in the operation and maintenance of the city owned electric distribution and water system. Applicant must be willing to obtain Grade 4 water operator license. Prefer electrical experience, but will train the right person. Wage is based on qualifications. Quality benefits package. Application can be obtained at PO Box 487, 757 2nd Street, Chappell, NE 69129 or by email to chappellcityhall@hotmail.com. Website is www.chappellne.org. Inquiries can be sent to 308-874-2401 or faxed to 308-874-2508. EOE. Position will be open until filled.

Maintenance. The Village of Cody is accepting applications for a full-time maintenance position to oversee the Village's maintenance needs. Duties include oversight of water and wastewater system, streets, snow removal, equipment care, weekly trash pick-up and disposal, up-keep of village public areas (park, ball

field, arena) and some seasonal requirements (Christmas decorating, 4th of July, etc.). The successful applicant must be able to obtain a grade 4 water license (we will provide training to right applicant if not licensed at hiring). A valid Nebraska driver's license is a must and a CDL will be required if hired. Wage is commensurate with experience. North central Nebraska is a great place to live for the outdoor person. We are a small town of about 150 population located in the Sandhills of Cherry County. The high school and middle school are located in Cody and the grade school is located nearby; together they form the Cody Kilgore Unified Schools. We have a grocery, restaurant, banking, post office, fuel, repair and service shops as well as other services available. We are situated about half-way in-between Valentine and Gordon on Highway 20. Applications are available by calling the clerk at 402-823-4118 or writing to Village of Cody, PO Box 118, Cody, NE 69211. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. EOE.

Street Superintendent. The City of Seward is accepting ap-



plications for a Street Superintendent. Salary is \$4,664-\$5,893/month. Supervises and provides administrative oversight and direction in planning and coordinating the operation and maintenance of the Street Division, Recycling Center, Burn Site, and Compost Site. Salaried/exempt. Physical requirements. Valid driver's license required. Additional requirements listed in job description. Applications accepted until filled. Must meet minimum requirements. Full job description and application: www.CityofSewardNE.gov. Seward City Hall, 537 Main St.; PO Box 38; Seward, NE 68434 (402-643-2928). Reasonable accommodations available for persons needing assistance in completing

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Classifieds

Continued from page 17
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. Equal Opportunity Employer.

Electrical Department Foreman. The City of Sutton, Nebraska (pop. 1502) is accepting applications for a position of full-time Electrical Department Foreman with a pay range between \$28-\$35 per hour DOQ. This is a full-time position which requires knowledge and training of electrical distribution with a preference given for in-field working background of 3-5 years of lineman experience. Preference is also given to applicants with leadership training and/or supervisory experience. The applicant for this position would need to per-

form skilled line work in the operation, construction maintenance, and repair of overhead and underground electrical distribution systems. Experience in construction and maintenance of overhead and underground, primary/secondary is desired. Having experience as a certified Journeyman Lineman is a preference for this position. Education may substitute for some experience. The department is made up of one other lineman. The foreman position will oversee the daily activities and long-term planning of the Electric (Light) department and direct planning for upkeep of the system. Full benefits include health insurance, H.S.A., pension contribution, sick and vacation time, comp. time, holiday time, uniforms, etc. Wage rates are nego-

tiable, but compensatory with qualifications, experience and leadership abilities. Resume, cover letter and application may be sent to: Marla Newman, City Clerk, PO Box 430, Sutton, NE 68979-0430. A complete job description and application can be obtained by calling 402-773-4225 or by e-mailing cityofsutton@gmail.com. Sutton is an equal opportunity employer. Position open until filled.

Electric Distribution Lineman. The City of Sutton, Nebraska is accepting applications for an Electric Distribution Lineman. This is a full-time position which requires knowledge and training of electrical distribution. The individual for the position will perform skilled line work in the operation, construction maintenance, and repair of overhead and underground electrical distribution systems. Experience in construction and

maintenance of overhead and underground, primary/secondary is desired, or department foreman will train for the right individual with appropriately completed credentials. Education may substitute for some experience. Full benefits including health insurance, H.S.A., pension contribution, vacation, comp. time, uniforms, etc. Lineman will work under our electric utility foreman. Wage rates are negotiable, but compensatory with experience. The average wage rate with multiple years of experience is \$26/hour. Resume, cover letter and application may be sent to: Marla Newman, City Clerk, PO Box 430, Sutton, NE 68979-0430. A complete job description and application can be obtained by calling 402-773-4225 or by e-mailing cityofsutton@gmail.com. Sutton is an equal opportunity employer. Position open until filled.

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Electric Underground Workshop scheduled

An Electric Underground Workshop is scheduled for Sept. 9-10, 2020, at the Wheatbelt Training Facility, located

on the north edge of Sidney. More information can be found on the League's website at www.lonm.org.

Training calendar

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

June

June 17-19.....Municipal Accounting & Finance ConferenceWebinar Series

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

July

July 14.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....Community Center, Loup City

July 22-23.....Power Equipment ExpoCANCELLED

August

Aug. 12.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....McCook

Aug. 13.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....Lexington

Aug. 18-20Rubber Gloving WorkshopNortheast Community College, Norfolk

Aug. 18.....Backflow Workshop.....Beatrice

Aug. 19.....Backflow Workshop.....Wayne

Aug. 25.....Backflow Workshop.....Ogallala

Aug. 27.....Backflow Workshop.....Grand Island

September

Sept. 9-10Electric Underground WorkshopWheatbelt Training Facility, Sidney

Sept. 16-18Annual ConferenceCornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

October

Oct. 13.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....O'Neill

Oct. 14.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....Norfolk

Oct. 15.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....York

December

Dec. 2Water Operator Training Workshop.....Fremont

Dec. 3Water Operator Training Workshop.....Crete

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nebraska Pool Owners and Operators

THRU: Steven M. Goans, Deputy Director *SMG*
Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy

Shelley Schneider, Division Administrator *SS*
Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy

FROM: Tom Buell, Section Supervisor *TB*
Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy

Date: April 15, 2020

SUBJECT: Indoor/Outdoor Pool Opening Guidelines and Recommendations during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Indoor and Outdoor Pools

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance for both indoor and outdoor pools during the COVID-19 pandemic. State-Wide Direct Health Measures (DHM) and local health directives at the time of this memo require social distancing and groups no larger than 10 people. There are some facilities that may be able to meet these difficult COVID-19 requirements and not contribute to further spread of the virus through community contact. The Department recommends pools, spas and spray parks carefully evaluate these requirements and close or delay opening until the social distancing requirements in the DHM are lifted. Current CDC guidance states the COVID-19 virus is not spread in pool water provided proper pool chemistry is maintained, but there is a concern for common areas, and people being in close contact with one another and in groups of 10 or larger.

Local health departments, municipalities, or other local jurisdictions may require pools to close because of the ongoing pandemic.

If pools elect to remain open or open for the summer season, the Department strongly recommends observance of the 10-person maximum for the gathering, excluding staff, and a minimum distance of 6 feet between patrons until the DHMs are lifted. Proper pool chemistry shall be maintained and monitored. Common areas should be properly disinfected frequently to minimize the potential for virus exposure. Please contact the Department if you have questions on disinfectant procedures. Precautions and proper steps should be taken to ensure lifeguard safety.

Lifeguards

As described in the Department's March 23, 2020 memo, lifeguard training and CPR requirements were given an extension until June 30, 2020. The Department is granting an additional extension for lifeguard certification through August 30, 2020. For CPR requirements, the Department will accept online courses for an extension through December 31, 2020. Historically, the Department has required CPR training to be in-person. Please note, this is only for renewals, for a new lifeguard to become certified they would need to complete both an in-person lifeguard and CPR certification.

If you have any questions please contact the Department at 402-471-8283.