

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

March 2020

## Utility disconnects and sewer backups in the age of COVID-19

By Lash Chaffin,  
Utilities Section Director

**UTILITY DISCONNECTIONS.** This information might change quickly, but as of the date of this *Newsletter*, this information was current.

**Is there a moratorium on utility disconnects?** The League office has received numerous calls concerning a federal or state moratorium on utility disconnects. No such moratorium exists at this time. However, federal and state officials are watching the situation closely and the Governor has been asked about utility disconnects several times during his daily press briefings. The Governor has consistently said that Nebraskans treat each other with respect in times of crisis. So, your utility might want to take a proactive stance with customers affected by COVID-19 so that federal or state officials don't feel compelled to adopt a strict moratorium on utility disconnects.

**What are other utilities doing?** Both the Lincoln Electric System (LES) and the Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) have temporarily suspended disconnections. Many municipalities have adopted policies to provide for flexibility in dealing with COVID-19 financial issues.

**Possible Municipal Action.**

Below is a possible policy that a municipal utility could adopt until the COVID-19 crisis dissipates.

The City/Village of \_\_\_\_\_ understands that COVID-19 is having an unprecedented disruptive effect on customer's ability to pay monthly bills. Thus, the City/Village will not disconnect any customer for 45 days (subject to extension) under the following conditions:

The customer subject to the disconnection submits in writing a request to suspend the utility disconnection because of financial disruption to the customer's personal or business income from COVID-19.

The customer shall indicate briefly the nature of the disruption such as:

- Loss of income from contracting COVID-19
- Loss of income from caring for family member or friend that has COVID-19
- Temporary or permanent loss of employment
- Income loss due to social distancing
- Loss of income from self-quarantine
- Other COVID-19 related reason
- The customer shall indicate in

writing a willingness to commit to a payment plan for the unpaid utility bills

- The customer indicates that they understand that providing false information to a public utility is a violation of Neb. Rev. Stat. 28-901 and 28-909 and is punishable as a class 1 misdemeanor subject to one-year imprisonment or a fine of \$1,000.

**Is it required that we adopt a policy and what actions are necessary?** It is not required that you adopt a policy, but at this time, it seems better to be proactive rather than waiting for a federal or state moratorium that could be much stricter. Ideally, this policy or a similar policy would be adopted by the Board or Council, unless your municipality feels that this is the sort of procedure traditionally handled by the Mayor or management staff, then you could adopt a policy in that manner. Basically, there are no state rules on how to adopt such a policy. Please consult with your municipal attorney on how to best proceed.

**Where can customers get assistance in paying their utility bills?**

- **Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** offers a variety of assistance programs. DHHS, 301 Centennial Mall South,

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1335 L Street, Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 476-2829  
Fax (402) 476-7052



UTILITIES SECTION

Lash Chaffin  
Utilities Section Director  
Rob Pierce  
Utilities Field Representative

# Utility disconnects and sewer backups in the age of COVID-19

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Lincoln, NE 68509; 402-323-3900 or 1-800-383-4278; <http://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/accessnebraska.aspx>

- **United Way.** United Way 2-1-1; Call 211 (no area code needed). If caller is outside the service area or using certain cell phones, they may need to call 1-866-813-1731; <https://www.heartlandunitedway.org/211-resource-hotline>
- **Community Action.** 402-471-3714; <https://canhelp.org/get-help/>
- **Salvation Army** has multiple regional locations in Nebraska. The website shows the regions. Salvation Army Western Divisional Headquarters, 10755

Burt Street, Omaha, NE 68114; 402-898-7700; <https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/western/>  
**SEWER BACKUPS.** COVID-19 also has created an unexpected issue that is causing a lot of work for city and village employees and will ultimately cost taxpayers money if the situation continues. It seems that because of the toilet paper shortage, many people are flushing other items down the sewer. Municipal sewer systems are designed to treat toilet paper. Municipal employees are very aware that items such as wipes, paper towels, moist towelettes, diapers and cloths plug the city or village sewer system and are expensive to remove. If they are not removed, raw sewage will

begin backing up into basements.

Many municipalities already have an ordinance prohibiting such discharges. In the early 1980s as a condition of getting a Clean Water Act grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, many municipalities adopted a long ordinance probably entitled: **HAZARDOUS AND PROHIBITED DISCHARGES; FLAMMABLE, TOXIC, CORROSIVE AND OBSTRUCTIVE SUBSTANCES; PRELIMINARY TREATMENT.** This ordinance contains provisions making it illegal to flush unauthorized items into the sewer system.

*If you do not have such an ordinance, you can adopt the follow-*  
*Continued on page 3*

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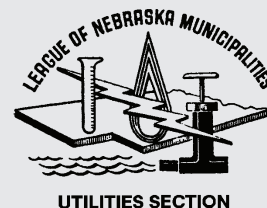
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## Utility disconnects and sewer backups in the age of COVID-19

*Continued from page 2  
ing language:*

No person shall discharge or cause to be discharged any of the following described waters or wastes to any public sewers:

- A. Any gasoline, benzene, naphtha, fuel oil, or other flammable or explosive liquid, solid, or gas.
- B. Any waters or wastes containing toxic or poisonous solids, liquids, or gases in sufficient quantity, either singly or by interaction with other wastes, to injure or interfere with any waste treatment process, constitute a hazard to humans or animals, create a public nuisance, or create any hazard in the receiving waters of the wastewater treatment plant.
- C. Any waters or wastes having a pH lower than 5.5, or having any other corrosive property capable of causing damage or hazard to structures, equipment, and personnel of the sewage works.
- D. Solid or viscous substances in quantities or of such size capable of causing obstruction to the flow in sewers, or other interference with the proper operation of the sewage facilities such as, but not limited to, ashes, cinders, sand, mud, straw, shavings, metal, glass, rags, feathers, tar, plastics, wood, unground garbage, whole blood, paunch manure, hair and fleshings, entrails and paper dishes, cups, milk containers, etc., either whole or

ground by garbage grinders. Admittedly, this is very difficult to enforce, and public information might go much further. The League Association of Risk Management (LARM) has a great poster on its website that encourages customers not to flush items such as wipes, paper towels, diapers, moist towelettes, feminine napkins and pieces of cloth into the sewer system: <https://larmpool.org/welcome-to-our-services/news/news.html/article/2020/03/20/educate-your-citizens-to-not-flush-these-items->

### *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 an-

swer 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.

### **Milestone celebration recognition**

Is your municipality or utility celebrating a historic milestone? We encourage 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.

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.

## Nebraska utilities history – Benedict

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

**B**enedict, located in York County, saw bonds approved in 1886 to bring a railroad to the area. In the spring, grading work for railroad tracks was being constructed. A town site was platted and a hardware store, a hotel and a grocery store were in place and a school was in session in 1886. By 1887, a bank was established and on June 27, the first train arrived at the community. On Aug. 6, 1887, a post office was established in the general store, which was moved from an area farm. By 1890, the Benedict Telephone Company was organized, and the water system consisted of a windmill on Main Street. That year, Benedict was incorporated as a village with a population of about 200. In 1896, telephone lines were extended from York to Benedict.

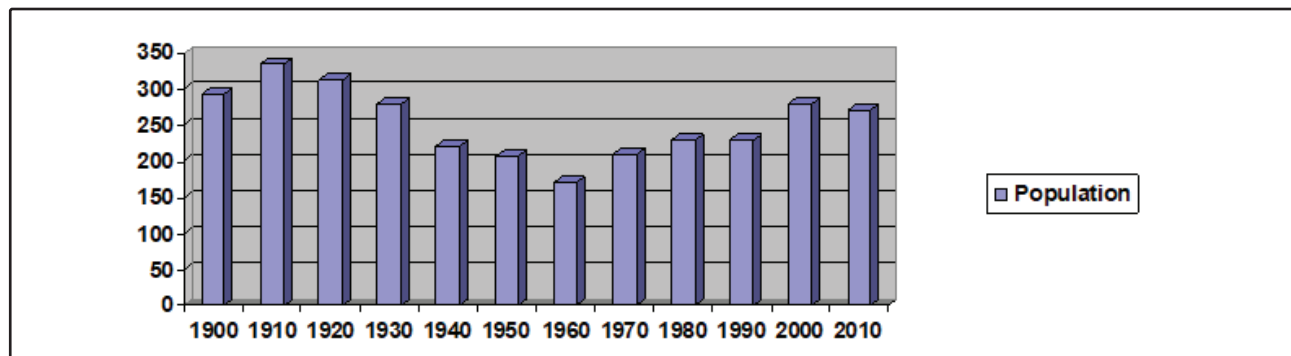
By 1900, the population was 292 and an Opera House was in operation. The Farmer's Cooperative

Grain Company was organized in 1902 and telephones were installed. In 1907, a grain elevator and a VOB Hall was built, but a fire that year destroyed six businesses (\$30,000 loss). The Benedict Electric Light Company was in operation by 1907.

In 1910, the population increased to 336 and a water system was installed in 1913. Also that year, the volunteer fire department was organized. By 1915, the Benedict power plant consisted of a 30 horsepower (HP) engine, boilers, a 60 HP steam engine, and a generator rating of 35 kilovolt ampere (kVA). By 1917, the Public Service Company was supplying electrical current. By 1920, the population was 313, the first high school formed in 1921 and in 1922, the bank closed. Water lines were installed and a new school building housing a gymnasium was dedicated in 1924. The population in 1930 was 279 and the school had 78 high school students by 1939. The population decreased from 221 in 1940 to

206 in 1950. The fire department purchased a new truck in 1947 and had 22 volunteer firefighters in 1958. In 1958, the water rates were \$1.50 for first 3,000 gallons, next 3,000 gallons at \$0.35, all over 6,000 gallons at \$0.25 with a minimum charge of \$1.50. The electric system was supplied by Consumers Public Power District with a meter deposit of \$5 and street lighting cost from \$65-\$70 per month. The population by 1960 decreased to 170, the electrical system was owned by Consumers Public Power District. The telephone system installed a dial system in 1961 and a 16,656-gallon pressure tank was installed in 1964. In 1972, a park was established and the electric system was owned and supplied by the Nebraska Public Power District. In 1974, a new fire truck was purchased, and an addition was added to the school in 1977. The population increased from 209 in 1970 to 228 in 1980. In the 1980s, a new fire hall and a wastewater treat-

*Continued on page 5*





## **Nebraska utilities history – Benedict**

*Continued from page 4*

ment facility was built in 1983.

In 1990, the population was 230 and by 1991, the electric system was operated by York County Rural Public Power District. The natural gas system was supplied and operated by KN Energy Inc. A new handicap accessible community center/city hall was built in 1997-98 for \$130,000. The wastewater system consisted of a two-cell facultative controlled discharge lagoon designed for a capacity of 0.033 million gallons

per day (mgd) for a population of 300 with room for growth. By 2000, the population was 278 with the water system consisting of a 75,000-gallon water storage tower, 24 fire hydrants and an average demand of 25,000 gallons with historic peak demand of 75,000 gallons. The system had a maximum capacity of 720,000 gallons per day (gpd) and the rates were \$30 per month with \$1.60 per 1,000 gallons used. The electric system was operated by Perennial Public Power District

(formerly York County Rural Public Power District). Natural gas service was provided by Kinder Morgan. In 2004, a new water tower was erected along with new water mains and a new well were in operation. The project cost \$805,000: \$250,000 from a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a \$445,000 SRF loan and \$100,000 loan forgiveness from SRF. The water bills increased from \$12 per month to \$30 per month with a rate of \$1.60

*Continued on page 6*

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## Nebraska utilities history – Benedict

Continued from page 5  
per 1,000 gallons used. By 2004, the village had 5.18 miles of streets (3.39 miles hard surfaced), 62 percent curbed and 4 percent with sidewalks. Solid waste was provided by a private collection service with waste hauled to the York landfill.

In 2008, the natural gas system was served by SourceGas. In 2010, water rates were: residential and commercial at a \$42 base rate then \$1.60 per 1,000 gallons. The tapping fee was \$50 with a \$50 reconnect fee. Sewer rates were a flat fee of \$9 with a tapping fee of

\$50. By 2015, the natural gas system was operated by Black Hills Energy and supplied by ACE.

Benedict, with a population of 234, has been an incorporated village for 128 years and a Utilities Section Member for over 30 years. The village maintains a park, a water, wastewater and over five miles of streets. The natural gas system is operated by Black Hills Energy and supplied by ACE. The electric system is operated by Perennial Public Power District.

References: *Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1958,*

*1960, 1962, 1965-67, 1969-75, 1977-87, 1989, 1990-2018; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2000; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; NHHS Sanitary Survey, 2004; Sargent Leader Newspaper, 1903; Nebraska Municipal Review, 2004; Maps Tell a Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; Community Facts Report, 2006; Electric Power Development in the United States, Dept. of Agriculture, January 1916; BLS Report 1905-06, 1907 and the Nebraska Blue Book, 1928, 1946.*

### Staying connected

On staying connected, be sure to keep informed on all cancellations, postponements or rescheduling of conferences, workshops, meetings, deadlines and other events from various associations, local, state and federal sources.

- NDEE announced “All TEST-

ING” in 2020 is indefinitely postponed until further notice due to COVID-19

- The 64<sup>th</sup> Annual (2020) Great Plains Waste Management has been canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- The Electric Rubber Gloving School scheduled in Norfolk for

May 19-21 has been postponed to Aug. 18-20, 2020.

- The Water Operator Training Workshops scheduled for April 7 in Ainsworth and April 9 in Sargent have been postponed to a later date (check our website for cancellation or rescheduling dates).



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# Pandemic: Change of work practices

**Addressing changes to the utility industry and safer home offices:** stay clutter free, maintain a clear line of vision, get a grip, shut drawers, provide adjustable equipment (desks), safe stacking, train on equipment use (safety), keep feet on the floor, provide document holders, correct mouse placement and sitting positions. Wash your hands (after using toilet, collecting animal waste, before/during/after eating, treating wounds, etc.). Avoid shaking hands, touching eyes or face, cough/sneeze into tissues or elbow sleeves, avoid items handled by others such light switches, door handles, doors, etc., and clean those items regularly. In the absence of water, 60-80 percent alcohol type sanitizers. For those working from their vehicles, carry some type of sanitized and clean towels or rags.

**Washing hands:** use running water, lather with soap 15-20 seconds rubbing together, rinse thoroughly and dry with a clean towel. May use towels or gloved hands to open doors when leaving a restroom.

More information on this pandemic situation can be found at the following websites:

- <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>
- [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/pandemic\\_iac\\_final\\_032620\\_508\\_fillable.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/pandemic_iac_final_032620_508_fillable.pdf)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

**Links to state and federal COVID-19 resources:**

- [Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus page](#)
- [Gov. Pete Ricketts' News Releases](#)
- [Updates from the Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)



- **From U.S. EPA:** [COVID-19 Implications for EPA's Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Program](#)
- **EPA:** [Coronavirus and Drinking Water and Wastewater](#)
- **EPA:** [Incident Action Checklist – Pandemic Incidents](#)

More links to information on the coronavirus can be found on the League's website at [www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org).

As Gov. Ricketts keeps reminding us: “Stay home, stay healthy and stay connected!”

**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.

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

**Incorporation Anniversary Recognition:** 85 years – **Murray** (1935); 100 years – **Clinton** (1920); 120 years – **Minatare** (1900); 130 years – **Madrid, Merna** and **Creston** (1890); 145 years – **Syracuse** (1875); 150 years – **Ashland** (1870); 160 years – **Peru** and **Table Rock** (1860); 165 Years – **Tekamah** (March 14, 1855, Incorporated by Nebraska Territory).

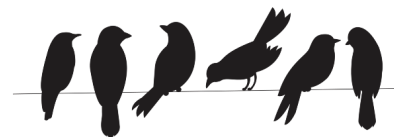
**Congratulations** to the following awardees at the Nebraska Rural Water Association’s 42nd Annual Banquet held in Kearney on March 10, 2020:

**Andy Ditter** of **Genoa** received

the Russell Topp “Doing it Right Award.”

**Nick Taylor** of PeopleService, which operates the **Valley** water system band; and **Bob Birkit** of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), both received the “Outstanding Water Operator Award” from Andy Kahle, Ralph Naber and Tin Thares of the DHHS.

**Best Tasting Water Competition Winner!** The City of **Franklin** Water Department was selected at the “best tasting water” in Nebraska at the Fall Annual Nebraska Rural Water Conference. The panel of judges chose



Franklin over the other 10 systems that provided water for the competition. The judges included **Natasha Byers** of USDA, **Don VanVeldhuizen** of USA Bluebook, **Rollin Davis** of the City of **Ord**, and **Rob Pierce** of the League of Nebraska Municipalities. By winning this competition, Franklin is now qualified to enter the National Rural Water competition in Washington, D.C. Congratulations, Franklin!

Ryan Hurst, Chairman of Water WARN, presented the City of **Auburn** with an “Outstanding Mutual Aid Service Award.”

**80 Years of Providing Municipal Electric Service!** The City of **Superior** purchased the electric distribution system from the Southern Nebraska Power Company in 1940, who had operated the electric system for over 23 years. Superior has had at least limited electric service as early as 1880 (140 years ago).

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.)*

## *G3 Elite AEDS recalled*

The Cardiac Science Corp. issued a voluntary recall on its G3 Elite AEDs due to a software issue. The company encourages customers to remove the device from service and contact the Cardiac Science technical sup-

port group at (262) 953-3500 or 800-426-0337 or the local representative to schedule a software update. If your municipality/utility purchased this brand of AED, be sure to contact the company to schedule a software update.

## **Nebraska Breaktime Trivia** **“Just For Fun”**

- Q-1.** What do the following communities have in common: Amelia, Angora, Archer, Bingham, Champion, Dickens, Enders, Inavale, Lakeside, Martell, Parks and Purdum?
- Q-2.** How many cities of the first class are listed in the

*2019 Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials?*

- Q-3.** What community was one of the earliest in Nebraska (1856) with the following street names: St. James, Hope, Mechanic, Vine and North Court?

**Answers on page 9.**



## **Non-flushable issues**

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

With the stay at home recommendations due to COVID-19 and an apparent lack of toilet paper, it seems many of our sewer systems have been experiencing increased blockages and/or flow changes in the collection system and at treatment facilities. A combination of low, increased or different flow in the collection system along with a multitude of “non-flushables” being flushed can cause problems. The material flushed needs to maneuver through the consumers plumbing into the sewer mains, often traveling several miles through 45-90 degree turns. Many Nebraska systems are mainly gravity flow (a few entirely gravity flow) with occasional lifting by lift/pump stations before arriving at the head works of the treatment facility. At this point, the non-flushable items clog the screens, cominuters and sometimes the impellers of the pumps. All operators who unplug the sewer collection mains and perform the maintenance of cleaning the

screens, cominuters and pumps, know what items cause these problems. Some of the items found include paper towels, sanitary products, baby wipes, cleaning wipes, pre-moistened towelettes (wet wipes), makeup wipes, feminine hygiene products and even extra thick toilet paper can impede the flow.

Other items may include: children’s toys, jewelry, hair, string, small caps (off toothpaste, cleaning containers or medicine bottles), coffee grounds, medication, oil/grease, food products, plastic, latex, cigarette butts, along with rags and clothing. As items flow in piping, they swirl, causing a roping effect essentially braiding items together making them harder to break down. In a Dec. 25, 2019, article by Diane Peters, Barry Orr, an inspector for the City of London, Ontario, was quoted as stating: “Wipes are like kryptonite—they should not be flushed.” Trash your wipes!

All municipal systems need to provide more information to the consumers on what should not be flushed and the consequences if they are flushed. The public

education needs to stress flushing anything other than human waste and toilet paper may cause a backup into their and/or their neighbors' homes. Manufacturer advertising such as flushing golf balls down a toilet or promoting items as flushable often do a sewer system no favors. The costs of sewer backups, clogged lines, damage to equipment (pumps) can increase the cost of maintenance by thousands of dollars. The need to provide the public with information by way of brochures, flyers, newsletters, newspaper ads, media ads (radio, TV), our digital media outlets (web pages, social media sites) along with training sessions is essential. Communication by word of mouth is best as it involves two-way communication rather than one-way which provides for better understanding.

Many of our municipal systems were installed in the 1930s or before so they are pushing the life cycle of the material used for construction. Due to budget and/or labor restraints many systems work on a break/repair work practice rather than proactive replacement.

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### **“Just For Fun” Answers**

- A-1.** All are unincorporated Nebraska communities. Angus is listed in the Nebraska Blue Book so it may have been incorporated at one time, but unsure of the other communities were ever incorporated.
- A-2.** Thirty – population 5,001 to 100,000 (page 13 of the 2019 *Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials*).
- A-3.** Jackson – was originally a Catholic Irish Colony called St. John, located to the north of the present Village of Jackson. Due to rising flood water from the Missouri River about 1860m the settlement was moved south 1.5 miles to the present site of Jackson.

## Non-flushable issues

*Continued from page 9*

Asset management programs by EPA stress the need to be more proactive rather than reactive. This concept needs to be strategically planned, efficiently scheduled with adequate funding. Along with increasing public education, operators may need to step-up their monitoring and preventative maintenance concerning collection systems. With the pandemic “stay at home” policy, the increased use of disinfectant wipes and other non-flushables may be stressing the systems. Sewer department

personnel may need to increase the televising of mains, jetting/ vacuuming of mains along with root control in order to maintain adequate flow to the screening at the headworks.

NDEE's website <http://www.deq.state.ne.us/> has additional information labeled as “Sanitizing wipes are not flushable.”

Some other items on NDEE's website include rescheduling of the “Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Opportunities” webinar. All Wastewater Treatment Facility Operators testing

is postponed. The NDEE Test Dates calendar will be updated when new dates are established. All Onsite Certification Exams are postponed. The 2020 Onsite Certification Exams schedule will be updated when new dates are established. All in person Chemigation training dates have been postponed. The NDEE Chemigation Training Calendar will be updated when new dates are established. For the online exam, go to <https://water.unl.edu/article/agricultural-irrigation/chemigation>.



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## March – Eye Workplace Wellness Month

Half of all eye injuries occur at home, so whatever safety measures we practice at work, we need to follow at home. Over 90 percent of eye injuries can be prevented by wearing protective eyewear and taking some simple precautions. Goggles, safety glasses and face shields should be worn while doing work in our parks, shops and other work environments, especially when dealing with chemicals.

The most effective eyewear

should be snug with a wrap-style frame to keep airborne particles from getting behind the lenses. Using proper lens in good condition, free from scratches and smears can protect your eyes from ultraviolet light and impeding vision while working. Factors such as being rushed, fatigue, distractions or performing unfamiliar tasks can increase the risk of injuring our eyes. Our vision is irreplaceable, so take proper steps to protect your eyes!

### National Doctors Day Proclamation

On March 30, 2020, a National Doctors Day Proclamation was issued by President Donald Trump to recognize the remarkable men and women who treat their fellow Americans.

Thank You!



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## SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

### *Slips, trips and falls*

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

Annually, more than 250,000 workers suffer nonfatal injuries from falls. In 2018, falls were the second leading cause of accidental or unintentional injury deaths worldwide. Each year, an estimated 646,000 individuals die from falls globally, and often, adults older than 65 suffer the greatest number of fatal falls. As our workforce ages (includes me), the odds of a serious injury due to a fall are greater. The reason falls are so common is because of the number of hazards all around us. Slips, trips and falls can occur in offices/shops on ground level, on stairways, from heights (ladders, scaffolding, aerial lifts), and in a variety of weather types (work environments). Preventing slips, trips and falls may be as easy as implementing a good basic house-keeping practice. What works area performing and how we perform the job tasks can minimize injuries. What equipment

we select to use along inspection prior to use can minimize injuries. How we carry or move items such as proper lifting techniques, not over loading or obstructing our vision can minimize or eliminate injuries. If a load is too heavy or cumbersome then the use of material handlers such as forklifts, pallet jacks or two-wheelers or carts should be utilized. Sometime the job may just require an extra set of hands to minimize the load. Proper personal protective equipment or gear should be worn such as adequate footwear. Proper footwear can protect your feet from many hazards. Those hazards may include sharp items such as nails, scrap metal, or other sharp objects. If these are potential risks, then shoes may be needed that have puncture proof (steel sole) or steel-flex resistant insoles. A chemical resistant boot should be worn when working with chemicals. If working with heavy items such as barrels, boxes, steel parts, heavy tools or metal pipe, your footwear should have metal

toe protectors. An insulated shoe may be needed to protect from cold weather and when working around wet or icy environments a good on-skid sole may be needed. In many most cases a good leather boot is adequate. Like any work environment a variety of footwear may be utilized but often in most cases soft soled (tennis shoes), high heels, flip flops, or other open toe shoes are not adequate. Accidents are often unpredictable, but we can eliminate most slips, trips and falls by wearing adequate PPE and paying attention to the task at hand.

### **Safety Awards reminder**

The AWWA and the NWEA has safety applications to recognize water and wastewater departments/facilities for their safety program for the calendar year 2019. The 2020 application forms can be found on their respective websites (AWWA, NWEA) via a link through the League 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 banquets held in November at the Younes Convention Center in Kearney. If you wish to recognize your facility for their safety program and activities, be sure to fill out an application.

### **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.

# 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 linemen. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Chappell, NE 69129 or by email to [chappellcityhall@hotmail.com](mailto:chappellcityhall@hotmail.com). Website is [www.chappellne.org](http://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](http://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

*Continued on page 14*

An advertisement for HDR. The top half features the slogan 'Ideas transform communities' in a large, bold font. Below it, a smaller line of text reads 'At HDR, we're helping our clients push open the doors to what's possible, every day.' The bottom left corner shows the HDR logo. The bottom right corner contains the website 'hdrinc.com' and the phone number '402.399.1000'. The background of the advertisement is a grayscale photograph of industrial machinery, including large pipes and a complex mechanical assembly.

# Classifieds

Continued from page 13 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 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. 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 up-keep 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 negotiable, 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. Experi-

ence 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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**E-MAIL: [power@hkscholz.com](mailto:power@hkscholz.com)**  
**[www.hkscholz.com](http://www.hkscholz.com)**

## 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](http://www.lonm.org).



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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.

## June

June 17-19.....Municipal Accounting & Finance Conference .....Webinar

**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

## August

Aug. 12.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....McCook  
Aug. 13.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....Lexington  
Aug. 18-20 .....Rubber Gloving Workshop .....Northeast Community College, Norfolk  
Aug. 18.....Backflow Workshop.....Beatrice  
Aug. 19.....Backflow Workshop.....Lexington  
Aug. 25.....Backflow Workshop.....Ogallala  
Aug. 27.....Backflow Workshop.....Grand Island

## September

Sept. 9-10.....Electric Underground Workshop .....Wheatbelt Training Facility, Sidney  
Sept. 16-18.....Annual Conference .....Cornhusker 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. 2.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....Fremont  
Dec. 3.....Water Operator Training Workshop.....Crete

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**Memorandum**

To: Certified Wastewater Operators expiring July 1, 2020  
From: Mike McBride, Onsite Wastewater Section  
Thru: Tom Buell, Shelley Schneider, and Steve Goans  
Date: 3/17/2020

RE: Certificate Renewal Extension & Continuing Education Opportunities

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, wastewater operators with certificates expiring July 1, 2020 will have an **additional 90 days** to earn continuing education hours for renewal purposes. Title 197, Chapter 7, 001 allows late renewals up to 90 days beyond the expiration date (commonly referred to as the "90-day grace period"), meaning that you would have until October 1, 2020 to renew your certification. In the past the Department has required continuing education hours to be completed by the initial expiration deadline (July 1); because of the public health emergency, the Department will accept continuing education hours during the 90-day grace period.

**Please note:**

- "in-house" safety, first aid and equipment training may be used for continuing education hours;
- Operators are encouraged to consider online/on-demand continuing education opportunities (see list of approved providers below);
- Contact the NDEE Wastewater Operator Certification Program for assistance and questions.
  - Mike McBride, Program Coordinator, 402-471-4244.
  - Kelly Stallworth, Admin. Assistant, 402-471-4285.
  - NDEE Front Desk, 402-471-2186.

TRAINING PROVIDER	
CEU PLAN	<a href="https://www.ceuplan.com">https://www.ceuplan.com</a>
INDIGO WATER GROUP	<a href="https://www.indigowatergroup.com">https://www.indigowatergroup.com</a>
AMERICAN WATER COLLEGE	<a href="https://www.americanwatercollege.org">https://www.americanwatercollege.org</a>
360 WATER	<a href="https://www.360water.com">https://www.360water.com</a>
WATER OTTER	<a href="https://waterotter.com">https://waterotter.com</a>
SACRAMENTO STATE WATER PROGRAMS	<a href="https://www.owp.csus.edu">https://www.owp.csus.edu</a>

