

Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

November 2020

Mark your calendars and watch your email in-box

To no one's surprise, the 2021 League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference is going virtual. The conference is an opportunity to stay up to date on key issues affecting municipal utilities and public works departments and will be an opportunity to obtain up to 15 water and wastewater operator credit hours and 5 backflow operator credit hours.

The virtual event will be held at various times on Jan. 12-15 and there will be opportunities to view recordings of the sessions to obtain credit hours.

Some of the informative ses-

sions include:

- Landlord Responsibility for Unpaid Utility Bills
- New Disconnect Laws Require New Disconnection Policies and Forms
- Effective Employee Evaluations
- Utility Asset Management
- Health and Human Services Regulatory Update
- Remedies if Someone Messes with the Meter
- Cyber Security for Utilities
- Will Wastewater and Water Workers Become Key Players in viral Pandemic Detection
- NDEE Regulatory Update

- Electric Circuit Fault Indicators
- Construction Law 101: Learn how to avoid problems with your projects
- Flint, Michigan Update
- Utilities and Public Works Legislative Update

Also, as a BONUS to supplement any credit hour needs, every registered attendee will receive recordings of pre-approved pre-recorded sessions of the Cross-Connection Series OR the JASON Safety Series. At their own leisure, attendees can view these for an additional 5 water and wastewater or backflow operator credit hours.

SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

General chain saw safety

By Rob Pierce, LNM Field Rep./
Training Coordinator

Proper personal protective equipment must be worn when operating the saw, Always hold a running chainsaw with two hands. Never use one hand. If you need to use your hand for something make sure you turn off your chainsaw first. The following are general tips of chain saw use:

1. Do not climb a tree with your chainsaw. Climbing trees is

for experienced or professional operators. Purchase pole extension saw if you need to cut branches that require climbing. Never a good idea using a chain saw above your head!

2. Don't rush at task. Have a plan before starting your chain saw.
3. Inspect your chainsaw before



starting to ensure that all the safety features are in working order and the chain is tight on the guide bar.

4. Never cut with the nose or tip of your chainsaw. This will

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Lash Chaffin
Utilities Section Director
Rob Pierce
Utilities Field Representative

General chain saw safety

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- cause kickback and can lead to a serious injury.
- 5. Read every word of your owner’s manual and learn it thoroughly. Not every chain saw is the same so become acquainted with your particular model.
- 6. Understand your limits. Sometimes it’s better to call a professional if your project is beyond your experience level.
- 7. If you’re a beginner start simple with your projects. Initial operation should be under the supervision of an experience operator.
- 8. Do not cut alone. Always have someone nearby – but not close to you in case something goes wrong.
- 9. Always have a good first aid kit nearby. Know what is in the kit!
- 10. Never cut wood being held by somebody else.
- 11. When starting your chainsaw make sure the chain brake is engaged.
- 12. Always hold your running chainsaw with two hands. Never use one hand. If you need to use your hand for something make sure you turn off your chainsaw first.
- 13. Before you refuel, allow the chainsaw to cool down.
- 14. When moving from tree to tree either turn off your chainsaw or engage the chain brake.
- 15. Avoid using a chainsaw on a ladder.
- 16. Use a scabbard to transport your chainsaw.

Snowball Conferences scheduled

The dates for future “Snowball” Wastewater Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed with the Kearney Holiday Inn. Note the upcoming Snowball Conference schedule:

Jan. 27-28, 2021 (Wednesday-Thursday) - This will be a virtual conference.

Jan. 26-27, 2022 (Wednesday-Thursday)

Jan. 25-26, 2023 (Wednesday-Thursday)

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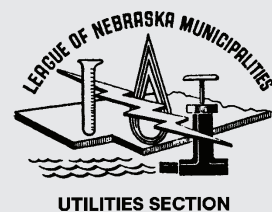
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Cone zone news

During the last year, several water projects have been under construction with some completed in 2020.

Columbus replaced their 1930's fire hall at 14th and 26th Streets, with a new one completed at 46th Avenue and Howard Boulevard.

During the past five years, several cities/villages have built or have plans to construct new firehalls some of which include Oakdale (2020), Beatrice (2020), Bennington (2014-2015), Byron (2015), Colon (2019), Columbus (2019-2020), Dakota City (2017), Emerson (2017-2018), Geneva (2019-2020), Giltner (2020), Grand Island 2019-2020), Lindsay (2019), Lincoln (two stations 2018), Oakdale (2020), Oshkosh (2016), Minatare-Melbeta (2020), Pilger (2018), Roseland (2018), Scribner (2018-2019), Thedford (2018) and Valparaiso (2016).

During the past few years, several water storage towers have either had new construction or existing facilities inspected/renovated. Some of the facilities include Grand Island (2019-2020), Gretna-Lincoln Crossing (2020), Jansen (2019-2020), Hemingford (2018), Henderson, Lindsay (2018-2020), Mead (2019-2020), Oakdale (2018-2020), O'Neill (2020), South Sioux City (2020), and Weston (2020).

The 2020 renovated (painted) Jansen water tower was a finalist in the annual contest held by the Tnemec Company, Inc., a provider of high-performance coatings. Jansen was one of 11 finalists for the 2020 Tank of the Year competition. More info on the competition can be found at

www.tankoftheyear.com. Changes in Oshkosh included new water storage as the old 120 feet (1920) water tower, which was retired in 2018, was on put on National Register of Historic Places in 2019. It was noted in a recent article as being similar to a lighthouse on the plains, with its welcoming presence seen from miles away. This style of coned roof water tower along with the cylindrical style standpipe were once the standard or common across Nebraska. These water tank styles have been slowly replaced with the larger more modern spherical or hydro-pillar style of tower. In October 2020, the Wisner council approved the purchase of land northeast of the city for siting a water tower.

O'Neill replaced its 100-year-old 150,000-gallon water tower and two storage tanks (300,000 gallons each) with a new 750,000-gallon elevated water storage tower.

In 2020, the Village of Mead

completed the new 150,000-gallon water tower that was constructed in the Fall of 2019, replacing the 35,000-gallon tank which was erected in 1913. A water treatment facility also was constructed to remove arsenic, manganese and iron from the source water.



Mead water tower. 2020 photo.

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O'Neill water tower. 2020 photo.

Utilities Section members

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

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

Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

- Q-1. Where in Nebraska is the Klown Doll Museum located?
- Q-2. Where in Nebraska is the Bess Streater Aldrich Home and Museum located?
- Q-3. The “Prairie Schooner” Museum is located in what Nebraska village?
- Q-4. The “Willow Point Gallery” is located in what city in Nebraska?
- Q-5. Do you know where this veteran memorial is located?

Answers on page 16.



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.

Cone zone news

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The Nebraska Crossing water tower at the outlet malls south of Gretna on Interstate I-80 transformed from a white tower with white/red lettering to a black tower with red lettering and a large red “N.”



Nebraska Crossing water tower 2018 photo (left) and 2020 photo (right).

As new towers have been erected, several systems have removed older water towers such as the early 1900s standpipe in Hemingford, the cone topped O’Neill 1920 tower and two 1980s ground level tanks, a cone topped tower in Humphrey and in March 2020, the Terrytown council approved the removal of its 1950s tower.

Several road projects have been underway this fall with barricades, cones and road closures across the state, including the railroad overpass being resurfaced at Ansley, a new lane east of Sidney to the I-80/I-76 interchange. Other projects includes the demolition of the old swimming pool at Clay Center and a new water park/swimming pool erected (2019-2020).

If your utility/municipality has a project underway or completed, let the League office know so we can help celebrate your infrastructure improvements.

Nebraska utilities history – Osceola

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

Osceola is located in Polk County, which was created in 1856 and organized in 1870. Polk County split from Butler County in 1870. Settlers had been in the area by 1868 and a post office was established July 21, 1871. By August 1870, a temporarily town site was located three miles southwest of the present site. One source noted a site was permanently found by October 1871. On Nov. 10, 1871, the county seat vote went in favor of Osceola. By January 1872, the first courthouse was built and by June 1872, John Hopwood Mickey surveyed and platted the town site. By May, a general store was erected, two churches were organized (Methodist Episcopal and Congregational) and by summer, the *Osceola Homesteader* newspaper was established. About June 1872, the post office established in 1871 was moved to new site and by December, a school was built. On Aug. 27,

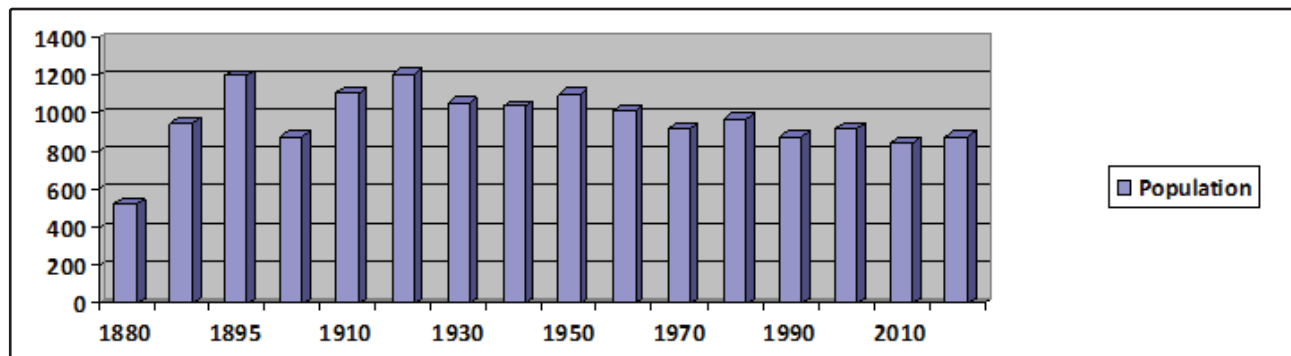
1873, the first *Homesteader* newspaper was published. The Annabil Hotel and stable were in operation by 1874 and by 1876, the settlement may have had some firefighting equipment. On March 1, 1876, the *Homesteader* newspaper's name was changed to *The Osceola Record* and a livery was established in 1877. The Mickey Bank was established in 1879 (incorporated 1881), the Osceola Bank was established and in June, the Omaha & Republican Valley Railroad extended to Osceola. In May 1879, the college named Nebraska Wesleyan was chartered with classes held in the Methodist Episcopal Church. On Dec. 24, 1879, the *Herald* newspaper was founded, later purchased in the spring of 1880 and the name was changed to *Home News*.

One source noted the population from 1879-1880 almost doubled. The census noted 527 in 1880 as another source listed about 700. In February, the first fire destroyed a two-story building on the north side of the square, which housed

the post office, jewelry store and some general merchandise. By 1880, businesses included a Bank of Polk County, an Osceola Bank, a general store, the Louger House (by 1881 was known as Commercial Hotel), *The Osceola Record* newspaper, a dray business and a brickyard. On June 26, 1880, a special meeting of School District #19 was held to vote for constructing a school. A bond issue was approved for 10 years. By 1880, the stage line operating between Osceola and Columbus was discontinued. On Dec. 1, 1880, the *Home News* consolidated with the *Record* newspaper.

The courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1881 and a new wooden boardwalk was installed on State Street in front of the Osceola Bank. In August, a plat was filed and on Aug. 26, 1881, Osceola was incorporated as a village by the county commissioners. Trustees were appointed Aug. 30 and on Sept. 13, 1881, the first meeting was held. The Nebraska

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Nebraska utilities history – Osceola

Continued from page 5

Wesleyan College closed in 1881 and was moved to Fullerton, then later to Lincoln about 1886. By 1882, the general budget had \$100 allotted for street crossings, \$250 for fire protection and by May, a tentative budget of \$330 for the street fund. On Feb. 3, 1883, the village board discussed plans for furnishing a fire engine for the village and by May, the tentative fire protection budget was \$375. By October, the clerk was ordered to prepare an ordi-

nance appropriating money to purchase a fire engine. In 1882-83, a new three-story red brick Polk County Courthouse was built on the southeast corner of the square and trees were planted around the new facility. The Osceola House was built in 1882 on the corner of Nebraska and Main Streets. The Henderson Building was constructed in 1884 and a grain elevator was built in 1885. On March 24, 1885, a motion was made and passed that the city water be shut off at night. Trees were planted

at the courthouse in 1886 and by 1888, a three-story brick “The Palace Hotel” was completed (later called the Osceola Hotel). By 1889, a cigar factory and the Goldenrod Telephone Company were in operation. The water system had an elevated 18-foot water tank, a 600-barrel cistern and a four horsepower (HP) gas engine. A windmill was located behind the county jail building. On April 25, 1889, the board ordered a road scraper for \$150.

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Nebraska utilities history – Osceola

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In 1890, the population was 947 and the council approved \$300 to purchase a hook and ladder truck from North Western Rubber Company of Chicago for \$500; the citizens of the town donated the remainder of the balance. The price included a 100 feet hose and three couplings. The extinguisher is to be on hand early. By February, a hook and ladder company was formed and given the name of J. L. McKeever Hook and Ladder Company honoring a \$25 donation. A pump was bought on March 7 for cisterns on the southwest corner of the square. Following a fire at the Sorghum Factory on September 1891, a fire department soon was established. By 1892, Eugene A. Walrath and A. P. Mickey both installed poles in front of their businesses and attached electric lights operated by dynamos, usually found in the buildings. A fire destroyed all of the businesses on the south side of the city square except the hardware and bank buildings in August 1895. In 1896, Ordinance No. 56 was passed to allow the Nebraska Telephone Company to erect poles

and wires. New sidewalks were installed around the square and by October 1897, the Osceola Roller Mill was fitted for electric lights. By November, O. P. Heald proposed to build an electric light plant, backed by a petition from the citizens. The proposal was accepted and backed by satisfactory contract. The proposal was approved for a third time at the Nov. 23 meeting. It was decided to erect three lights and poles with one at the center of the Methodist Church Street, one in the center of the street crossing of the southwest corner of the public square and one in the center of the street crossing at the northwest corner of the public square. By January 1898, the village planned to have electric lights. On March 2, 1898, O. P. Heald presented the village a bill of \$36 for three arc lights from Jan. 15 to March 1, 1898. By May 4, 1898, the budget for street lighting was \$365, for street \$290 and for fire protection \$220. On July 6, the council moved that electric lights for street purposes be discontinued for three months, July, August and September. The Council contracted with O. P.

Heald for \$8 per month per light for the balance of the year starting Oct. 6, 1898. Along with low funding for lights, there were complaints concerning the condition of the wooden boardwalks in town. By December 1899, the Roller Mill, built in 1885, was using a boiler and steam power and the Omaha Elevator Company was operating using a 6 HP gas engine. In 1889, the grain elevator was destroyed by fire. In December, the fire department building was located on the north side of Main Street and water Cisterns were on all four corners of the courthouse square. The department had 26 volunteer firefighters, one hook/ladder truck, one hose cart with 600 feet of two-and-a-half-inch hose. Two pumps were used in the square for fires along with five public cisterns. The power plant building housed an engine, a 30 HP Dynamo, a boiler, a pump and 85 feet of one-inch hose. The water tower was to be repaired and one source noted the population was about 1,200.

By 1900, the population was 882, the brickyard was in opera-

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Nebraska utilities history – Osceola

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tion and 43 telephones were in use. The library budget in 1903-04 amounted to \$300 and books were purchased in 1904. In 1903-04, the fire protection budget was \$1,000 and streets were \$1,000. Streetlighting budget was \$500 and money also was budgeted to build an engine house and a jail. By July 4, 1903, the 110-foot by 14-foot diameter water storage standpipe was partially completed (capacity 127,270 gallons). In 1904, an election on the water bonds passed 116-28 (4-1). In 1905, water mains were laid and by 1905, the steel water storage standpipe was completed. By 1905, Clarence Miller was providing electricity from the power-plant. Lots went on sale at public auction on Sept. 11, 1906, and by 1907, a newspaper was being published. It was in 1907 that an ordinance was passed to become a city with a Mayor/Council and divided into two wards. In 1908, an ordinance was passed requiring owners of lots to clean the snow from their walks. The city purchased seven acres of land for a

park at a cost of \$1,500. The first Chautauqua held in Osceola was July 4-8, 1908. The park purchased by a group of businessmen in 1909 and was sold to the city in 1915.

The population by 1910 was 1,105 and the Osceola Light plant, located at Polk & Hawkeye Streets, had a 30 horsepower (HP) engine, a dynamo and a boiler fueled by coal. The electric streetlights were kept lit until midnight when they were shut off. In 1911, there were complaints of a bad smell causing nausea by those using the water system. The problem was traced back to not allowing adequate time for the paint to dry in the newly repainted standpipe before being filled with water and put into use. By May 1913, the fire department had 49 volunteers, two hose carts, 600 feet (ft) of hose, a hook/ladder truck and an alarm fire bell on the town hall building. Five cisterns and hand pumps were located on the courthouse block corners with water fed from two, 6-inch deep wells (206 ft & 201 ft deep). The water distribution system consist-

ed of three miles of four-, six- and 8-inch water mains, and 35 double hydrants with a daily consumption of 35,000 gallons. A new school was erected and dedicated Jan. 3, 1913. In 1913, the power plant was enlarged by Clarence Miller, Frank Chauner and crew. The roof was raised as new boilers and engines were installed. The electricity was provided by the C. Miller Electric Light and Power Company for Osceola and Shelby. By 1915, the water system had two miles of four-to-eight-inch cast iron pipe, 30 fire hydrants, 300 various meters, an average daily consumption of 35,000 gallons per day (gpd) and served 300 customer connections. Ordinary pressure was 45 pounds (lbs.) with fire pressure at 125 lbs. The system had two, six-inch wells about 200 feet deep using two American pumps (108,000 gallons each) driven by gasoline 32-hp Fairbanks Morse engines pumping the water to the steel standpipe. New phone cable was laid in 1915 and in 1916, a fire destroyed the Central Meat Market business.

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Nebraska utilities history – Osceola

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About 1917, a paving project was underway for \$23,654.55. Before this, the city used a water wagon to water the unpaved streets to keep dust down. The Continental Gas & Electric Corp. (Public Service Company) acquired the Osceola & Shelby Electric Light, Heat & Power, which had been located in Osceola in 1917. In 1918, Public Service Company connected its Osceola lines with neighboring cities and 24-hour service was available. The Osceola plant was used for emergencies and for supplementary service at times. Power was provided from the Boelus hydroelectric power plant. In 1919, a note was sent to Public Service Company patrons as being unable to get electric current from the water plant at Boelus was unavailable as the steam plant was used for power. Due to a low coal stock, businesses were asked to close at 5 p.m. with no lit window display. All residences were asked to use as few lights as possible. By reducing the electric load in town, it extended the coal stock until more coal could get acquired. A contract for sewer system was let for \$61,299 to construct a sewer disposal plant with collection mains and laterals, which were installed in 1919.

In 1920, the population increased to 1,209 and a special election was held to vote for bonds of \$225,000 for a new courthouse. The vote was 1,601-1,449 and by March, bids were received but none were accepted by December. A fire at the electric plant apparently did not impair service, which was provided by the Public Service Company.

A paving contract was let to L. L. Beye of El Dorado, Kan., on July 9 at \$8.78 per square yard or \$152,544 for the job with the work to be completed by Sept. 1, 1921. A new swimming pool with a bath house was built in 1921. Sewer tile was laid on State Street, just north of the Methodist Church, as the street was paved. A single cylinder Mogull gas engine was used to lay the tiles into the trenches. By 1922, the courthouse was completed for \$203,132.91. In 1924, the city council recommended that the city turn down the municipal light plant proposal due to low rates at the present time. By 1926, the city operated a complete sewer system and maintained two miles of asphalt paved streets. In 1926, the Nebraska Gas & Electric Company planned to rebuild the distribution system and have a new office in town if they were given a franchise by the city council.

The debt owed for the water system was paid in full by 1926. By 1927, Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power provided electricity to Osceola. By 1928, two weekly newspapers (*Polk County Democrat* and the *Record*) were printed in Osceola and the city was a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities.

The fire department in 1929 purchased a Pamono pump, which had a capacity of 400-gallons per minute, a new Anderson hose cart and a chemical apparatus mounted on a truck with motor power.

The population dropped to 1,054 by 1930 and telephone service was provided by the Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Company. The electric service was provided by

the Iowa Nebraska Light & Power Company, which had a capacity of 161 kilowatts (kW) of steam power generation. A boy scout cabin was erected as a WPA project in the 1930s and natural gas lines were installed because the city was using natural gas by 1932. Airport plans were underway in 1933 with plans approved to have 160 acres with a runway running north to south. A special election was held to vote on a \$4,000 bond for swimming pool improvements (4.5 percent interest) in 1935. A new pool filter was installed for \$2,000 and the bond issue for improving and enlarging the swimming pool carried by a majority of 199 votes (332-133). Using WPA labor and materials, the swimming pool opened on July 1, 1936. In 1937, a contract for paving was let on approximately one-half-mile of road on Highways 16 and 81 through town. The Blue Valley Sand & Gravel Company of Fairbury got the bid at \$10,007. The Highway between York and Osceola was paved with armor coat in 1939. That year, the city received recognition for being one of 25 Nebraska cities of 1,000 or more population that had no traffic fatalities during the year.

The population was 1,039 in 1940, the natural gas system was operated by Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power and 1,000 Chinese Elm trees were planted as a WPA project. Other 1940s WPA projects included: the laying of new sidewalks, water mains and some storm sewer mains. The Iowa Nebraska Light and Power sold its electric properties to Consumers Public Power District

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in 1941, but continued to operate the gas systems. Train service was discontinued by 1942 and in 1944, the Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power sold the natural gas service to the Central Electric & Gas Company. On Sept. 19, 1946, a special election was held to vote on \$50,000 in revenue bonds for the purchase of Consumers' properties in Osceola. This included the distribution system, meters, supplies and a half-mile of rural lines. The voters rejected the bond proposal. Workers began razing the 40-year old electric light plant building, which was located a block west of the square. A fire that destroyed the St. Andrews Church in 1946 may have prompted a new white fire truck to be purchased in 1947. Bids were let for a school auditorium, which opened later that year. A garage next to the city/ fire hall was remodeled to house a new truck. A contract for \$6,138 was let and a new public library building was built in 1949.

The population in 1950 was 1,098, electric service was provided by Consumers Public Power District and natural gas service was provided by the Western Power & Gas Company. In March 1951, a new siren was installed on the city hall building and the fire department had 25 volunteer firefighters. In 1951, 34 new light poles with steel Luminaire-type electric lamps were installed around the square and 10 additional wooden poles equipped with the same type of fixture on some of the streets leading off the square. In 1954, new park playground equipment was installed, a new brick First Methodist Church

was built in 1955 and by March, work began on a new elementary school that was completed in December 1956. By 1956, the city maintained a cemetery by tax levy and a waterworks by user fees with residential flat rates at \$5 per quarter. In 1958, construction began for a sewer lagoon facility (\$23,000), sewer system and disposal plant to be maintained from a sewer charge of \$3 per quarter. In 1951 and 1956, new municipal water wells were drilled.

The population decreased slightly to 1,013 by 1960 and the gas system was operated by the Western Power & Gas Company. The city-owned water system had 100 meters in service by 1960. In April 1961, a bond issue was passed for a new city hall and fire station with bids let in December. Construction began in 1962 on the new city hall estimated for \$29,000 with a bond issued at \$25,000. The sewer system and disposal (lagoon) plant was maintained from sewer charge of \$1 per month. The rural fire department purchased a Ford Fire Truck for \$18,000. A brick post office building was erected and the electric system was operated by Consumers Public Power District with street lighting costs at \$139.43 per month and the cost of pumping water was \$1,969.32 per year. In 1964, a new water well was drilled and by 1967, the city constructed a new metal city building. The former hospital and residence of John Mickey became the Polk County Museum in 1967 and was placed on the Historic Register of Historic Places in 1976. By 1968, a streetlight improvement project was planned and in 1969, the city

entered a three-year contract with Consumers Public Power District to replace 90 streetlights over a three-year period.

By 1970, the population dropped to 923 and the electrical system was operated by the Nebraska Public Power District in 1970 and by 1974, was owned by the city and leased to the Nebraska Public Power District. In 1972, the council voted to purchase a flow meter for the new eight-inch well and the natural gas system was operated/supplied by Cengas. A new school as constructed in 1975 with an athletic complex completed in 1982. There was work on the wastewater system in 1983 as the city now had an aerated facultative lagoon system designed for 0.108 million gallons per day (mgd) facility. A new six-inch diameter water well was drilled in 1986. The population decreased from 975 in 1980 to 879 in 1990. From 1985-1992, the natural gas system was operated/supplied by Minnegasco. Peoples Natural Gas operated the gas system from 1994-2003. In 1998, an addition was built on to the city library and in 1999, the fire department had 25 volunteer firefighters with rural protection also provided. The fire insurance rating was an 8 inside city limits and a 9 outside.

By 2000, the population was 921 and since 2003, the electrical system was owned by the city and operated/supplied by Polk County Rural Public Power District. The sewer system was expanded in 2007 with the sewer tap fee for new service at \$100, and rates of \$60 per quarter. The natural gas system from 2004-2008 was

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Nebraska utilities history – Osceola

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operated by Aquila. Since 2009, the natural gas system had been operated by Black Hills Energy. The water system by 2007 consisted of three wells, distribution mains and a 125,000-gallon storage tank. By 2010, a water project costing \$1,008,127 included the installation of new water meters. The population increased slightly from 842 in 2010 to 880 in 2018. The city had a solid waste transfer station with rates for collection at \$24 per quarter for residential and \$24-\$410.50 per quarter for commercial customers.

In early 2018, the city acquired two buildings which were converted into a Civic Center, which also houses the Osceola Senior Center. The renovated facility was opened in December 2018. Osceola is a city of the second class and a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and the Utilities Section.

References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956,

1958, 1960, 1962, 1964-75, 1977-87, 1990-97, 1999-2011, 2013, 2016-2019; Nebraska Municipal Review Magazine, 1925, 1928, 1946, 1962, 1972; Pages of History Nebraska High School, 1854-1994; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2008; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; Nebraska A Guide to the Cornhusker State, 1979; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Nebraska Our Towns... Central Southeast, 1991; Maps Tell Nebraska's History, 1991; The Crete Democrat Newspaper, 1891; Osceola Nebraska Website, 1999; Johnson's History of Nebraska, 1880; Who's Who in Nebraska, 1940; Andrea's History of the State of Nebraska, 1882; Moody's Manual of Railroads and Corp. Securities, Part 2, 1921; BLS Report 1905-06, 1907; Nebraska State Gazetteer & Business Directory, 1890-9; The McGraw Waterworks Directory, 1915; Nebraska Blue Book,

1928, 1942, 1946, 1978 and the Sanborn Maps, December 1899, May 1910.

Need water or wastewater credit hours?

The Utilities Section sponsored webinars held since August 2020 still can be viewed (taped version) for credit hours. The six safety sessions earn one hour each for both water and wastewater credit. The three well sessions earn either 1 or 1.5 hours depending on the session viewed. The asset management session is approved for one hour. The backflow, if all four backflow/cross connection control sessions are viewed, is approved for 5.0 hours toward grades 1-4, 6 and wastewater can be obtained (two one-hour and two 1.5-hour sessions).

If interested in registering for one of these sessions to earn credit hours, contact the League office. Each individual needing credit hours must register, answer the survey questions and supply a signed statement by a responsible charge (supervisor) in order to receive credit hours. These "COVID-19 Safe" sessions will help operators in obtaining credit hours and useful safety information.

Registrations for these sessions can be found on the League website at www.lonm.org.

If you have question on attending or obtaining credit hours, contact Rob at rob@lonm.org or call 402-432-9172.

30th Annual Snowball Conference in 2021 to be held virtual

Due to the increased (record numbers) rate of COVID-19 positives and fatalities, the Snowball Conference will be a virtual conference. The webinar sessions will begin Jan. 19 and continue through Jan. 22.

Plans to highlight the 30th year will be postponed and hopefully we will be able to plan a late celebration event at the Snowball Conference scheduled in 2022.

Registration forms soon will be listed on the League website at www.lonm.org.

Credit Hours Reminder for those who attended the 2020 Snowball Conference and the 2020 Annual Utilities Conference, your water and wastewater hours are posted on the League's website at <https://www.lonm.org/utilities/water-and-wastewater-credit-hours.html>.

Classifieds

POSITIONS.

Public Works Director. The City of York has a key leadership position open. This position is responsible for directing the public works department including the divisions of water, wastewater, streets, landfill, airport and parks. This position also administers building, zoning and flood plain regulations.

Requirements include: a minimum of five years of progressive public works experience and responsibilities in municipal engineering or public works management. Possession of or ability to obtain, street superintendent and responsible charge certifications. Must possess a valid driver's license. Registered Professional Civil Engineer in the State of Nebraska is preferred.

Send resume and application to: City Administrator, City of York, PO Box 276, York, NE 68467 or email to jfrei@cityofyork.net. Job description and Applications are available on the City's website (www.cityofyork.net) or by contacting the City office at (402) 363-2600. Position open until filled.

Electrical Lineman/Foreman. The Village of Morrill is accepting applications for a full-time Electrical Lineman/Foreman. The ideal candidate would have at least five years or more previous experience in construction, repair, maintenance and operation of the electric system. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen and possess a valid driver's license with the ability to obtain CDL within 6 months of hire.

Applications are available at Village of Morrill 118 S. Center

St, Morrill, NE 68358 or online at www.villageofmorrill.com. Completed applications, along with a cover letter and resume, should be emailed to electrical@villageofmorrill.com or delivered to the Village office address above or mailed to PO Box 305, Morrill, NE 69358 and will be accepted until position is filled.

Salary package negotiable DOE, with excellent fringe benefits, including vacation, sick time, retirement, medical, and holidays.

Village of Morrill does not discriminate on basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services. EOE

Electrical Lineman: The City of Ord Utilities, Ord, NE is currently seeking applicants for a lineman position. It is desirable that candidates be graduates of a lineman program, but it is not required. Duties include working on both energized and de-energized distribution lines; building and maintaining underground and overhead systems; and installation of new services. Requirements include graduation from high school or equivalent, a valid Nebraska driver's license and residency in the City of Ord. Applications must



be received by Dec. 11, 2020. Salary based on experience and qualifications; competitive benefits. Applications may be requested from the Ord City Office, 201 So. 17th, Street, PO Box 96, Ord, NE 68862 or 308-728-5791. EOE

FOR SALE.

The Village of Marquette has the following items for sale:

- Wisconsin Air Cooled motor. VG4D 154 Cubic Inches 37 HP;
- GM Motor - propane, 3.0 L 2.2 Hours;
- 125 Gallon Propane tank, 5 feet long 24" diameter; and
- Mosquito Sprayer for parts use only, sprayer for sale only trailer not included - Clarke Covgar 8HP Briggs & Stratton Engine Purchased 7-23-97.

[Click here](#) for pictures of the items. Send questions and/or bid(s) to Haley Bamesberger, Marquette Clerk/Treasurer, at villofmarquette@hamilton.net.

Free cloth masks still available

The Nebraska WARN still has cloth masks available for water, wastewater and stormwater systems.

The masks are available to those systems that need them. The initial FEMA grant, which was secured by the WARN group, consisted of

50,000 masks to be made available to water systems. The contact sites and phone numbers are listed in the attachments with this newsletter. More information also can be found at the AWWA website at <http://awwaneb.org/words/2020/q2/clothmasks/>.

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

Congratulations! Incorporation Anniversary Recognition: 110 years – Lushton and Bellwood; 130 years – Campbell and Lawrence (1890); 135 years – Arcadia, Hay Springs and Gordon; 140 years – Byron, Hardy, Tilden (as Burnett) and Wellfleet (1880); and 150 years – Schuyler (1870).

Nebraska Section American Water Works Association (NSAWWA) Awards Banquet. The following individuals received the Silver Drop Award; Dennis

Watts (Norfolk), Tom Ourada (Crete), Mary Maher (MUD) and Daryl A. Kottwitz, retired formerly HDR. *The Silver Drop Award recognizes twenty-five cumulative years of AWWA membership.* **Water Safety Awards:** Certificate of Achievement – Class I – **City of Chadron**; Certificate of Recognition – Class II – **Beatrice** Water Department and Class II – **Wahoo** Water Department. The “Outstanding Volunteer Award” – Marc Rosso, **City of Lincoln**.
Operator Scholarship Awardees:



Susan D. Keller (**Broadwater**) and Shelby Steenson (**Wolbach**). These awards were given at the Annual Nebraska Section American Water Works Association (NSAWWA) held virtually Nov. 6, 2020.

The City of Omaha was recog-

Continued on page 14

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Annual League Conference virtually held

The Annual League Conference was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference began Oct. 7, 2020, with a preconference covering "LB 424" on governing regional land banks.

The conference sessions were held Oct. 8, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21 with the Business Meeting held Oct. 22, 2020. Topics at the conference included: a Recent Nebraska Supreme Court Decision Regarding Landlord Responsibility for Tenant Utility, Making Excellence the Norm, Not the Deviation, Rural Broadband Issues Update, Overview of the "Imagine Nebraska Act," Leadership for Today's Problems, Update on Reimbursements for COVID-19 Related Expenses From CARES Act Funds, Understanding Municipal Finance and Fiduciary Duties, Understanding Tax In-

crement Financing (TIF) Versus Micro-TIF and a 2020 Legislative Session Update. The virtual conference was well attended with about 129 total participants from across the state.

A special thanks to the following sponsors for their support of the conference: **Advanced Consulting Engineering Services**, AMGL CPAs and Advisors, **Black Hills Energy**, **Burbach Aquatics, Inc.**, **D.A. Davidson, Evluma, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig**, **Heartland Consumers Power District**, **Johnson Service Company**, **Kirkham, Michael & Associates**, **LARM**, **Nebraska Public Power District**, **Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC)**, **NMPP Energy**, **NPAIT**, **N Solar**, **Piper Sandler & Co.**, **Schemmer**, **T&R Electric Supply**, and **Vacanti Municipal Consulting**

(Associated members listed in bold.)

Mark your calendars as

the 2021 League Annual Conference is scheduled for Sept. 22-24, 2021.

APPA "eSafety Tracker" Program

The American Public Power Association (APPA) has launched a safety tool called "eSafety Tracker" to help reduce costs associated with injuries, illness medical expenses, along with plan/record safety meetings, job briefings and perform investigation reports. The eSafety Tracker was funded in part by

a Demonstration of the Energy 7 Efficiency Development (DEED) program grant. DEED members can get a discount on their subscription and eSafety Manual licenses. If interested, more information can be found at www.publicpower.org and click "shop" or email Products@PublicPower.org for a quote.

Crow Line

Continued from page 13
nized as "Waste Diversion Project of the Year" at the Nebraska Recycling Council's (NRC) virtual Fall Conference and Awards ceremony. The conference was held over four afternoons from Oct. 13-16, 2020. Short videos of all the award winners are featured on NRC's website www.nrcne.org.

Utilities Section members and associate members highlighted in

bold.

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 acknowledgement in the Utilities Section Newsletter?

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

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Nebraska utilities history – Wolbach

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

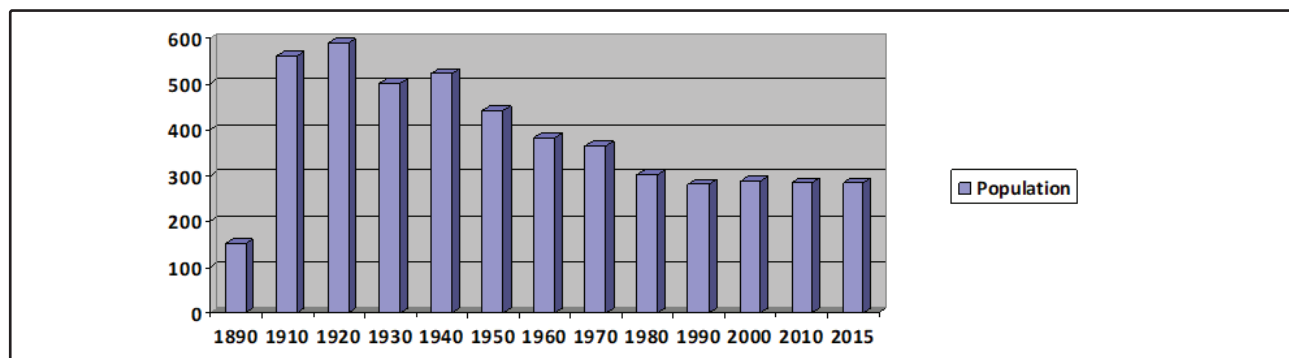
Wolbach, located in Greeley County, had settlers in the area by 1860 and in 1887, a railroad line was constructed through the Spring Creek Valley of Greeley County. By Spring 1887, the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad arrived in the area with a townsite platted by Lincoln Land Company. The town site was named for Sam Wolbach, a Grand Island businessman who owned considerable land in the area and offered financial assistance to the early settlers. A hotel structure was built (later moved up hill in 1889 and enlarged). On April 27, 1888, a post office was established, a saloon was erected and by 1890, the population was 150. The community boasted a hotel, a lumberyard, a blacksmith, a general store, a grain elevator and the B & M Railroad Station. By 1893, a flagpole had been erected in the middle of the dirt Main Street. On Aug. 7, 1900, Wolbach

was officially incorporated as a village (although one source noted November 1887, which was possibly a plat date). In 1902, the schoolhouse was destroyed by fire and by 1905, a new two-story brick school was completed and opened. The population increased to 563 by 1910 and by 1917, the village had a waterworks system and a Wolbach Electric Light Plant. In 1920, the population was 589 and by July 1923, electric current was purchased via transmission lines from the Van Ackeren Bros. Cedar Rapids Power Plant. The *Wolbach Messenger* newspaper was published in 1928 and the population increased from 501 in 1930 to 523 by 1940. The population decreased from 442 in 1950 to 382 in 1960. The village took a hit from a tornado in 1964, leaving about \$750,000 in damages. The electric standby generation and distribution system was owned by the village and leased to the Nebraska Public Power District in the 1970s. From 1970-1980, the population dropped

from 366 to 301. In 1989, the village had 16 businesses on Main Street. In 1988, a wastewater treatment plant was built. In 1990, the village population was 280 and operated an activated sludge extended aeration system wastewater treatment facility designed for 0.034 million gallons per day (mgd) with an aerobic digester sludge treatment. The electric distribution system was operated by the Nebraska Public Power District.

In 2000, the population was 287 and the electrical system was operated by Howard-Greeley Public Power District. In 2001, the junior high sports merged with Greeley. By 2002, they merged with Greeley High School and formed the Greeley/Wolbach (red, blue and green) Titans, formerly the blue and white Wolbach Mustangs and the red and white Greeley Bulldogs. By 2005, a project was underway to map the water and wastewater systems for \$3,300. A project started in 2007 with fund-

Continued on page 16



Nebraska utilities history – Wolbach

Continued from page 14
ing of \$220,860 Federal, \$76,620 State and \$88,000 FHAL money. Many of the streets are paved/curbed with some curbs with gravel and street signs. In 2007, the solid waste was collected by a private collector service, Mid Nebraska Disposal Inc. In 2010, Wolbach received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of \$167,000 to install a wastewater ultra-violet (UV) disinfection system and to install a comminutor, influent submersible pumps and a sludge tank wagon. An additional loan of \$50,000 from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) state revolving loan fund (SRF) completed the project. By 2010-

2011, the water rates were flat rates of: residential – \$15.50, commercial – \$20, with a \$75 deposit and a \$150 tapping fee. The sewer flat rates were: residential – \$21, commercial – \$22.50 with a \$150 tapping fee and \$25 reconnect fee. A new metal 5,500-square-foot Community Center was constructed in 2012 using a \$278,000 CDBG.

Today, Wolbach has a population of 283 and has been an incorporated village for 120 years. The village has been a League of Nebraska Municipalities member for more than 40 years and a Utilities Section member for more than 10 years. The village maintains a village hall, a public library, a cemetery, swimming pool, two parks with athletic fields, a swimming pool and a community center. The gas system consists of individual

propane tanks and the electric distribution system is operated by Howard-Greeley Public Power District.

References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964-75, 1977-87, 1990-2020; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Nebraska Municipal Review, 2005; Nebraska Our Towns...Central & North Central, 1989; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place Names, 1960; NEDED Website, 2005 U. S. Gazetteer Greeley County, 1890; Wolbach Website, 2009-2012; 2010 Census, 2010; Water & Sewer Rate Comparison Study, NeRWA, 2010-2011; Nebraska Blue Book 1920, 1928, 1942, 1946; and the Nebraska Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1917.

“Just For Fun” Answers

- A-1. Plainview
- A-2. Elmwood
- A-3. Dalton
- A-4. Ashland
- A-5. Adams, Nebraska-Adams Cemetery

Years of Service Awards

Remember to recognize your employees' anniversary milestones. The Utilities Section 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 info@lonm.org or fax 402-476-7052.



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Training calendar

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

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

December

- Dec. 2 Water Operator Training Workshop Fremont **Cancelled**
- Dec. 3 Water Operator Training Workshop Crete **Cancelled**
- Dec. 3 Water Tower Operation and Maintenance Webinar
- Dec. 10 Solid Waste Screening Workshop Webinar

January

- Jan. 13-15 "Virtual" Utilities Public Works Section Annual Conference
- Jan. 20 Water Operator Training Workshop Blair
- Jan. 21 Water Operator Training Workshop Nebraska City
- Jan. 26 Water Operator Training Workshop Holiday Inn, Kearney
- Jan. 27-28 "Virtual" Snowball Conference

February

- Feb. 9-10 Meter Conference Holiday Inn, Kearney
- Feb. 22-23 "Virtual" League Midwinter Conference



NEWARN is pleased to announce that FEMA is making a significant quantity of washable, cloth face masks available for potential distribution to all requesting water and wastewater utilities/purveyors in Nebraska. We have received 50,000 cloth masks for Nebraska water and wastewater utilities. Accordingly, masks will be initially allocated to requesting utilities at the rate of five (5) masks per full time employee. The masks are not limited to only operators; all full-time employees in the utility (associated with water/wastewater) are eligible. As supplies may be limited, requests will be filled on a first-come first-served basis. Masks will be available at the distribution locations starting May 13th.

If you are interested in requesting FEMA masks through this program, we ask that you please fill out the form attached to this letter and bring it to the distribution location.

Please fill this form out completely and accurately so we have all pertinent data and contact information. If you have multiple PWSID or NPDES numbers for service areas within your system, please provide only the number for your primary service area. (Note: Requests will only be accepted by completing the official request form)

To facilitate distribution of masks throughout the State, we have established eight (8) primary points of distribution (PODs) which should allow for reasonable access to the masks for most utilities.

The location of each POD (along with associated contact information) is provided in this letter. Please go to the POD associated with your field service area as indicated on the map.

Nebraska Rural Water has volunteered to pickup and deliver masks to water/wastewater systems that cannot send employees or need help receiving masks. Please Contact Randy Hellbusch at 402-443-8535 or email randy@nerwa.org to coordinate.

We ask that you please follow all recommended social distancing and other protective requirements and guidelines that may exist at the time of your pick-up or delivery.

Please note that there is NO GUARANTEE of mask availability for all utilities in our State through this program. At this time, it is recommended that you not cancel or reduce any previous orders or ongoing supply arrangements that you may have made with other sources.

We are pleased to be able to assist with this effort as a means of supporting all water and wastewater utilities in our State as they adapt to the many challenges at hand, while also continuing to provide reliable and essential services for all. If you have any questions regarding this program or if you have problems in accessing/filling out the mask request form contact me or one of the contacts associated with the points of delivery.

Thank You

Ryan Hurst

NEWARN Chair

Hurst@wahoo.ne.us

402-443-3222

Mask Information/Instructions

As a reminder these masks are not PPE. However, you should use the same protocols for putting on and taking off.

How to put on a face mask

1. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask.
2. Remove a mask from the package and make sure there are no obvious tears or holes in either side of the mask.
3. Determine which side of the mask is the front. (similar to a shirt stitching)
4. Instructions for the type of mask you are using. *Face Mask with Ear loops*: Hold the mask by the ear loops. Place a loop around each ear. Mold or pinch the stiff edge to the shape of your nose.
5. Pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth and chin.

How to remove a face mask

1. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the mask. Avoid touching the front of the mask. The front of the mask is contaminated. Only touch the ear loops/ties/band.
2. *Face Mask with Ear loops*: Hold both ear loops and gently lift and remove the mask.
3. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
4. After use you can wash the mask up to 15 times. Follow instruction on the packaging for laundering.

Mask Example:





NEWARN Mask Request Form

Please use this form to request face masks for your utility. Please note that there is NO GUARANTEE of mask availability for all utilities in our State through this program.

Date: _____

Number of Masks Requested (Limit 5 per Full time employee): _____

Utility Name: _____

Utility's Full Address: _____

PWS ID or NPDES Number (combined utilities use one or the other): _____

Utility Type (mark one)

Water

Wastewater

Both

Estimated Population Served: _____

Number of Full time Employees: _____

Utility Contact Name (First and Last Name): _____

Utility Contact's Cell Phone: _____

Utility Contact's Email: _____

Mask Pickup Location _____

*******Mask Pickup Instructions*******

Please follow all social distancing guidelines when picking up masks.

- Please contact the Point of Distribution for your field service area for specific instructions on pickup.
- Have the form completed before you come to pickup the masks. You will not be given the masks if you do not turn in a completed form!
- If you are having Rural Water or another utility pickup your masks they must turn in the form on your behalf.

Field Service Area 1

Beatrice Utilities

Address for pickup

1806 S 16th Circle Drive

Beatrice, NE 68310

****Residential address****

Hours available

M-F 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Contact

Steve Kelley

(402) 228-5217

skelley@beatrice.ne.gov

Field Service Area 2

Wahoo Utilities

Address for Pickup

605 N Broadway

Wahoo, NE 68066

Hours available

M-F 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

Contact

Ryan Hurst

(402) 443-3222

Hurst@wahoo.ne.us

Field Service Area 3

City of Norfolk

Address for Pickup

300 South 49th

Norfolk, NE 68701

Hours available

M-F 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

Contact

Dennis Watts

(402) 844-2210

dwatts@norfolkne.gov

Field Service Area 4

City of York

Address for Pickup

100 E 4th Street

York, NE 68467

Hours available

M-F 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

Contact

Aaron Dressel

(402) 363-2604

adressel@cityofyork.net

Field Service Area 5

City of Kearney

Address for Pickup

Kearney Utilities
1220 E 26th Street
Kearney, NE 68847

Hours Available

M-T 7:00 AM-4:00 PM

Contact

Anton E. Jelinek

(308) 233-3259

ajelinek@kearneygov.org

Field Service Area 6

City of O'Neill

Address for Pickup

O'Neill Utilities
401 E Fremont St
O'Neill, NE 68763

Hours Available

M-F 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

Contact

Curtis Kizzire

(402) 340-7827

ssidak@cityofoneill.com

Field Service Area 7

City of North Platte

Address for Pickup

401 E 7th St
North Platte, NE 69103

Hours Available

M-F 7:30 AM- 4:00 PM

Contact

Leroy Kramer

(308) 530-7758

Kramerel@ci.north-platte.ne.us

Field Service Area 8

City of Alliance

Address for Pickup

1313 W 1st Street
Alliance, NE 69301

Hours Available

M-F 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

Contact

Paige Johnson

(308) 762-1907

pjohnson@cityofalliance.net

