

LIVELines

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Trade Experts Share Industry Insights

Linemen from throughout the state gathered for the 2015 Lineman Seminar held Nov. 10-11, 2015 in Wisconsin Dells. Trade experts were there to provide information on areas that linemen deal with on a daily basis.

The use and availability of flame-resistant (FR) clothing has become increasingly common due to the continued development and updating of industry safety regulations and voluntary performance standards. Representatives from Amarel Uniform company provided education on FR clothing to best meet the needs of each individual electric utility. The importance of PPE can impact not only worker safety, but your company's bottom line. Safety professionals choose to implement FR clothing programs for various reasons, ranging from simply protecting workers from ignition risks such as arc flash.

Many lineworkers are confronted with dogs in their work environment. Hector Hernandez, owner of First Class Dog Training, entertained and educated attendees on personal safety and dog bite prevention. As a regular speaker for private and public companies, utility companies, the United States Postal Service and police departments, Hector demonstrated how "reading the dog's body language" can teach individuals the difference between a harmless encounter and a potentially dangerous one, as well as how to react to both. He challenged attendees to think seriously about dog behavior and body language, as well as know how to stay safe in all potential encounters.

Bryan Singletary, owner of Practical Energies and past speaker of MEUW events, reviewed customer service techniques and the benefits of working for a public power utility. When it comes to meeting the needs of customers, employees have a choice. By doing one little thing each day that shows the customer you are different and value their business, you can make a big impression. Public power systems are unique in their ability to serve the end use consumer. This presentation demonstrated to employees how to use this unique business model to provide a higher level of customer service.

To wrap up the seminar, attendees learned the "ins and outs" of the transmission system that provides utilities with power. Representatives from ATC provided an overview of the company, planning and operations. By learning the role ATC plays in the electric system, attendees can be prepared for how they may interact with them in the future.



Bryan Singletary reviews principles of great customer service.



MEUW Executive Director's Corner

By Matt Bromley, MEUW Executive Director

As I begin my new position as MEUW's executive director, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and share with you my excitement about the future of the organization.

For the past eight years I have had the privilege of serving as executive director of the Customers First! Coalition (CFC), an organization formed to protect the interest of electric customers with respect to policies affecting the electric industry. Wisconsin's public power community, represented by MEUW and WPPI Energy, helped form the CFC over fifteen years ago and have been key participants ever since.

Through my tenure at the CFC, I have gained an appreciation of the special and important role municipal electric utilities serve, and the benefits that public power systems offer their communities. I am excited to be part of MEUW with a mission focused on helping members provide affordable and reliable electric service to their communities.

My enthusiasm is rooted in knowing that MEUW has a superbly proficient and professional staff guided by dedicated members who volunteer their time and expertise serving on MEUW's board of directors and committees. The staff and volunteer members strive to ensure that MEUW is responsive to your needs, and that it provides quality services, effective advocacy, and first-rate job and safety training services.

Moving forward, I intend to look carefully at how MEUW can best position itself to help members effectively respond to the demands of a changing electric utility industry. New and changing technologies, economic and environmental regulation, and workforce issues can present significant challenges to members and impact their fundamental goal of providing low cost, reliable electricity to their customers.

As executive director, I will try hard to see the organization from our members' eyes and understand what's important to them and why. To gain this perspective, I hope to meet and listen with as many members, government officials, community leaders, and key partners in the coming months as I can. I thank you in advance for sharing your ideas with me so together we can continue to make MEUW succeed. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 608-837-2263 or mbromley@meuw.org with any questions, comments or concerns.

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- Cybersecurity Webinar Series: The Role of Joint Action Agencies in Addressing Cybersecurity **Dec. 10**
- Cybersecurity Webinar Series: Developing a Cybersecurity Plan **Jan. 7**
- Public Power's Unique Business Model and Governance Structure **Feb. 11**
- Electric Utility 101 Series: Generation **Feb. 16**
- Rating Agency Outlook for Public Power **March 16**

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MEUW Safety Corner

By Chris Schlehta, MEUW Director of Safety Services

We spend a lot of time talking about how to prevent work related injuries and illnesses, as well we should, but how you handle an injury/illness event is equally important. Having an established and consistent process ensures that each incident is handled appropriately, properly documented, and that the needs of the employee and the employer are adequately met. Employers are required to document their annual numbers of injuries and illnesses, but how that is accomplished is largely undefined. Additionally, there is no requirement for an employer to have a “Return to Work Program”

that specifies how to accommodate an injured employee rejoining the workforce with less than 100 percent function, yet this single program can result in substantial benefits to both the employee and the employer. As with any other successful program or project, the success lies in the proper preplanning and training being put into place before the event transpires.

The first step after ensuring the employee receives appropriate medical attention, is to start documenting the incident. For the purposes of illustrating this process, I’m going to refer to the MEUW Supervisor’s Incident Report (SIR) that is provided to every member participating in the Regional Safety Management Program. This is a basic form that captures the “5 W’s” (Who, When, Where, What, Why and How) of an incident. Most worker’s compensation insurance companies have a variation of this form available for free, however, if you would like a copy of the form that our MEUW staff utilizes, please contact me.

The form has several purposes beyond capturing what basic information is needed to memorialize the event. First and foremost the incident report establishes the first set of facts used during the incident investigation process to determine how to prevent the incident for reoccurring and injuring another employee. Second, the information creates the necessary paper trail to protect the rights of the employee. I’ve seen multiple instances where legitimate claims were denied by the insurance company because the employee failed to document/report the incident in a timely manner. Ideally, the employee (or supervisor if employee is incapacitated) should report any workplace incident by the end of the work day, and no later than three days later.

A good example of this would be an employee sustaining a minor cut to the hand, and dismissing it as minor injury with maybe a Band-Aid to cover it up. Two or three days later they then notice that the cut appears to be abnormally red and swollen. Another couple of days go by when they realize that small cut seems to be getting worse. At this time, they notify the employer and seek medical attention only to discover they have an infection. The claim is submitted to the insurance company who now rejects it based on lack of evidence that it was work related. The burden of proof lies with the employee; how do you prove something happened a week ago at work when nothing was reported to the employer? The SIR that MEUW utilizes captures information for Near Miss/Close Calls, Injury/Illness and Property Damage. This ensures a consistent approach to address any unsafe acts or unsafe conditions, and ensures that any incident is properly documented from the beginning.

After the employee has received medical attention, some may require medical limitations during their recuperation from the injury. This is where having solid Return to Work program will ensure a consistent set of expectations for both the employee and the employer. Having a Return to Work program is beneficial to both the employee and the employer. Over the years, a number of medical studies have concluded that the sooner a person is able to regain mobility and engage in physical activity following an injury, the faster they will heal. Years ago, someone going in for a significant surgery may have been hospitalized for days before being allowed to walk around. Now, the medical community recognizes the importance of getting a person

on their feet and ambulatory as soon as possible. By challenging the patient to become active as soon as possible, it increases blood flow to the site of the injury increasing the speed of healing. Beyond the physical benefits to the employee becoming more active, there are significant mental and emotional benefits to the employee that were found through the course of these studies. For many of us, the friendships and relationships we’ve developed with our coworkers are a significant component of our daily lifestyle. When those interactions are abruptly interrupted by an injury or illness, it leaves a mental and emotional void in our lives. Similarly, those coworkers also experience feelings of a void when a coworker is missing due to an injury or illness. By

...continued on page 4

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Sales Tax on Used Motor Vehicles Sold by a Municipality

Following is an important reminder from Boardman and Clark for utilities regarding the sales tax on used motor vehicles sold by a municipality. In 2009, the law changed with respect to the applicability of the state sales tax on sales of used motor vehicles by municipalities. Municipalities are now required to collect sales tax on the sale of motor vehicles.

As of October 1, 2009, a municipality that sells a used motor vehicle is required to collect sales tax on such sales. Specifically, Wis. Admin. Code § Tax 11.05(2)(gm) provides that a governmental unit “must collect the sales tax on its sales of” motor vehicles, as well as boats, snowmobiles, recreational vehicles, trailers, semi-trailers, all-terrain vehicles, and aircraft. That regulation also provides that “[i]f the governmental unit does not collect the tax from the purchaser, the purchaser shall file a sales tax return and pay the tax prior to titling or registering the property in this state.”

Occasional Sale Exemption: If the sale of the motor vehicle qualifies as an occasional sale, then it is exempt from sales tax. “Occasional sales” includes isolated and sporadic sales of products and services where the infrequency and sale price support the inference that the seller is not engaged in the business of selling the product or service. Wis. Stat. § 77.51 (9).

In order to qualify for the occasional sale exemption, the municipality must not be engaged in a trade or business with respect to

the sale of taxable products and services. A municipality is considered engaged in a trade or business if its sales of taxable products and services: (a) occur on more than 20 days during the calendar year and (b) total more than \$25,000 for the calendar year. Wis. Stat. § 77.54(7m).

This test is applied on an aggregate basis. That is, once the municipality's sales of taxable products and services occur on more than 20 days during the year and total more than \$25,000, the occasional sale exemption is lost and cannot be claimed for any sales of taxable products. See, e.g., Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Submitted Sales and Use Tax Questions, p. 5 (May 11, 2007).

Also, the sale does not qualify for the occasional sale exemption if, at the time of the sale, the municipality holds or is required to hold a seller's permit. Wis. Stat. § 77.51 (9).



Safety Corner *continued...*

keeping the injured employee engaged in the workplace within the restrictions identified by the employee's physician, the proof is irrefutable that it leads to employees achieving their maximum level of improvement sooner with fewer long term physical, mental and emotional effects.

The cornerstone of the Return to Work program is having documented job descriptions that can be provided to the employee's physician as well as conveying that the employer can accommodate any restrictions. A physician returning a note stating an employee “is unable to work” is not a satisfactory excuse unless it's medically justified (i.e. the employee is bed-ridden and/or requires medical transport). As the employer, it's imperative to understand that even though an employee may not be able to perform 100 percent of their job duties, allowing them to complete any of their job duties that are consistent with their medical restrictions or providing other meaningful work is in the best interest of all. This may also include providing modified work in a different department. From an employer's perspective, any time an employee misses work due to a lost time injury, there are significant financial ramifications that will affect your worker's compensation premiums for the next three renewals. Because these premiums are set by state statute, once a lost time injury is logged, there is nothing you can do to mitigate that future expense.

If you participate in the Regional Safety Management Program and have questions, please feel free to reach out to myself or your regional safety coordinator. If you are not a program participant and would like a free copy of our incident report, or would like more information on receiving help with Return to Work program development, please feel free to contact me via email at cshlechta@meuw.org or via phone at 262-989-2000.

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Coming Events

Nov. 10-11	MEUW JT&S Lineman Seminar Wisconsin Dells
Dec. 8-9	MEUW JT&S Overhead/Underground Design Seminar, Eau Claire
Jan. 27-29	MEUW WI/REC Joint Superintendent's Conference, Wisconsin Dells
Feb. 2-3	Wisconsin Energy Providers Conference, Madison
Feb. 10	MEUW Management Training Program: Session D, Wisconsin Dells
Feb. 17	Municipal Utilities Legislative Day, Madison

Mark Your Calendars! Visit the MEUW [website](#) for a full list of events scheduled through summer of 2016.

MEUW Member Website

Take advantage of the MEUW online directory feature of our website!

All MEUW member utilities now have access to be able to log in to the MEUW website from the homepage to access the online directory. Search for other MEUW member utilities and contacts quickly. Complete your profile today!*

Other features of logging into the website include the ability to complete online registration and payment for events. No more PDF's to download and print out, simply log in to the website and register online – you also have the option to use a credit card. Plus, see who's already registered for an event with a click of a button!

*If you are an MEUW member and have not received login information, please contact your utility administrator or MEUW for more information at 608-837-2263.

If you are a WUSA member and would like to be included in the online directory, [click here](#) for more information.

Save the Date! 2016 Joint Superintendent's Conference

The 2016 MEUW/Wisconsin Rural Electric Cooperatives Joint Superintendents Conference will be held Jan. 27-29 at the Glacier Canyon Lodge in Wisconsin Dells, WI. This annual conference attracts approximately 150 professionals in the utility industry. Sessions will include mutual aid best practices, competitive bidding, micro grids, energy storage, smart grid, arc flash, PPE and more. The conference also includes the annual WUSA trade show. The trade show brings together the industry's most important manufacturers and suppliers and showcases the latest products, materials and technologies in the utility industry. See more than 15,000 square feet of exhibits and 60+ manufacturers and suppliers of the latest and most in-demand products and services.

We are pleased to have Lee Shelby as our keynote speaker. Shelby's story about a work-related accident has the ability to deeply impact an audience and is ideal for inspirational, motivational and safety awareness speaking engagements. Lee has helped thousands of people understand the importance of staying focused, eliminating distractions and not taking shortcuts through his live presentations. Both he and his story are unforgettable. His words are simple, and he tells us things we think we already know, but he tells it in a way that will dramatically change our attitudes toward safety forever.

We look forward to seeing everyone for an exciting few days including the Apprentice Graduation Banquet, WUSA Trade Show and a welcoming cocktail hour hosted by WUSA on Wednesday evening! Look for registration materials coming soon!

Are you a current WUSA member looking to showcase your latest products, materials and technologies? Exhibitor registration is now open for the trade show. [Click here](#) to learn more.

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Member News & Tidbits

APPA 2016 Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo

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- Learn about the latest products and services at the Rodeo vendor expos.
- Educate the public about the critical work that lineworkers do.
- Develop lasting friendships with lineworkers who share your dedication and passion for the craft.

Visit www.PublicPower.org/Rodeo or contact Rodeo@PublicPower.org for more information.

MEUW Job Training & Safety Schedule Update

The JT&S training schedule through the end of December is available on the MEUW website. For the schedule, overview of upcoming sessions and session agendas [click here](#).

Connect with MEUW on LinkedIn!

Stay up-to-date on the latest news, insights and opportunities from MEUW. [Follow us](#) today!



Congratulations on Your Retirement!

After 28 years with Rice Lake Utilities and the past 16 as general manager/CEO, Scott Reimer has announced his retirement effective December 31, 2015.

Scott began his career with Rice Lake Utilities on September 22, 1987 as a journey lineworker then progressed to the Electrical Superintendent position until the commission appointed him general manager/CEO in 1999. Scott stated that this has been a most rewarding professional career and gives thanks every day for the many opportunities that have made this 28-year career so enjoyable. "The customers of Rice Lake Utilities make us what we are today. Their motivation for building and maintaining a vibrant business community and making Rice Lake a great place to live and raise a family is one thing that kept me working harder to succeed every single day. I give thanks to them as well as the many coworkers and utility commission members that have helped us in being successful. Best wishes to all of you." Leo Diehl has been appointed as the new general manager/CEO for Rice Lake Utilities effective Jan. 1, 2016.

Scott, we wish you the best of luck and happiness in retirement!

Send your member news and tidbits to Rachel Stephenson at rstephenson@meuw.org.



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Classifieds

Brodhead Water & Light (BWL) is accepting applications for a journey-level electric lineworker. Consideration will also be given to apprentice lineworkers and those who have completed the Electrical Power Distribution Program. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. [Click here](#) for a complete job description and application details.

The city of Fennimore, seeks to fill a full-time electric lineworker position. The individual hired will work as part of a three-person team responsible for day-to-day operation, maintenance and repair of the municipal electric system. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. [Click here](#) for a complete job description and application details.

Waunakee Utilities is accepting applications for a journey-level electric lineworker. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. [Click here](#) for a complete job description and application details.

Send your employment opportunities to Rachel Stephenson at rstephenson@meuw.org.

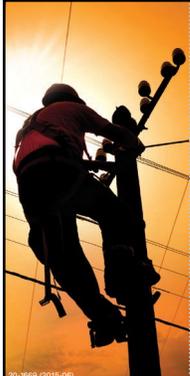
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