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Cumberland's Chuck Christensen is Presented with the Donald Smith Distinguished Service Award

Chuck Christensen takes a selfie with Dean Bergstrom, Assistant Manager , Cumberland Municipal Utility

The Donald L. Smith Distinguished Service Award was presented to Chuck Christensen, General Manager of the Cumberland Municipal Utility, at MEUW's annual awards presentation at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake on June 2. This award is given in recognition of exceptional leadership and dedication to public power. It is the highest honor MEUW can bestow on an employee of the association's membership.

The award is named after Donald L. Smith, a 35-year employee at Columbus Water and Light, who served his last 17 years as Superintendent at the utility. Don was a very active member of MEUW, serving as president in 1963-1964 and as a part-time executive director from 1973-1980. He was very involved when legislation was passed to allow the formation of Joint Action Agencies in Wisconsin and was instrumental in forming the Municipal Wholesale Power Group.

This year's honoree, Chuck Christensen, was hired on January 1, 1977 as the Outside Line Superintendent for the Cumberland Municipal Utility. In less than one year he was promoted to General Manager.

In 1978, the City of Cumberland determined there was a need for additional generating capacity. In doing some research, Chuck discovered that the City of Richland Center also needed generation capacity and the two communities signed an agreement to share capacity. This marked the first time in the history of Wisconsin that two cities joined in such an agreement.

Chuck was also instrumental in the formation of the Western Wisconsin Municipal Power Group and served as the group's Secretary/Treasurer for the past 30 years. In 2005, he helped form the Upper Midwest Municipal Power Agency (UMMPA), which currently has a membership of 16 Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota communities. He continues to serve as chairperson.

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Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin's mission is to lead, unify, advance and protect the interests of Wisconsin's municipally owned utilities. Since 1928, MEUW has been the trade association for Wisconsin's 82 public power communities and is affiliated with the American Public Power Association (APPA), www.publicpower.org.

MEUW 24/7 Emergency Notification Contact Information:
1-844-MEUW 911 (1-844-638-9911)

A Tale of Two Long Careers in Public Utility Service

By Phil McDade

Tom Bushman attributes his long career in public utilities to a long-ago adventure on a replica of a ship sailed by Christopher Columbus. For Pat Drone, a lifetime in public utilities was simply a family affair.

Together, the two have spent nearly a century serving the public in several Wisconsin communities as leaders of electric utilities. They were both honored at the 87th annual MEUW conference in June with the association's Retirement Award for their years of service to the industry. (Both are pictured here with Steve Baker, Director of Public Works, Bangor Municipal Utility.)

Bushman (top) spent his entire career at the Two Rivers Water and Light Department and retired with nearly 38 years of service.

A graduate of Manitowoc Lincoln High School, he had just gotten an associate degree in electrical power distribution from nearby Lakeshore Technical Institute and was looking for work. Traveling in Green Bay, he met a man dressed in 14th Century garb who was sailing a replica ship of Columbus' Santa Maria up the Atlantic Coast and through the Great Lakes. The ship's mast light was broken and needed fixing.

"I said, 'I could fix that.' But the crew leader was skeptical. 'It's all the way at the top of the mast.' I said, 'That's where I'd expect the mast light to be.'" Bushman climbed up, fixed the light, and proceeded to join the crew on a three-month adventure sailing the Great Lakes.

He had a knack for fixing things, and upon his return, he looked for work. The Two Rivers utility had an opening in its service department, a position for which his interviewer said he was over-qualified. Bushman took it, figuring he would find a way to be of service. "I got the job here, and started working my way through," he said. Plant repairs, electrical technician, supervising a crew – Bushman did it all, moving from one job to another wherever he was needed.

Twelve years ago, he noticed "my boss kept pushing more and more of his work my way." Then one day he was called into his boss's office and told, "I'm getting ready to retire and want you to take over." So he did.

For years, Two Rivers Water and Light has been known for its community outreach efforts. It sponsors numerous educational programs, from educating schoolchildren about energy efficiency and clean water to having conversations with senior citizens about utility issues. Bushman emphasized that these program are an important connection between the utility and the citizens it serves. "They get their power from a public power utility; they own the utility," he said. "That's the big thing – it's important. We try to take really good care of them."

In retirement, Bushman expects to do more of the things he's always enjoyed – camping, hiking, fishing and water-skiing. As a newly minted grandfather, he also plans to spend time with his grandson James Thomas.

Pat Drone's 50-year career in public utilities came easily. His father, Joseph, ran the Muscoda Utility for several years, and after graduating from Muscoda High School and a tour of duty in Vietnam, Drone joined his father there.

Growing up on a farm in Basswood, near Muscoda, with

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How to Plan for a Successful Storm Recovery

By Steve Hedden, JT&S Instructor

Storm season is already upon us.

No matter how big an electric utility is, it will not have enough staff to respond to a storm that affects a widespread area of its distribution system. Responding in a timely manner to keep the public safe and restore power is always a challenge. Over the years many of our members have experienced significant storm damage and it has enabled our members to pull together and provide the kind of mutual aid assistance that demonstrates the strength of public power. MEUW members have even reached out beyond the borders of our state and provided assistance to other parts of the country. Most recently 15 crews responded to restore power to portions of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

So how do you prepare for these situations?

Make your system more resilient. First or all you have to look at your system and determine if there are ways to make your system more resilient. The powerful forces of nature mean that we will never be able to build systems that can survive extreme weather conditions. However utilities need to assess whether they can withstand damage to different parts of their system while being able to still supply power to the unaffected areas. This can be done by creating multiple points of feeds into your system, upgrading feeders, and installing tie points and isolation points on your system. This is not an exhaustive list, but these steps are some of things that can be done to enable your crews to isolate the damaged areas and get power restored to as many customers as possible after the storm is over.

Get your crew prepared for an emergency. Next on the list is to go over emergency planning with your crews. Doing this can help them develop the critical thinking and decision making skills they'll need when responding to a large scale outage. In the initial stages of an emergency, crews will need to determine, based on the damage done, how they will provide for public safety while restoring power to as many customers as possible. They will also need to know how to advise customers about where to go to receive help for medical needs. Management will need to connect with local emergency government and coordinate efforts with other responding agencies and warn the public to stay away from damaged equipment and downed power lines.

If you think you need help, call MEUW's Mutual Aid Hotline. When a member community is struck with a disaster, and I get a call for help, I often find that the utility has underestimated its need for assistance. It can be very hard to determine how many crews are needed if the amount and type of damage done is not known. MEUW recommends that you call the MEUW Mutual Aid Hotline as soon as possible if you are concerned. It could take a few hours for a staff member to respond on-site, but calls to nearby utilities for assistance can begin immediately. The MEUW provides this service to all members. So if in the end you find that help was not needed, you will not be charged for MEUW's response to your Hotline call. A single call to the hotline **1-844-MEUW911** will connect you with an MEUW staff member and the closest JT&S staff member will be dispatched to your utility.

Take the time to assess the damage first. Typically, a utility wants to go directly into work mode because that's what makes sense. However, it is tough to assess the amount of damage, determine the estimated time to restore the system, and figure out how much and what type of help is needed when crews are focused on what may or may not be the true priority at that time. While some of the crew needs to be assigned to making the electrical system safe for the public, the remainder should be in assessment mode. This assessment needs to be done by individuals who have a knowledge of the electric system and its components. This could be done by a utility's available crew members, linemen from neighboring communities, or retired crew members. In a storm assessment, you first make a list of all of the locations where wire is down and then you sort the list into type of damage -- main feeders, single phase taps, three phase taps, secondary main, and finally services. In addition, you'll identify the locations where trees need to be cut off lines. Finally, you'll get a count and the location of all the poles that will need to be replaced or straightened. When you collect all of this information,

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Delinquent Utility Charges from Mobile Home Renters May Be Placed on the Tax Roll by Municipal Utilities

By Attorney Lawrie Kobza, Boardman & Clark, LLP

Question: Can delinquent charges for utility service provided to a mobile home in a licensed mobile home park be placed on the property tax roll if the mobile home unit is owned by the park owner? Do the landlord-tenant provisions of 2013 Act 274 apply if the mobile home is rented?

Answer: Yes, a municipal utility may place delinquent electric utility charges on the tax roll if utility service is provided to a mobile or manufactured home owned by the park owner **provided the municipality has either enacted an ordinance that authorizes the municipal electric utility to use the tax roll process to collect electric utility arrearages or the municipality collected electric utility arrearages using the tax roll process in 1996**.

The governing statute is Wisconsin Statute § 66.0809(3)(d) which provides that:

> [I]f an arrearage is for utility service furnished and metered by the utility directly to a manufactured home or mobile home unit in a licensed manufactured and mobile home community, the [October 15th] notice shall be given to the owner of the manufactured home or mobile home unit and the delinquent amount becomes a lien on the manufactured home or mobile home unit rather than a lien on the parcel of real estate on which the manufactured home or mobile home unit is located. A lien on a manufactured home or mobile home unit may be enforced using the procedures under s. 779.48 (2).

The key issue under § 66.0809(3)(d) for purposes of this question is the character of the lien on the mobile or manufactured home unit. A mobile or manufactured home unit is unique because at times it may be considered to be personal property and at other times it may be considered to be real property. The character of the lien on the mobile or manufactured home will depend upon whether the mobile or manufactured home is personal or real property.

The issue of whether a mobile or manufactured home unit is to be treated as personal property or real property is addressed by Wisconsin Statute § 70.043 – a property tax statute. That statute provides that if a mobile or manufactured home is connected to utilities, and set upon a foundation on land owned by the mobile or manufactured home owner, the mobile or manufactured home is an improvement to real property. If however, the mobile or manufactured home is not located on land owned by the mobile or manufactured home owner, or is not set on a foundation or connected to utilities, the mobile or manufactured home is personal property.

In the situation posed by the question, the mobile or manufactured home is connected to utilities and is located on property owned by the mobile or manufactured home owner. In that case (assuming the unit is fixed to the property by some support), the mobile or manufactured home is to be considered real property. The § 66.0809(3)(d) lien for utility arrearages is therefore a lien on real property and a lien for delinquent utility charges on real property may be enforced as provided in Wis. Stat. § 66.0809 (i.e., by placing the delinquent charges on the tax roll).

The last sentence in § 66.0809(3)(d) which states that a lien on a mobile or manufactured home may be enforced using the procedures under § 779.48(2) does not apply in the situation where the mobile or manufactured home is considered real property. Section 779.48(2) deals with liens on personal property and therefore would only apply in the situation where the mobile or manufactured home is not located on land owned by the mobile or manufactured home owner, or is not set on a foundation or connected to utilities.

With respect to the question of whether the landlord-tenant provisions of 2013 Act 274 apply if the mobile home is rented, the answer is yes they would. Where the mobile home is a rental dwelling unit, Act 274 applies just as it does to any other rental dwelling unit. Act 274 revised the law applicable to residential tenants' delinquent utility charges and established a few additional requirements a municipal utility has to follow in order to continue using the tax roll to collect a residential tenant's delinquent utility charges.

MEUW guidance on complying with the Act 274 requirements can be found on the MEUW website here.

From Page 1

Christensen Receives Award

Early in his tenure as Cumberland's General Manager, he identified a need for more formal safety training for small municipal utilities. Working through MEUW, Chuck helped form a committee to begin offering training and safety programs to its members. He continued to be active in MEUW activities and served the association as president from 1990-1991.

Chuck has also been active in the community of Cumberland where he helped establish the Cumberland Economic Development Corporation. He currently serves as president. Through the efforts of the EDC many new businesses have come into Cumberland. He is also the chairman of the Cumberland Hospital Board, a supervisor on the Barron County Board, and a chairman of the Barron County Waste to Energy Committee. In 2010, he was recognized by Cumberland as its Outstanding Citizen of the Year.

Thank you, Chuck, for all that you have done over the years to advance the public power model!

Dustin Thompson and Mark Rumpel Become Certified Safety Professionals

Please join the MEUW Board of Directors, Safety and Education Committee and the MEUW staff in congratulating Regional Safety Coordinators Dustin Thompson, Region 9, and Mark Rumpel, Region 8, who recently obtained the Certified Safety Professional (CSP) designation. They now join Angelina Symicek from Region 10 who is also a CSP.

To become a Certified Safety Professional (CSP) is a challenging process. The applicant must have a Bachelor's Degree in a safety related field, have four years of work experience in safety, be certified as an Associate Safety Professional (ASP) and pass a comprehensive exam. This is quite an accomplishment! Their knowledge and experience will undoubtedly benefit all MEUW members and staff.

From Page 2

A Tale of Two Long Careers

12 brothers and sisters, Drone said the work of serving the public came naturally for him. His dad often took him out on jobs just to tag along, and he found himself interested in how utilities worked.

He also spent time at the Viola and Sauk City utilities before joining the Prairie du Sac Public Works and Utilities Department in 1977.

He found that over the years, his most enjoyable moments were tackling projects with his fellow utility workers.

"The crews I've worked with are fantastic," he said. "We're all working together and everyone's having a good time."

His work in leading the Prairie du Sac utility drew national recognition in 2008 when he was given the Larry Hobart Seven Hats for outstanding management of a small public power system by the American Public Power Association.

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MEUW Management Training Program - SESSION E

Personnel Issues

MEUW will be offering Management Training Program Session E: Personnel Issues on August 25 at the Glacier Canyon Lodge in Wisconsin Dells. Registration is now open online at www.meuw.org. The registration deadline is August 15. The fee is $275.

Even if you are not participating in the Management Training Program you will find this to be a useful seminar if you are involved in hiring and managing employees. Those that are currently participating in the management training program should plan to attend if you need to complete Session E. If you are not currently participating in the program but want to start, you are welcome to attend. You can start the management training program at any session, A through F, and work towards completing all six sessions.

Steve Zach from Boardman & Clark Law Firm will be conducting the session covering an array of employment-related issues. Steve is a frequent speaker at MEUW-sponsored programs and this is his fifth time presenting this session. The purpose of Session E is to give participants a deeper understanding about the hiring process, compensation issues, policies, handbooks, rules and discipline, as well as open records and open meeting laws.

The hiring process plays a crucial role in the success of any organization. Recruiting staff is a costly exercise and it pays to do it properly. When organizations choose the right people for the job because they have taken the appropriate hiring steps, the initial and ongoing investment of recruiting and maintaining employees is well rewarded in job performance and retention.

Being comfortable with current laws governing employee compensation, insurance, HIPAA, FMLA and COBRA will help you gain confidence in dealing with a wide variety of employee-related issues. Learn how to effectively draft and enforce employee handbooks and policies, how to approach employee issues from a proactive standpoint, and what considerations are critical in your implementation of discipline.

From page 3

Successful Storm Recovery

you will be able to make a work plan to restore power, develop a crew work schedule, and estimate how much time it will take to restore power. It will also help you inform the public as to the amount of damage done to the system and when power will be restored. When the assessment is completed, you will have a much better idea of how much help you will need. This is where MEUW can help. We will call crews in from municipal utilities within a one-hour radius and then work our way out until a sufficient number of crews are responding to the call for mutual aid. We will then assist with coordinating the crews.

Keep public safety a priority. While doing this assessment, customers with damaged service masts need to be disconnected and notified that they need to contact an electrician to get their service entrance repaired. Crews that are clearing downed wires to make them safe for the public may need to cut them clear from the electric system to accomplish this. These wires have to be considered energized unless they are disconnected from the distribution system or isolated, tested and grounded. Even though circuits may be open at substations, backfeed can exist on the wires up to your primary distribution voltage. This can happen when wires are in contact with energized wires or incorrectly connected generators.

Help responding crews help you. Keep storm kits available for responding crews. Have these kits ready with updated area maps and electric system maps as well as a list of locations where crews can get fuel, meals, and truck repairs. The kit should also include the location of local hospitals or urgent care clinics. Arrange for lodging for crews as soon as possible. Hotels with power will fill up quickly with customers that are out of power.

Taking the time and effort to plan for an overwhelming event that may never happen will allow you to shine in the face of adversity just in case it does.

Classifieds

The Village of Pardeeville is seeking a full-time Utility Office Clerk. This position is responsible for a wide range of utility-related activities including customer service, billing, and the creation, maintenance and timely filing of a wide range of internal and regulatory reports. The Utility Office Clerk also assists the Village with a variety of other tasks. Applications are due no later than 9:00 a.m. on July 8. Click here for a complete job description and application details. Contact Brandon Bledsoe at clerk-treasurer@villageofpardeeville.net if you have questions.

The Oconomowoc Electric Utility is seeking a full-time Electric Lineman (Journeyman preferred). The online application and a resume must be uploaded through the city's website at www.oconomowoc-wi.gov by 4 p.m. on July 15 for consideration. Click here for more information and application details.

The Oconomowoc Electric Utility is seeking a full-time Electric Engineer. The Electric Engineer provides direction and supervision for safe, reliable, cost effective maintenance, construction, and daily operations of the electrical distribution system. The online application and a resume must be uploaded through the city's web-site at www.oconomowoc-wi.gov by 4 p.m. on July 15 for consideration. Click here for salary and application details.

Manitowoc Utilities is seeking a full-time Journeyman Line Technician who will be responsible for constructing and maintaining electric power facilities up to 69 kilo-volts. A successful applicant will have a Journeyman Lineman certification with a Certificate of Apprentice-ship in Electric Line Trade and five years of journeyman experience. Click here for a complete job description and application details.

Manitowoc Utilities is seeking a full-time Meter Tech-nician. The position requires a wide range of skills, in-cluding the ability to accurately read and record meter readings and recognize defects or other irregularities. Send applications or resumes to MPU, Attn: Carissa Mrotek. Click here for more information and application details.

Send your employment opportunities to info@meuw.org.

Coming Events

August 25	MEUW Management Training Program—Session E, Wisconsin Dells
September 13	MEUW Accounting and Customer Service Seminar, Wisconsin Dells
October 12	Management Training Program—Session F
October 17-18	MEUW JT&S Tree Trimming Workshop, Rice Lake
October 19-20	MEUW JT&S Tree Trimming Workshop, New London

Mark Your Calendars! Visit the MEUW website for a full list .

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- Workforce Series: Success in Succession Planning **July 12**
- Accounting & Finance Series: Industry Rate Trends and Future Rate Structures **July 27**
- Workforce Series: Benchmark Your Compensation and Counter the Competition **Aug. 9**
- Governance Series: Strategic Planning for Utility Boards and City Councils **Aug. 11**
- Account & Finance Series: Line Extension Policies (Contributions in Aid of Construction) **Aug. 18**

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