



# ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHALLENGES

Unique obstacles and  
conditions confront crews  
in the Mountain Division

# XTRA

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## Transforming the customer experience

(Editor's Note: Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO, periodically writes a blog on XpressNet, as well as other articles and communications. *Xtra* features Fowke's comments on a recurring basis to share his thoughts with a wider audience.)

**For decades, our mandate has been to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy for our customers. During the last 10 to 15 years, expectations have shifted as many stakeholder groups have asked for a cleaner product, on the condition that we don't compromise on reliability or affordability. And we've delivered and will continue to do so.**

Now, the landscape is changing again. Customer expectations are rising. The new expectation is that we don't just serve customers – we need to delight them.

We all know that competition is increasing on a daily basis, whether it's from community solar developers, businesses that want to produce their own energy or even non-traditional entrants into the energy business. When customers are presented a choice when it comes to their energy needs, we want them to choose us. And although we have a competitive advantage as their existing service provider, we will be in for a rude awakening if we mistake captivity for customer loyalty.

We all know that "Enhancing the Customer Experience" is one of our three strategic priorities, but we want to do more than enhance. We want to transform that experience and are laying the foundation to do just that.

In April, under Brett Carter's leadership, we kicked off the Customer Experience Transformation Program. This is a three-year, five-track effort designed to transform customer experiences, improve customer and employee satisfaction, keep bills low, and generate new revenue opportunities.

I've participated in or spoken at many kickoff

events before. But I can't recall one that had such complete and specific buy-in from members of our leadership team. For example, Bob Frenzel, our CFO, shared that the significant transformation we are undertaking to serve our customers is imperative for the company. We think this is the most successful path forward and have invested both people's time and company money, O&M and capital, to build a better world for our customers.

Scott Wilensky, our general counsel, shared how important the effort is to make the customer front and center, and how his team will continue to work tirelessly on partnerships and to make sure new proposals have the best opportunity to succeed with our regulators. They will be there working with us, arm and arm, for long-term success.

David Eves, who leads our operating companies, discussed the importance of providing this experience to our customers, and how it can help us get our plans approved with a little more ease. He pledged his continued support with legislators, regulators and community leaders to help enable the approval of our new plans and pave the way for cost recovery.

When Brett talks about this program, he likes to use the phrase that we are "pivoting towards the customer." We still must meet the basic table stakes of providing reliable and affordable energy, but we need to pivot to know our customers better so we can help them do more. Delighting customers the right way makes us more efficient as well – it's a win-win. A frictionless experience for customers must start with a seamless operation.

And, let's not forget – we're a Fortune 500 company with millions of customers and millions of opportunities to interact and delight them. This work, which is beginning now, will pay important dividends in the future. We need to step up our game in this part of the business, and I'm confident that under Brett's leadership and with the energy of our team working together, we'll get it done. ←



# 'BOOK OF HORRIBLES'

## Fink featured with 'Dirty Jobs' Mike Rowe in 811 campaign

**Mike Rowe, star and host of TV's "Dirty Jobs" show, got a good laugh over beavers' tendencies to chew on gas pipes and other utility lines.**

"That's actually Mother Nature at work – it's a beaver chew," explained Erica Fink, business continuity consultant, holding a piece of chewed-on pipe. "A beaver gets ahold of our stuff, and it's like candy."

This exchange and others are part of a national public-service-announcement (PSA) campaign promoting the 811 "Call Before You Dig" effort, via a series of short videos starring Rowe and several industry experts.

"They'll chew until they either get incapacitated by a gas leak – and it's funny to see a little beaver just passed out," she continued. "Or if it's electric, they'll chew through, and zip – that'll be the last thing they do."

"Not as funny," Rowe quickly deadpanned.

This opportunity for Fink, who previously worked as a public safety coordinator, came about after friends in the industry wanted to do something new around the 811 effort and hired Rowe to star in the PSA series.

Rowe, when he heard about the effort, jumped at the chance to help the types of workers he has honored and supported since his days on "Dirty Jobs," she said, including attracting more people to work in the trades. Management at Xcel Energy also liked the idea, and Fink soon was off to San Diego for shooting.

For those who don't know, 811 is the national "Call Before You Dig" phone number to request to have underground lines marked by using paint, flags or stakes. This call is free and required by law.

"This is a recurring epidemic because people aren't calling 811 and are hitting buried lines," Fink said. "If we don't

try something different, there is going to be more tragedy and potential for great harm.

"Mike is concerned about the issue and wants to make a difference," she added. "He wants to help change the numbers."

Fink was chosen for the PSA effort due to her unusual background, which includes public safety, of course, along with her time in the oil and gas industry, her work as a reserve sheriff's deputy and the law degree she holds. Rowe, for his part, has been listed as the second most trusted man in America, behind Tom Hanks.

"Laying eyes on that beautiful man was a pleasure," she said, adding that all of the men involved were equally taken with Rowe and his down-to-earth, relaxed presence. "Everyone was just excited to be there and be part of the effort."

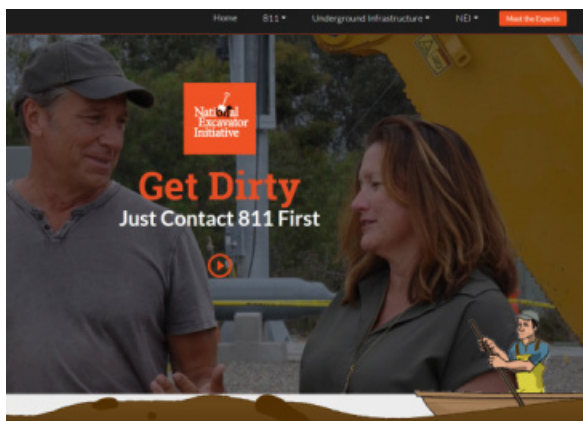
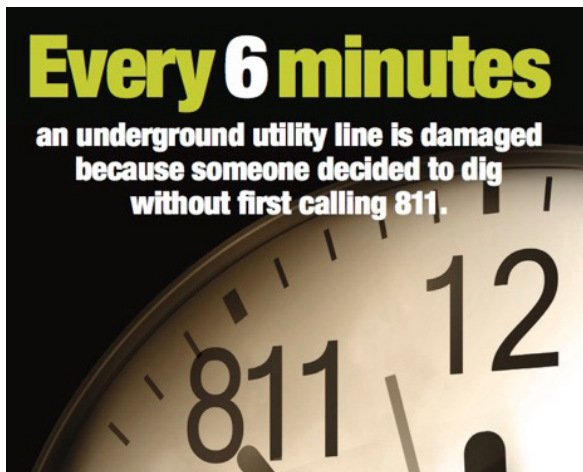
Filming happened last July over a few days at Southern California Edison's natural gas training facility. There was no script to work from – just talking with Rowe and no "you can't say this" directions.

Fink's PSA is titled "Book of Horribles," and the introduction reads: "Anyone thinking about putting a shovel into the ground should first visit with Erica Fink. Having dedicated more than a decade to dealing with damaged underground facilities, Erica describes some of the crazy things that can go wrong when people fail to contact 811 before digging, and provides sound advice for those working around underground facilities."

Her "Book of Horribles" is a scrapbook she put together over four years that documents all of the things that can go wrong when people don't call before they dig – a book of "what not to do." It was always with her when she visited fire and first-responder departments about the issue. Not surprisingly, it resonated with her audiences – and with Rowe.

It includes examples such as cars removing pad-mount





## Call Before You Dig

Employee Erica Fink recently took part in a national public-service-announcement campaign, along with “Dirty Jobs” star and host Mike Rowe, promoting the 811 “Call Before You Dig” effort via a series of short videos.

transformers, ladders being balanced on overhead power lines and unusual gas line “repairs.” (More on that later.)

“You literally can’t make this stuff up,” she said. “The book represents things that actually happen, and it’s too bad. This is what happens when you mess with things that you really shouldn’t.”

As Fink says in the PSA, the message is: “Call 811 so you don’t have to call 911.”

“I have to call. You have to call,” she emphasizes. “That’s how it works.”

At the end of the video, Rowe compliments Fink, saying, “You’re a wealth of endless knowledge and a fascinating human. Thanks for sharing your ‘parade of horrors’ with us.”

Concerning the overall experience, Fink said the PSA campaign will help build more credibility for Xcel Energy and show that the company is ahead of the curve on the issue.

“It shows that we’re aware of the challenges and are trying to change the metrics,” she said. “It shows we’re a talented and innovative company.”



Now about that “gas line repair,” part of video goes as follows, with Fink showing Rowe a photo of the “work:”

Fink: “You know how they say duct tape fixes everything?”

Rowe: “My entire career is held together with duct tape.”

Fink: “These guys were like, ‘It’s all good. We hit the pipe, there’s probably damage – let’s tape it up, and we’ll bury it. Nothing to see here, triple kiss and keep it moving.’”

Rowe: “And so they didn’t report it. They just put the magic duct tape on it and figured no harm, no foul. . . . What happened as a result?”

Fink: “As a result, we had a continuing leak, and when we started to excavate to find out where the leak is coming from – voila – there’s duct tape on the line, and we sure didn’t put it there. So yeah, whoopsie.”

Rowe: “So if you nick a pipe, don’t wrap it in duct tape and keep it to yourself. You have to report it.”

To see the video series, visit [safeexcavator.com/meet-the-experts](http://safeexcavator.com/meet-the-experts). ←



# Oil Team

Work helps keep 'life blood' of power plants clean and flowing

**Much like the oil we put in our cars, the "life blood" of the more than 70 generating units at Xcel Energy also is lubricating oil. It reduces wear and friction, controls deposits and contamination, and provides cooling.**

When oil fails, equipment failure is not far behind, said Glen Green, manager of Environmental Services in Chemistry Resources. And these types of equipment failures tend to be catastrophic in nature – typically leading to lost megawatt-hours of generation for extended periods of time.

To avoid such outcomes, the company created a detailed oil-analysis program more than a decade ago to monitor substance characteristics and increase the reliability of equipment while minimizing costs, said Green, who leads Energy Supply's Oil Team, which meets regularly throughout the year.

"We consider predictive maintenance around oil as a relatively cheap insurance policy on a large investment," he said. "Preventing just one turbine failure justifies our efforts for a long time."

"Like a car, you want to take care of your investment," he added, "and get the most out of it that you can."

Changing oil in a power plant also is like dealing with a car – only on a grand scale. Instead of five quarts, it's 5,000 or 6,000 gallons of oil that is pumped out and then replaced. Typically, huge tanks sit a floor below the units and circulate oil up during operation.

Not surprisingly, the company tries to go as long as safely possible between oil changes, usually between five and seven years, Green said. One oil change can run \$100,000 for some units.

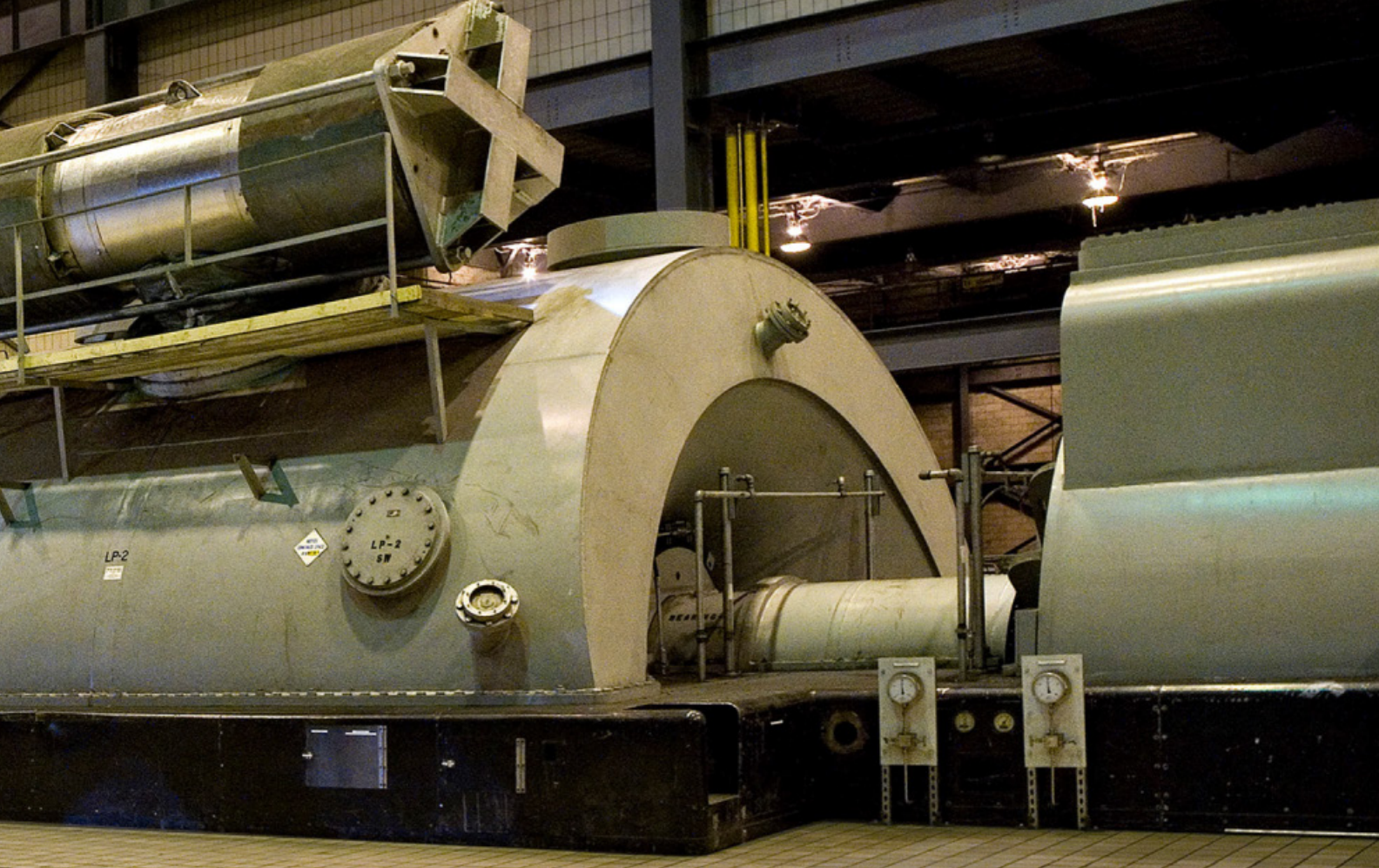
One major tool for testing oil is the Remaining Useful Life test, known as the RULer Test. This effort looks at inhibitors in oil, which enhance its properties, and measures their breakdown compared to a new oil sample.

"When it hits a certain trigger point, we let people know so they can start budgeting," he said. "We then sample more frequently and try to line up the oil change with a planned outage at the site."

Wind turbine oils are a new part of the equation, now that the company owns and operates more and more wind facilities. With more wind production coming online every year, the team is looking into the best types of testing, frequency needed and







the proper sample volumes.

The company currently takes two samples a year per turbine – one for the hydraulic system and another for the gear oil.

“We want to normalize our operations for wind turbine oil samples,” he said. “We’re working with the groups so samples are coordinated and proceed in a steady flow.”

Another recent change in oil operations involves changes to oil rooms, Green said, as each power plant has an area set aside for oil storage.

Energy Supply is now setting up dedicated rooms at the plants – where systems are in place to transfer different types of oil from receiving containers to storage containers in a closed system, with no exposure to air. A filtration system also is used as the oil is decanted into transfer containers for movement to equipment.

“We like everything clean and clearly marked so there is no chance of cross contamination,” he said. “Our system is now color-coordinated, and beyond that, each type of oil container has its own individual connection device for added safety.”

Much like diesel versus regular gasoline, you don’t want to

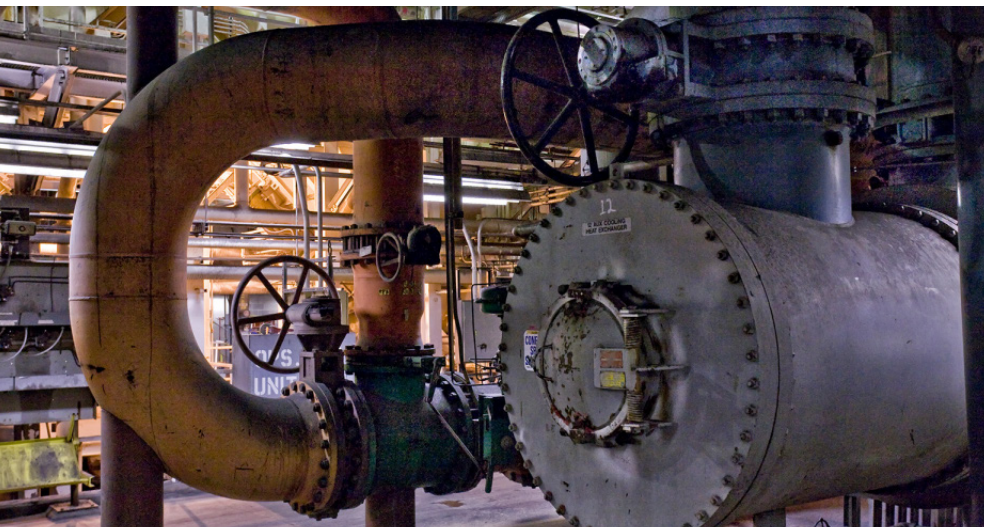
mix up oils, he said.

The effort was piloted at Minnesota’s Black Dog Generating Station. Dedicated oil rooms have since been added to five other Minnesota plants, and similar efforts for the rest of the fleet are now being considered. This new level of oil cleanliness is translating to an 80 percent gain in component cleanliness, extending equipment life, and ultimately lowering maintenance and repair costs.

During its regular meetings, the oil team also discusses lessons learned, new techniques for testing and various issues that are coming up with certain types of oils. Team members also look over plenty of data, and consider new trends and philosophies for predictive maintenance.

“An oil maintenance program is kind of like going to the doctor to have your blood drawn,” Green said. “Tests are run on your blood, and if everything looks good, you keep on going.

“Or if a little cholesterol shows up, start the process to keep things running smoothly.” ←



## Oil Rooms

Energy Supply is setting up dedicated rooms at company plants in which systems are in place to transfer different types of oil from receiving containers to storage containers in a closed system. Pictured here are scenes from the rooms at the Riverside and Black Dog plants, along with some internal plant equipment shots.



## Xcel Energy's Amarillo HQ earns LEED status

The U.S. Green Building Council has awarded Xcel Energy's 790 Buchanan building in downtown Amarillo a LEED Silver status for meeting high efficiency and sustainability standards.

### News Briefs

"For years, we have encouraged our customers to use energy more efficiently and to be good stewards of our environment, and we believe we should model those

behaviors in the way we generate electricity and in how we carry out our daily work," said David Hudson, president, Xcel Energy—Texas and New Mexico. "The new 790 Buchanan building meets our high standards of efficiency and hopefully will set a trend in how buildings are constructed across the region."

LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a certification that can be granted to a whole building and for a number of different building systems, based on a point system. LEED buildings are classified as

basic LEED, silver, gold and platinum, based on the number of points a building scores.

Xcel Energy's new seven-story regional headquarters, is located at 790 S. Buchanan St. on the east side of downtown Amarillo. The building features an architectural precast concrete and glass exterior with more than 18 percent of the construction materials sourced from recycled materials.

The office structure is equipped with energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, and energy-saving LED lighting throughout. Additionally, low-flow plumbing fixtures were installed that use half as much water as systems found in older buildings.

When 790 Buchanan opened in May 2017, it became the first high-rise office structure built in downtown Amarillo since the 1980s. It houses an executive office for Xcel Energy's regional operating company, along with working groups such as regulatory administration, engineering and a host of departments focused on the planning, design and operations of the region's electricity generating and power delivery systems. Xcel Energy accommodates more than 300 workers in the 790 Buchanan building.

## First quarter earnings reported

Xcel Energy recently reported 2019 first quarter GAAP and ongoing earnings of \$315 million, or \$0.61 per share, compared with \$291 million, or \$0.57 per share in the same period in 2018.

Earnings reflect higher electric and natural gas margins due to regulatory rate outcomes and favorable weather, which were partially offset by higher depreciation, operating and maintenance and interest expenses.

"We are off to a good start with strong first quarter earnings and are on track to deliver earnings within our 2019 guidance range," said Ben Fowke, chairman, presi-

dent and CEO. "In addition, we are making strides toward our ambitious vision to deliver 100 percent carbon-free electricity to customers by 2050 and have already reduced carbon emissions to our customers by 38 percent since 2005.

"Our wind energy expansion is key to achieving those clean energy targets, and we have marked another milestone with approval to build the Cheyenne Ridge Wind farm in Colorado," he added. "The 500-megawatt project is part of our steel-for-fuel strategy that will help us continue to keep bills low, build on our clean energy leadership and provide economic benefits for the region."

## Monticello plant using drones and virtual reality for refueling effort

After two consecutive years of breaking its own generation records and reliably providing carbon-free electricity to customers throughout the Upper Midwest, the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant began its biennial refueling outage on April 13. For the first time, new drone and virtual reality technology is helping crews complete this important work.

"Our Upper Midwest nuclear plants are a cornerstone of our strategy to provide 80 percent carbon free electricity to our customers while keeping bills low," said Chris Clark, president, Xcel Energy—Minnesota. "The work performed at Monticello will position the plant to continue delivering reliable, affordable, clean energy."

During this maintenance, new technology is being introduced to help improve safety and save time performing some specialized training and inspections. Virtual reality technology will be used to train new workers on several activities that will increase employee safety around

sensitive equipment. The technology will provide a more immersive training experience, helping to complete jobs more quickly and safely by providing a hands-on training environment prior to performing work in the plant.

"Using virtual reality technology in training is an example of our employees being innovative in their work, improving efficiency in our operations, while always keeping an eye on safety," said Chris Church, Monticello Site vice president.

Workers will use a drone to inspect several pieces of equipment in and around the plant, saving time, money and increasing worker safety by eliminating the need to build and climb scaffolding for manual inspections. The specialized camera on the drone will provide high-resolution photos that can identify issues that may be missed by the naked eye, increasing effectiveness of the inspections.

More than 1,000 specialized workers will replace about one-third of the plant's nuclear fuel, and perform maintenance, inspections and testing that can only be conducted when the plant is offline.



# WIND POWER HOLDINGS CONTINUE TO GROW

## **Two new wind energy projects have been added to Xcel Energy's growing wind energy portfolio.**

The purchase of 200-megawatt Blazing Star 2 wind project in southwest Minnesota and the 300-megawatt Dakota Range 1 and 2 projects in eastern South Dakota will allow Xcel Energy to continue as a national leader in wind energy.

The two projects – in addition to the 200-megawatt Blazing Star 1 project now under construction – are part of the company's low-cost, clean-energy strategy that will add 1,850 megawatts of renewable energy in Upper Midwest region alone over the next two years.

"Our customers want clean, reliable, affordable energy," said Chris Clark, president of Xcel Energy—Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota. "That's why we're investing in projects like Blazing Star and Dakota Range that will help keep bills low, build on our clean-energy leadership and provide economic benefits for the region."

The company's wind efforts are part of its strategy to deliver 80 percent carbon-free electricity by 2030, as well as a step towards meeting its new vision of zero-carbon electricity by 2050.

The Blazing Star projects, located near Hendricks in southwest Minnesota, will include nearly 200 wind turbines and cover approximately 70,000 acres. Fewer than 100 acres of land will be used for the project, while the rest will remain in agricultural production.

Local landowners and governments will benefit from the investment in the Blazing Star wind farms, with local property taxes totaling an estimated \$36 million over the life of the projects, and landowners receiving more than \$60 million in lease payments. About 200 construction workers will build Blazing Star 2 will build the projects in 2019 and 2020.

The Dakota Range projects, located in Codington and Grant counties in northeast South Dakota, will include 72 wind turbines. The project will provide local and state property taxes totaling more than \$36 million over the life of the project and \$39 million in landowner lease payments. Approximately 200 construction workers will build the project in 2020 and 2021.

In other wind-related news, the company is also seeking more wind energy to power its growing renewable programs. It plans to add an additional 200 megawatts of wind energy to its system serving customers in the Upper Midwest. The company is seeking proposals from wind developers to provide clean energy for new customers and the company's innovative renewable energy programs.

A portion of the new wind will provide energy for Renewable\*Connect, Xcel Energy's program that provides up to 100 percent renewable energy for customers. Renewable\*Connect provides an option for customers to subscribe to low-cost wind and solar energy. Several hundred customers have requested to join the next phase of the program, which sold out its first phase in 2018. ←





# A MOUNTAIN O



## Hard-to-access equipment part of the equation

**Over a one-week period this past winter, more than 300 avalanches roared down the mountainsides of Colorado – some taking out company electric lines and gas facilities.**

If working with electricity and natural gas in the utility business isn't hazardous enough, how about adding avalanches, falling chunks of ice and hordes of ski tourists driving on slick roads to the mix? Welcome to life in Xcel Energy's Mountain Division, which spans large expanses of the Rocky Mountains west of Denver and covers the entire Interstate 70 ski corridor.

This is not to deny that there's plenty of hazardous weather and treacherous conditions in other parts of the service territory. But relying on skis, snowshoes, snowmobiles and snow cats to work in steep, hazardous and remote terrain – after waiting for avalanche warnings to recede – is a bit unusual.

"We had some unprecedented weather in the Mountain Division this winter and some grueling impacts to work through," said Rod Sgrignoli, director of Distribution Operations for the region. "But these are the kind of challenges we face up in the mountains. It's all in a day's work in serving our customers



# F CHALLENGES



and communities in the high country of Colorado.”

For instance, one crew of linemen took on a four-mile hike through heavy snow by snowshoe and telemark skis – on several occasions – in an effort to return a section of line to service taken out by a series of avalanches. The line feeds the Eisenhower Tunnel along Interstate 70, which lies underneath the Continental Divide.

“It takes a good team to handle it all. Crews need to communicate and work together on both the gas and electric side,” said Matt Botruff, manager of Electric and Gas Operations. “They continually take calls and respond in storms. We are a tight

group up here, taking on unique work and special challenges.”

Jake Martens, a lead-fitter based in Vail, grew up in northern Wisconsin and is no stranger to tough winter conditions. However, he never thought a workday in Gas Operations would start with loading tools in a backpack, donning skis and riding a lift to the top of Vail – before skiing down to check on regulator stations and gas meters on the mountain.

Driving over mountain passes was another new experience for him, including coming across falling rock that can shut them down, as well as simply getting stuck in people’s driveways due to an overabundance of snow.



"It's definitely a tough, long winter up here," he said. "You have to have extras of everything along on a workday, because you don't know how long you are going to be out there. And it can take much longer to cover all the bases in the winter."

Gas meter issues pose one of the bigger challenges for Gas Operations in the mountains, he said. This winter, there was one day for a few weeks when the freeze/thaw cycle began in earnest, piling snow around meters.

Sometimes, the fire department is called to help with digging out a meter, while also helping everyone stay safe. Crews first assess the situation, then the real work begins, he said. Some piles of snow around meters can be more than 10 feet deep, and turn rock hard and compact around the devices.

Extensive testing also is done with various probes to determine if gas is present, he said, and if so, where. Meters are then rebuilt, and spot tests performed to check on piping that travels inside homes. Possible internal problems are red-tagged for plumbers to come and handle.

Albert Major, a journeyman-fitter working out of the Grandby office, spent many years working in the Denver area before moving to the mountains, where he says winters are a "different animal." Just getting around can be tough.

"There's snow, and then there's 'real snow,'" he said. "And gas issues are just tougher with ice, frost and snow."

Plus, there are the distances that a remote journeyman like Major needs to cover. He works from Grand Lake at the base of Rocky Mountain National Park to Winter Park Resort, about an

hour to the south — as well as traveling out west to the town of Kremmling.

On the electric side, linemen face a lot of snowshoeing every winter to get to a lot of hard-to-access equipment, said Aaron Couette, troubleman. However, in 12 years, he said he has never seen snow like that of the 2018/19 season. In fact, in working on the electric line near Eisenhower Tunnel, the snow came up to his waist, even while wearing snowshoes.

"The snow didn't set up, and the weather didn't warm up, so it was even a struggle in snowshoes to make it out the four miles to the damaged poles," he said. "The snow was so deep that there was little clearance between the snow and the line."

And during one avalanche in Officers Gulch along Interstate 70, the top of a pine tree ended up lodged in a company power line — 45 feet up in the air.

Jesse Mace, overhead line crew foreman, worked on at least four different backcountry issues this winter, all requiring skis or snowshoes to gain access. Yet another avalanche in the area took out six to eight poles, leaving wire lying on the snow, he said.

That avalanche took out one of the main feeds to Copper Mountain Resort and left 1,300 customers without power. Due to closed roads, Mace and his crew needed a police escort to get to the area to then restore power.

"All of the avalanches and late-season snow have definitely been worse this winter," he said. "But it's peaceful back in the woods. I don't mind it one bit." ←







## Mountain Division

On pages 10 and 11, a crew tackles an avalanche-created repair project in the backcountry, including Jesse Mace, lineman, Chad De John, apprentice lineman, and Scott Jenson, apprentice lineman. On page 12, the aftermath of an avalanche near Copper Mountain Ski Resort that affected company equipment. The snow-covered opening in the upper right-hand side of the photo was dense forest before the slide took it out. Above and clockwise from top left – Chad De John, apprentice lineman, at work in a storm after shoveling out a large transformer; a crew at work in the woods; an uncovered meter; and a crew tackling a repair effort.



# VETS ON THE LAKE

## Sherco employees' efforts put a shine on nonprofit resort

### It started with a suggestion from a co-worker.

Larry Richter, a friend of Bob Landwehr's at Sherco Generating Station, had used up his volunteer paid time off (VPTO) for the year.

Richter, now retired, asked Landwehr if he would travel north to provide some VPTO help at the nonprofit Veterans on the Lake – a resort in Minnesota's Boundary Waters area that provides cabins, meals and recreation activities for disabled veterans.

"When I saw their need, I wanted to help out," said Landwehr, lead machinist. "I took a loving to the place."

And a lot of other employees at Sherco did, too. Over the years, Landwehr has enlisted dozens of Sherco folks, along with family and friends, to help out with numerous projects at Veterans on the Lake.

And not little projects, either. Their accomplishments are astounding when seen in total. They include:

- New steel roofs on all 26 cabins, plus the lodge, boat house and bait house.
- A rebuilt pool and deck, with a new patio and furniture.
- New windows and doors and various carpentry work on the buildings, including 27 new windows alone on the resort's classic five-bedroom "Rock House."
- New microwaves, mattresses, sheets, pillows and comforters for each cabin.
- An assortment of used artwork, lamps, silverware and home-made quilts for the cabins.
- Even some golf carts and motorized scooters for moving people around the resort, and fishing poles for, well, you know.

Not resting on their laurels, the Sherco crew's next project may be their biggest of all – although they will not be doing all of the tough physical work this time. They have hired help to build a huge new deck off the lodge's dining room, which will overlook the lake and have handicap ramps down to the ground.

They will, however, be installing the new handicap doors that will open up onto the deck, along with the needed automatic buttons and openers. And perhaps best of all, Landwehr is raising all of the \$42,000 needed for the project. That money will also pay for new furniture for the deck, and landscaping around it.

"It's a dream on mine that is becoming a reality," Landwehr said. "And as always, we'll be giving them a bill for zero."

"I can't emphasize enough that I am nothing without my crew from Sherco," he added. "Some of them have been with me from day one."

Landwehr does speaking engagements at organizations like the Lions Club to help raise money for the nonprofit because he says someone has to take the initiative.

"But just because I raise some money doesn't mean I should get all the credit," he said. "I really just fell in love with the place and the veterans. It's a real thrill to be able to help them out and a real benefit that the company supports us."

"We are all honored just to be there with the veterans," he said. "They think we're heroes, but of course they are the real heroes."

After portions of the land of the Boundary Waters area of Minnesota were designated a national forest or wilderness area in the early 1980s, a group of local veterans formed a board in 1982 and began leasing the resort property from the U.S Forest Service.

Veterans on the Lake is located on the wooded shores of Fall Lake, three miles east of the town of Ely. The resort has 2,700 feet of shore line on 25 acres of land situated in the Superior National Forest.

The first day of operation was celebrated on May 13, 1983, with a grand opening celebration on the 1983 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener. That year, the resort hosted its first large group of veterans, this one from the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. Since then, veterans and their guests from 34 states have enjoyed the resort.

All veterans and their families are welcome, but 75 percent of the clients are disabled, said Neil Weisinger, manager of Veterans on the Lake. They make reservations like at any other resort, but pay up to 50 percent less than comparable facilities. There are also scholarships available to help with a number of disabled-veteran stays.

Part of the resort's mission statement reads: "Our recreational resort is designed to honor those who have contributed to and sacrificed for our nation, in order to help them heal from the pain and suffering they endure. We strive to make the Veterans on the Lake Resort facilities and outdoor amenities safely accessible and barrier-free."

Weisinger calls the Sherco volunteers who help out every year "outstanding."

"You couldn't ask for a better group of guys, or a group of harder working guys," he said. "They've been such a big help. They've done so much for this resort – it's just unbelievable."

"And for the company to help by providing them paid time off to volunteer?" he added. "Well, my hat's off to Xcel Energy."

Landwehr appreciates the support, too, and is happy about any other help he can provide. Anyone wishing to donate to the cause can contact him via Outlook or call him on his cell at 320.291.4594.

"I know how to swing a hammer, so I'm happy I can help out," Landwehr said. "I think the veterans have this coming to them. It's my honor to do things for them, and it's great we have a company like Xcel Energy to back us up." ←

## Helping Out

Over the years, Sherco's Bob Landwehr has enlisted dozens of fellow employees to help out with numerous projects at Veterans on the Lake Resort. At right bottom, Landwehr (left) and Dave Trushenski work on a roof, as do Rod Karls (center photo) and Ken Knettel (right photo). In the center is the resort's lodge, which will soon sport a new deck. At top (left to right), visitors enjoy a meal, boats at the resort and more work getting done.







## Xcel Energy a top company for LGBTQ equality again

Xcel Energy has once again earned the distinction of “Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality” by earning a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign’s 2019 Corporate Equality Index (CEI). It was among 571 companies reviewed this year, and was one of 12 in the utility industry to receive a perfect score. This is the

16th year the company has been listed on the index.

“We are proud to be recognized once again for our policies, practices and commitment to equal employment,” said Darla Figoli, senior vice president, Human Resources and Employee Services, and CHRO. “Our company is committed to fostering and upholding a culture of diversity and inclusion, and treating all people with respect, which al-

lows us to attract and retain the best and brightest talent.”

The CEI is a national benchmarking tool that evaluates LGBTQ-related policies and practices within corporations nationwide. The rating process considers factors such as equivalency in spousal and partner benefits, equal employment opportunity policy, LGBTQ-specific public engagement efforts and responsible citizenship.

Promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion has long been one of Xcel Energy’s corporate values, she said. Since 1995, Xcel Energy has offered benefits to employees’ domestic partners and children, allowing LGBTQ families access to equal benefits.

The company continually raises the bar on its own performance by developing new diversity and inclusion initiatives throughout the organization, Figoli said. Xcel Energy’s inclusive culture is imperative to creating a collaborative and productive workplace, which enables the company to provide the highest quality services to customers.

## News Brief

## Photo Op



## Cornell on the Chippewa

The sun sets behind a high river flow at the Cornell Hydro Plant in Cornell, Wis., in this photo taken by John Johnston, principal production engineer. Xcel Energy owns 19 hydroelectric projects in Wisconsin, six of which are located on the Lower Chippewa River, including Cornell. The plant was acquired from a paper company in 1929 and has a generating capacity of 31 megawatts.

**Editor’s Note:** “Photo Op” is a standing feature in Xtra. Each issue, a photo submitted by a reader or produced by a member of Corporate Communications will be published. Please submit high-resolution digital photos to the editor at the email address listed on the back page of this publication. By submitting images for “Photo Op,” employees give Xtra permission to run the photos.





### Sending kudos after the storm

Dear Xcel Energy:

I just wanted to send you all kudos after this storm. I know you probably had a lot of unhappy customers, but I am not one of them.

My power stayed on during the whole storm. The lights flickered a couple of times, and a couple of my circuit breakers kicked off, but I had power.

I can imagine the hundreds of linemen/women you had out working in the storm. I am a retired police officer, and I know they too risk their lives to keep the power flowing during storms like this. Thank you.

—Texas customer

### 'I have so much admiration'

Dear Xcel Energy:

I just wanted to give a huge "thank you" to all of the people who helped restore power to the Denver area on March 13, 2019.

Our power was out for about six hours, and it was a very bad weather day. I have so much admiration for the folks who go out in such horrible weather and work so hard to get our power restored.

So, I just hope that my appreciation can somehow be relayed to all of those who worked so hard to get our power restored. Thank you all very much!

—Colorado customer

### 'Working overtime in dangerous situations'

Dear Xcel Energy:

I know your linemen have been working overtime in dangerous situations to restore power to the Denver area. Working 40 to 50 feet above the ground in the weather we have been having cannot have been fun.

I hope no one was injured over the last few days. In any event, thank you for your efforts.

—Jim

### 'It was cold and the conditions not great'

Dear Xcel Energy:

I know it was cold and the conditions not great, so I want to thank all of our electric company workers who are working to keep us all in relative comfort this winter, and every winter! Thank you.

—Colorado customer

### 'Gold stars and kudos all around'

Dear Xcel Energy:

We are so happy that your company worked in very tough conditions to restore our service. Thanks to all who contributed to the effort.

I can't imagine the stress on the systems during these conditions. Gold stars and kudos all around.

—Minnesota customer

### 'Hard work is much appreciated!'

Dear Xcel Energy:

A big thank you to all of the men and women who helped restore our power during the blizzard in Colorado. That hard work is much appreciated!

Thanks to your hard work, we were able to stay warm and so much more. Kudos.

—Colorado customer

### 'Clearly your crews worked their tails off'

Dear Xcel Energy:

I just wanted to say thank you for the extra effort Xcel Energy put forth during this storm. We were without power for four hours and expected it to be out for a day or two.

Clearly your crews worked their tails off in the worst possible weather to keep my family and others safe and warm. Just wanted to say thank you and acknowledge your efforts.

—Matt

### 'They are heroes and deserve medals'

Dear Xcel Energy:

While I have power, I know others do not. I just want to thank all of the guys and gals out there in this most brutal weather, restoring power to others.

They are heroes and deserve medals and special thanks of some sort. I hope they are all safe and OK.

—Colorado customer



## Friends We'll Miss

**John Andre**, 84, field operator, Salida, Colo., died on March 10, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1962 to 1994.

## People

**Thomas Barrett**, 80, construction superintendent, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died on Feb. 12, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1956 to 2001.

**Samuel Brooks**, 83, maintenance planner, Planning and Scheduling, Comanche Generating Station, Pueblo, Colo., died on March 4, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1964 to 1994.

**Kimberly Buhl**, 59, gas meter lead, Gas Shop, Rice Street Service Center, St. Paul, Minn., died on Feb. 25, 2019. She worked for NSP from 1980 to 2016.

**Duane Carson**, 91, civil engineering supervisor, Electric Energy Services, Holly Operations Center, Denver, Colo., died on Feb. 2, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1972 to 1992.

**Milford Clark**, 96, electric meter foreman, Cheyenne Service Center, Cheyenne, Wyo., died on Feb. 14, 2019. He worked for Cheyenne Light Fuel & Power from 1951 to 1984.

**Nunzio Cogliandro**, 68, control room operator, Tolk Generating Station, Muleshoe, Texas, died on Feb. 20, 2019. He worked for SPS from 1981 to 2015.

**Mario Cornejo**, 64, journeyman lineman serviceman, Construction Maintenance, Roswell Service Center, Roswell, N.M., died on Feb. 11, 2019. He worked for SPS from 1977 to 2019.

**Roland Deines**, 89, corporate document services manager, Insurance and Claims, Denver, Colo., died on Feb. 1, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1955 to 1991.

**Jose De Leon**, 45, lineman journeyman serviceman, Operations, Hereford Service Center, Hereford, Texas, died on March 13, 2019. He worked for SPS from 2006 until the time of his death.

**Gale Festel**, 77, customer service associate, Customer Billing, Centre Pointe, Roseville, Minn., died on Feb. 28, 2019. She worked for NSP from 1990 to 1998.

**Scott Friedrich**, 58, designer, Southeast Minnesota Design, Faribault Service Center, Faribault, Minn., died on Feb. 14, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1985 to 2019.

**Delores "Dee" Gonzales**, 61, marketing business management specialist, Client Services, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., died on Feb. 5, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy from 1978 to 2014.

**Eugene Gruhlke**, 90, mechanic foreman, Maintenance and Testing, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died on March 4, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1950 to 1983.

**Mickey Hallman**, 84, control room operator, Operations, Jones Generating Station, Lubbock, Texas, died on Feb. 24, 2019. He worked for SPS from 1975 to 2000.

**Thomas Howell**, 89, died on Feb. 20, 2019. He worked for SPS from 1980 to 1996.

**Charles Jenkins**, 79, communications specialist, Communications, Seventeenth St. Plaza, Denver, Colo., died on March 3, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1963 to 1995.

**Walter Johnson**, 71, mechanic specialist, Maintenance, Cameo Generating Station, Palisade, Colo., died on Feb. 14, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1974 to 2010.

**Charles Kelso**, 91, Texas, died on Jan. 4, 2019. He worked for SPS from 1948 to 1992.

**Harold Kooiman**, 95, general manager, White Bear Service Center, White Bear Lake, Minn., died on March 11, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1953 to 1987.

**Gary Kuensting**, 86, truck driver, Electric Construction, Brooklyn Center Service Center, Brooklyn Center, Minn., died on March 13, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1955 to 1989.

**Thomas Kulas**, 73, principal specialty engineer, Electric Distribution Engineering, 414 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minn., died on Feb. 17, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy from 1968 to 2002.

**Glen Loudermilk**, 82, helper, Maintenance, Arapahoe Generating Station, Denver, Colo., died on March 3, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1961 to 1994.

**Alan Miller**, 92, manager, Transmission Engineering, Systems Engineering, died on Feb. 28, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1948 to 1989.

**Floyd Nerheim**, 89, customer information specialist, Customer Operations, Minnesota, died on Feb. 26, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1952 to 1987.

**Albert Nesshoefer**, 89, classified mechanic, Production, Zuni Generating Station, Denver, Colo., died on March 5, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1965 to 1992.

**B. G. Nettesheim**, 93, lead fitter serviceman lead, Gas, Boulder Service Center, Boulder, Colo., died on Feb. 17, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1962 to 1986.

**Edward Olson**, 69, production support analyst, Billing, Renaissance Square, Minneapolis, Minn., died on Feb. 21, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1973 to 2008.

**Victor Paradis**, 100, assistant plant superintendent, Keystone, Wilmarth Steam Plant, Mankato, Minn., died on Feb. 18, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1948 to 1982.

**Robert Perea**, 66, overhead working foreman, Street Lighting, Lipan Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., died on Feb. 17, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1983 to 2017.

**Dorothy Pihlstrom**, 87, medical technologist, Employee Relations, Headquarters Office Building, Denver, Colo., died on Feb. 17, 2019. She worked for PSCo from 1967 to 1990.

**Ronald Reinke**, 70, plant operator, Operations, Zuni Generating Station, Denver, Colo., died on March 6, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1989 to 2012.

**Mark Roach**, 65, troubleman, Minneapolis Trouble, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died on Feb. 27, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1973 to 2008.

**Mary Scott**, 94, customer service representative, Customer Service, Colorado, died on March 5, 2019. She worked for PSCo from 1960 to 1986.

**Gary Shrum**, 75, team lead, Construction, Operations and Maintenance, Operations, Lubbock Service Center, Lubbock, Texas, died on Feb. 2, 2019. He worked for SPS from 1964 to 2003.

**Hilary Skiba**, 84, station meter tester, Electric Meter, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died on Feb. 25, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1952 to 1989.

**Joanne Smith**, 82, associate, Transmission Lines-North, Golden Warehouse, Golden, Colo., died on Feb. 12, 2019. She worked for PSCo from 1983 to 1998.

**Richard Stengaard**, 70, designer thereafter, Northern Colorado Design, Fort Collins Operations Center, Fort Collins, Colo., died on March 21, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1966 to 2005.

**Ralph Thomson**, 85, service fitter, Gas, Holly Operations Center, Denver, Colo., died on Feb. 1, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1960 to 1994.

**Thomas Tolbert**, 76, production specialist, Maintenance Resources, SPS Tower, Amarillo, Texas, died on March 24, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy from 1977 to 2002.

**Gary Ward**, 61, mechanic A, Fleet Maintenance, Lipan Transportation Center, Denver, Colo., died on Feb. 8, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1979 to 2012.

**Gale Whitworth**, 26, lineman apprentice (7th 6 months), Metro Apprentices, Kipling Service Center, Lakewood, Colo., died on Mar. 10, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 2013 until the time of his death.

**Patricia Wiese**, 77, senior labor relations representative, Employee and Labor Relations, 414 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minn., died on March 1, 2019. She worked for NSP from 1960 to 1996.

**Jeremy Wildeman**, 35, assistant plant equipment operator, Operations, King Generating Plant, Bayport, Minn., died on Feb. 27, 2019. He worked for NSP from 2007 until the time of his death.

**Joe Wilson**, 94, died on Jan. 14, 2019. He worked for SPS from 1950 to 1990.

**Walter Woertman**, 71, mechanic A, Fleet Maintenance-North, Valentia Service Center, Denver, Colo., died on Feb. 11, 2019. He worked for PSCo from 1977 to 2004.



**Darwin Wosepka**, 100, lineman-in-charge, Indianhead Division, Wisconsin, died on March 14, 2019. He worked for NSP from 1949 to 1981.

**George Wright**, 92, died on Feb. 10, 2019. He worked for SPS from 1948 to 1986.

## Retiring

**Martina Bass** (bass-martina@yahoo.com), rates analyst, Revenue Analysis, Denver, Colo., retired on April 22, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

**Randy Baud** (randybaud@frontiernet.net), cost analysis, Nuclear, Capital Projects, Welch, Minn., retired on March 29, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for five years.

**Nanette Crawford** (necraw4d@gmail.com), senior instructor, Customer Contact Center, Talent and Training, Sky Park, Eau Claire, Wis., retired on April 30, 2019.

**Karen Davis**, repairman, Maintenance, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on April 12, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

**Steve Deaton**, regional community manager—Texas South, Community Relations, Texas, retired on March 7, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 40 years.

**Jeanne Fox**, executive assistant, President Xcel Energy—Wisconsin, Eau Claire, Wis., retired on March 29, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 29 years.

**Greg Gelbmann**, control center operator, Electric Operations, St. Paul, Minn., retired on April 25, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 33 years.

**Paul Huffman** (paul.huffman@comcast.net), general manager, Nuclear Fleet Operations, Nuclear, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on May 2, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 27 years.

**Paul Hughes**, working foreman, Gas Emergency Response, Denver, Colo., retired on March 29, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

**Charles Kinne**, principal substation field engineer, Substation Field Engineering, Maple Grove, Minn., retired on April 1, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 40 years.

**Marsha Manderschied** (marshamandy@aol.com), rate information specialist, Regulatory, Centre Pointe, Roseville, Minn., retired on April 10, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 40 years.

**Vicki McCarl** (vmccarl@comcast.net), strategy & planning consultant, Strategy & Planning, 1800 Larimer, Colo., retired on May 15, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 45 years.

**Linda Moldenhauer** (lmoldenhauer@suddenlink.net), work operations coordinator, System Protection, Amarillo, Texas, retired on April 1, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

**Betty Otremba** (rotremba@frontiernet.net), business process specialist, Business Support, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on March 1, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 29 years.

**Ronald Otremba**, senior instrument and control specialist, Tech Services, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on March 1, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 32 years.

**Leonardo Ovalle** (ovalle58@firearea.com), maintenance journeyman mechanic, Maintenance, Tolk Station, Earth, Texas, retired on March 29, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37.5 years.

**Lisa Perkett** (brian\_perkett@comcast.net), principal financial consultant, Capital Asset Accounting, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on April 2, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 39 years.

**Rick Perkins** (rperkins@amaonline.com), senior system analyst, IO Transmission, Amarillo, Texas, retired on April 30, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

**Jeffrey Robinson**, field representative, Collections-North, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on April 12, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 42 years.

**Juan Rodriguez** (jua222up@gmail.com), instrument technician, Plant Controls, Cunningham Station, Hobbs, N.M., retired on April 26, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

**Rick Rohrer** (rickrohremn@gmail.com), manager, Fukushima Task Force, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on June 3, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 30 years.

**Jerome Rokke** (jdroke@aol.com), senior functional analyst, IT Account Management-Corporate, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on March 29, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

**Julie Rushton**, corporate giving representative, Corporate Giving, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on March 1, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

**Michael Schreer**, journeyman mechanic, Maintenance, Harrington Station, Amarillo, Texas, retired on March 15, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 33 years.

**Mark Staggs**, area engineer, Area Engineering, Denver North Metro Region, Arvada, Colo., retired on April 20, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

**Christine Stangl**, billing specialist, Eau Claire, Wis., retired on April 1, 2019. She worked for Xcel Energy for 39 years.

**Paul Torgerson** (ptorgie371@yahoo.com), I & C technician, Minneapolis, Minn., retired in March 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 20 years.

**James Witt**, principal fuel portfolio coordinator, Fuel Supply, Denver, Colo., retired on March 29, 2019. He worked for Xcel Energy for 21 years.

## Online Xtra subscription available for employees and retirees

Employee readers of *Xtra* can opt out of receiving the print version of Xcel Energy's employee and retiree publication, and instead read the online version on XpressNet or via a portal on the company's website at [xcelenergy.com](http://xcelenergy.com).

To complete the opt-out process, employees need to fill out a form on the *Xtra* homepage of XpressNet, providing their name, employee ID and company email address. Those who choose to opt out will receive an email when a new issue is available for online viewing.

The opt-out form and online versions of *Xtra* can be found by clicking on the "Xtra Online" link, located

at the bottom of the XpressNet homepage. The online edition of *Xtra* also can be found at [xcelenergy.com/Xtra](http://xcelenergy.com/Xtra) – or from the homepage, look under Community/Community Involvement/Retiree Directory.

In addition, retirees can opt out of receiving the print version, or request address changes regarding home delivery of the print edition, by calling the Human Resources Service Center at 800.689.7662. They also are invited to visit the webpage noted above (or [xcelenergy.com/Retirees](http://xcelenergy.com/Retirees)) to view the latest issue, as well as a number of back issues of *Xtra*.

## News Brief



**XTRA**

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If you're planning to dig on your property, make sure to call 8-1-1 before you get started! Electrical or natural gas lines could be buried just below the surface, and damaging them can be dangerous, and even deadly. A professional will stop by to mark the area for you. Whether it's a major project or just some gardening, be sure to call 8-1-1 first. It's smart. It's easy. It's safe. And it's one of the ways we're always delivering, safely. **For more information visit [xcelenergy.com/Safety](http://xcelenergy.com/Safety).**



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