Xcel Energy®

XTRA

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PRIORITIES:
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‘Friendly and helpful service’ beyond the call of duty appreciated

Dear Xcel Energy:

I wish to bring to your attention the friendly and helpful service of one of your employees who went beyond the call of duty in removing a backyard tree that had fallen on my power line, and then repairing that line.

The gentleman politely declined my modest offer of a small honorarium that could have provided for a libation much later that day. In lieu of that, I now offer this expression of appreciation.

—Minnesota customer

Thanks sent for prompt restoration of power in freezing weather

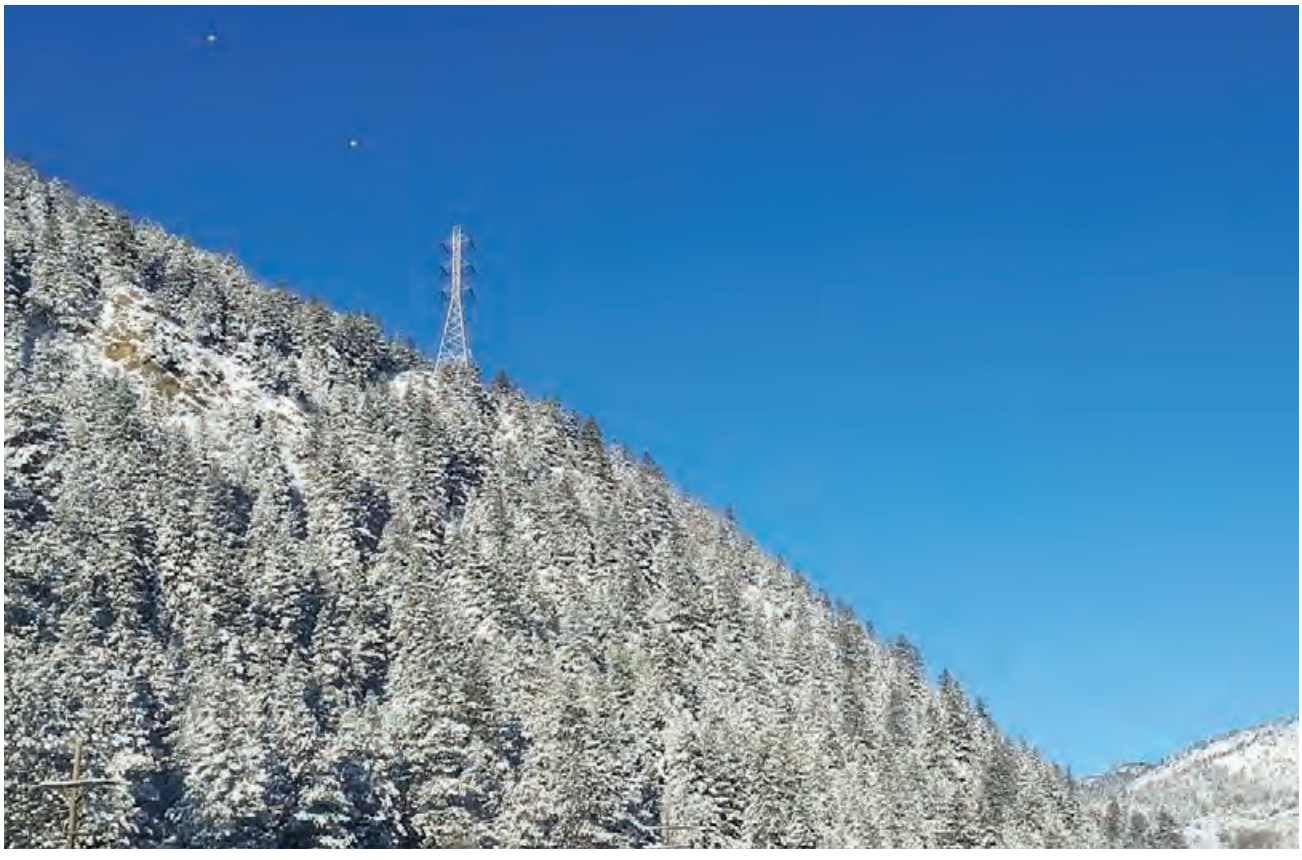
Dear Xcel Energy:

I just wanted to say thanks for the prompt re-institution of power last night.

I was worried I was going to freeze to death – like, really worried. But you guys came through and got the heat back on for us!

Big smooch to your team out there in the cold!

—Laura Hansen, Minneapolis, Minn.



ROCKIES WINTER SCENE

Timothy Strong, an engineer in Substation Design at 1800 Larimer in Denver, caught this winter scene on a sunny day in the Rocky Mountains west of the city. Pictured in the scene is an Xcel Energy transmission tower and line, traversing a high snow-covered mountainside.

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 e-mail address listed on the back page of this publication. By submitting images for “Photo Op,” employees give Xtra permission to run the photos.*

2014 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Call to action shaping business planning and priorities

Last fall, Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO, challenged employees to begin to think and act more like a competitive business. This strategic call to action was accompanied by a new vision and mission.

"If we want to remain successful, we need to become flexible, nimble and more responsive to our customers and policymakers than ever before," Fowke said.

To meet the call to action, he said, Xcel Energy must:

- Bend the cost curve while continuing to drive operational excellence.
- Offer customers and communities more services and options that they want and value.
- Make smart investments that position the company for the future.
- And become more engaged than ever with customers, communities and policy makers.

As part of the overall effort to meet the strategic call to action, Judy Poferl, vice president and corporate secretary, is leading a cross-functional team to integrate Xcel Energy's new vision, mission and the call to action into its business planning, talent management, strategic communications, and employee outreach and engagement.

The team's goal is to help employees – no matter what their role at the company – to better understand what it means to "think and act more like a competitive business," she said.

"We are in the initial stages of implementing the call to action – focusing on ensuring employees understand it, embrace it and are well prepared to execute it," Poferl said. "At the same time, we are working to instill the call to action into various business activities and functions to help drive it through the organization."

First off in this effort is Xcel Energy's business planning process. Those efforts are tightly linked to the strategic call to action going forward, said Scott Wilensky, senior vice president and general counsel, who also oversees the Corporate Strategy and Planning Department.

"As we work our business plans for 2014, the call to action will shape our corporate priorities," Wilensky said. "While the focus on a competitive mindset is new, there are many strategic priorities that will remain the same as we make the transition.

"This year, we are adding one new priority – strong community and civic engagement," he added. "This is an important part of getting the rules right so we can compete fairly."

Judy Poferl

2014 Corporate Strategy Guidance

Provided by Strategy & Planning

Our Vision:
We will be the preferred and trusted provider of the energy our customers need.

Our Mission:
We provide our customers the safe, clean, reliable energy services they want and value at a competitive price.

Our Values: *Who we are, how we conduct our business, and the importance of our customers. We commit to:*

- Ensure safety for ourselves, coworkers, and the public
- Work productively and create a challenging and rewarding workplace
- Conduct all our business in an honest and ethical manner
- Work together to serve our customers
- Be accountable to each other for doing our best
- Treat all people with respect
- Promote a culture of diversity and inclusion
- Protect the environment
- Achieve operational excellence

Our Strategy: *To grow our business by thinking and acting like a competitive business*

Just because we are a regulated monopoly does not mean we don't compete. We compete today for shareholders and customers, and for the support of our regulators and legislators. We know our stakeholders can choose from whom they receive their energy, where to make their investments and whom they trust when making key decisions about their future. More than ever we face competition every day, and we must never take for granted the privilege to serve our customers. To be positioned for the future:

We will think and act like a competitive business so that our customers want us to be their energy provider. We will:

- Bend our cost curve while continuing to drive operational excellence – *Focus on cost leadership and keeping costs low*
- Offer our customers and communities more services and options that they want and value – *Our high quality products and services should be our unique competitive edge*
- Make smart investments that position us for the future – *Continue to build our core business*
- Become more engaged than ever with our customers, communities and policy makers – *It's all about the people we serve and our people who serve them*

Our Strategic Priorities:

We will focus on the following ***7 Strategic Priorities*** to support execution of our strategy.

Safety	Customer Focus	Operational Excellence/ Cost Competitiveness	Attractive Total Return For Shareholders	Workforce Development	Environmental Leadership	Strong Community and Civic Engagement

Our Strategy Aligns with Our Strategic Priorities:

Our Strategy	Our Strategic Priorities
Bend the cost curve while continuing our drive to operational excellence	**Safety** **Customer Focus** **Operational Excellence/Cost Competitiveness** **Attractive Return for Shareholders** **Workforce Development**
Offer our customers and communities more services and options that they want and value	**Customer Focus** **Safety** **Operational Excellence/Cost Competitiveness** **Community and Civic Engagement** **Environmental Leadership**
Make smart investments that position us for the future	**Customer Focus** **Workforce Development** **Operational Excellence/Cost Competitiveness** **Attractive Return for Shareholders** **Environmental Leadership**
Become more engaged than ever with our customers, communities and policymakers	**Strong Community and Civic Engagement** **Customer Focus** **Environmental Leadership** **Attractive Return for Shareholders**

Bend the cost curve while continuing our drive to operational excellence

Become more engaged than ever with our customers, communities and policymakers

Strategic priorities	Safety	Customer Focus	Operational Excellence/ Cost Competitiveness	Attractive Return For Shareholders	Workforce Development	Environmental Leadership	Strong Community and Civic Engagement
Why?	▪ The safety of employees, customers and neighbors is our #1 priority. ▪ Our employees are our #1 asset. ▪ Our communities and neighbors rely on us to perform our work with safety as our utmost priority.	▪ To be the preferred provider to our customers, we need to provide them with the services and options they want and value. ▪ We believe that we are well positioned to provide options that will compete on cost and quality with third party offerings. ▪ We believe that customer choice will help put more control in the hands of customers and local entities.	▪ We must maintain the highest service quality while making smart investments in our infrastructure, processes and workforce. ▪ Our reliability cannot be matched cost effectively with alternative technology – it is our competitive advantage. ▪ Our cost should align with the value that customers place on our products and services. ▪ Regulators are increasingly focused on cost containment for customers.	▪ Our shareholders expect us to invest and grow our core business and earn our authorized Return on Equity (ROE). ▪ Earning our authorized ROE is the #1 opportunity for growth of shareholder value. ▪ We are not currently earning our authorized ROE in all jurisdictions. ▪ Improving our ROE enables growth with moderated impacts to the customer.	▪ Employees are our #1 asset. ▪ Developing the next generation workforce will be critical to our continued success. ▪ 50% of our workforce will leave the company over the next 10 years. Successfully managing this transition will require focus on attracting, training and retaining employees. ▪ As we assimilate new workers into our workforce, we must leverage their skills to perform more efficiently.	▪ We embrace our role as an environmental leader. ▪ We need to build on the value we have created thus far by implementing a clean energy strategy that works for our many stakeholders through balancing environmental improvement with affordable and reliable energy delivery.	▪ We need to build and maintain trusted relationships with our customers, regulators, policymakers and investors. Their trust in Xcel Energy, its brand, and its people are essential for us to be at the table. ▪ We need to proactively shape policy -- getting the rules right on issues such as climate legislation, net metering, and taxation is more important than ever.
What are we doing or could we do?	▪ Journey to Zero ▪ Stop work rules ▪ Contractor safety programs ▪ Gas pipeline integrity ▪ Critical infrastructure protection	▪ Solar source, solar gardens and utility-scale solar systems ▪ WindSource ▪ Large C&I solutions ▪ Demand response programs ▪ Energy efficiency programs ▪ Municipal offerings and franchise agreements ▪ Energy source choices ▪ Rate plans ▪ The value message	▪ Productivity Through Technology (PTT) ▪ Optimize and standardize processes ▪ ES Operating Model and Distribution optimization ▪ Customer reliability ▪ Nuclear 3:2:1 initiatives ▪ Standardize processes ▪ Plant reliability ▪ On-time, on-budget incentives ▪ Control expenses ▪ Cap on cost of projects	▪ ROE gap closure initiative ▪ The right capital investments ▪ Growth opportunities ▪ Mid-stream gas transmission exploration ▪ Electric transmission investment ▪ Expense management ▪ Constructive rate case outcomes ▪ 'Get the Rules Right' in our jurisdictions	▪ Leadership development ▪ Succession planning ▪ Path to Leadership ▪ External pipeline programs ▪ New Hire Connection (on boarding) ▪ Workforce Strategy and the Human Capital Report ▪ Productivity Through Technology (PTT) ▪ ES Operating Model ▪ Distribution optimization ▪ Nuclear 3:2:1 initiatives ▪ Standardized processes	▪ Wind resource purchases and ownership when cost effective for our customers ▪ Solar source, solar gardens and utility-scale solar systems ▪ WindSource ▪ Energy efficiency programs ▪ Past proactive investments in clean energy leveraged to position the company for the future ▪ Communication of the value of our environmental leadership efforts	▪ 'Glad You Asked' ▪ Community engagement ▪ Community scorecard ▪ Customer scorecard ▪ Day of Service ▪ Political engagement ▪ Large C&I customer relationships ▪ Environmental performance ▪ Public safety ▪ Polity initiatives (CO_2, net metering, franchises) ▪ Workforce development ▪ Leadership development
How do or should we measure our results?	▪ Public safety indices - OSHA/DART ▪ Contractor safety ▪ Gas E-1 response time ▪ High pressure gas assessments	▪ Program adoption rates ▪ Customer satisfaction scores ▪ Customer separations and adoption of 3rd party competing offerings ▪ Number of new products ▪ Speed to market	▪ Plant reliability (UOR) ▪ System reliability (SAIDI) ▪ INPO rating (Nuclear) ▪ Cost per unit metrics ▪ Rate/value comparisons ▪ Value creation metrics ▪ In-market availability ▪ System cost benchmarking ▪ Cost/value comparisons of customer alternatives	▪ Earned v. authorized ROE ▪ Total shareholder return ▪ EPS growth ▪ Meet earnings guidance ▪ Meet budgets	▪ Succession planning metrics ▪ Productivity metrics ▪ Quality of hire ▪ High performer/low performer attrition ▪ Performance management ▪ Labor cost growth	▪ Wind and Solar resource capacity additions ▪ Energy efficiency improvements ▪ Emissions reductions ▪ Environmental compliance ▪ Comparisons to peer utilities	▪ Policy outcomes ▪ Most trustworthy companies ranking ▪ Customer satisfaction ▪ Policy value impact ▪ Political engagement ▪ Charitable giving ▪ Non-profit board memberships

Offer our customers and communities more services and options that they want and value

Make smart investments that position us for the future

"The other change involves highlighting cost competiveness," he said. "It will gain even greater emphasis in our pursuit of operational excellence."

Each organization's plans should align with and support the strategic priorities, Wilensky said. They include:

- Safety
- Customer focus
- Operational excellence/Cost competitiveness
- Attractive total return for shareholders
- Workforce development
- Environmental leadership
- Strong community and civic engagement

"As an additional resource, we are providing the 2014 Strategic Guidance Placemat," he said. "The placemat briefly describes the importance of each priority, what the company is currently pursuing to achieve the priorities, as well as some suggestions for how to approach KPIs this year.

"As you work on your organization's 2014 business plans," he added, "we ask that you align your organization's efforts with these priorities while beginning to emphasize goals that align with our strategic call to action." Additional tools to help understand the call to action are available to employees, Poferl said.

"We have a dedicated page on XpressNET, where employees can find the statements and several tools that have been developed to help them on this journey," she said. "Discussing these topics as teams will help us gain understanding, and prompt ideas, areas of focus and action items that make sense for each business area.."

As more tools are developed, they will be posted to this central XpressNET location, under "Our Company/Who We Are/Company Profile/Mission, Vision and Values." Be sure to check out the current video of Ben Fowke delivering his "Setting the Framework" presentation, she said, as well as a discussion guide and other tools in the Resources section.

"Right now, we want employees to continue having team discussions about how they will think and act more like a competitive business so our customers will want us as their energy provider," Poferl said. "This exchange is feeding into our business planning and goal setting for 2014.

"We surveyed managers to hear the results of those discussions," she added. "The feedback we are hearing ranges from, 'It's about time," to 'We don't know what it means to think competitively.'

> "We ask that you align your organization's efforts with these priorities while beginning to emphasize goals that align with our strategic call to action."

"This is not a surprise," she said. "Some of our areas operate in a very competitive environment, while other teams have not looked at their work through this lens before.

"It is going to be a new concept for some of us," Poferl said. "We are just embarking on this journey as an organization, and each team needs to process this together so they understand what their role in this change will entail."

Scott Wilensky

Energy Outlook

Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO, recently took part in University of Colorado Business School's Global Energy Management Program. Fowke gave a CEO Briefing to a gathering at the Denver Business School's facility in downtown, updating students, faculty and other leaders about the state of the utility industry and the changes and challenges that lie ahead.

NEWS BRIEFS

HomeSmart helps bring heat and comfort to Colorado family

Winter recently got a little warmer for one Denver-area family. The Ott family of Arvada was the recipient of the Home Comfort Giveaway by Xcel Energy's HomeSmart appliance repair and protection program.

The giveaway included a high-efficiency furnace, an air purification system and a high-efficiency central air conditioning system, valued at an estimated $12,000.

Several third parties nominated Joanne Ott and her two-year-old daughter, Joslyn, who was born prematurely and suffers from lung ailments and frequent illnesses. The mother and daughter live in a house where inside temperatures sometimes fall as low as 50 degrees in the winter because of an old furnace. Entry essays also cited dust accumulation in the home, which is near an industrial area.

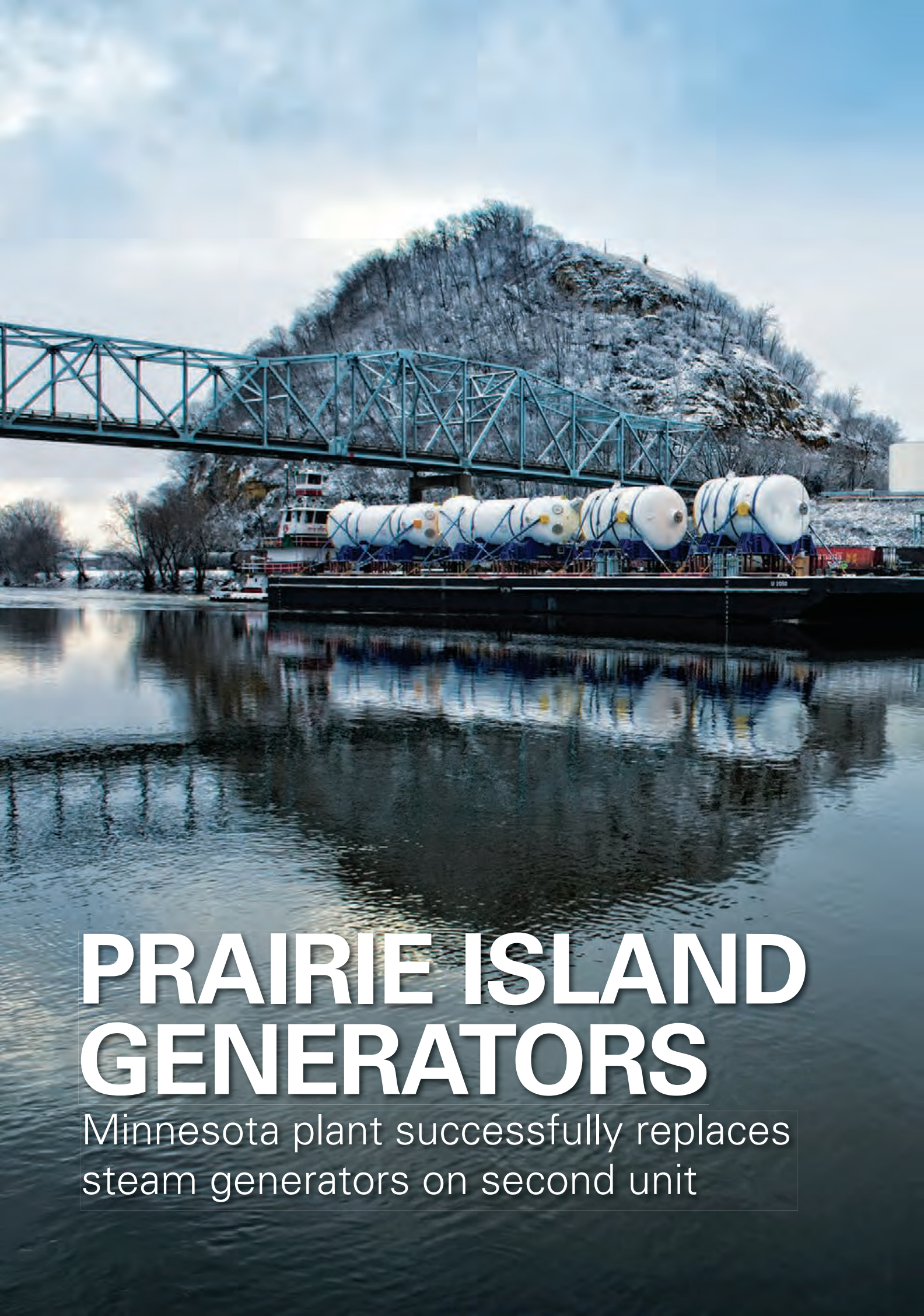
"This is a godsend for us," said Joanne Ott. "Now I don't have to worry about my daughter staying warm on cold winter nights, and hopefully the air filtration system will help her breathe easier and keep her healthy."

"Our entire staff wanted to be part of giving back to the Denver-metro community, and we felt it was important to find a family in need that could truly benefit from the type of services our company offers," said Paul Olivier, HomeSmart program manager.

HomeSmart partnered with the American Lung Association in Colorado to help select a recipient.

"Joslyn's frequent respiratory complications and the family's need for a working furnace demonstrated the greatest need for a new system," said John Streit, manager of Lung Health Programs at the American Lung Association in Colorado. "Living in a home with clean air and a comfortable temperature will improve Joslyn's quality of life."

HomeSmart performed the installation of a new furnace, central air conditioning system and home air purification system last month.



PRAIRIE ISLAND GENERATORS

Minnesota plant successfully replaces steam generators on second unit

In a testament to O&M practices at Prairie Island, the Minnesota nuclear generating plant recently replaced some of the oldest steam generators remaining in service in the world.

The remarkable run marked an industry first in the United States – the longest operational run ever for steam generators in a nuclear plant.

Prairie Island is one of only a few facilities that operated this equipment for the design life of the plant – this due to Prairie Island's high standards in operations, controlling chemistry and preventive maintenance said Scott Marty, project director of the steam generator replacement effort.

"The new steam generators will improve the efficiency of Unit 2, while reducing future operation, maintenance and inspection costs," he said. "The project is one of the significant investments Xcel Energy is making in its nuclear plants to ensure continued safe, reliable, carbon-free electricity generation for its customers for the next 20 years."

. Prairie Island's Unit 2 reactor returned to full power on Jan. 13, producing electricity with the two new steam generators installed during a refueling and maintenance outage. During the outage, which started Sept. 21, approximately 1,500 contractors helped plant staff replace two 40-year-old steam generators and one-third of the unit's fuel to prepare the unit for its next operating cycle.

The startup marked the culmination of a project nearly seven years in the making. It began in 2006 with a contract with AREVA to fabricate and manufacture the generators in Chalon St. Marcel, France. With that contract, the $280 million project got under way.

STEAM GENERATORS

Prairie Island's Unit 2 reactor returned to full power on Jan. 13, producing electricity with the two new steam generators installed during a refueling and maintenance outage. Above and on page 11, the generators are moved at or near the plant in Red Wing, Minn. And on pages 8 and 9, the generators move up the Mississippi River near Red Wing, headed for the plant.

The replacement steam generators arrived at the plant via barge on the Mississippi River last spring after a trans-Atlantic voyage, Marty said. Each replacement steam generator was shipped in two parts. When the generator parts were later installed in containment and joined together, they were approximately 70 feet tall and weigh 330 tons each.

From the river, the parts were placed in a specially constructed building, where work began to prepare the equipment for installation at the plant near the city of Red Wing.

Aside from the physical preparations, a Prairie Island team also met with Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) officials to discuss the project's oversight, scheduling and technical specifications, he said. This information helped prepare NRC inspectors for a planned steam-generator-replacement inspection.

The final section of old steam generator was removed from containment on Oct. 16. The new components were in place for welding just two weeks later. The welding task ahead was massive, with welders working around the clock both inside containment and in a remote welding station outside.

PCI Energy Services, a Westinghouse company, operated the mobile welding command center, which joined the steam generator to the reactor coolant system piping. Welding specialists manned the center, which was laden with video monitors and programmable logic controllers to direct the welding operation.

Remote welding has many benefits, Marty said. The technology improves weld quality while allowing a supervisor to oversee all operations from one location. It also helps reduce the amount of welding equipment and personnel stationed inside containment.

Chicago Bridge and Iron performed the manual welding to join the two steam generator vessel parts. This 3.25-inch-thick by 14-foot-diameter girth weld was completed with zero defects.

With the welds complete, radiography then began. By the end of November, with this part of the project complete, the plant was released for core reload and final hydrostatic testing.

Finally, on Jan. 3, Unit 2 started its measured ascent to 100 percent power, Marty said. All signs point to a successful run until the unit's next scheduled refueling outage, as well as for the life of the plant's license through 2033.

Prairie Island replaced its Unit 1 steam generators back 2004, but the Unit 2 project had a much different flavor, he said.

"Times have changed, and the operating environment has changed," Marty said. "It's not an easy process, and the bar is always being raised in the nuclear industry."

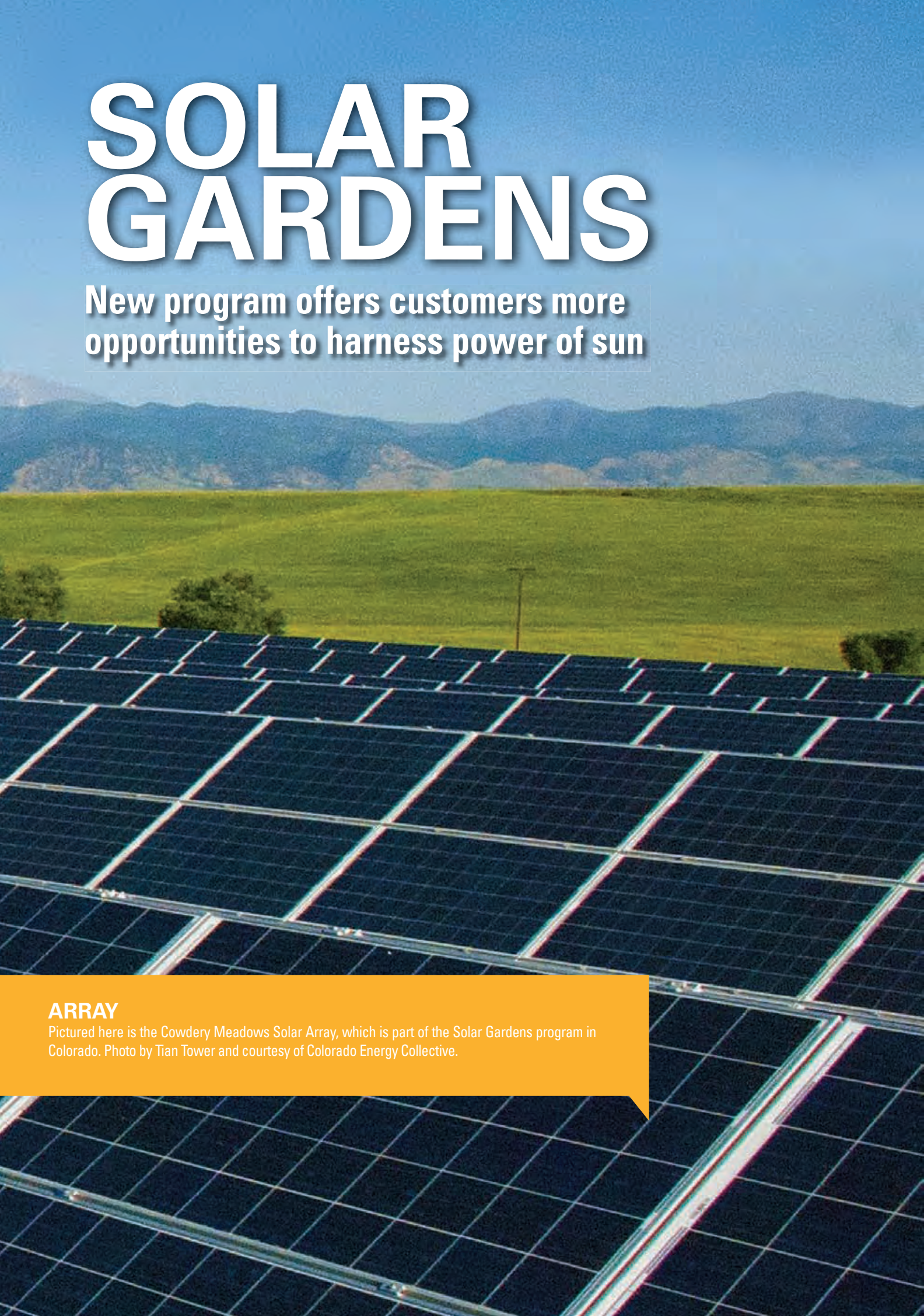
The effort at its base was an economic reliability project that restored operating pressures for Unit 2 and will allow for extended operations for decades to come, he said.

"This successful project will provide us with long-term reliability to produce safe and clean energy going forward," he said. "It will help us with future outage costs, restores full pressure to our operations and increases electric production."

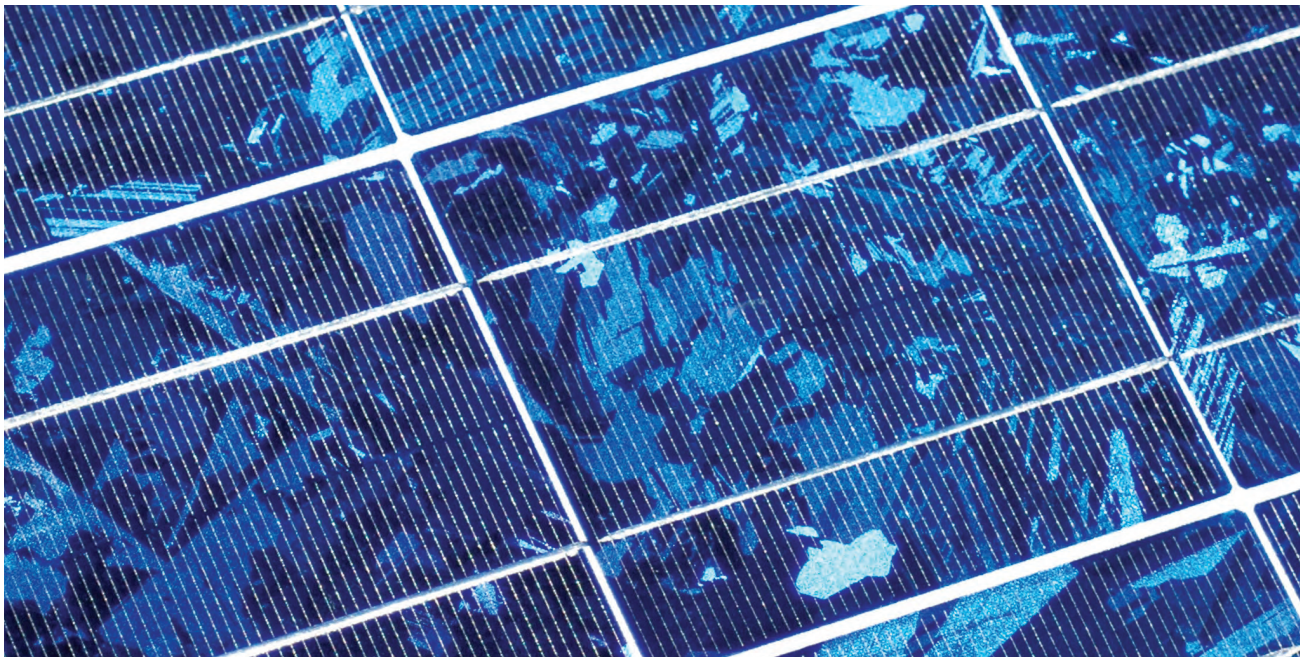
The plant's new steam generators contain nearly 10,000 tubes (4,868 each) that transfer heat from the nuclear reactor to steam-driven turbines. Prairie Island consists of two pressurized-water reactors, totaling 1,076 megawatts of capacity. Unit One began commercial operation in 1973, with Unit Two coming on line the following year.

SOLAR GARDENS

New program offers customers more opportunities to harness power of sun



ARRAY
Pictured here is the Cowdery Meadows Solar Array, which is part of the Solar Gardens program in Colorado. Photo by Tian Tower and courtesy of Colorado Energy Collective.



Xcel Energy is among the nation's leaders in delivering safe, clean energy from renewable sources at an affordable price. As part of its renewable energy mix, solar technologies have great promise. The company is incorporating both large, utility-scale systems and small, customer-sited systems into its clean energy portfolio.

As part of this effort, the company recently launched a Solar Gardens program in Minnesota. The new program offers customers more opportunities to harness the power of the sun to meet their energy needs and could more than double customers' use of solar power over the next two years.

"Providing more choices and creating competitive product offerings is part of our commitment to customers," said Ben Fowke, chairman, president, and CEO. "Solar energy is a bright part of our future, so we continue to design options that ensure we develop renewable resources like solar as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible."

Previously, customers who didn't want solar panels on their rooftops, or whose homes were not suitable for solar panels, were unable to participate in solar programs. Through this new program, Xcel Energy is funding the development of solar gardens – or groupings of solar panels – at centralized locations within communities. Customers can subscribe to a solar garden for a portion or all of their electricity needs and receive credits on their electricity bills for their share of the energy produced.

"Our customers want the option to participate in solar energy without some of the cost, space and aesthetic restraints of solar rooftop panels," said Craig Konz, associate product portfolio manager in Marketing. "Solar gardens will help make renewable energy affordable and accessible to as many of our customers as possible."

Participants in the program also benefit from the economies of scale associated with larger central systems, which generate solar power at a significantly lower cost than smaller, individual systems.

Minnesota's Solar Gardens program is modeled after Solar*Rewards Community, a successful initiative in the Colorado service territory, where Xcel Energy has extensive experience with solar programs.

Since 2006, more than 15,000 Colorado customers have installed on-site solar through Solar*Rewards, a program designed to help make installing rooftop solar panels more affordable for residential and business customers, he said. The company recently completed the fifth of 11 planned community solar facilities, totaling nearly five megawatts, and plans to offer an additional 6.5 megawatts of community solar gardens within the Colorado service territory in 2014.

Xcel Energy also recently received approval to add significant new solar energy resources from large-scale facilities at prices that compete with fossil-fuel generation. The additional 170 megawatts will triple the size of current large-scale solar installations – providing enough energy for more than 53,000 additional Colorado homes – and equates to more than eight times all of the rooftop-solar energy currently installed in Colorado at less than half of the cost.

The Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA) ranks Xcel Energy among the top-10 U.S. utilities for total solar electric capacity, and the company ranks fifth in the country in purchases of solar energy overall.

Xcel Energy also leads the nation in wind power production. Since 2004, the company has invested in enough wind and solar energy to power more than 700,000 homes.

As the energy landscape evolves and renewable sources grow, it's more important than ever to incorporate renewable energy in the right way – in a fair, efficient and sustainable manner, he said. Xcel Energy will continue to play a pivotal role in stimulating the growth of renewable energy across its service territories – in wind, biomass, hydro and solar – to make renewable energy accessible, sustainable and practical for everyone.

Just as technology changes, so does the market when it comes to solar. For the latest company information on this valuable renewable resource, please go to the "Glad You Asked" section on XpressNET, under "Our Company" and "Who We Are," for more information.

PLATINUM PROJECT

Chemistry injection effort complete at Monticello

Monticello Nuclear Generating Station recently completed an effort to significantly reduce radiation-dose exposure and maintain reactor-vessel corrosion protection.

The On-Line Noble Chemistry (OLNC) project conducted its first water-treatment process in October, but future treatments will continue to pay dividends at the plant in Monticello, Minn.

"The On-line Noble Chemistry project will have the most meaningful impact for Monticello employees of any project the Chemistry Department has been involved with over the years," said Kurt Petersen, manager of the department. "The injection process lasted 10 days and went like clockwork. We couldn't be more pleased with the results."

The OLNC effort reduces the annual on-line dose to the plant's workforce by 6 to 12 REM. Achieving this level will place Monticello among the lowest-dose plants in the country, he said, and could potentially achieve lowest-dose standing for the plant.

OLNC is a safe and well-understood practice used by most boiling reactor sites in the United States.

"Other plants had broken the ice for us," Petersen said. "But still, it was a complicated process, and we are proud of the project's success. We're protecting our people and at the same time protecting the company's asset."

Over time, corrosion caused by oxidation creates microscopic cracks in the plant's reactor vessel. The corrosion process is a natural occurrence occurring between the iron in the vessel and associated piping and oxygen in the water, he explained.

"The On-line Noble Chemistry project will have the most meaningful impact for Monticello employees of any project the Chemistry Department has been involved with over the years."

Previously, Monticello injected high levels of hydrogen into the plant's feed-water system to remove oxygen and mitigate the corrosion process. With the OLNC project, however, low levels of platinum are injected into the feedwater, reducing the need for the high levels of hydrogen, he said.

The platinum is a powdered compound that is mixed with water. Acting as a catalyst, the platinum recombines hydrogen and oxygen, and removes the oxygen from the water, along with radioactive nitrogen. The platinum also works to protect various metal surfaces and piping at the plant.

"We need as little oxygen as possible in the feedwater," Petersen said. "We had many predictions on what we were looking for in the feedwater

MONTICELLO
Minnesota's Monticello Nuclear Generating Station recently completed an effort to significantly reduce radiation-dose exposure and maintain reactor-vessel corrosion protection. Pictured above is some of the equipment used during the Chemistry Department's successful injection effort.

after this process, and everything came out as planned."

A huge benefit of the new process is the ability to use less hydrogen. This significantly reduces the generation of the isotope N-16, Petersen said. The isotope is an undesirable and unavoidable byproduct that produces elevated dose rates in steam-affected areas of the plant.

The OLNC effort began more than two years ago with budgeting and planning. The needed equipment was then built by GE Hitachi (the product vendor) and shipped to the plant.

During Monticello's 2013 outage, the plant was then fitted with the appropriate injection lines, other plumbing and monitoring equipment in preparation for the first platinum injection. The platinum injection began on Oct. 15 and concluded Oct. 25 last year.

"As with any new process, we monitored a variety of parameters," Petersen said, "such as reactor-water conductivity, main steam-line radiation, re-combiner temperature and radiation projections. They were all right on target."

The Chemistry Department and GE Hitachi (the product vendor), along with other plant personnel, monitored the process around the clock until its conclusion. The project's success was then validated after measuring radioactive isotopes in water samples.

"We had a lot of different departments at the plant working on the project, so it was quite a team effort," he said.

"Going forward, the injection process will occur two times during Monticello's two-year operating cycle to maintain maximum benefits," Petersen said.

Other Chemistry team members included Temporary Chemistry Supervisor Mark Holmes, Project Manager Tom Ginter, Procedures Specialist Writer Jack Ramm, Senior Chemist Leah Whiteker and Operations Procedure Writer Gary Braatz.

NEWS BRIEF

Xcel Energy's year-end earnings announced

Xcel Energy Inc. reported 2013 GAAP earnings of $948 million, or $1.91 per share, on Jan. 30, compared with 2012 GAAP earnings of $905 million, or $1.85 per share.

Ongoing earnings, which exclude adjustments for certain items, were $1.95 per share for 2013 compared with $1.82 per share in 2012.

Ongoing earnings increased as a result of higher electric and gas margins due to rate increases in various states, the impact of favorable colder weather on the company's natural gas business and reduced interest charges. These positive factors were partially offset by planned increases in operating and maintenance expenses and depreciation.

2013 GAAP earnings include a $0.04 per share charge for a potential SPS customer refund based on FERC orders issued in August 2013. 2012 GAAP earnings reflect the $0.03 per share positive impact for a tax benefit associated with federal subsidies for prescription drug plans. Both items are excluded from ongoing earnings.

"It was a successful year from both an operational and financial perspective," said Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO. "The investments we have made in our system were once again tested by severe storms experienced across our service territories.

"We were well prepared, meeting all of our customer energy requirements with minimal disruptions," he added. "This would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts of our skilled and dedicated employees.

"Further, we successfully completed several major construction projects, including the Monticello nuclear extended life and uprate project, as well as the Prairie Island steam generator replacement," he said. "We are set to increase our future wind production by 40 percent, which is expected to provide significant fuel savings to our customers over the next 20 years.

Financially, the company delivered earnings within its guidance range for the ninth consecutive year and raised the dividend for the 10th consecutive year, Fowke said.

"We are reaffirming our 2014 ongoing earnings guidance of $1.90 to $2.05 per share," he said. "I believe we are a premium company, well positioned for the future."

LOOKOUT RAPTORS

Strassler's encounter leads to idea to support area owls, falcons

Late one summer evening, Mark Strassler walked out of Lookout Center in Golden, Colo., enjoying the still quiet of the night. Carefully watching and listening for any signs of nearby foxes or coyotes, he crossed the empty parking lot, moving slowly toward his car.

Suddenly, a bird with a large wingspan flashed by overhead, landing softly on top of a perimeter security camera. Startled, Strassler peered through the blackness, trying to get a better look at the bird. Although hindered by the night sky, he finally realized it was an owl.

This encounter gave Strassler, an IBM system administrator and support technician for Xcel Energy, the idea of creating several bird boxes to be hung on perimeter light poles, which had not been used in years.

"I knew the company has supported raptor programs for years, so I decided to look into an idea for Lookout Center," he said. "I thought the poles at the facility could be put to good use for raptors."

Strassler contacted Bob Anderson, executive director of the Raptor Resource Project, and explained his idea. Anderson, who also is responsible for the bird boxes and Bird Cam's at various Xcel Energy facilities, supported the idea and offered to build some bird boxes for Lookout Center.

After completing some research on the area, Strassler and Anderson learned they had the best chance of attracting kestrel falcons and barn owls to the bird boxes.

The boxes eventually were constructed of painted, treated wood with three inches of sand in the bottom, providing

birds with a safe place to nest and take shelter in severe weather, Strassler said.

When the boxes were finished, Strassler contacted several of his colleagues, asking for help installing the boxes and for any possible leads on a way to get them installed up on the poles.

"There were employees as far away as the Alamosa Service Center willing to help as long as we could find a bucket truck," he said. "The challenge ended up being how to get them mounted on the poles."

Eventually a lift was found, and after an electrician disconnected the power to the light poles, Strassler and his team were able to install two boxes – one for barn owls and one for kestrel falcons – high on the sides of two light poles.

"Another project was planned at Lookout, requiring a lift, and we were able to use it to get the raptor boxes in place, as well," he said. "With any luck Xcel Energy will be able to attract birds this spring and eventually install cameras to monitor the two boxes on the Xcel Energy Bird Cam site, if so."

Mark Strassler


Lookout Raptor Box

Building and installing the bird boxes was a project with a lot of personal meaning for Strassler.

"I have always loved owls," he said, noting that he still remembers the first time he saw an owl in the wild at his grandparent's home in Lincoln, Neb., when he was seven years old.

Throughout the years since that first encounter, Strassler has invested both time and money in the support of raptors. He has sponsored an owl at a small zoo in Nebraska and supports the Raptor Education Foundation in Colorado.

NEWS BRIEFS

Xcel Energy employee receives leadership award

Tom Yohn, a consulting engineer with Electric Distribution Engineering at the Lipan Distribution Center in Denver, Colo., has been awarded the Industry Leadership Award from the Rocky Mountain Electrical League (RMEL) after 40 years of service with Xcel Energy.

"I didn't know that I was even nominated for the award, so it was definitely a surprise," Yohn said, who was also recognized internally for winning the award. "I thought for sure they got the wrong person.

Yohn started with PSCo in 1973 as a newly hired engineer in System Protection Engineering, where he spent 16 years and would later become supervisor of the department. He currently supports operating groups across the company.

"What makes Tom an industry leader is not only the extremely strong technical and engineering skills he possesses, but also his ability to communicate and negotiate with others in a collaborative way," said Ward Scharmer, manager of Electric Distribution System Performance. "His efforts foster cooperation and concurrence, and avoid adversarial situations."

RMEL's Industry Leadership Award is given annually to an individual who has demonstrated exemplary service, leadership and dedication to the electric utility industry.

Monticello and Duane Arnold plants to team up on pilot project

Xcel Energy and Nextera have teamed up to form a pilot project in which Nextera's Duane Arnold Station in Iowa and Xcel Energy's Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant in Minnesota will explore joint strategic opportunities.

Nextera and Xcel Energy officials recently joined Duane Arnold and Monticello leadership in Minneapolis to discuss common technology and business opportunities.

The meeting focused on equipment sharing, common procurement opportunities, collaboration on Fukushima modifications, emergency-preparedness drill scenarios, common training initiatives, obsolescence, engineering programs and potential resource sharing opportunities in Maintenance, Radiation Protection, Chemistry, Engineering and other areas.

"The purpose of this meeting was to assist both facilities in efficient and cost-effective operations, meeting common business objectives and a practical approach to work on similar issues in a business-savvy manner," said Aldo Capristo, vice president of Licenses and Common Services. "This collaboration does not impact Xcel Energy's current membership with Utilities Services Alliance. Rather, this effort serves as a supplement to our ability to utilize business alliances efficiently."

The partnership may be expanded to consider opportunities between the Point Beach and Prairie Island plants to achieve similar common business objectives, Capristo said.

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

Glenn E. Anderson
85, district manager, Windsor Office, Windsor, Colo., died on Dec. 26, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1947 to 1986.

Thomas H. Beck
83, division dispatcher, Mankato Service Center, Mankato, Minn., died on Dec. 22, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1948 to 1988.

Roy D. Bruha
89, lineman, died on Oct. 30, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1949 to 1984.

John A. Bystrzycki
65, maintenance and construction director, died on Dec. 10, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy from 1970 to 2007.

Robert D. Carbone
84, operations analyst, Gas Distribution, Lipan Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., died on Sep. 15, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1949 to 1986.

Gene R. Carlson
50, operations specialist, Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Monticello, Minn., died on Dec. 17, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1988 to 1993.

Larry W. Farley
62, team lead, Southwest Service Center, Amarillo, Texas, died on Dec. 18, 2013. He worked for SPS from 1971 to 2008.

John L. Fennelly
84, electric distribution manager, Seventh Avenue Service Center, Denver, Colo., died on Nov. 20, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1954 to 1992.

Jeremiah Fonville
57, line crew foreman, White Bear Service Center, White Bear Lake, Minn., died on Dec. 21, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1978 to 2013.

P. W. Garrigan
81, field engineering unit manager, Electric Distribution, Colorado, died on Dec. 17, 2013. He worked for PSCo f rom 1959 to 1994.

Richard L. Gilligan
85, relief stores foreman, died on Dec. 3, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1951 to 1986.

Norma J. Halter
73, business financial analyst, Finance, General Office, Minneapolis, Minn., died on May 8, 2013. She worked for NSP from 1976 to 1999.

Richard L. Hammel
66, material and procurement specialist, Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Red Wing, Minn., died on Dec. 8, 2013. He worked for NSP from 2001 to 2013.

Jim R. Harris
76, rate administration director, Rate Administration, Colorado, died on Dec. 18, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1955 to 1994.

Ronald R. Herrin
86, engineer manager, Southern Division, Colorado, died on Oct. 26, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1952 to 1991.

Malcolm L. Hilton
87, mechanic, Zuni Station, Denver, Colo., died on Dec. 6, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1959 to 1986.

Lauri J. Isaacson
77, organizational manager, Human Resources, General Office, Minneapolis, Minn., died on Nov. 11, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1973 to 1993.

Vernon D. Lane
60, foreman, Gas Operations, Garfield Operations Center, Rifle, Colo., died on Dec. 4, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1981 to 2011.

William R. Laven
81, section supervisor, Delivery Support Services, Mankato Service Center, Mankato, Minn., died on Nov. 30, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1963 to 1992.

Albert Lind,
87 senior fitter serviceman, Colorado, died on Nov. 26, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1949 to 1986.

John W. Linquist
87, customer service supervisor, Lakeland, Minn., died on Dec. 23, 2013. He worked for NSP-MN from 1954 to 1985.

David L. Masters
77, plant specialist, Operations, Cherokee Station, Denver, Colo., died on Dec. 2, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1979 to 1999.

Fredrick T. Mc Cauley
82, plant attendant, Sherco Generating Plant, Becker, Minn., died on Nov. 27, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1950 to 1980.

Magdalena Mychajliw
90, house keeper, Colorado, died on Nov. 27, 2013. She worked for PSCo from 1966 to 1986.

Raymond J. Ose
77, shift engineer, Riverside Steam Plant, Minneapolis, Minn., died on Dec. 17, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1961 to 1994.

Blake E. Overland
28, electric meter specialist, Electric Field Metering, Winona Service Center, Winona, Minn., died on Jan. 5, 2014. He worked for NSP from 2013 until the time of his death.

Allen A. Peters
69, plant specialist, Colorado, died on Dec. 12, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1981 to 2005.

Donald D. Raitz
79, computer specialist, Colorado, died on Dec. 13, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1963 to 1994.

Paul A. Ring
48, lead operator, Pathfinder Plant, Sioux Falls, S.D., died on Dec. 11, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1985 to 2013.

Joyce M. Shuman
85, information operator, Minot Service Center, Minot, N.D., died on Nov. 23, 2013. She worke d for NSP from 1960 to 1986.

Glenola H. Southard
99, senior clerk, Colorado, died on Nov. 18, 2013. She worked for PSCo from 1956 to 1979.

Leonard L. Stenbeck
89, foreman, Colorado, died on Nov. 28, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1955 to 1986.

Leo S. Sterkel
78, fitter serviceman, Pueblo Service Center, Pueblo, Colo., died on Dec. 3, 2013. He worked for PSCo from 1960 to 1994.

James Y. Sweazey
93, business operations manager, Winona Service Center, Winona, Minn., died on Dec. 12, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1946 to 1981.

Francis E. Utecht
91, customer care manager, died on Oct. 31, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1948 to 1988.

Jackie L. Weatherly
69, field service representative, Construction, Operations and Maintenance, Lubbock, Texas, died on Dec. 22, 2013. He worked for SPS from 1964 to 2003.

Jonas C. Webb
76, manager, Community and Economic Development, Lubbock, Texas, died on Nov. 20, 2013. He worked for SPS from 1961 to 1988.

Lincoln L. Winger
97, senior field clerk, Plant Accounting, Wisconsin, died on Dec. 16, 2013. He worked for NSP from 1950 to 1979.

Brian D. Zambo
31, lineman, Transmission Construction, Maple Grove Service Center, Maple Grove, Minn., died on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for NSP from 2011 until the time of his death.

RETIRING

Duane Barnet
service technician, Gas Field Operations, Phillips Service Center, Phillips, Wis., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

Steve Brandes
system relay specialist, System Protection, Maple Grove Service Center, Maple Grove, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 33 years.

Vincent Brown
control specialist, Production and Maintenance, Zuni Generating Station, Denver, Colo., retired on Feb. 2, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 42 years.

Bob Capra
shift engineer, Operations, Allen S. King Plant, Bayport, Minn., retired on Dec. 21, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

JC Carter
(JC_Carter53@hotmail.com), substation foreman, Substation Operations and Maintenance, Carlsbad Service Center, Carlsbad, N.M., retired on Jan. 3, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

Herman O. Castro
journeyman welder, Production, Harrington Station, Amarillo, Texas, retired on Jan. 3, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

Duane Daley
(ojdaley@gmail.com), lead station electrician, Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Red Wing, Minn., retired on Dec. 30, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 27 years.

Chuck Diggins
lead station electrician, Maintenance, Allen S. King Generating Plant, Bayport, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 36 years.

David Eberhardt
system dispatcher 1, System Operations, Eau Claire, Wis., retired on Jan. 1, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Steven P. Glaser
gas pressure foreman, Gas Operations, Rice Street Service Center, St. Paul, Minn., retired on Jan. 1, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 32 years.

Robert L. Gonzales
(hotrod52special@yahoo.com), line working foreman, Construction and Maintenance, Line Department, Hobbs Service Center, Hobbs, N.M., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 40 years.

John Halvorson
(halvy_1@msn.com), lead equipment operator, Fuel, Sherco Generating Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

Mark C. Harris
electrician technician, Maintenance, Riverside Steam Plant, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Dec. 27, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Bill Hitz
environmental specialist, Environmental and Chemistry, Sherco Generating Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 28 years.

John Jamnick
dispatch and damage prevention technician, Damage Prevention, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Dec. 27, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

Noel H. Johnson
lead machinist, Maintenance, Allen S. King Generating Plant, Bayport, Minn., retired on Dec. 27, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

Mike Korfiatis
(realtor@isd.net), telephone wire system foreman, IO Operating Services, 414 Nicolett Mall, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 26 years.

Owen Kosloski
(okkosloski@comcast.net), chemist, Chemistry Resources, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Steve LaBissoniere
(slabiss@comcast.net), senior production engineer, Engineering and Construction, Riverside Generating Plant, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Dec. 30, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 42 years.

Susan Leciejewski
(dslecie@hotmail.com), customer service, Business Solution Center, Sky Park, Eau Claire, Wis., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. She worked for Xcel Energy 38 years.

Keith Lederhos
lead fitter, Gas Construction, Kipling Service Center, Lakewood, Colo., retired on Jan. 8, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

William Moeller
lead yard equipment operator, Fuel, Sherco Generating Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on Dec. 25, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Roger P. Moen
(rogerpmoen@gmail.com), splicer mechanic foreman, Underground, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

William A. Moussette
foreman, Electric Line, La Crosse Service Center, La Crosse, Wis., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

Arthur G. Peterson
mobile operating technician, Facility Services, Normandale Service Center, Edina, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 22 years.

Chuck Plummer
principal control center leader, Control Center, Rice Street Service Center, St. Paul, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 36 years.

James R. Schetter
(jdschetter@aol.com), principal asset analyst, Asset Management, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired on Jan. 15, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 10 years.

Barbara Sherwood
business process specialist, Riverside Steam Plant, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. She worked for Xcel Energy for 32 years.

Steven Strauch
senior buyer, Sourcing and Purchasing, Materials Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., retired on Jan. 31, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

David Sturgeon
system relay specialist, System Protection, Operations and Maintenance, Chestnut Service Center, Maple Grove, Minn., retired on Dec. 25, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 46 years.

Gene Taylor
gas controller, Gas Control, Rice Street Service Center, St. Paul, Minn., retired on Dec. 26, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 15 years.

Cliff Theusch
relay technician, Protection Operations and Electrical Maintenance, Western Avenue Service Center, Eau Claire, Wis., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 26 years.

Russell VanDell
(Russvd70@gmail.com), information technology manager, Business Systems, Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Monticello, Minn., retired on Dec. 31, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 40 years.

Charles Walker
field operator, Eastern High Pressure Gas, Brighton Service Center, Brighton, Colo., retired on Jan. 31, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

R. Mark Whitlatch
senior service fitter, Gas Emergency and Special Services, Lipan Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., retired on Dec. 25, 2013. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

David Wilkinson
(davidwilkinson302@gmail.com), relay technician working foreman, System Protection, Operations and Maintenance, Amarillo, Texas, retired on Jan. 8, 2014. He worked for Xcel Energy for 39 years.

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Kevin Graham, Editor
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Phone: 303-294-2417
Fax: 303-294-2968
email: Kevin.Graham@xcelenergy.com

Contributors: Kelly Stone, Anna Koch
Lisa Kuehl, Margaret Church and Kayla Sullivan

Design: Steve Berry

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