

#### **Content**

- General Ledger
  First PTT initiative a success.
- **Black Dog**Agreement reached fo new gas supply.
- Wind Records

  New generation records
  set as new facilities come
- 12 Milestone
  First transmission link in
  New Mexico expansion
  complete.
- Deployment
  Environmental-management software deployed.
- Revenue Assurance
  Renamed group taking on new efforts.
- Beekeeping
  Employee's efforts helping
  with pollinator initiative.
- People
  The most recent Friends
  We'll Miss and
  Retirements.

#### On the Cover

Xcel Energy remains the nation's No. 1 utility wind power provider with a total wind capacity now of more than 6,500 megawatts. That number breaks down to 2,566 megawatts for PSCo, 2,221 megawatts for NSP and 1,780 for SPS operations. Pictured on the cover is an early morning shot of a portion of the Nobles wind facility in Minnesota.







# Connecting to Consumers

(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.)

As we move into 2016, I want to thank all of you for the hard work and dedication you showed to Xcel Energy throughout last year. I was pleased by our company's performance around all of our key metrics, and am excited about our opportunities together this year.

I recently attended the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) event in Las Vegas. If you've never heard of or been to CES, I can tell you — it's incredible!

More than 175,000 people come to see all the new business and consumer gadgets from all the well-known brands. You could spend days checking out all of the exhibits, and learning about the latest electronics and tech trends.

Unfortunately I didn't have time to attend the actual conference. So why was I there?

We're working on a pilot program with Panasonic and one of their new products that will help connect

technology like smart thermostats, lighting solutions and home automation to make using them more convenient and efficient.

I was able to be part of the official press conference in front of several hundred reporters, and got to talk about how we'll be able to give customers even more control of the things that are important to them, like the energy they use every day.

This is a great
opportunity for us as a
company, and what better
way to do it than by working with a
company that really knows consumer technology and
how to make it all work together?

I am really excited about the work we'll be doing with Panasonic over the next few months to bring this concept to life for our customers.  $\leftarrow$ 

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# General Ledger

## First PTT initiative launches successfully

Xcel Energy's new general ledger software went live on Jan. 4 – the culmination of three years of work on the new financial reporting system.

In the end, cutover work from the legacy system went more quickly and smoothly than planned — wrapping up 36 hours early. The new SAP financial software is the first major milestone in the company's Productivity through Technology (PTT) journey.

It is one of the largest and most complex application transitions that Xcel Energy has undertaken in years, said Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO.

"We have achieved a historic milestone," he said. "The technology platform on which the new general ledger is built will ultimately provide us the insights to better meet our customers' needs and become more consumer-centric — advancing our Strategic Call to Action.

"This PTT investment in our infrastructure replaces our old platform with a stable and secure system that will meet our needs for years to come," Fowke added. "We're using this opportunity to streamline and simplify our financial accounting and budgeting processes — eliminating some of the roadblocks that prevent our employees from being as productive as they want to be."

The General Ledger Project is the first of two PTT initiatives that will transform the company. The other is Work and Asset Management (WAM), which will begin to roll out in November

to Energy Supply, followed in early 2017 to Distribution, Gas Engineering and Operations, Nuclear and Transmission. Supply Chain, Business Systems and Human Resources will deploy throughout the 11-month period due to their high impact across all business units.

"We could not have achieved this goal without the leadership, collaboration and teamwork of the PTT team, the entire Financial Operations organization, Business Systems, and our partners, Accenture, IBM, and SAP," Fowke said. "If you are one of the nearly 500 employees who worked tirelessly to deliver the new general ledger — or will be using the new system and sustaining the change going forward — thank you."

A post go-live team is now providing support to users as the company transitions to the new business processes and technology, said Jeff Savage, senior vice president and controller. The support focuses on three efforts:

- Training More than 100 courses and job aids are available. Job aids take advantage of a tool called "uPerform" that allows users to try a procedure, watch the procedure or print it out
- Super Users About 110 super users are trained to assist SAP users and employees who have questions about the new system. Super users meet regularly to share what issues are arising and recommend potential solutions. Super users will either resolve the issue or escalate it to Hypercare.





Hypercare – This escalated support
effort will be in effect until it is no longer needed. It is staffed with individuals
based at 414 Nicollet who work closely
on the system. This team will identify
and fix defects, update training and job
aids, and serve as a transition to longterm support by the regular IT Help Desk.
In long-term support, super users will
continue to be a resource for functional
and technical SAP-related questions.

"We know there will be obstacles," Savage said. "But our best line of defense is being prepared and supporting each other. We hope employees will rely on our super users and work as a team. We are in this together.

"Day One was a big accomplishment in providing us with a stable, supported, integrated system with cyber protection," he added. "However, the first close on the new system probably will be the bigger event for most users.

"It will take us longer, and it won't be perfect," he said. "And a key message will be: 'Good isn't necessarily going to feel good."

Longer term, Xcel Energy will have more visibility into its data, Savage said, with the ability to match up how much is spent and what the company spent it on.

"The example I like to use is our chemical spend," Savage explained.



Teresa Madden



**Jeff Savage** 

our power plants, but we don't have a direct link to the quantities used.

"By making cost-per-unit information readily available, we can monitor performance over time, and compare plants using similar systems and technology," he said. "This will help us identify improvement opportunities and highlight best practices across the company."

As the first of several major PTT phases, the new general ledger is creating the foundation from which the company can build common enterprise processes and enable standard technology solutions.

The PTT initiative began in 2012 with a focus on helping Xcel Energy meet the challenge of keeping costs low for customers, improving reliability, and delivering more tools and resources for employees. Since that time, the PTT team has delivered significant savings by streamlining some WAM processes ahead of the WAM launch.

These "early process releases" have focused on sourcing, fleet management, work scheduling and work management. They are helping prepare some business areas for the upcoming WAM deployment, starting later this year.

At a celebration in Minneapolis in early January, Teresa Madden, executive vice president and CFO, reflected on the beginning days of the General Ledger Project, when the effort felt like climbing a mountain.

"Three years of hard work have paid off,"

"Generally, we know how much we spend on chemicals to run she said. "We did it – thanks to all of you."  $\leftarrow$ 

**News Briefs** 

# Haeger to retire; Adelman named vice president

After working at Xcel Energy for more than 33 years and leading the Resource Planning area for the past 11

years, Kurt Haeger, area vice president of Resource Planning, will retire in early 2016.

"Kurt's strategic thinking and calm leadership of our resource planning efforts will be greatly missed," said Marvin McDaniel,

executive vice president, group president of Utilities and CAO.

Jonathan Adelman has taken on a new leadership role as area vice president, Strategic Resource & Business Planning. Adelman is leading the Resource Planning functions, while maintaining his existing responsibilities for Strategic Asset Planning.

"Jonathan's strong and diverse background in strategic planning, marketing and finance has prepared him well for this role," McDaniel said. "Please join me in congratulating Kurt on his upcoming retirement and Jonathan on his expanded responsibilities."

Adelman's area will work closely with the operating company presidents and business areas to provide leadership for the development and facilitation of long-range strategic resource, asset and business plans.



**Jonathan Adelman** 

In addition to providing executive management with the vision, insight and analysis to determine long-term strategy and direction, Strategic Resource & Business Planning will meet both operational and financial objectives and align decisions with customer strategy and affordability, McDaniel said.

## Xcel Energy storm-restoration efforts lauded as nation's best

With 60 mph winds, lightning and torrential rain, the July 18 storm that hit the Twin Cities area last year left 250,000 customers without power. Xcel Energy was prepared for the devastating event, however, because it followed its Escalated Operations Playbook, which was adopted by all control centers throughout the company in 2014.

With 750 employees, contractors and mutual aid partners dedicated to this event, 80 percent of customers were restored in 24 hours; 99 percent in 48 hours; and 100 percent by noon on July 20. Their work included replacing more than 20 miles of distribution line, 121 distribution poles and 85 distribution transformers.

In recognition of successfully, safely and quickly restoring power and rebuilding the network, the Edison Electric Institute recently awarded the company its Emergency Recovery Award during its January CEO and

board meeting.

"The hardworking crews from Xcel Energy are truly deserving of this recognition for their tremendous work to restore service in the face of difficult conditions," said Tom Kuhn, EEI president. "Xcel Energy's efforts to swiftly and safely restore service are representative of our industry's unwavering commitment to customer service."

"Our customers depend on us to provide reliable electricity," said Chris Clark, president of NSP-Minnesota. "I'm proud of the quick, safe action our employees took to restore power after that storm.

"Our crews train and prepare for situations like they faced in July and sprang into action when called upon," he added. "That demonstrates the kind of people who work for us and the dedication they have to our customers."

Response teams prepared for the July storm by prestaging crews, identifying material and resources needed for repairs, and working with partners to deploy workers and equipment to restore customers quickly and safely.

#### Year-end 2015 earnings reported

Xcel Energy reported 2015 GAAP earnings of \$984 million, or \$1.94 per share, compared with 2014 GAAP earnings of \$1,021 million, or \$2.03 per share.

Ongoing earnings, which exclude adjustments for certain items, were \$2.09 per share for 2015 compared with \$2.03 per share in 2014. Ongoing earnings increased primarily due to rate increases in various jurisdictions, non-fuel riders, a lower earnings test refund in Colorado and a decline in operating and maintenance expenses.

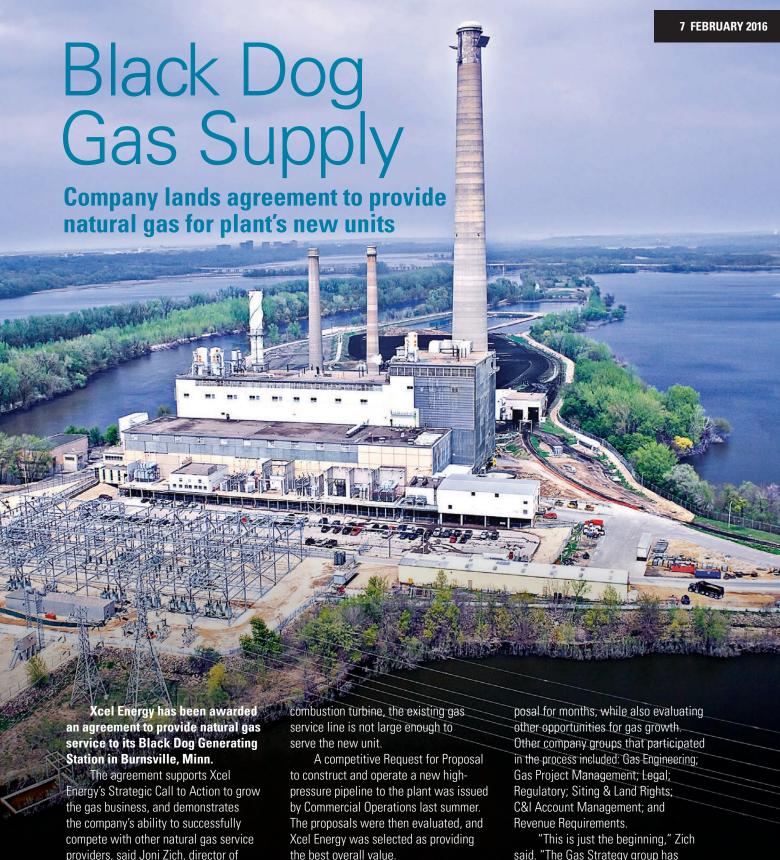
These positive factors were partially offset by the impact of negative weather (seven cents per share), as well as higher depreciation, property taxes, interest charges and lower allowance for funds used for construction.

This is the 11th consecutive year Xcel Energy has met or exceeded its earnings guidance, and the 12th consecutive year the company has increased its dividend.

"I am pleased with our 2015 results," said Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO. "We delivered earnings within our guidance range despite negative weather and certain regulatory challenges.

"We were able to accomplish this by reducing 0&M expenses and taking other management actions," he added. "We are proud of our long track record of delivering financial results that are worthy of the trust our investors place in us. Strong fundamentals, a committed workforce and solid consistent performance are the hallmarks of Xcel Energy."

Xcel Energy reaffirms its 2016 ongoing earnings guidance of \$2.12 to \$2.27 per share.



Gas Strategy. "While Black Dog is a companyowned power plant, that doesn't mean the natural gas it uses is necessarily supplied by Xcel Energy," she said. "In fact, the plant already has gas-fired generating units that are supplied by a

different gas company.

"But last year, the remaining coal units at the Black Dog plant were closed," she added, "leaving room for the addition of new gas-fired generation units at the plant site."

With the addition of a new gas

the best overall value.

"We are all aware of the competitive environment that utilities find themselves in as sources of energy and populations increase," Zich said. "Participating in the competitive-bidding environment is crucial to our future success – and the newly awarded Black Dog agreement shows that Xcel Energy is up for the challenge."

A significant amount of work and strategy go into growing the gas business, she explained. The Gas System Strategy and Business Operations group worked on the Black Dog pipeline pro-

said. "The Gas Strategy group has identified multiple opportunities for growth, and we are optimistic about our future ability to win more business.

"The award of this agreement proves that we can offer competitively priced solutions to our customers in a competitive marketplace," she added.

As part of the Black Dog agreement, Xcel Energy will construct a roughly two-mile pipeline from the interconnection with Northern Natural Gas Co. at the Cedar Town Border Station to the Black Dog plant. The line is scheduled for completion by November 2017. ←



Xcel Energy recently set a new wind-generation record in Colorado by powering more than half of its entire system with wind power for more than 24 hours.

On Oct. 2, 2015, the company set several new wind records in Colorado thanks to the new Golden West Wind Project, which was preparing for commercial operation at the time.

"For the first time, wind generation supplied more than half of our customers' energy for an entire day, reaching a daily average of 54 percent," said Drake Bartlett, senior trading analyst with Power Operations. "Most notably, wind energy served more than 50 percent of our customers' load every hour of that Friday, except during the last hour of the day when it served about 49 percent of the load."

With commercial operation at Golden West reached on Oct. 12, Xcel Energy is now purchasing the wind farm's output from NextEra Energy Resources, which built and will operate the 250-megawatt wind farm located in El Paso County, Colo.

It is one of two projects in Colorado that Xcel Energy



selected through a competitive bidding process in 2013 because the energy was priced competitively with new natural gas generation. The 200-megawatt Limon III Wind Project came online last fall

"Because our Colorado system is a small, stand-alone system, it serves as a test bed for wind integration," Bartlett said. "We are experiencing greater challenges in Colorado as we add more wind, but we can also achieve greater successes, as we're seeing with these generation records."

While PSCo's maximum daily load of wind power was set at 54.3 percent in October, SPS came in at 50.83 percent on Nov. 15. And NSP set a record for maximum daily load at 41.28 percent on Nov. 8.

Xcel Energy is the nation's No. 1 utility wind power provider for 11 years running, according to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), with a total wind capacity now of more than 6,500 megawatts. That number breaks down to 2,566 megawatts for PSCo, 2,221 megawatts for NSP and 1,780 for

SPS operations.

The recent records are primarily due to new wind capacity that was added to each system, including:

- Border Wind Farm, 150 megawatts capacity
- Pleasant Valley Wind Farm, 200 megawatts capacity
- · Golden West Wind Farm, 250 megawatts capacity
- Roosevelt Wind Farm, 250 megawatts capacity

Xcel Energy officially acquired the Pleasant Valley Wind Farm from the development company, Renewable Energy Systems Americas, on Nov. 18. The 200-megawatt wind farm near Austin, Minn., consists of 100 turbines spanning nearly 34,000 acres.

In addition, the company acquired the Border Wind Farm on Dec. 3. With the addition of the Border and Pleasant Valley projects, Xcel Energy increased its wind capacity by 20 percent in the Upper Midwest and more than doubled its ownership of wind generation.

Border Wind Farm, with 75 turbines in Rolette County, N.D.,

also was developed by Renewable Energy Systems Americas.

"Adding these two wind farms to our system is a significant step forward in our work to cut carbon emissions and shows our commitment to deliver 35 percent renewable energy to our Upper Midwest customers by 2030,"said Chris Clark, president of NSP-Minnesota. "This clean energy also comes at a reasonable cost, at prices competitive with new natural gas generation."

The wind farms also have given two local economies a boost. Border Wind Farm created 10 full-time jobs, and employed 150 people during peak construction. It will generate \$605,000 in local tax revenue.

The Pleasant Valley Farm is expected to bring in \$950,000 in local tax revenue, while producing 11 full-time jobs. It employed 250 workers during peak construction.

The two projects are part of Xcel Energy's plan to add 750 megawatts of clean wind energy to its Upper Midwest system by the end of 2016. The company will also buy wind power from







the Odell Wind Farm near Windom, Minn., which is expected to begin operations by mid-2016. Construction started on the Courtenay Wind Farm in North Dakota and is expected to be complete in the fall of 2016.

On the consumer front, customers can choose to purchase more wind energy for their homes or businesses through the company's Windsource program. First launched in 1998 to Colorado customers, the program has become one of the largest voluntary renewable-energy programs in the United States. Customers in Colorado, New Mexico, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin can participate in Windsource.

Xcel Energy also works with the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and its high-resolution forecasting system to better predict wind energy and decrease traditional generation when the wind is strongest. The joint effort has improved forecasting and has saved customers about \$59 million so far in fuel and other costs since the effort began in 2009. ←







# Ponnequin wind facility in Colorado retired

The Ponnequin Wind Farm in Colorado – an integral and historic part of Xcel Energy's early efforts to develop wind power – was retired at the end of 2015 when the company discontinued operations of its portion of the facility, including 37 turbines totaling just over 26 megawatts capacity.

Time, economics and the advances in wind technology led the company to pursue other options for its wind portfolio, said Bruce Cotie, plant manager. The Ponnequin units, located in Colorado just south of Cheyenne, Wyo., were installed in the late 1990s and 2000-2001. As first-generation turbines, they were much smaller and far less efficient than other wind generation resources that have been added to the company's system in recent years.

Xcel Energy will maintain aviation lights and other safety and security measures at the facility until 2019, when the company should have a final decision on the disposition of the towers and related assets. There are seven other turbines on the Ponnequin site not owned by Xcel Energy that are also idle.

The facility was named after an old cattle or sheep camp found just south of the site. It was built to provide power for the company's popular WindSource program, which at the time was one of the country's first voluntary green-energy programs.

Xcel Energy has continued to expand its wind portfolio over the years, and committed in 2013 to grow its wind capacity from 5,080 megawatts to 7,078 megawatts by the end of 2016 – a 40 percent increase.

"Our early actions to add wind energy at competitive prices, and to proactively comply with state renewable energy standards, have benefitted customers and helped protect them against rising fuel and environmental compliance costs," Cotie said, "all while reducing environmental impacts."  $\leftarrow$ 



# First link in major expansion completed

Xcel Energy has completed the first link in a major expansion of a new bulk electricity transmission network in the southeastern corner of New Mexico, which will help sustain a surge in industrial development and position the regional economy for continued growth.

In December, the company formally dedicated a new 230-kilovolt, 42-mile transmission line between the Potash Junction Substation in Eddy County and the new Roadrunner Substation in southern Lea County. More than 50 people, including state and local officials, oil and gas company representatives, media and others gathered for a celebration outside the newly upgraded Potash Junction Substation.

At a later date, this new line will be upgraded to 345-kilovolt service and will be part of a major 345-kilovolt power backbone, moving power from the eastern grid into southeast New Mexico. Additionally, Xcel Energy has completed and energized the 20-mile Battle Axe-to-Roadrunner 115-kilovolt transmission line project in southern Lea County.

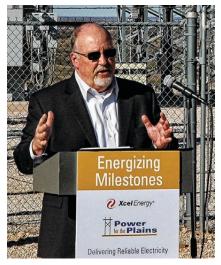
The two projects, both completed on time and on budget, are part a \$200 million-plus investment made by Xcel Energy in 2015, which includes more than 250 miles of transmission and distribution lines, and seven new substations in southeast New Mexico. In this part of the state, oil and gas production and potash mining have recently expanded into remote areas with very little electrical infrastructure.

"This has been a historic undertaking for our company and the industries we serve," said David Hudson, president of SPS. "We had to work closely together in order to move so quickly, and we're pleased to reach this first major milestone that will enable regional industries to make a lasting contribution to job opportunities for decades to come."

By 2020, Xcel Energy plans to link the new Potash Junction-Roadrunner line segment with roughly 250 miles of new lines that will complete a new, 345-kilovolt trunk line from the TUCO Substation north of Lubbock, Texas, to Roadrunner Substation, and also to the new China Draw Substation, south of Carlsbad.

Regional industries, especially the oil exploration







industry, face stiff competition on world markets, Hudson said, and a reliable reasonably priced power supply is key to helping them maintain their edge. Hundreds of wells already completed have relied on remote diesel generator power until new lines have reached them. And, despite lower oil prices, new wells continue to be drilled.

Community leaders mapping the region's economic future say the investments in infrastructure are critical to the region's success.

"The economic growth of Eddy County is tied to the capacity of our utilities," said John Waters, executive director for the Carlsbad Department of Development. "Whether it's potash mining, nuclear materials management or oil and gas production, all need a power utility that grows with their industries. Xcel Energy has made that commitment to grow with the area."

The eastern and southeastern counties of New Mexico also have seen strong growth in renewable-energy development that wouldn't be possible without a growing transmission grid, Hudson added.

Two new solar-generation plants being developed in Chaves County by affiliates of NextEra Energy Resources, will tie into Xcel Energy's system when the solar facilities come on line at the end of 2016. They will be boosted by improvements that include a \$28 million capital project to complete a 115-kilovolt transmission loop around the city of Roswell.

Wind energy also is growing in New Mexico thanks to Xcel Energy's expanding power grid. The Roosevelt wind farm near Elida, N.M., came on line in October with 250 megawatts of wind energy that will supply Xcel Energy customers through a long-term power purchase contract.

"Transmission investments indirectly lead to more renewable-energy development," Hudson said. "And renewable energy is bringing great benefits by enhancing the regional tax base and providing low-cost energy capacity for Xcel Energy customers."

As part of the Power for the Plains initiative, Xcel Energy has built nearly 600 miles of new transmission lines since 2011 in Texas and New Mexico, and is planning to build another 500 miles in the region through 2018.  $\leftarrow$ 



#### Ceremony

Above left, David Hudson, president of SPS, addresses a gathering at Potash Junction Substation to celebrate the completion of the new transmission line. Other photos on pages 12 and 13 show ongoing construction work in southeast New Mexico.

# Team helps make worker-safety information more accessible to Spanish-speaking crews

Xcel Energy's Public Safety team recently received feedback from several field crews and in turn created communication materials that were more easily accessed by Spanish-speaking, at-risk work crews – widening the reach of those materials.

#### **News Brief**

An at-risk worker is anyone outside of the company who works around Xcel Energy facilities, such as tree trimmers, excavators, house painters, and gutter and siding installers.

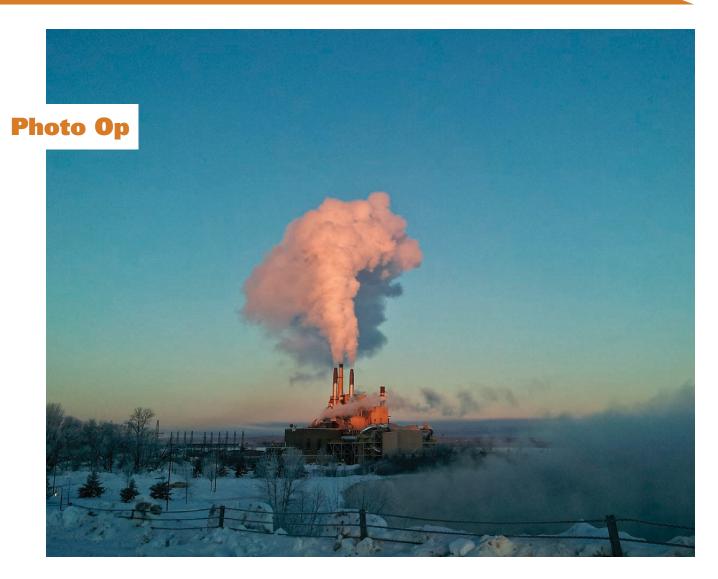
Sharing safety information with at-risk workers is an

important part of keeping the public safe, and is a priority for the company, said Lori Warner, coordinator of Public Safety.

Motivated by the field crews' dedication to public safety, the team put together a plan to make it easier for Spanish-speakers to access existing translated materials on the e-Smart workers website. As a result of the request from field employees, there is now a direct link to translated materials on the homepage.

"Keeping the public safe is a collaboration that involves all work groups," Warner said. "Receiving feedback on how we can improve is critical. In this case, we heard from the field crews and got it done."

To support ongoing updates, the Public Safety team also has created a business card with Spanish translation that contains information about the e-Smart workers website. Field crews will distribute these cards during the regular interactions they have with at-risk workers.



#### 'Brrrr' at Bay Front

Brendon Shields, plant engineer, took this photo of Bay Front Generating Station near Ashland, Wis., on a cold winter's day, with steam billowing out of the plant. "Thankfully, we haven't had a day that cold up here in a while," he reported last month.

**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.

# Essential Compliance

# New environmental software helps streamline work

New software for tracking, managing and reporting environmental compliance is now in place at Xcel Energy. Environmental Services successfully deployed the last of seven modules of its new compliance system in the fall of 2015.

The package, called Essential Suite, replaced more than 70 applications, databases and tools previously used for environmental management and reporting at the company, said Jeff West, senior director of Environmental Services.

More specifically, Essential Suite is being used to manage a myriad of compliance work, as well as incident management (spills and agency inspections), environmental auditing, and task and compliance management.

"This new enterprise-wide software is allowing us to streamline work functions, and enhance the timeliness and accuracy of our reporting" he said. "It also will help us better manage future compliance obligations."

Primary users of the software include Environmental Services employees and select Energy Supply personnel. Deployment to other Operations personnel in Gas Distribution, Electric Distribution and Transmission is now being evaluated.

Essential Suite modules have been developed and deployed around the following environmental functions and reporting areas:

- Audits
- Incident reporting
- Compliance and task management
- Chemical inventory
- Water
- Waste
- Air emissions, including greenhouse gas reporting

A three-phased deployment approach was used, and the various modules were deployed to users in stages from August 2014 through September 2015. The project wrapped up in December, with the decommissioning of all legacy systems set for completion by June 2016.

Essential Suite improves our management process, allowing work functions to be streamlined," West said. "And it increases the accuracy and timeliness of our reporting."

The software helps the company better manage the multitude of compliance obligations it faces through:

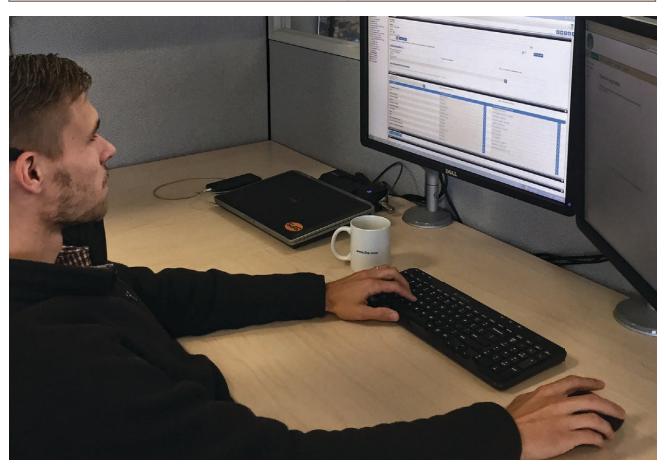
- Standardization of Environmental Services' processes and procedures across regions
- Improved data quality and visibility
- Reduction of gatekeepers
- And simplification via one standard application vs. numerous disparate systems





Performance Management Environmental Management Health & Safety Management Crisis Management

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#### **Essential Suite**

New software for tracking, managing and reporting environmental compliance is now in place at Xcel Energy. The package replaced more than 70 applications, databases and tools previously used at the company. Pictured above is Justin Gable, environmental analyst, using the software.

An enterprise environmental software solution team formed in 2011 with the aim of improving the business processes that support environmental-compliance management. The overall goal sought to reduce environmental compliance risk through the implementation of a software solution, West said.

The idea centered on taking multiple systems and creating one centralized solution. Seven vendors were evaluated by the team, and Essential Suite was chosen as the best fit.

The process of selecting Essential Suite involved an RFP process that included a number of vendor demonstrations for Environmental Services staff. The department received Business Systems' solution approval in March 2012.

After approval, another team of more than 35 Environmental Services managers and subject-matter experts formed to

serve as software implementation champions, West said.

"They worked hard to get the modules deployed, and to make sure the new software met the department's goals and requirements," he said. "Many months of preparation went into getting the processes, people and system ready for use.

"Essential Suite consolidates all of our environmental activities and data into one location, under a single set of principles," West added. "The goals of this software installation go hand in hand with the overall goals of the company — process improvement and the standardization of systems and procedures across our operating regions.

"Now that the software is in place, our focus is on reducing environmental-compliance risk in the most efficient and effective manner possible."  $\leftarrow$ 



# Revenue Assurance

Analytics helping find lost revenue in many more areas

The Revenue Protection group typically has focused on meters that have been tampered with or otherwise diverted. But recently, the group has turned its sights on additional areas to discover and to capture more lost revenue.

This broadening of scope brings with it a new name for the department – the Revenue Assurance Group – one that better reflects its mission, said Rick Weitner, supervisor of Field Operations and Revenue Assurance.

"Our group is now using data analytics to discover lost revenue in many more areas of the company," he said. "We have broadened our scope as to where we look for lost revenue. That scope now includes company processes, billing measures, meter-reading processes, IT solutions and customer behavior.

"We're trying to identify gaps, investigate those gaps, and then find resolutions to fill those gaps — ensuring that we recover all of the revenue due to the company," he added. "Our work is not just involved with tampering or diversion recovery anymore."

One of the department's initiatives is its recently





rolled out Primary Metering Tracking System in the Texas and New Mexico jurisdiction. There are thousands of primary-equipment meters (PMEs) throughout the service territory, and when one goes out due to storm damage or other problems, line crews scramble to get the affected customers back in service.

To do that quickly and efficiently, crews often have to bypass a PME because of equipment damage and then repair it at a later date. However, there was not a tracking mechanism in place to ensure that timely repairs of those meters were carried

out — and that proper metering for billing was restored.

"When crews bypassed meters, often the need to repair the meter at a later date and restore billing was communicated by word of mouth," Weitner said. "So if someone forgot to follow through, the customer was receiving utility services that they weren't paying for while the meter sat idle."

Meters bypassed and left unrepaired in the field also led to a series of other problems. In some cases, energy use of customers without working meters was estimated, causing customer complaints — some escalating to the PUC level.

This focus on the customer and operational excellence — with a new direction and scope — is helping Revenue Assurance better align with the company's Strategic Call To Action and the related Four Pillar Plan.

In addition, the lack of accurate information about disabled meters in the field also leads to increased monthly 0&M expenses for service and meter departments, which have to track down those meters with inadequate information.

But thanks to the new tracking system, those days will soon be over. Now when a primary meter is bypassed and left idle in the field, crews create a work order onsite and send it to Revenue Assurance via mobile data terminals (MDTs).

"The new process for the service, meter and line groups allows them to enter a work order for us while they are on location, no matter what time they are out conducting the work,"

Weitner said. "This ensures that we have a record of the work needing to be scheduled, and the customer receives the best customer service possible."

Once a work order is generated in the field, it goes to Revenue Assurance, which logs it into the tracking system and sends it to a field representative, who checks and logs those reports every morning, before forwarding them on to the metering department.

Once crews have repaired the meter, that information is

then relayed back to the Revenue Assurance group, and all of the data is entered into a spreadsheet.

"Now, when looking at the detailed data in the spreadsheet related to a PME that was bypassed, we can create accurate bills by calculating according to the date of the bypass to the date of the repair," Weitner explained.

The first step in building this new tracking system involved creating a system for filing work orders from the field using MDTs, as well as developing measures for tracking data on bypassed terminals in need of repair. The next step then is to schedule repairs.

A close working partnership with the SPS Meter Shop, led and managed by Rhett DeSpain, helps ensure successful operation of the system.

"We know the system works," Weitner said. "Recently, we had five locations where we had to bypass primary meters due to storm damage. Crews generated work orders from the sites, and we immediately started tracking progress on having them repaired.

"We have been very pleased with the new tracking system," he added. "Where we previously had situations where customers had power and we were losing revenue, the new system allows us to easily recover revenue when meters have to be bypassed.

"The system also will mean better customer service in terms of quicker

and more accurate billing – and will help prevent complaints," he said. "And finally, it will allow us to spot and schedule needed repairs in a timely manner." 

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"The system also will mean better customer service in terms of quicker and more accurate billing – and will help prevent complaints."

# 'Efforts projected an exemplary image'

#### Dear Xcel Energy:

Did you ever know someone who succeeded in life while tirelessly contributing to the lives of others? We can illustrate what we have in mind by referring to an employee of Xcel Energy in Denver.

Mr. Jim Carrero [senior service-fitter B, Gas Emer-

#### **Letters**

gency Response, Lipan Distribution Center] exemplifies the drive that makes our point. Mr. Carrero is a truly dedicated individual who supports and

cares about the community in which he works. We were impressed by his genuine desire and concern for humanity, and the unrelenting pace and effort he exhibited in giving of his time and energy to help others.

Mr. Carrero recently responded to our gas-odor complaint, and within seconds of his arrival, it was apparent that his years of service and knowledge of handling emergency responses were going to save lives. He remained calm and reassuring, and asked for help in finding the source of what he identified as a strong gasoline odor, possibly from a car running in a garage with the garage door closed.

With his direction, we were able to arouse and remove a resident from his unit's bedroom, where carbon monoxide levels were life threatening. Mr. Carrero's immediate response call for ambulance, police and the fire department not only saved the life of the resident, but also led to the evacuation of people in the eight surrounding units affected by the high levels of carbon monoxide — meaning more lives were saved.

With emergency-response teams enroute, Mr. Carrero continued working and stayed through the late evening hours to assist emergency teams as needed. The resident was transported to a nearby hospital and remained in the ICU for two days.

Thanks to Mr. Carrero's professionalism and timely response, there were no casualities. His efforts have projected an exemplary image of your company and have defined quite well the quality of your company's employees.

—Ms. Joyce Messer and Ms. Betty Bullock, Centennial, Colo.

# Ben Cooper painting in search of new home

#### Dear Editor:

I inherited a painting from my mother that belonged to her brother, who lived in Denver. My uncle, Bud (Bill) Davies, worked for the railroad for many years, and the painting hung in his office. After he passed away, it was given to my mother, and then to me when she died in 2012.

After researching online, it appears to be a Ben Cooper original that was used in Public Service Co. of Colorado advertising. I found lithograph prints for sale on Ebay and have identified the painting as "Birthright," dated 1972. It depicts a cow and her calf, and seems to be identical to the photos of the lithograph I'm seeing online.

After further research, I found the article you published about Mr. Cooper's artwork in the December 2015 Xtra Magazine. Do you know anyone who collects Ben Cooper's work, or someone who would be interested in this painting?

As an interesting coincidence, I also work for a utility company – Sacramento Municipal Utility District. Thank you for your time.

—Mary Rowe, katycats@hotmail.com, 916-601-6793

# Transmission launches new website for one-stop information

There is a new, one-stop shop for all Xcel Energy transmission-related information. Transmission collaborated with the Customer Experience Digital Marketing team to launch Transmission.XcelEnergy.com.

#### **News Brief**

The new website was designed to significantly improve the online experience and deliver critical information, including a Transco section, as well as provide sections

devoted to projects, planning, interconnections, a photo gallery and other useful tools.

"The new website is a great marketing tool that will allow us to better position ourselves in the competitive

transmission environment," said Teresa Mogensen, senior vice president of Transmission. "We can showcase transmission accomplishments, keep landowners, legislators and other stakeholders informed on projects, and educate the public on the importance of transmission in their everyday lives."

The site also can be accessed by clicking on the Transmission link located on the footer section of XcelEnergy.com. The new site includes links to the Power for the Plains and CapX2020 websites, which will continue to operate, highlighting transmission projects and other news and information. The Colorado SB100 transmission website will redirect users to the new website.

"We are looking forward to utilizing this new tool to engage stakeholders and let them see just what Xcel Energy Transmission is capable of accomplishing," Mogensen said.



## Ronning's apiculture work aiding pollinators

Pollinators are in trouble, but Tedd Ronning hopes his beekeeping efforts can provide some help for the declining honeybee population.

The senior environmental analyst has worked with bees since 2006, the same year he started working at Xcel Energy. Today, he has hives on land at the company's High Bridge Generating Station in St. Paul, Minn. He first put hives there in the spring of 2015.

"I started by asking the plant director's permission, and he was comfortable with the proposed location," Ronning said. "My hives sit on a remote part of the property where employees rarely, if ever, visit.

"I then worked with Siting and Land Rights to draw up an agreement," he added. "And because the hives are within St. Paul, I also had to obtain a license from the city."

When High Bridge was converted to natural gas, the plant's former coal yard was planted in native prairie plants. Ronning was at the plant a couple summers ago when the prairie flowers were in full bloom and was taken by the sight.

"The flowers were full of native bumble bees, and I figured adding some honey bees would provide some diversity to the neighborhood," he said.

Co-workers frequently ask him about the beekeeping process, and he said it's a topic that he enjoys talking about. Ronning also uses his prolific honey production for philanthropy — selling the sweet treat at the plant and at Marquette Plaza,

and contributing half of the proceeds to United Way. He also has donated honey to the annual employee United Way auction.

Ronning is not only passionate about beekeeping and the advantages of producing his own honey, but also about the great importance of bees in keeping the environment and food-production systems in balance.

More than one-third of the world's crop species are pollinated by bees, he noted. In the United States, for example, honey bees are transported to different parts of the country to pollinate different crops during their blooming periods.

For California's almond crop alone, more than 1.6 million colonies of honeybees from around the country are used to pollinate the almond trees. Without the imported honeybees, he said, the almond crop wouldn't be possible.

In spite of their vital importance, however, honeybee populations are in alarming decline. Ronning explained that there are numerous factors for this disturbing trend.

"There isn't a single culprit, but rather a 'perfect storm' of conditions devastating bee populations," he said. "The overuse of pesticides is blamed by many as a major culprit."

However, there are many other factors involved, he said. Loss of habitat and monoculture are huge factors.

"The immense fields of corn you see driving around the countryside are essentially deserts to the bees," he said. "They provide no nutrition for bees. And bees also are susceptible to a number of diseases and parasites.



"Combine all these factors, plus the stress for some of them from being trucked all over the country to work, and I'm sometimes surprised they can survive at all."

In spite of the unfortunate decline of bee populations around the world, Ronning said he had an outstanding year with his hives at High Bridge last year.

"The weather was perfect, rain came at the right times and there was a long blooming period — what beekeepers call the 'nectar flow,'" he said. "In a good year, I can gather 50 to 100 pounds [4 to 9 gallons] of honey from a hive.

"Last year, I harvested more than 400 pounds from the three hives I keep at High Bridge," he added. "Not only was the harvest great, but the honey won a blue ribbon at the Minnesota State Fair!"

Ronning takes his beekeeping and environmentalism seriously, noting that environmental factors are affecting all pollinators, not just bees. For example, the drastic decline in Monarch butterflies has been in the news recently.

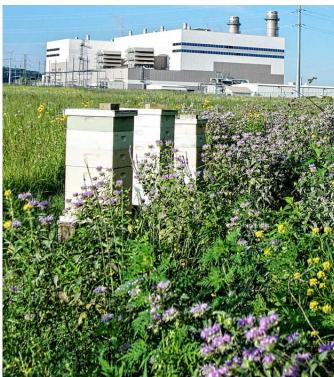
However, there are some simple steps everyone can take to help the pollinator population. Ronning urges people to plant pollinator-friendly plants in their gardens. People who stick with native plants have the added bonus of enjoying lower maintenance.

"Minimize your use of pesticides," he said. "And above all, support your local beekeeper and buy local honey."

Xcel Energy also is playing a role in the effort. The company recently signed a Pollinator Pledge to help reverse the decline in pollinators.

It is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create or restore at least 50 acres of pollinator-friendly habitat near company facilities in the St. Croix region, including outside King Generating Station in Bayport, Minn.

The University of Minnesota is doing some valuable research in this field, as well, and also does a great job of public outreach, Ronning said. For people interested in beekeeping, the university offers classes for beginners that he highly recommends. A web site provides a wealth of information at www.beelab.umn.edu. ←



#### **Beekeeping**

Tedd Ronning practices his beekeeping in part at several hives on property at High Bridge Generating Station in St. Paul, doing his best to help lessen the decline of the honeybee population. The photo at top was taken by fellow employee, Julie Mooney, environmental analyst.

#### Friends We'll Miss

#### Nanette S. Dinges

55, senior associate, Eastern High Pressure Gas, Brighton Service Center, Brighton, Colo., died on Nov. 19, 2015. She worked for PSCo from 1978 until the time of her death.

#### **People**

#### John Aspden

76, unit manager, Electric Construction, Arvada Service Center, Arvada, Colo., died on Nov. 19, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1957 to 1994

#### Martin E. Bistram

87, Substation Engineering & Construction, Minnesota, died on Dec. 4, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1951 to 1988.

#### Wallace J. Dockter

90, Minnesota, died on Nov. 22, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1949 to 1984.

#### John M. Greenlees

88, automotive painter, Transportation, Third and Lipan Garage, Denver, Colo., died on Dec. 4, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1956 to 1992

#### Melvin K. Hardt

82, EEO/AA specialist, Human Resources, Headquarters Office Building, Denver, Colo., died on Dec. 1, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1966 to 1991.

#### **Donald E. Healy**

93, general manager, Grand Forks, N.D., died on Nov. 30, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1947 to 1985.

#### Don C. Jagusch

87, supervisor, Customers Accounting, Central Accounting, Wisconsin, died on Nov. 18, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1949 to 1984.

#### Sally M. Keep

85, billing analyst, Meter Reading, Rice Street Service Center, St. Paul, Minn., died on Nov. 21, 2015. She worked for NSP from 1948 to 1985.

#### Robert F. Mc Dougald

65, line crew foreman, Electric Operations, Maple Grove Materials Complex, Maple Grove, Minn., died on Dec. 17, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1971 to 2007.

#### Douglas W. McNeill

62, control specialist, Operations, Valmont Generating Station, Boulder, Colo., died on Nov. 19, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1982 to 2011.

#### Sylvester Novacek

93, underground foreman, Minnesota, died on Nov. 27, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1946 to 1982.

#### **Lelland C. Perry**

78, electric meter unit manager, Southwest Metro Region, Kipling Service Center, Lakewood, Colo., died on Nov. 27, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1955 to 1994.

#### Harold J. Peterson

78, environmental specialist, Environmental Affairs & Lands, Wisconsin, died on Nov. 27, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1960 to 1993.

#### Thomas J. Roche

73, loss control consultant, Hazard Insurance, Fort Collins, Colo., died on Nov. 27, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy from 2002 to 2013.

#### Milton E. Smith

61, Tolk Generating Station, Muleshoe, Texas, died on Dec. 4, 2015. He worked for SPS from 1975 to 1984.

#### Roger W. Steeber

72, shift engineer, Unit Operations, Riverside Steam Plant, Minneapolis, Minn., died on Nov. 3, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1963 to 1998.

#### Otis P. Sterling

89, died on Oct. 17, 2015. He worked for SPS from 1944 to 1986.

#### Dale W. Swenson

68, shift engineer, Operations, High Bridge Steam Plant, St. Paul, Minn., died on Nov. 22, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1971 to 2004.

#### Allen E. Windecker

78, lead service-fitter, Gas Distribution Control, Lipan Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., died on Dec. 7, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1957 to 1994.

#### Charles L. Witry

81, accounting supervisor, Plant Accounting, Minnesota, died on Nov. 29, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1955 to 1990.

#### Retiring

#### Daniel N. Ableman

(danableman@yahoo.com), district representative, Overhead Distribution, Faribault Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., retired Jan 29, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 33 years.

#### **Leonard Abote**

electrician specialist, Substation Operations and Maintenance, Lipan Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., retired on Dec. 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

#### **Terry Bacon**

shift manager, Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Red Wing, Minn., retired on Dec. 2, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 28 years.

#### Greg "Woody" Brown

(woodyredAwbs@hotmail.com), foreman, Construction, Subs Construction MDC, Henderson, Colo., retired Dec. 4, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 42 years.

#### Mike Caven

(caven.mike@yahoo.com), lead machinest-welder, Maintenance, Wilmarth Plant, Mankato, Minn., retired Dec. 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 40 years.

#### Michael A. Cordova

(mncordova@comcast.net), working foreman, Electric Meter, Kipling Service Center, Lakewood, Colo., retired Dec. 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

#### **David Duran**

(dnd\_tlc@bresnan.net), lead fitter serviceman, Gas, Alamosa, Colo., retired Dec. 28, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

#### Robert H. Eisenreich

plant equipment operator, Operations, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., retired Jan. 1, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 30 years.

#### Iva Eschete

(eschete@suddenlink.net), representative, Amarillo Call Center, Amarillo, Texas, retired Sep. 15, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 14 years.

#### **Gerald Gore**

(ggore@centurytel.net), senior instructor, Training, Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Welch, Minn., retired Dec. 28, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

#### Alan L. Gruba

analyst, Regulatory Accounting, Sky Park, Eau Claire, Wis., retired Jan. 15, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

#### Jeffrey W. Hartfield

(jwhartfield@gmail.com), operator, Red Wing Plant, Welch, Minn., retired Jan. 8, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

#### Kirk Hendrickson

(kdhendie@charter.net), designer, Operations Design, Western Avenue Service Center, Eau Claire, Wis., retired Jan. 15, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 30 years.

#### **Gay Holm**

(ga.holm@yahoo.com), operations accounting director, Financial Operations, 414 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minn., retired Dec. 31, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

#### **Nancy Kluver**

senior communications representative, 414 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minn., retired Dec. 11, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

#### Dale S. Krech

leak survey lead, Gas Street/Construction, Rice Street Service Center, St. Paul, Minn., retired Jan. 8, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

#### Robert M. Larsen

(bbflars@yahoo.com), lead, Gas Utilization, White Bear Lake, Minn., retired Jan. 6, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

#### **Jake Martinez**

senior buyer, Purchasing, Cherokee Generating Station, Denver, Colo., retired Dec. 1, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 44 years.

#### Miguel "Mike" Martinez

representative, Personal Accounts, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired Dec. 30, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 40 years.

#### Gerald W. Marx

(gwmarx@centurylink.net), principal pricing analyst, Regulatory Affairs, Sky Park, Eau Claire, Wis., retired on Jan. 29, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 39 years.

#### **Victor Medellin**

senior distribution operator, Non-Metro Control Center, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., retired Jan. 22, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 36 years.

#### **Henry Montoya**

(hjmontoya22@gmail.com), lineman, Arvada Service Center, Arvada, Colo., retired Dec. 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 33 years.

#### **Allen Nelson**

(anelson003@msn.com), lineman, Line Construction, Fargo, N.D., retired Jan. 15, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

#### Jenna Parish

administrative assistant, Plant X, Energy Supply, Earth Texas, retired. She worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

#### **David Rockwell**

(d.rock0556@gmail.com), project manager, Skypark, Eau Claire, Wis., retired Jan. 29, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

#### **Doug Ryan**

(dougryan100@hotmail.com), account manager/team lead, Managed Accounts, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired Jan. 18, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 36 years.

#### Janet Schmidt-Petree

(janetandbob82@msn.com), senior director – operating companies, Financial Operations, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired Dec. 31, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 33 years.

#### **Thomas Severson**

technician, Gas, La Crosse, Wis., retired Jan. 15, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

#### Linda Sheron

(ljsheron@gmail.com), administrative assistant, Technical Services, Energy Supply, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired Feb. 2, 2016. She worked for Xcel Energy for 20 years.

#### **Chuck Smith**

senior engineering technician, Electric Distribution Engineering, Western Ave. Service Center, Eau Claire, Wis., retired Jan. 8, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 30 years.

#### Terry E. Stencel

designer, Greeley, Colo., retired Dec. 18, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

#### John St. George

lead yard equipment operator, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on Jan. 4, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 36 years.

#### Terry L. Thorstensen

(thorrfamily@aol.com), account manager, Fargo Service Center, retired Jan. 11, 2016. He worked for Xcel Energy for 27 years.

#### John Velasquez

(johnvelasquez027@gmail.com), agency relations manager, Credit & Collections, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired Dec. 2, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

#### Phil Willett

(pwillett1@yahoo.com), senior tax analyst, Tax Services, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired Dec. 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 15 years.

#### Jan Witt

(movynon@yahoo.com), planner, Design & Layout, Fort Collins Service Center, Fort Collins, Colo., retired Dec. 31, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 27 years.

#### Ron Wyatt

(wyattlinro@rtebb.net), district supervisor, Eastern High Pressure Gas, Roundup, Colorado, retired Dec. 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

### Xtra annual publishing schedule changing

Xtra is moving to a publication schedule of every six weeks, instead of every month. However, each issue will feature additional pages, so overall news content will remain the same, while cutting costs.

As a reminder, employee readers of Xtra can now 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.

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 — or from the home page, look under Community/Community Involvement/Retiree Directory.

#### **Retiree information**

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) to view the latest issue, as well as a number of back issues of Xtra

In addition, and as a reminder, Xcel Energy's main phone number is 800-328-8226. Just hit "0" for an operator to contact various departments and employees.





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#### **XTRA**

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