Xcel Energy®

Tower on Wheels

Military-based idea links new substation to grid

XTRA

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Content

On the Cover
A crucial effort in New Mexico relied on a mobile, military-based technology to permit needed communications for a new substation on a 345-kilovolt transmission line. One of the "tower on wheels" sites is pictured here from above.

Ben's Blog

We're all in this together

(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.)

If you participated in our most recent CEO Webcast, you heard once again that our focus on customers is absolutely fundamental to our long-term strategy and success. As we move forward, we are discovering that our customer relationship needs to go beyond offering customers more energy options, although that remains a key component.

We need to think of customers more broadly – as "consumers" of energy that we need to "win." Winning the relationship requires us to:

- Not only restore service quickly after a storm, for example, but to respond quickly and communicate effectively.
- Not only excel at operations, but excel at creating and communicating value.
- And not only build infrastructure but build brand, trust and reputational loyalty.

We do so many things well, and now we have to build on that good work. And because words matter, try to think about customers as consumers who have more choices than they did before and have their own ideas about what they want from an energy provider.

On another note, I've had a couple of great opportunities recently to speak with policymakers about the changing energy landscape, and the need for us to work together to provide energy consumers with the products and services they want.

I like to begin those conversations by listing what we've accomplished together, such as making renewable energy viable and reducing emissions – all without sacrificing reliability or safety. And I always mention that I'm most proud of the fact that we've done it all while keeping a keen eye on affordability.

Looking ahead, we see the cost of renewables continuing to fall, making them competitive with traditional fossil alternatives. We think smart technology will advance energy efficiency like never before, and we know that customers will demand more choice, control and convenience.

The heart of my message is the fact that we need supportive public policies, the right rules and open dialogue to reach our shared goals. The Clean Power Plan is always a good example of the challenges and opportunities we face. While we take a hard look at what needs to be done to comply, we also look at how we can push ourselves to find ways to innovate as we do so.

A good example is our work with wind. We made it work for us because we helped develop sophisticated wind forecasting. We need the same kind of innovative approach as we work to comply with the Clean Power Plan.

Here's the good news: policymakers have similar goals and seem receptive to the message. The devil is always in the details, of course, and establishing supportive policy isn't always easy. But I've appreciated the opportunity to make our case and keep the conversation going – and I encourage you to do the same whenever you can. ←

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

COMPANY TRACKING AND SUPPORTING GROWING MARKET

There was a time when mentioning an electric vehicle conjured up images of a golf cart. Those days are over.

Today, the market for electric cars is – while still small – definitely growing. More and more, drivers are considering electric vehicles (EVs) to get them down the road and to their destinations.

"Xcel Energy started anticipating the adoption of electric vehicle drivers years ago, with thoughts that the market would grow more quickly," said Eric Van Orden, product developer with Marketing's Program Strategy and Development group. "But while the rates of EV adoption have been slower that we'd anticipated, the market is definitely growing."

In 2010, for example, there were two EV models on the market. Last year, there were 22 models available.

Xcel Energy has been working to enable the use of EVs in a number of ways – by integrating EVs into its own fleet, supporting community events to educate customers about charging options, and continuing to provide electricity not just for homes and businesses, but also for the increasing opportunities in transportation.

By integrating both service and passenger EVs into its own fleet, Xcel Energy is learning more about both the challenges and benefits that come with the vehicles, he said. It also is setting an example for a public that is still somewhat wary of using EVs.

"In Texas, the company has two EVs as part of its fleet. They're converted Chevy Silverados as part of an Electric Power Research Institute study about vehicle use and performance," Van Orden said. "Plus, we have another six electric vehicles in the fleet, including four Chevy Volts and two converted Ford Transit Connects, with more coming."

Earlier this year, the company signed the Edison Electric Institute's [EEI] fleet pledge involving EVs. Xcel Energy is making a concerted effort to incorporate more EVs into its fleet, including following the EEI guidelines, said Chip Schula, fleet asset consultant. One guideline asks utility companies to pledge 5 percent of their replacement fleet budget to plug-in EVs.

"They are great vehicles for everyday use," he said. "We're excited to make a push in this area.

"It makes sense for us to promote and use our own products," Schula added. "And we want to encourage people to use our grid and resources for a proven technology like EVs."

One of the biggest factors minimizing the use of EVs is customer perception that there are too many limitations in terms of size, driving range and charging. But Van Orden suggests that many of those concerns are more a matter of perception than reality, and points to the considerable advantages that EVs can offer drivers.

EVs

Xcel Energy has been working to enable the use of electric vehicles in a number of ways. In 2010, there were two EV models on the market, while last year, that number jumped to 22 models.

In terms of vehicle range, studies have shown that the majority of U.S. drivers use their vehicles to get to and from work, and for errands, he said. A Columbia University study, for instance, found that 93 percent of the population drives less than 100 miles a day.

Many all-electric vehicles are now targeting that 100-mile range. And plug-in hybrid electric vehicles provide 20 to 50 miles of EV range, plus the addition of another 250 to 350 miles in hybrid mode.

"Many people have a mindset that they need a vehicle so they can get up and drive cross country any time," Van Orden explained. "But the reality is that long cross-country trips are the anomaly. Most of us use our cars to get to and from work or buy groceries, with only one or two of us in the car."

Considering the numerous advantages, coupled with a growing network of charging options, tax incentives and utility company policies that accommodate EVs, that mindset is changing, he said, and EVs are steadily becoming a stronger presence in the automobile market.

One of the main advantages of EVs is that driving them costs roughly half the price of conventional vehicles in terms of gasoline – currently the equivalent of about $1 a gallon. And throughout Xcel Energy's service territory, the network of charging stations is growing. There are nearly 200 public charging stations in Minnesota and roughly 230 in Colorado.

That said, however, more than 80 percent of EV charging takes place at home, Van Orden said. And that process involves just a common 110-volt plug.

Xcel Energy customers also can choose to use renewable energy for their charging needs through the company's "Windsource for EVs" program. And in Minnesota, the company offers three rate options, including two choices that cost less at night for off-peak EV charging and/or household electricity use.

"This new rate will encourage customers to charge their EVs in the evening and early morning hours at a reduced rate," he said, "while the rest of their home electricity use can remain the same."

In its ongoing effort to educate customers about EVs, the company again participated in National Drive Electric Week last month. Xcel Energy events throughout the week in Colorado and Minnesota included displaying some of the company's EVs.

Company representatives also answered questions about how to charge EVs, the "Windsource for EVs" program and rate options for less than $1 gallon gasoline equivalent. In addition, an EV car show at the events gave consumers a chance to see the range of EV options available, and ride and drive opportunities were offered to the public as well.

"Increasingly, customers are looking for more information about EVs, and we're happy to provide it," Van Orden said. "The market is growing at a steady pace, and we're looking to the future by providing innovative EV customer choices." ←

414 at 50

50th anniversary marked as companion building rises next door

Xcel Energy marked the 50th anniversary of its current headquarters building at 414 Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis last month, just as the new 401 Nicollet Building rises beside it to create a new Xcel Energy headquarters campus next year.

In honor of the 414 anniversary, employees opened a time capsule that had been placed in a column by the company during the building's construction in 1965.

The copper vessel contained items revealing what life was like in 1965, including an energy bill, brochures about downtown development and the company's business operations at the time. The capsule even held a letter from two teenagers, who began their letter by stating the obvious:

"The teenagers of today, the year 1965, are most of the time called 'the younger generation,'" they wrote, but went on to set themselves apart.

"They say (the adults, that is) that all we do is buy 'surfer' clothes, or buy Beatles or Beach Boys records. This is sometimes true."

Skateboards are the latest fad, they reported. "They're sort of between roller skates and a scooter."

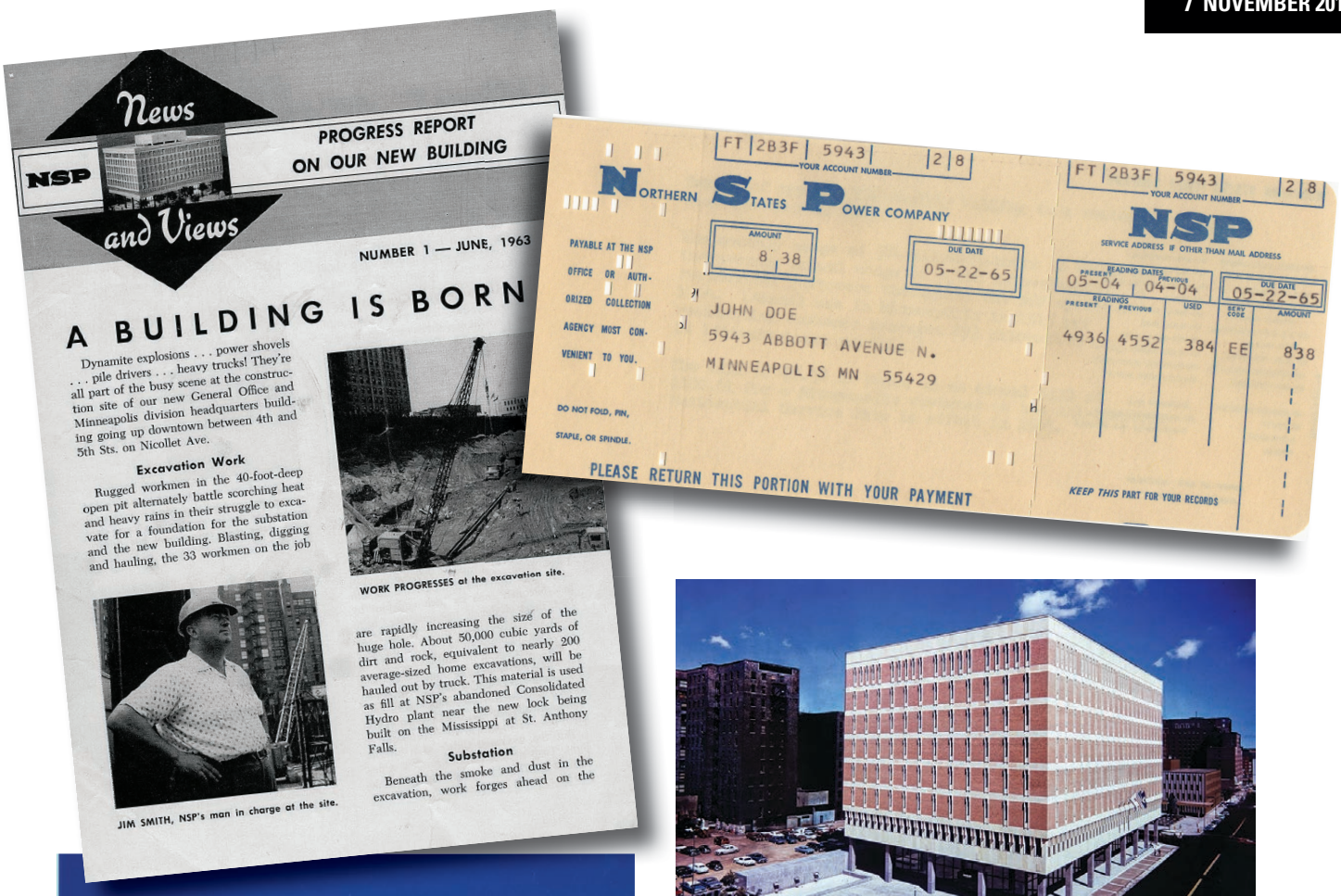
A brochure created about the building at the time trumpeted 414 Nicollet's many modern features.

"We sincerely appreciate your visit to inspect our new total-electric home," it stated in opening. "This newest addition to Minneapolis' fast-growing Gateway Center now serves as NSP's corporate headquarters and as headquarters for the operation of its Minneapolis division.

"The architectural treatment of our new general headquarters building was carefully planned to produce a blend of solidity and dignity, tempered with the use of warm colors. Above all, 414 Nicollet is functional, designed to enable us to give customers the best possible service."

General Office, as 414 became known as over the years, featured customer-friendly features such as a cashiers section, a home service kitchen, lighting displays, a small appliance repair desk, a lighting and electric heat demonstration room and a shareholders office.

"Here is a sparkling showcase of modern electric living, extending the full length of the building between Fourth and


NSP News and Views

PROGRESS REPORT ON OUR NEW BUILDING

NUMBER 1 — JUNE, 1963

A BUILDING IS BORN

Dynamite explosions . . . power shovels . . . pile drivers . . . heavy trucks! They're all part of the busy scene at the construction site of our new General Office and Minneapolis division headquarters building going up downtown between 4th and 5th Sts. on Nicollet Ave.

Excavation Work

Rugged workmen in the 40-foot-deep open pit alternately battle scorching heat and heavy rains in their struggle to excavate for a foundation for the substation and the new building. Blasting, digging and hauling, the 33 workmen on the job are rapidly increasing the size of the huge hole. About 50,000 cubic yards of dirt and rock, equivalent to nearly 200 average-sized home excavations, will be hauled out by truck. This material is used as fill at NSP's abandoned Consolidated Hydro plant near the new lock being built on the Mississippi at St. Anthony Falls.

WORK PROGRESSES at the excavation site.

JIM SMITH, NSP's man in charge at the site.

Substation

Beneath the smoke and dust in the excavation, work forges ahead on the

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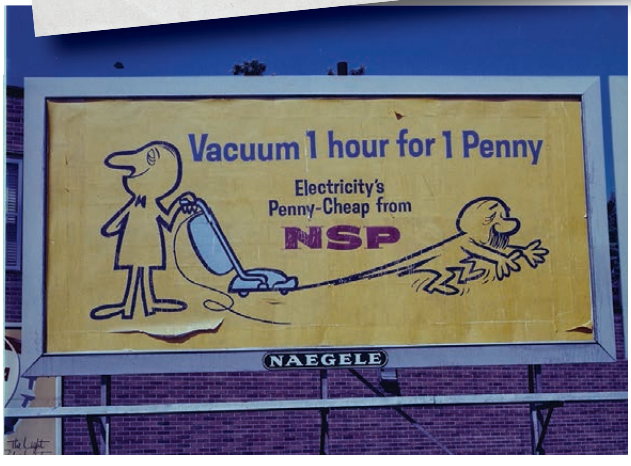


Time Capsule

In honor of the 50th anniversary of 414 Nicollet Mall, employees recently opened a time capsule that had been placed in a column by the company during the building's construction in 1965.

Fifth streets," the brochure stated. "The floor houses a display of many of the more than 200 electrical appliances and conveniences available for the home, plus a sales area for major electrical appliances such as ranges, clothes dryers and water heaters."

The brochure went on to note that the nerve center for NSP's electrical operations was on the eighth floor.

"Operation of our major electric generating plants, electric transmission lines and Twin Cities substations is controlled directly from this point," it said. "An 'economic dispatch computer,' one of the first installed in the nation, can determine within seconds what combination of electric generating units can deliver power most efficiently to meet our customers' needs throughout the four-state NSP system."

The building also featured a unique mail system. "An automatic vertical conveyor system moves internal mail to all floors of the building. A receiving and sending door are located on each floor. An employee simply puts mail on the conveyor, turns a dial for the proper floor, and the mail is automatically carried to that floor and deposited there."

414 Nicollet, upon opening, even had a building-wide music system, with music piped into the building through more than 500 speakers in the ceilings. And the exterior lighting for the building made 414 Nicollet a sparkling addition to the Minneapolis night scene, the brochure said. Each of the 550 windows in the upper stories had a floodlight set in the sill, providing a "highly decorative effect."

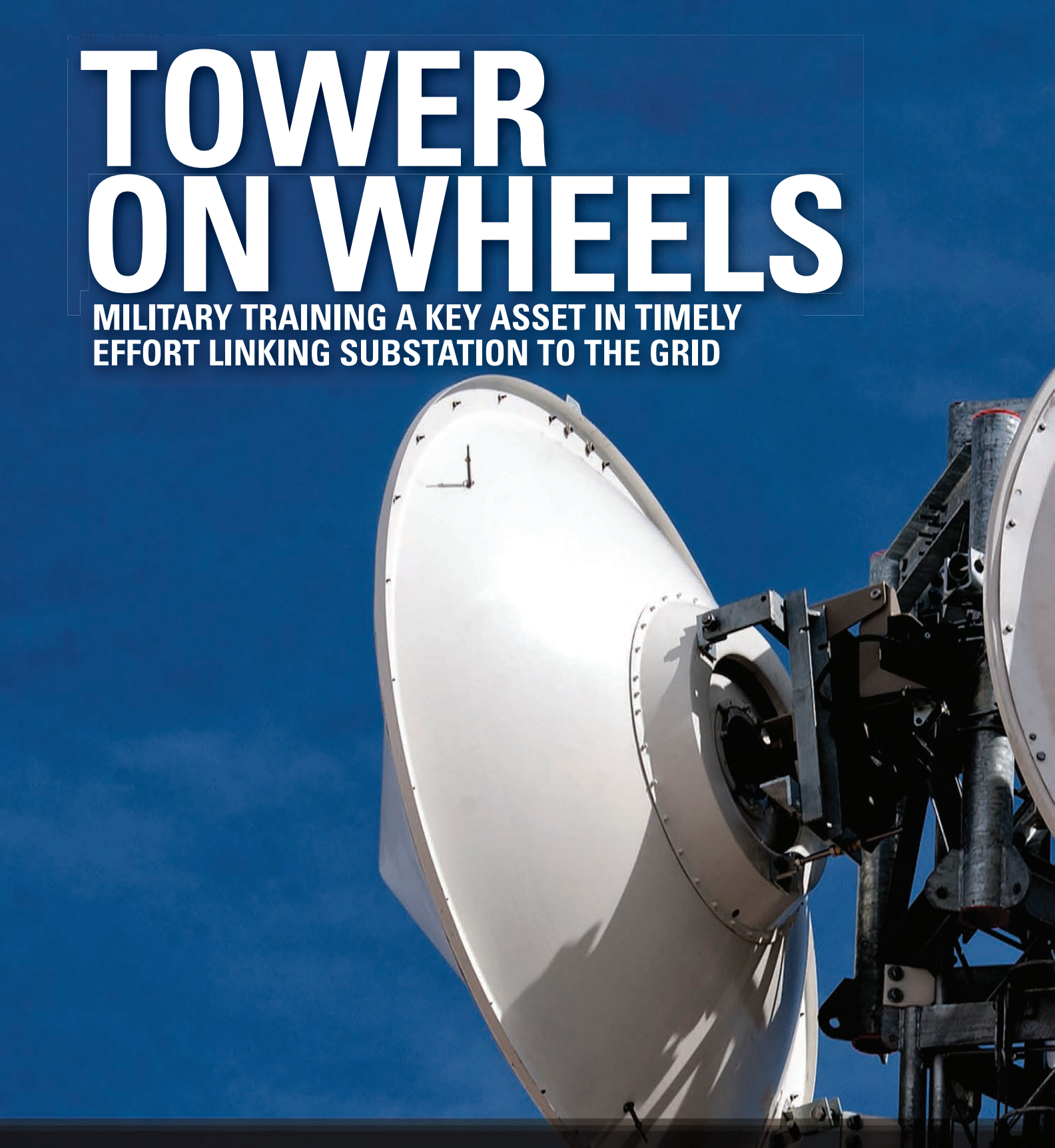
"Our new general headquarters building is dedicated to Allen S. King in recognition of his outstanding leadership of NSP," the brochure noted in closing.

"Mr. King was elected president of NSP in 1954, serving in that capacity for more than 10 years until his election as chairman of the board of directors in 1964. Mr. King retired from active employment with NSP in August 1965, after 45 years of service with the company."

King, whose service also was honored with the naming of Minnesota's Allen S. King Generating Station, operated an electric-driven drape on June 16, 1965, to unveil the cornerstone for 414 Nicollet.

TOWER ON WHEELS

MILITARY TRAINING A KEY ASSET IN TIMELY EFFORT LINKING SUBSTATION TO THE GRID



David Tryc's 14 years of training in electronics and communications with the U.S. Air Force recently proved instrumental when he spearheaded a crucial effort in New Mexico that relied on a mobile technology typically used by the military.

Xcel Energy needed communications for a new substation on a 345-kilovolt transmission line to start receiving up to 300 megawatts of wind energy. The company could have faced fines for every megawatt of production not allowed on its system when the third-party wind farm went into production.

Due to lengthy permitting requirements for permanent communication towers, fines were looking like a real possibility. Without sufficient time to obtain needed approvals for a new fixed tower, the company needed a fast, reliable and accurate solution.

Business Systems identified a mobile-technology solution called Tower on Wheels (TOW) as a possible fix. The mobile towers don't require permitting and could temporarily connect the new Crossroads Substation, located adjacent to the wind farm, to the company's communications network while permanent towers were constructed.

"What we're doing is pretty unique in the utility industry,"

said Tryc, project manager with Business Systems. "No one has done anything like this before to my knowledge.

"We needed to meet the in-service date for the substation and wind farm – and this was a good option," he added. "And as an added benefit, we now have a set of TOWs for disaster recovery and other possible needs in the future."

With land available for setup, TOWs can be in place and meeting microwave communications needs within 48 hours of a disaster such as a tornado or severe storm, he said.

Three TOWs were set up – one at Crossroads Sub and two more needed to connect with the existing tower at Roosevelt Sub near Portales, N.M. The mobile network provided a critical communication link to allow safe and efficient operation of the 345-kilovolt transmission line when Crossroads came online.

The TOWs enabled Crossroads to be tied to the 345-kilovolt line and allowed for needed monitoring of the new substation, said Diane Cloud, principal engineer in Substation Communications, who worked on the communication system for the new substation. Transmission regularly works with Business Systems to ensure that the company's electric system has all the communications support needed to safely operate the grid, she said.

"That 345 line is a critical line for SPS, and we have to

New Mexico TOWs

Three installations were set up in the effort – one at Crossroads Sub and two more to connect with the existing tower at Roosevelt Sub near Portales, N.M. The mobile network provided a critical communication link to allow safe operation of the 345-kilovolt transmission line when Crossroads came online. Photos by David Tryc.

all transmission lines remotely controlled," she said. "We protect the lines and our system with these communications."

The entire 345-kilovolt line runs from the Eddy Substation, west of Hobbs, N.M., to the Crossroads Sub and on to the switchyard at Tolk Generating Station, near Muleshoe, Texas.

"Without proper communication, we wouldn't energize the substation because we couldn't monitor it," Cloud said. "Those communications are crucial to operating our electric system.

"For instance, we couldn't have allowed the 300 megawatts of wind energy to come online without having remote control and the ability to monitor the new generation facilities," she added. "And Business Systems came up with this great idea to make it happen.

"We went to great lengths to get the TOWs in place because without a temporary solution, we couldn't serve the wind farm, and the owners could have taken their business elsewhere," she added. "And being able to meet customer requirements like this helps our image in the transmission world."

One of the challenges with this mobile technology is that a small amount of movement in the 120-foot towers' position can break the connection, Tryc said. Keeping the mobile towers stable enough to maintain a microwave connection became a key element in the effort.

To keep the TOW units stable, Business Systems fashioned three sets of 32,000-pound anchor blocks, totaling 96,000 pounds per unit, along with four sets of guy wires per unit. Each TOW rig required six trucks and trailers to set up, along with a forklift for unloading and stationing the anchor blocks.

"This solution is more common in overseas military operations than commercial ventures," Tryc said, "and is one of a kind to date for the utility industry."

Tryc worked with a vendor to create the TOW units from the ground up. He then used his Air Force training to devise a deployment plan.

"The TOW solution helped us deliver a project for a customer on time, and now has us poised for meeting disaster-recovery needs," he said. "And it can provide us an avenue to put substations in service more quickly in the future." ←

Utility IT
For the third year in a row, utility IT executives and their leadership teams gathered to discuss the industry's most critical issues, including Dave Harkness (far left), senior vice president of Business Systems and CIO.

IT Symposium

THIRD ANNUAL EVENT TACKLES TOPIC OF INNOVATION

Another successful Utility IT Symposium, hosted by Xcel Energy, recently brought together IT thought leaders from utilities across the country, as well as representatives from energy industry associations and federal agencies.

For the third year in a row, utility IT executives and their leadership teams gathered to discuss the industry's most critical issues.

"The event was born a few years ago from discussions with other utility CIOs who felt there weren't enough opportunities for their key team members to be a part of strategic but casual discussions about how best to approach important issues," said Dave Harkness, senior vice president of Business Systems and CIO, who hosted the two-day event in Denver.

Guest speakers and discussions for the past two symposiums focused heavily on cyber security. While the topic remained on the agenda, this year also featured a new topic – utility IT innovation. The topic is a key element in staying ahead of the curve with ever-changing business and regulatory needs, Harkness said.

The nearly 50 attendees received the latest updates on protecting critical infrastructure from speakers representing the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Edison Electric Institute (EEI), and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC).

Day two of the symposium involved sharing best practices on accelerating the speed of delivering complex IT requests, as well as how to work more effectively with business counterparts to accomplish mutual goals.

Speakers included Marc Sachs, senior vice president and chief security officer (NERC), and Bob Timpany, COO of Industrial Control Systems' Cyber Emergency Response Team (DHS). Additional speakers represented various utilities such as Exelon and Oklahoma Gas & Electric (OG&E), as well as industry research organizations like the SAS Institute and CEB Global.

Dr. Efran Ibrahim, the opening speaker from NREL, covered a topic that became a recurring theme throughout the symposium – the importance of disrupting the status quo and break down organizational barriers to more effectively accomplish goals in a business environment filled with roadblocks and speed bumps. Many attendees said they plan to take that proactive mindset back to their respective team to maintain the momentum from the symposium.

The symposium held true to Harkness's original vision of fostering a collaborative mindset across the utility industry and among IT peers, he said, and conversations among the participants are expected to continue beyond the event. ←

Economic development work makes an impression

News Brief

Show them what you can do, collaborate and provide solutions. That's what wins business, said Chris Clark, president of NSP-Minnesota.

Clark recently welcomed professionals from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, local government agencies and various site selectors to the company's headquarters in Minneapolis to discuss economic development.

"At Xcel Energy, we have a history of working with our state, regional and local partners to grow business," he said. "Not only do we offer rate incentives, but we have a strong history of working with businesses to develop customized energy solutions."

Kicking off the event, Dan Pfeiffer, senior director of External Affairs, highlighted the company's value proposition, including how Xcel Energy's Upper Midwest 54-percent, carbon-free energy mix helps companies meet sustainability goals at a reasonable price.

Bringing in a panel of site selectors from various locations across the United States gave economic development professionals a unique opportunity to hear how Minnesota compares to other states in regard to job growth, state regulation and economic stability.

Pfeiffer also provided a more in-depth view of the specifics on Xcel Energy's economic development program in Minnesota and what it can do for business customers. The efforts provide businesses with several programs, including Energy Design Assistance, Energy Efficient Buildings and Data Center Efficiency, as well as business incentives and reduced rates.

"Hosting this event was a great way to demonstrate our ability to provide solutions to businesses as they explore relocating or expanding," said Pfeiffer. "We're pleased to be a partner in the effort to grow quality, sustainable business throughout our Upper Midwest territory."

Photo Op

Valmont Rainbow

Valmont Generating Station in Boulder, Colo., is nearly across the street from the office of Craig Eicher, area manager, at the Boulder Service Center. Eicher had just left the service center after a strong thunderstorm one afternoon this summer when a double rainbow appeared. He pulled off the road and found the rainbow perfectly situated over Valmont Station.

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.*

Customer Advocates

Colorado program offers support to builders and developers

Securing the permits, designs and work orders to begin construction of a project has at times in the past been challenging for Colorado's residential builders and developers. A number of those customers were frustrated with the process of receiving Xcel Energy's approval before getting new construction projects up and running.

Customers expressed a variety of grievances: long application process times, a lack of adequate customer service, lengthy wait times for cost estimates, lack of foresight for infrastructure upgrades needed to support development, and getting gas and electric service to new homes in a timely manner.

"In 2014, our large Colorado residential builders and developers voiced concern with the lack of support from Xcel Energy in meeting the large demand of development," said Cheriese Marczyk, manager of New Business Design in Distribution. "There were a wide range of concerns expressed. And one – a change in service policy, causing customers to pay upfront cost for services – led many big builders to hire an administrator to track applications and payments to Xcel Energy."

Clearly something needed to be done. So the company's New Design Department set out to shift the dynamic from one bordering on being perceived as adversarial to one based on partnership.

In the end, the department created a new Customer Advocate program in Colorado to proactively reach out to Xcel Energy's builder/developer customers, she said. The new effort offers them ongoing support from beginning to end in securing utility service for new construction projects.

The effort ties well with the company's Strategic Call to Action to think and act like a competitive business. It also supports the strategic pillar to exceed customer expectations for service options and convenience, and to retain and satisfy key customers through innovative solutions.

The new Colorado-specific project and related processes have since been streamlined and organized to further increase efficiency and create effective working relationships with builders and developers, Marczyk said.

Customers initially complete and submit an application directly to their Xcel Energy customer advocate – giving the company an opportunity to educate customers on the application process and what they should be doing to receive approvals for work needed at the start of a new development. Company support for large builders and developers now starts at the procurement phase of a project and continues straight through until a project is completed.

Additionally, weekly updates are now sent to customers throughout the completion of new projects, with customer advocates outlining design and construction timeframes. This supports open dialog with customers to ensure understanding of their timelines and workload, she said.

"By splitting up customer responsibilities, the design department is able to focus more on the technical aspects of their design and the system, producing a higher quality product," Marczyk explained. "With the support of our advocates, we are able to fully understand projects before they end up at the Builders Call Line.

"A customer advocate will take the initial plans and submit them to Capacity Planning, so we can identify upfront if we will need to increase infrastructure to support the new development," she added. "This allows the customer to understand

Customer Support

A new Customer Advocate program in Colorado is proactively reaching out to Xcel Energy's builder/developer customers. The new effort offers them ongoing support from beginning to end in securing utility service for new construction projects.

additional financial responsibilities on the frontend of a project."

The Customer Advocate Program is now in place in Colorado to serve all of the Denver metro region, as well as Ft. Collins and Greeley. Company advocates currently are supporting 45 builders/developers throughout the region, and preparations are under way to expand the program to support National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP), an organization similar to the Homebuilders Association (HBA) that supports commercial and industrial development.

The next phase of the program aims to support NAIOP and its commercial/industrial developers, she said, as the company is seeing high growth in e-commerce and multi-family development in the Denver area.

"Gas and electric service needs are now processed and quoted within seven business days, Marczyk said. "When we started this effort, we had a backlog of four weeks to six months in some regions.

"We consolidated all work orders in all metro regions and now have two teams working to meet customer demand," she added. "Positive feedback from our builders and developers has been high."

That success, however, did not come without some challenges. One challenge involved informing all departments about the new process and gaining employee support for the program.

Service centers had their own unique processes, so moving to one consistent process proved difficult at times. But overall, the program has been well received by managers throughout the company, Marczyk said.

Two departments (Utility Services and Contracting) play a key role and are fully onboard, she added, and work on 95 percent of the type of large-project work covered by the new customer advocates.

"The effort has increased our ability to create more foresight around upcoming workload and resource planning," Marczyk said. "One of the biggest benefits we have seen is an increase in design resources.

"Our team has started implementing items like natural gas tie-in procedures, working with Gas Engineering, Capacity Planning and other groups," she added. "Our emphasis on customer support through the Customer Advocate program is giving us the opportunity to be a resource to developers and builders – and in turn, forge strong partnerships with them."

This effort and others are part of the "Distribution Way" program – the business area's commitment to operational excellence through best practices, continuous improvement and a common operating model. ←

News Briefs

New Cherokee units ready; coal-fired Unit Three retired

Cherokee Generating Station's Unit Three recently burned the last of its coal and was officially retired, while the Denver plant's newest combustion-turbine units reached commercial operation.

The new gas-fired, combined-cycle facility – composed of two combustion turbines, two heat-recovery steam generators and a steam turbine – is part of the Colorado Clean Air-Clean Jobs (CACJ) project.

After passing a series of performance tests, the units were certified for full-scale commercial operation and have been dispatched this fall, producing electricity for the company, said Jerry Kelly, project manager.

Cherokee's last remaining older unit will be converted from coal to natural gas by the end of 2017. Units One and Two were retired earlier.

Cherokee has undergone a complete makeover as part of CACJ. The new combined-cycle units are capable of producing about 580 megawatts of cleaner energy.

"Engineering & Construction and Plant Operations teams worked long and hard to achieve this significant milestone," Kelly said.

The success of the project relied not only on sound, overall design plans and construction practices, but also on the contributions of several individuals.

For example, Dave Tomei, production specialist, provided maintenance and operations input on engineering and installation to ensure that workers had access to safe and correct size walkways and equipment platforms.

"The project team was great about enlisting the input of people who are now operating and maintaining the plant," Tomei said. "And that will lead to a safer, more efficient and reliable Cherokee Station."

Tribal Wind celebrates Native American culture at Texas event

Tribal Wind, Xcel Energy's business resource group (BRG) supporting Native American employees, recently hosted its first-ever SPS event, where attendees experienced American Indian culture, dance, arts and crafts. The Kwahadi dance troop performed at the event, presenting a pageant of song, dance and stories of the American Indian.

"The event was terrific," said Michelle Fix-Westall, chair of the Tribal Wind BRG. "The Kwahadi dancers made learning about Native American culture fun and interesting. Plus, we are excited to have gained many new members to our group."

The Kwahadi dance troop is a youth group from the Texas Panhandle, showcasing the song, dance and stories of Native Americans at events across the United States.

"Tribal Wind is centered on the promotion and celebration of the Native American culture, as well as the inclusiveness and diversity of employees at Xcel Energy," Fix-Westall said. "Anyone is welcome to come to our events, and get involved or join our group."

Tribal Wind's mission is to promote and share Native American culture through cultural awareness activities, facilitate professional growth and development of Native Americans within Xcel Energy, and work to positively impact Native American communities outside of Xcel Energy.

Xcel Energy hosts national accounts program meeting

Xcel Energy recently hosted the annual meeting of the South Central National Accounts Program in Denver. About 60 people attended the meeting, held in conjunction with the Edison Electric Institute.

Attendees included account executives from investor-owned utilities, national energy managers from multi-site commercial customers such as Costco and Macy's, and national account customers with headquarters in Colorado such as Sports Authority and Boston Market.

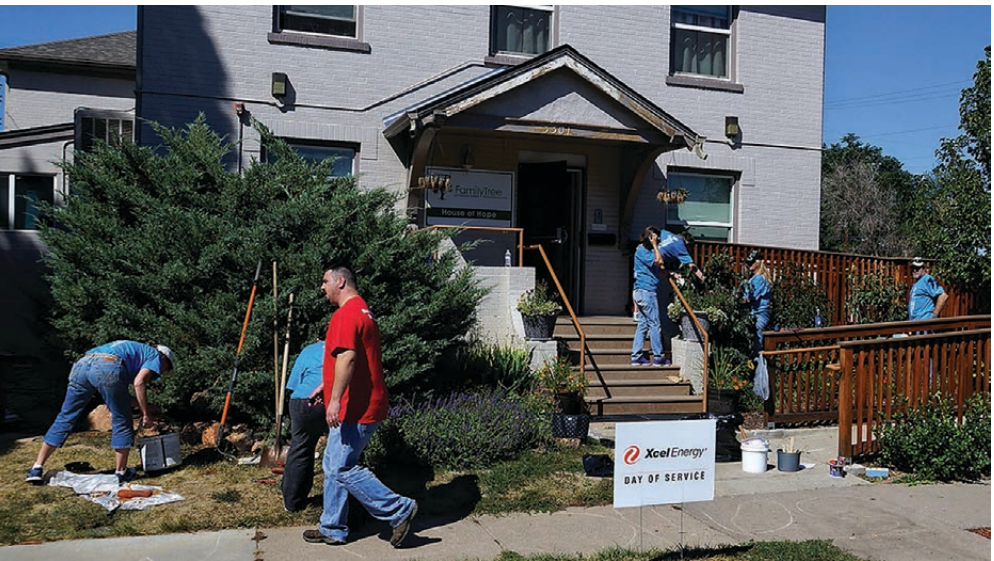
The meeting helped customers form relationships with their energy providers, convey their needs and priorities, and learn about critical issues facing the energy industry, said Judy Corrigan, key account manager. She has served on the program's steering committee for 15 years.

Jerome Davis, regional vice president for Colorado, gave the keynote address and told attendees about the company's achievements in energy efficiency, renewable-energy generation and emissions reductions. He also discussed some of the challenges the company faces and the opportunities it has for partnerships with its customers.

"As customers become increasingly interested in making energy choices that meet their individual needs and preferences, we are providing solutions that have the best combination of benefits at a reasonable cost, which customers are taking advantage of in large numbers," Davis said. "We stay competitive by supporting the efforts of our customers to develop and grow."

Day of Service

Serving communities across the service territory



Xcel Energy created a "positive effect" in numerous communities across the service territory in September when about 3,500 employees, family members, friends and even customers volunteered during the company's annual Day of Service.

"This year was again a tremendous success for the company," said Carol Wright, corporate citizenship representative, Customer and Community Relations. "It was great to see folks giving back to our communities in so many ways this year."

"Day of Service is one of the biggest ways we demonstrate that we are more engaged than ever with our customers, communities and policymakers," added Laurel Boerger, manager, Community Affairs.

Colorado Highlights

- More than 2,700 volunteers gave more than 8,100 hours of volunteer time.
- Employees, family, customers/community and elected officials volunteered at more than 50 nonprofit locations across the state.
- An exciting addition to this year's Day of Service was a Social Media Challenge, where nonprofits and volunteers utilized social media to tell the world about the great improvements for the nonprofits during the event.

Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota Highlights

- More than 700 volunteers
- Employees, contractors, retirees, family and friends
- 29 volunteer sites
- More than 2,100 volunteer hours given.

Wisconsin Highlights

- 42 volunteers
- Employees and families
- Three volunteer sites
- More than 120 volunteer hours given. ←

Letters

'Humor was legendary in the ranks'

Dear Editor:

I read the poem submitted by Bob "Sweed" Nielson in the October 2015 Xtra magazine. I knew and worked with Sweed during part of my 37 years with the company.

He was my foreman, and he taught me many things about the gas business. His humor was legendary in the ranks.

I was impressed with what he said. What he wrote is what many people felt doing their time at the "company."

Thank you for publishing the poem. And thank you, Sweed, for writing a very good poem.

—Richard Travis, retired, Gas Emergency Response dispatcher

Poem enjoyable to read

Dear Editor:

The poem by Bob Nielsen [October 2015 issue] was so enjoyable to read. If customers knew all of the pain, suffering and labor endured by both our electric and gas workers, they might not be so quick to ask when the lights or gas will come back on.

Working in Customer Service on the phones, sometimes we lose track of how much labor is involved with keeping gas and electric service on. I wish the best for Bob.

—Joe Kunz, CentrePoint, Roseville, Minn.

Information on historic photos noted

Dear Editor:

Many of the photos in the October issue were not identified, and for good reason I would guess. I can definitely identify one of the pictures and perhaps provide a lead on another.

On page 11, lower left, is Frank Litecky of the Minneapolis Overhead Department. He was an apprentice lineman when I met him in the mid-1950s, and later became a line crew foreman, which is probably the position he held at the time of the photo.

Frank was a character – a person that, once met, you didn't forget. He had a good sense of humor hidden behind a wit dryer than popcorn. He could be cranky sometimes, but very serious and no-nonsense about his work.

On page 2, the inside cover, I will make this guess: Given the background, this could be a shot of some of the work involved with putting Fridley, Minn., back together after a devastating tornado in the spring of 1965.

The line truck is exactly like the ones the company had at that time, including the boom and digger attachment. The hard hats also are exactly like the first ones we were issued in the early 1950s. They were uncomfortable and did not stay on your head very well, especially in a job where you looked up a lot.

Some readers may recall the effort needed to get a long pole into the ground using that setup. I'd even guess that the two lowest guys are Dick Rymarchick and Merle Dunning. The guy hugging the pole could be Bob Eng. The other guy is the foreman, because he's not wearing the kind of clothes or gloves needed to regularly be 'rassling' poles.

I'll stick with the Fridley tornado until someone can say otherwise. I was there, but at the time I was a tree trimmer, and it's easy to see there wasn't much for us to do. We worked the first night and then went back to our regular trimming duties.

—Dave Vos, retired

Friends We'll Miss

People

D.E. Courter
96, meterman, Western Electric Service, Colorado, died on Aug. 23, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1945 to 1983.

Thomas H. Dameron
84, property/local tax director, Tax Services, Colorado, died on Aug. 24, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1953 to 1993.

Donald D. East
80, overhead working foreman, died on Sept. 19, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1953 to 1994.

Robert C. Flack
89, station operator, Cherokee Station, Denver, Colo., died on Aug. 24, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1957 to 1986.

James K. Fuller
92, vice president, Engineering and Planning, Colorado, died on Aug. 26, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1948 to 1988.

Abraham L. Goff
79, service investigation specialist, Electric Distribution Engineering, Seventh Ave Service Center, Denver, Colo., died on Aug. 9, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1971 to 1994.

James E. Hanrahan
86, foreman, Electric Trouble, Minnesota, died on Sept. 18, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1964 to 1992.

James R. Hoppe
84, troubleman, Metro East Electric Service, Rice Street Service Center, St. Paul, Minn., died on Aug. 29, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1959 to 1993.

Clarence Jacob
81, janitor, died on Sept. 3, 2014. He worked for SPS from 1969 to 1997.

Dennis J. Leffler
69, bankruptcy technician, 990 Bannock, Denver, Colo., died on Sept. 2, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1972 to 2001.

Christian E. Mathys
85, carpenter, High Bridge Generating Plant, St. Paul, Minn., died on Sept. 4, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1952 to 1986.

Daniel A. Mazzeo
63, senior principal risk management analyst, Operations, Lipan Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., died on Sept. 22, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 2014 until the time of his death.

Donald E. Olson
78, gas working foreman, CLF&P Gas Operations, Cheyenne Service Center, Cheyenne, Wyo., died on Aug. 28, 2015. He worked for the company from 1959 to 1996.

Clyde A. Parker
91, working foreman, CLF&P Electric Operations, Cheyenne, Wyo., died on Aug. 30, 2015. He worked for the company from 1957 to 1986.

Owen D. Sebree
86, accounting clerk, Stores, Materials Distribution Center, Henderson, Colo., died on Aug. 16, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1963 to 1990.

Keith Sorensen
77, gas marketing consultant, General Office, Minneapolis, Minn., died on July 10, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1961 to 1983.

Marvin Stapleton
87, fitter serviceman, Colorado, died on Sept. 5, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1950 to 1986.

Edmund H. Theis
88, plant engineer, Operations, Black Dog Generating Plant, Burnsville, Minn., died on Aug. 26, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1949 to 1989.

Ronald H. Tigue
82, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., died on Sept. 7, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1959 to 1991.

George M .Warner
88, transmission engineer, Minnesota, died on Aug. 30, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1956 to 1989.

Andrew Wilson
89, system protection manager, Colorado, died on Sept. 14, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1949 to 1986.

Retiring

Stanley J. Anderson
electric troubleman, Electric Trouble, Rice Street Service Center, St. Paul, Minn., retired on Sept. 9, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 47 years.

John Bruno
lead fitter, Gas Construction, Arvada Service Center, Arvada, Colo., retired on Oct. 5, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Al Carlson
(alanjcalrson@icloud.com),
lead conveyor operator, Black Dog Generating Plant, Burnsville, Minn., retired on Sept. 23, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 45 years.

Douglas Lee Cherry
safety consultant, Safety, Amarillo Technical Center, Amarillo, Texas, retired on Aug. 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

James Corbett
technician, Engineering Design, North Metro Headquarters, Arvada, Colo., retired on Sept. 25, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

Steve Dellwo
senior engineer, Transmission Real Time Planning, 414 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Aug. 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Tamar Drager
design technician, Design, Fort Collins Service Center, Fort Collins, Colo., retired on Aug. 13, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 30 years.

Gary Edwards
storekeeper, Stores, Gateway Service Center, Denver, Colo., retired on Sept. 30, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

Mark Fluharty
technical support superintendent, Technical Support, Sherco Generating Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on Sept. 15, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 30 years.

Brenda R. Gee
(Bgee58@gmail.com),
construction contract administrator, Transmission Construction, Amarillo, Texas, retired on Sept. 24, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 32 years.

Becky Harasyn
(bharasyn@icloud.com),
account executive, Gas Sales, White Bear Lake, Minn., retired on Sept. 8, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 39 years.

Jim Jordan
pricing consultant, Regulatory Administration, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired on Sept. 8, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Wayne Knopik
(knopikw@yahoo.com), plant equipment operator assistant, Operations, Sherco Generating Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on Oct. 21, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 28 years.

Scott Lord
specialist, System Protection Shop, retired on Sept. 11, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Jeff Nylander
gas operations technical specialist, High Pressure Gas, Brighton Service Center, Brighton, Colo., retired on Sept 11, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Brent L. Petrini
extension associate, Extension Department, Southeast Service Center, Denver, Colo., retired on Sept. 30, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 30 years.

Terry L. Sheffler
(valyn182@sbcglobal.net), production specialist III, Maintenance Resources and Compliance, Amarillo Tower, Amarillo, Texas, retired on Aug. 14, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 36 years.

Cindy Shore
business support manager, Business Support, Sherco Generating Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on Oct. 8, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 29 years.

William S. Smith
(bill.barb@comcast.net),
supervisor, Fleet Operations, Boulder Service Center, Boulder, Colo., retired on Oct. 5, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

Janice Streeter
meter reader, Meter Reading, Ironwood Service Center, Ironwood, Mich., retired on Sept. 11, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 26 years.

Valentino T. Trevino
serviceman foreman, Dumas Service Center, Dumas, Texas, retired on Nov. 6, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 42 years.

Rickie Vaughn
lead machinist, Maintenance, Sherco Generating Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on Sept. 11, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

Lynn L. Worrell
senior director, Electric Distribution Engineering, Lipan Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., retired on Sept. 11, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

Retiree information

Retirees can opt out of receiving the print version, or request address changes regarding home delivery of the print edition, by calling Human Resources' Service Center at 800-689-7662.

They also are invited to visit 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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