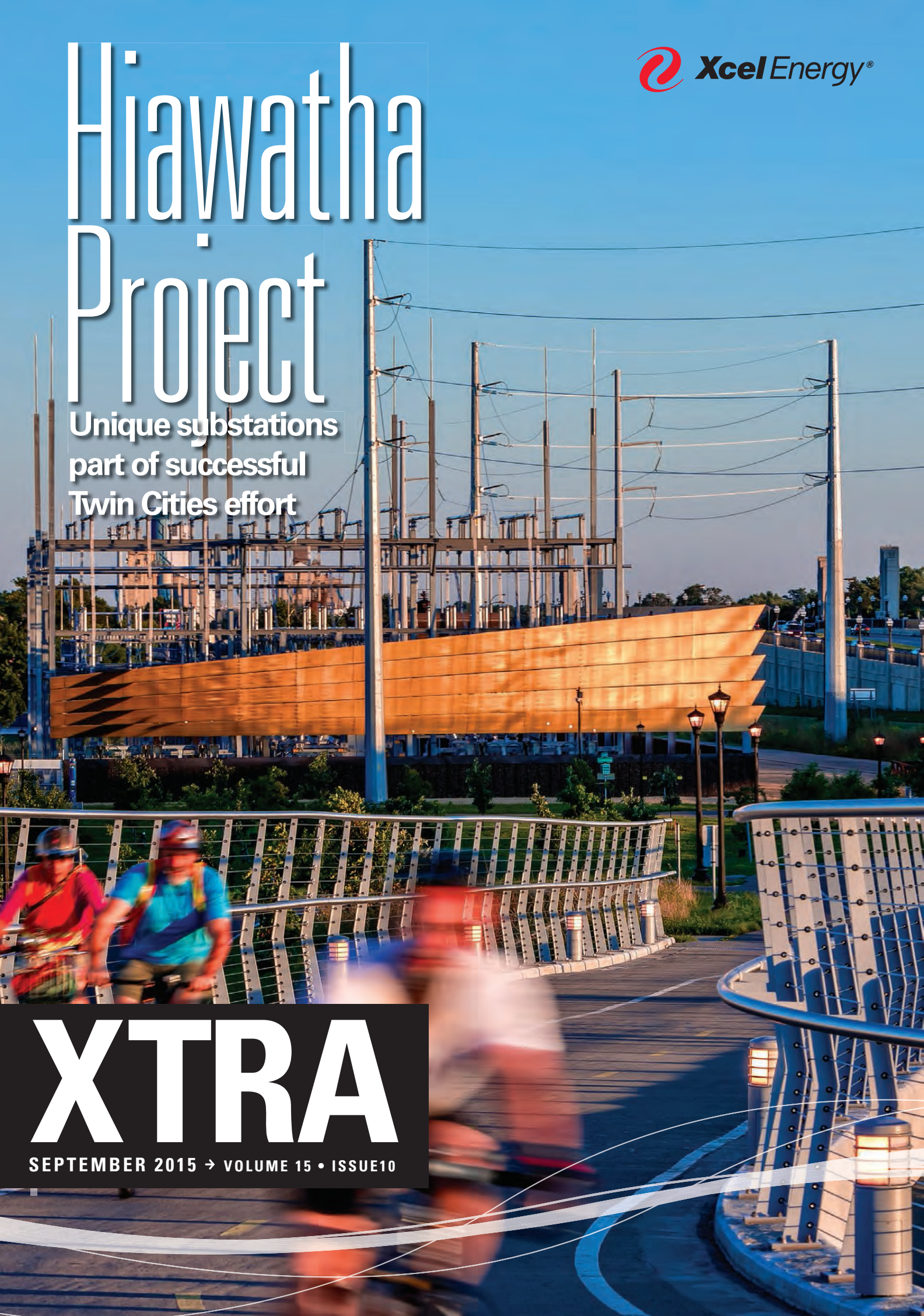
Xcel Energy®

Hiawatha Project

Unique substations part of successful Twin Cities effort



XTRA

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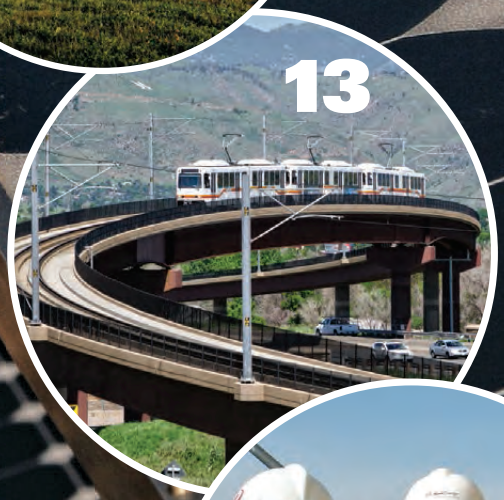
Content

On the Cover
Careful attention to many factors made the large-scale Hiawatha Project a huge success in meeting the Twin Cities' increasing electric needs. And a pair of substations built in South Minneapolis may be two of the most unique aesthetic designs in the country.



Ben's Blog

Keeping customers in mind with EPA's final rule

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

Last month, I attended the President's announcement of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) final rule on the Clean Power Plan – the first U.S. regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. I first attended a White House meeting that day along with a small group of other stakeholders, then sat in on the President's remarks announcing the plan.

I wanted to attend these meetings because Xcel Energy has made environmental leadership both a key strategy and a competitive advantage. Being present for the announcement would highlight our work.

I also wanted to attend because I believe it is critical for us to be at the table as policies are crafted, and this policy is as significant as I expect to see for our industry. And of course, it isn't every day that I am invited to the White House, so that had its appeal, as well.

> "I wanted to attend these meetings because Xcel Energy has made environmental leadership both a key strategy and a competitive advantage."

While I am sure the final rule is not all that we hoped for, it does appear to be greatly improved since the draft. To my point: advocacy and engagement with policymakers is important and does matter. So does having the performance to back up our credibility, as our environmental performance does.

So what's ahead? First, we need to fully assess the rule to understand all of its impact. Stay tuned for more information as we do.

Second, we are engaged and ready to work with our states on implementation. We know our states view the EPA rules differently, and we will work with each to come up with an effective plan.

We know how to reduce emissions at a reasonable cost and will work with our states to ensure implementation occurs in a manner consistent with the best interest of customers.

Doing so will ensure that we meet our customers' expectations for clean, reliable power at an affordable price – now and in the future. ←

SAFETY RECORD

EIGHTH 'BEST YEAR EVER' POSSIBLE IN LONG, IMPRESSIVE RUN

"Best year ever" has become a fixture for safety performance at Xcel Energy.

With more than half of 2015 now in the books, Xcel Energy is on pace for another – you've got it – "best year ever."

Through July, 56 OSHA recordable injuries were reported, representing a 35 percent decrease when compared to the 86 injuries recorded for the same time period last year.

In addition, nearly 89 percent of the work groups whose safety performance is tracked at Xcel Energy remained injury free as of July 31, 2015.

When the company's "Journey to Zero" safety effort began in 2008, the OSHA Recordable Incident Rate (ORIR) stood at 2.42. That rate has steadily dropped every year since to a 2015 rate of 0.78 to date.

"We knew there were improvements we could make," said Kent Larson, executive vice president and group president of Operations. "And our safety performance since then is a direct reflection of our employees' commitment to work safely to ensure we all go home injury-free every day."

"You can really see how the changes we've made to our safety culture over the last eight years have resulted in steady progress on our Journey to Zero," added Gary Lakey, vice president of Safety and Workforce Relations. "We're proud of that record and look forward to continuing to improve on it."

Eight years ago, Xcel Energy had made progress on its safety numbers, but also had plateaued, explained Paul Jeske, director of Safety.

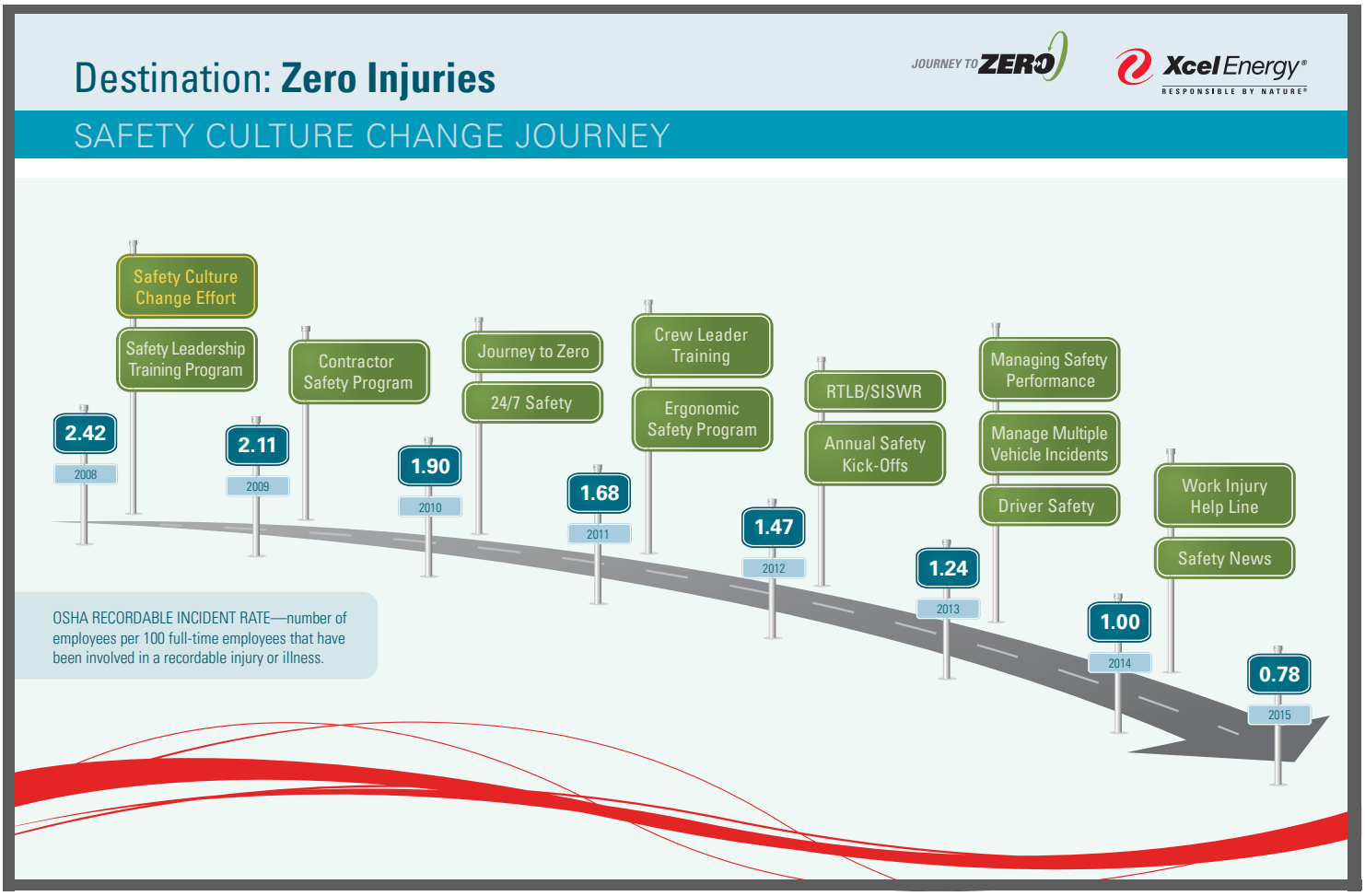
"Culture change takes time, but we have proven we are changing our safety culture for the better year after year," Jeske said. "Culture change is like a tree – growth is noticeable at top, but firmly grounded roots are needed to support that growth and keep things moving, all of which requires time.

"We have been able to make safety personal for employees and their families," he added. "We want everyone to work safely for themselves and their families. Do it because it's about you – and not necessarily the company."

Last year, Xcel Energy's ORIR of 1.00 put it just outside the top quartile in the utility industry. The top quartile included a rate of 0.99 or lower.

"And now, we're 35 percent better than our rate in 2014," said Julia West, manager of Safety. "This year we're seeing yet another step change as our overall rate continues to fall."

Over the past eight years, there have been a number of things that have impacted employee safety, she said. Most of those involve a series of programs that have both kept the focus on overall safety, while breaking out different facets of being



safe at work and home.

"Every year, we've had programs that built on themselves to help employees work more safely," she said. "Each had an impact and helped build their culture."

Some of the successful company-wide programs instituted over the past eight years include:

- Safety Leadership Training Program – This initial effort shifted the idea of safety for the company's field-based work to be more behavior-based.
- Journey to Zero – The one, big overriding effort at Xcel Energy. Many work groups achieve zero injuries every year, year after year, proving the goal is a realistic one, West said.
- 24/7 Safety – This effort focused on safety concerns at home to help employees stay safe away from work, as well.
- Crew Leader Training – Leaders of crews were trained under this effort to build their safety skills and help support their crew members.
- Ergonomic Safety – This program created great success in helping employees decrease strains and sprains related to muscular-skeletal disorders (MSD) or wear-and-tear injuries, West said. The company has gone from 54 MSD injuries in 2011 to just eight year-to-date in 2015.
- RTLB – The "Rules to Live By" effort focuses on rules to follow to avoid a life-changing event, such as the minimum approach rule in the electric world.
- SISWR – Safety takes a team effort and "Safety Intervention and Stop Work Responsibility" has been pivotal in Xcel Energy's efforts to help employees truly have the right and the responsibility to make their work environment safer, she said, and to intervene to help keep coworkers and others safe, as well.
- Annual Safety Kickoffs – This idea was born in Texas, where breakfasts and other events were held at the beginning of each year in the Texas Panhandle and eastern New Mexico to help employees refocus on safety as another new year began.
- Managing Safety Performance – This effort helps ensure that leaders are engaged in safety and managing safety efforts effectively within their organizations.
- Work Injury Helpline – This program helps provide the right care at the right time through telephone-based advice from healthcare professionals. When employees have on-the-job injuries, this service helps determine the best course of treatment and checks back to ensure progress is being made.

"I'm amazed at how all of these programs have helped build our safety culture over the years," West said. "And it's not one thing. Looking in the rearview mirror, we have been able to systematically – through a series of efforts – help employees do their jobs more safely.

And so, the Journey to Zero continues, in search of another "best year ever." ←

EPA
Clean Power Plan
Fowke attends White House announcement ceremony

On Aug. 3, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a package of new rules to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from new, modified and existing power plants.

"We appreciate the EPA's willingness to work with stakeholders in developing this groundbreaking and complex set of regulations," said Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO. "It will take time to thoroughly review and assess the full impact of the rules.

Ben Fowke

"While we expect the Clean Power Plan does not provide everything we hoped for in terms of fully recognizing the early actions of proactive states and utilities, Xcel Energy is ready to move ahead," he added. "We look forward to working with our states in the best interest of our customers, ensuring we continue to meet their expectations for clean, reliable and affordable power."

Xcel Energy was part of the ceremony to announce the final Clean Power Plan with President Barack Obama at the White House. Fowke participated in the event to show Xcel Energy's commitment to working with all parties to provide clean, reliable and affordable energy choices to consumers now and in the future.

"Implementing clean energy is familiar ground for Xcel Energy," Fowke said, noting Xcel Energy's 11 consecutive years as the nation's No. 1 utility wind energy provider. "We have worked for years with our states to increase the use of renewable resources, to help customers save energy and to modernize and retire our coal plants – all at a reasonable cost."

"These new regulations are likely the most significant environmental rules in the history of the U.S. power sector," added Frank Prager, vice president of Policy and Federal Affairs. "If upheld, they will change how we produce and consume electricity in this country."

Of these rules, the most important for Xcel Energy is the Clean Power Plan that will regulate carbon dioxide from existing plants, he said.

Under the rule, states are now expected to work with their local utilities and others to develop compliance plans for meeting new emission-reduction targets for carbon dioxide. These state plans are due to the EPA by September 2016, with the potential for a two-year extension.

"At nearly 1,600 pages, the Clean Power Plan is one of the most complex regulations we have seen," Prager said. It will take time to thoroughly review and determine the impact and next steps.

"While we are reviewing the rule, we do know the following," he said:

- Xcel Energy knows how to reduce emissions at a reasonable cost. We have worked with our states on programs that increase the use of renewable energy, help customers save energy, and modernize and retire coal plants. Through these efforts, Xcel Energy is already on track to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions by 30 percent companywide from 2005 levels by 2020.
- We will continue working with our states while acting in the best interest of customers. Our focus now changes from working on the proposed rule to supporting our states as they develop emission-reduction plans. Our states may respond in different ways to this rule, and we will need to follow their lead.
- We are committed to providing customers the clean, reliable power they expect at an affordable price. No matter what happens with this rule, we will continue to look for opportunities to cost-effectively improve environmental performance and meet our customers' interest in new clean energy options.
- Our proactive efforts to reduce emissions on behalf of customers should count with our states. While the EPA made improvements to the final Clean Power Plan, the rule does not fully recognize our proactive emission-reduction efforts. We will continue to reinforce the need for early action with our states as they develop their emission-reduction plans.

"We will provide more information on these rules as we fully evaluate them," Prager said. ←

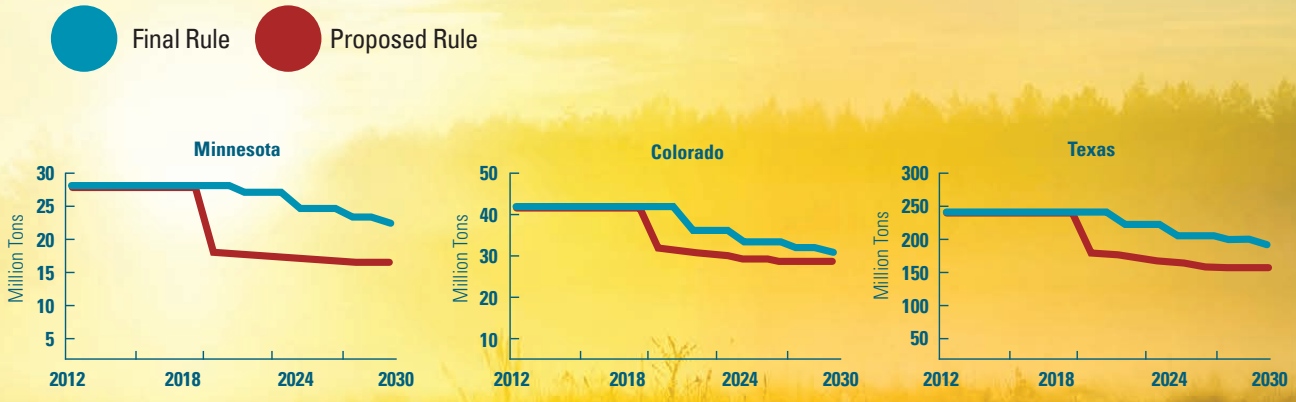
Initial review of the EPA's Clean Power Plan shows final rule generally better for Xcel Energy compared to draft proposal

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued its final Clean Power Plan, designed to reduce carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from the nation's power plants. The final rule is significantly different, and generally better for Xcel Energy's customers, compared to the draft rule proposed in June 2014.

Each state is assigned an emission-reduction target to meet. In the final rule, the baseline remains 2012, which means states can only apply reductions made post 2012 for meeting their targets. Collectively, state emission reductions contribute to a national goal equivalent to reducing CO_2 emissions 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. This final goal is more stringent compared to the goal for the proposed rule, which was originally a 30 percent emissions reduction.

Minnesota, Colorado and Texas have less stringent emission-reduction targets under the final Clean Power Plan, compared to the proposed rule. This improvement will benefit all Xcel Energy customers on its system, as these states represent more than 90 percent of Xcel Energy's electric generation and CO_2 emissions.

Required Emission Reductions from 2012 through 2030 in Minnesota, Colorado and Texas:



Every city goes through growing pains.

But the inconveniences and difficulties that come with meeting the demands of increased growth can be minimized through successful public engagement, careful planning and effective coordination.

Careful attention to all of those factors made a large-scale project a huge success in meeting the Twin Cities' increasing electric needs. And the pair of substations built in South Minneapolis may be two of the most unique aesthetic designs in the country.

The challenging Hiawatha Project involved the construction of two substations in the dense urban core of Minneapolis's Midtown neighborhood, and new transmission and distribution lines that needed to cross Highway 55 (Hiawatha Avenue) – a busy urban transit corridor for the city.

"It was a massive undertaking with a tight timeline," said Joseph Samuel, senior project manager. "And crossing Hiawatha Avenue with transmission and distribution lines was very complex."

Xcel Energy proposed the Hiawatha Project in 2009 to bolster existing capacity, which was insufficient to meet rapidly growing customer demand for electricity in the area. It involved the construction of two new substations, 1.5 miles of 115,000-volt transmission line and two miles of distribution line, at a

HIAWATHA AESTHETICS

Huge project meets growth while providing artistic views in the heart of the Twin Cities

budget of $55 million.

But the project would take place in some of the busiest and most high-profile parts of the city. That required special consideration of needs and concerns of residents and businesses in the area. Not surprisingly, then, one of the biggest challenges for the Hiawatha Project involved getting designs and plans approved.

"In the beginning, people were concerned about the installation of overhead electric lines, and the substations being located in highly visible areas," Samuel said. "But the permit order required us to put the lines underground along 28th Street, and based on that, a lot of people opposed to the project had their issues addressed.

"There was still considerable concern about the substations, however, so we put together a community group that included elected officials, city staff, business members and neighborhood representatives to come to an agreement on the aesthetics of the Midtown and Hiawatha West substations."

The group worked closely with Xcel Energy's Engineering, Siting and Land Rights, and Design, Construction and Maintenance departments to develop and oversee a collaborative process with the goal of ensuring that the final designs of the substations reflected the community vision, values and ideas about aesthetics, while also being financially and technically feasible.

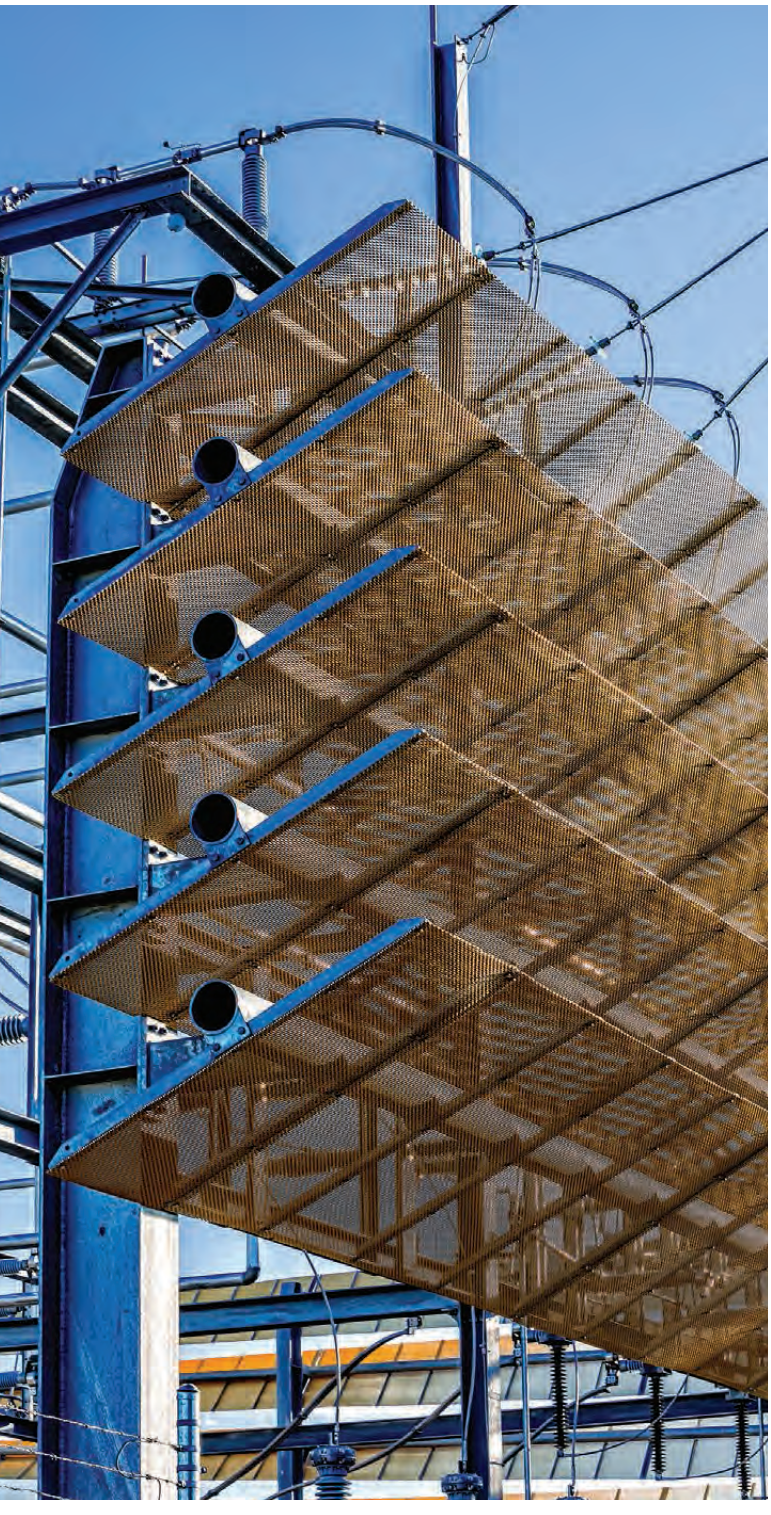
"Our team always works with a community prior to a project, but I'm not aware of another project where we've done such extensive outreach and had this much community engagement," said Nate Steward, senior engineer with Substation Engineering and Design. "There was a lot of back and forth since the substations are in highly visible areas. But in the end, the process of collaboration between Xcel Energy and the City of Minneapolis was quite successful."

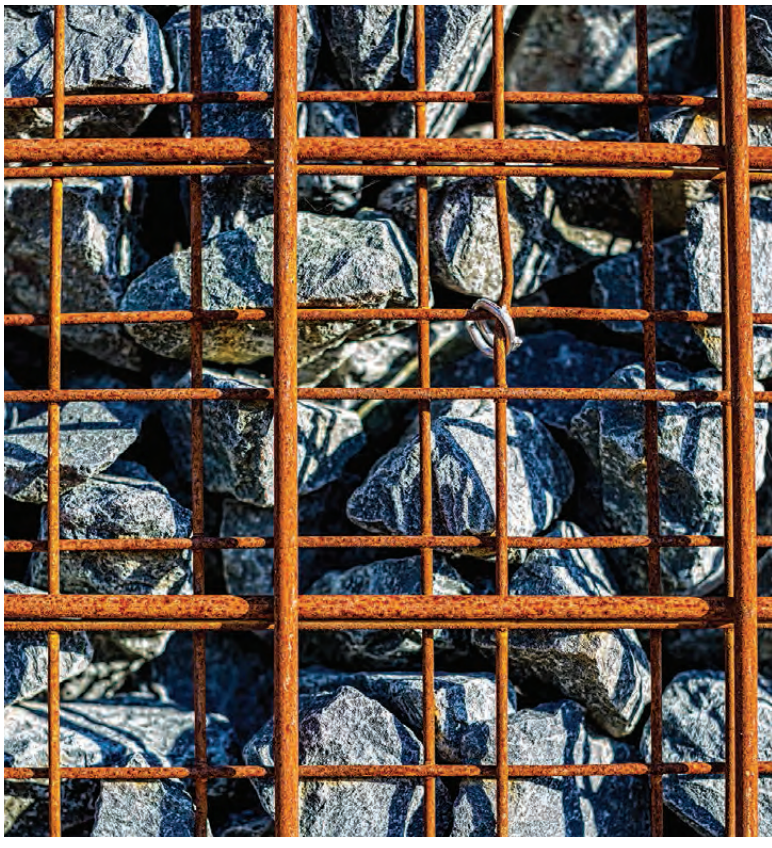
After an extensive public and regulatory review of the project, the Minnesota Public Utility Commission approved the project in January 2012. Once support for the aesthetic design also was obtained, the complex process of constructing the project under a tight deadline began in October 2012.

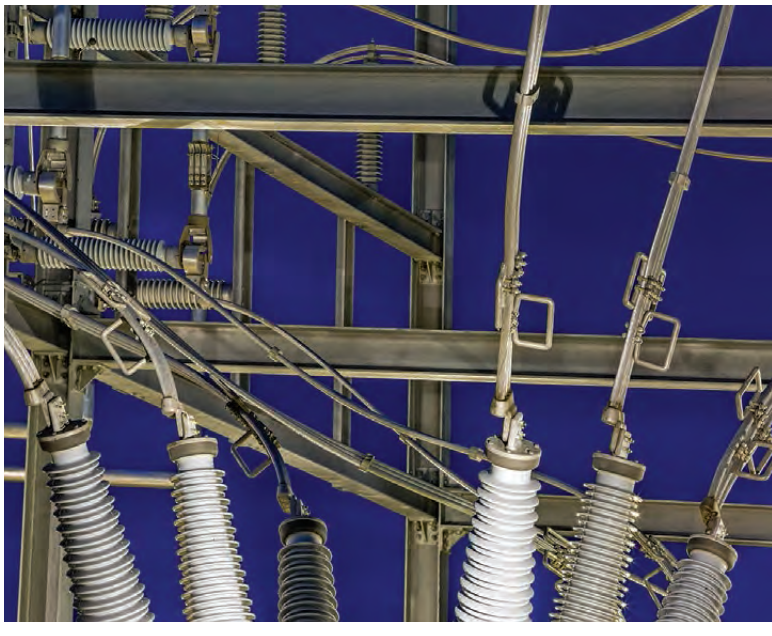
Construction required the installation of concrete duct banks across Highway 55. To minimize interruptions to motorists and the community, Xcel Energy worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to close a section of the highway to install the duct banks.

The closure lasted nine days while Xcel Energy crews worked around the clock to install the duct banks and restore the roadway surface for highway reopening. In addition to Xcel Energy work, the City of Minneapolis took advantage of the closure to complete signal-timing upgrades along the highway.

"We completed the crossing safely, efficiently and ahead of schedule," Samuel said. "That was due to our dedicated company team."







The Hiawatha West Substation was energized in June 2014, and the Midtown Substation came online in December 2014.

"All phases of the Hiawatha Project involved close collaboration between the design team and constructions teams, Steward said. "A lot of coordination, oversight and management was required both before and throughout the construction process."

In June, Xcel Energy received an American Institute of Architects-Minnesota 2015 Merit Award for its unprecedented community feedback and engagement process, which the institute said resulted in a "one-of-a-kind design that integrates public art with infrastructure." The substation design is the first of its kind in Minnesota.

Both the Hiawatha West and Midtown substations utilize ornamental base walls and anodized metal mesh panels to create semitransparent views of the substation interior and give the illusion of movement. While the finish is yellow, additional color is added through the use of LED lighting.

"We're pleased that by working with the community and the city, a substation design came together for this unique and densely populated area," Samuel said. "The substations are visually appealing and yet still meet our necessary safety and technical requirements." ←

Community Engagement

Successful public engagement, careful planning and effective coordination helped make the Hiawatha Project a success in meeting the demands of increased growth in the Twin Cities. In addition, both of the project's new substations feature award-winning architectural designs.

Second quarter earnings announced

Xcel Energy recently reported 2015 second quarter GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles) and ongoing earnings of $197 million, or $0.39 per share, compared with $195 million, or $0.39 per share, in the same period in 2014.

Second quarter electric margin increased due to new rates and riders in various jurisdictions and a lower PSCo earnings test refund that was partially offset by a weather-normalized sales decline and unfavorable weather, having an impact of $0.02.

The increase in margin was offset by higher depreciation, lower allowance for funds used during construction, higher property taxes, operating and maintenance expenses and interest charges.

"Our financial results during the first half of the year were generally in line with our expectations, and we continue to expect to deliver ongoing earnings within our 2015 ongoing earnings guidance of $2.00 to $2.15 per share, despite lower than anticipated sales, unfavorable weather and adjustments to our rate request in Minnesota," said Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO.

"Over the last several quarters, we laid out plans to reduce the ROE gap at our utilities, and we are especially pleased with our progress this quarter," he added. "Recently signed legislation in Minnesota and Texas supplements our regulatory compact with new tools, supports our efforts as we continue to strengthen the system for our customers and improves our visibility on meeting our long-term earnings growth objectives.

"Importantly, the new legislation brings a longer-term focus to regulation in Minnesota, similar to what we have already accomplished in Colorado and North Dakota," he said. "Aligning the rates, policies and business plans in each of the states we serve is an important part of our strategy, and we took a big step forward this quarter."

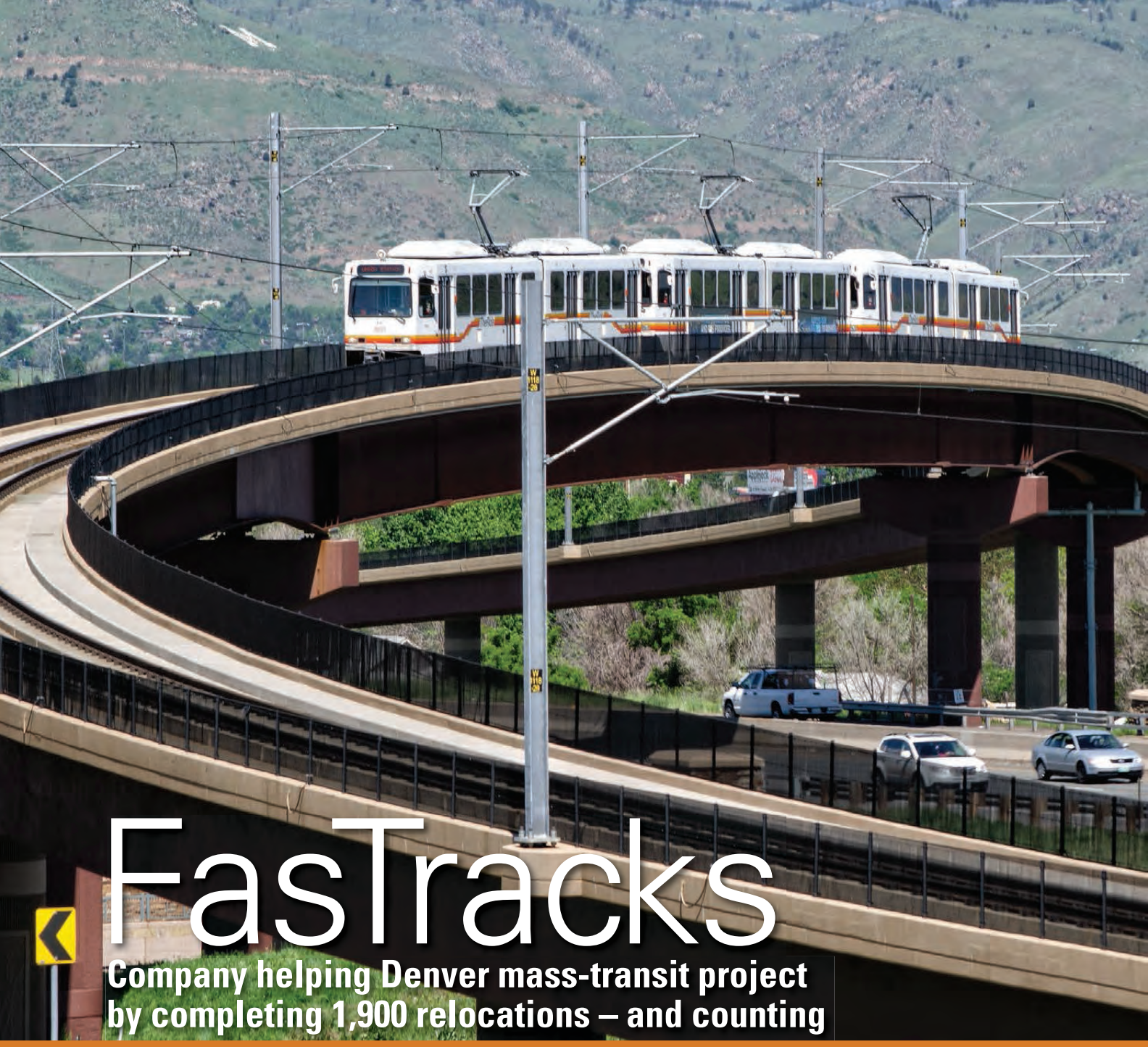
In other good news, Xcel Energy's Monticello nuclear plant has received final NRC approval and is operating at full capacity. In Colorado, the company's Cherokee combine-cycle plant completed its first fire in its startup process. The project is on budget and on time.

Photo Op

401 Nicollet

Chris Kelleher, senior communications consultant, took this photo of a worker moving material for the company's new headquarters complex in downtown Minneapolis. Work continues on the new building, as well as the skyway between 401 and 414 Nicollet. Move-in is expected early next year.

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.*



FasTracks

Company helping Denver mass-transit project by completing 1,900 relocations – and counting

Creeping along in slow-moving traffic is no one's idea of a good time. But getting where you want to go in the Denver metro area is getting a little easier, thanks to an extensive multi-billion-dollar, mass-transit system, now well under way in the city.

The nearly 120-mile FasTracks project will offer commuters a combination of rail, light-rail and 18 miles of rapid-transit bus options, along with 21,000 new parking spaces at light-rail and bus stations across eight Denver metro counties.

To help make all this happen, Xcel Energy is working closely with Regional Transportation District (RTD) to ensure the successful progress of the project. The company already has spent $100 million to move energy infrastructure to accommodate the extensive network of rail lines, 57 new transit stations and 31 new "park-n-ride" locations.

"The FasTracks project started as a $4.6-billion, voter-approved initiative in 2004 to build a mass-transit system to help make the Denver area an internationally competitive location and a world-class city," said Craig Coon, FasTracks project director. "When companies are looking to relocate their businesses, they look at all aspects of an area, including transit, because they want their employees to be able to commute to and from work quickly and safely."

Overlaying new mass-transit routes on existing utility facilities and lines is a daunting proposition. Since the FasTracks project began, the company has been involved in roughly 1,900 relocations, as well as the installation of new services.

Xcel Energy also regularly responds to a significant number of calls for assistance from RTD and their contractors, regarding questions when working around the company's complex network of utility infrastructure, or how to best deal with changes in the field of RTD's scope work that affects Xcel Energy crews' work.

The company also is monitoring crews to ensure that they are building according to Xcel Energy standards, he added, and to help RTD contractors work safely around the gas and electric infrastructure.

"As RTD regularly states, Xcel Energy has the most conflicts in terms of required relocations and requests from RTD of any utility, so we easily have the most interaction with them," Coon said. "In my opinion, the project is going well – all things considered.

"The comments we continually receive from RTD are that we are one of the few entities that they deal with that work

Transit Work

Two 195-foot transmission towers were part of the work being done in relation to the FasTracks project near the new VA Hospital on the east side of the metro area. The company continues to help with the project by moving lines or putting in new services.

with them to ensure they can meet project goals, timelines and other needs."

Not surprisingly, a project of this magnitude brings with it considerable challenges. One of those issues involves the ongoing changes to plans and work to accommodate unanticipated circumstances – an issue complicated by the participation of the multiple parties involved.

"This is a design/build project in which RTD contracts with one company to design and build the rail on one corridor or project, so often the designers are coming up with new ideas during the construction that affects the work we are performing" Coon explained. "It's not unusual for us to build something significantly different than what was originally designed, due to continuous changes from RTD and its contractors."

Another challenge involves dealing with the special requirements associated with RTD receiving federal funding, which require detailed tracking and accounting paperwork. And managing logistics, particularly with multiple companies involved, has been daunting at times, he said.

"Finding an open area to install infrastructure in an urban area can be difficult since there are a significant amount of relocations of other infrastructure such as sewer and water, as well," Coon said. "We're all trying to share the same easement space, and this creates a challenge for placing our transformers, switch cabinets and other equipment. Multiple companies trying to work together within confined spaces at the same time in an effort to meet project deadlines isn't easy."

Nonetheless, Coon said that in spite of the inevitable complications and challenges that come with a project of this scale, he is pleased with how the work has unfolded.

"With just a small team, we've been able to keep up with RTD and its contractors to ensure there are no project delays," Coon said. "We have an excellent group of employees and contractors, and also work well with other groups within the company [Transmission, Substations, System Protection, High Pressure Gas, etc.] to meet project needs in a timely manner."

FasTracks' West Light-Rail Line opened in 2013, and the new Denver Union Station complex and related amenities opened last year. The East Line to Denver International Airport, the Gold Line to Arvada and Wheat Ridge, the I-225 Rail Line through Aurora, the Northwest Rail Line to south Westminster, and the Highway 36 Bus Rapid Transit service all will open in 2016. More lines will follow in 2018 and 2019. ←

Hydro generation remains strong in 2015

More than half way through 2015, generation at Xcel Energy's Upper Midwest hydroelectric facilities is above average.

News Briefs

Year-to-date totals show that Xcel Energy North hydro – including 19 hydro plants in Wisconsin and the St. Anthony Falls facility in Minnesota – is generating eight percent more than its five-year average and 21 percent more than the 10-year average.

In 2014 and 2015, hydro generation has ramped up following nearly a decade of off-and-on droughts and low water levels. Hydro surpassed all but one year of production records last year after an unusually wet winter and summer led to higher river flows, said Scott Crotty, plant manager of Hydro Operations.

Record-breaking hydro production for the month of September was achieved in 2014, helped by precipitation that was 12.3 inches above normal for the year. This year, precipitation is hovering around three inches above normal – not a record-breaking number, but one that yields results for hydro production.

"A great first half of the year for hydro generation was the result of the efforts of hydro operations and maintenance staff, coupled with timely precipitation," Crotty said. "We hope that the favorable weather pattern will continue for the second half of the year and into the future."

While nine of Xcel Energy's hydro dams are more than a century old, and many others were built more than 80 years ago, the company is committed to continually upgrading and renovating facilities to ensure hydro power remains safe, efficient and a viable energy source for Xcel Energy and its customers, he said.

The dam at Moose Lake, which serves as a water storage reservoir for the Chippewa-Flambeau Improvement Co., of which Xcel Energy is a majority shareholder, is currently undergoing a major redevelopment to ensure efficient continued operations. Also, work to replace the trash racks and support structures at the Apple River Hydro is currently under way following a 15-foot drawdown of the Apple Falls Flowage.

Holcombe Hydro

New vice presidents in Finance announced

Two leadership changes within the Financial Operations organization recently were announced. George Tyson has assumed the role of senior vice president of Corporate Development, and Brian Van Abel is now serving as vice president and treasurer. Both of these positions report directly to Teresa Madden, executive vice president and CFO.

In this new role, Tyson will oversee the company's strategy to grow the business, pursuing new investment opportunities that support achievement of Xcel Energy's financial objectives, she said.

"This role will shape and lead execution of the growth pillar of our corporate strategy, which we have found requires sound financial engineering to execute," Madden said. "George has played a critical role in putting Xcel Energy on the sound financial footing we currently enjoy, and I am confident he will bring the same disciplined approach to growing our business."

Van Abel will assume the role of treasurer and will be responsible for acquisition and management of capital, as well as investment strategies for the company's key financial assets such as pension.

"Having served as assistant treasurer for the past year, he has demonstrated great agility and produced solid results," Madden said. "Brian has developed corporate financial forecasts, planned long-term debt and equity financings, and evaluated the corporate dividend policy – all of which are well-suited to the treasurer role."

Both bring a wealth of experience and talent to the positions, she added. Tyson joined Xcel Energy in 2002, and has served as treasurer of Xcel Energy for most of his tenure. His prior experience at Deutsche Bank Securities, Bankers Trust Company and Amoco Corp. gave him experience in investment banking and acquisition assessments, both of which are important to this new role. Van Abel joined Xcel Energy in 2009, and his responsibilities rapidly grew to his current role.

Raptor Loss

Anderson's passing magnifies the success of his efforts

As yet another group of fledglings finished spreading their wings and launching skyward as part of Xcel Energy's raptor nesting program, the key player and founder of the effort passed away.

Bob Anderson, the man who hatched the power-plant nest-box program and Internet Bird Cam viewing site that spread across the company, country and even the world, died July 27 in Decorah, Iowa.

An avid falconer, Anderson started his work in raptor conservation in 1971, while working for the Science Museum of Minnesota. At that time, raptors were in trouble. Many species were in decline, and several, including the peregrine falcon and bald eagle, were threatened with extinction.

Anderson began by breeding peregrine falcons for release and recovery efforts. He helped produce many of the first peregrine falcons to be released in the Midwest.

Anderson went on to pioneer a program to attract falcons to utility stacks as director of the Raptor Resource Project, forging a long-standing partnership with Xcel Energy that proved enormously successful.

The peregrine falcon eventually was removed from the endangered species list in 1999. And by 2011, more than 1,000 young peregrines had been produced at Midwest power plants.

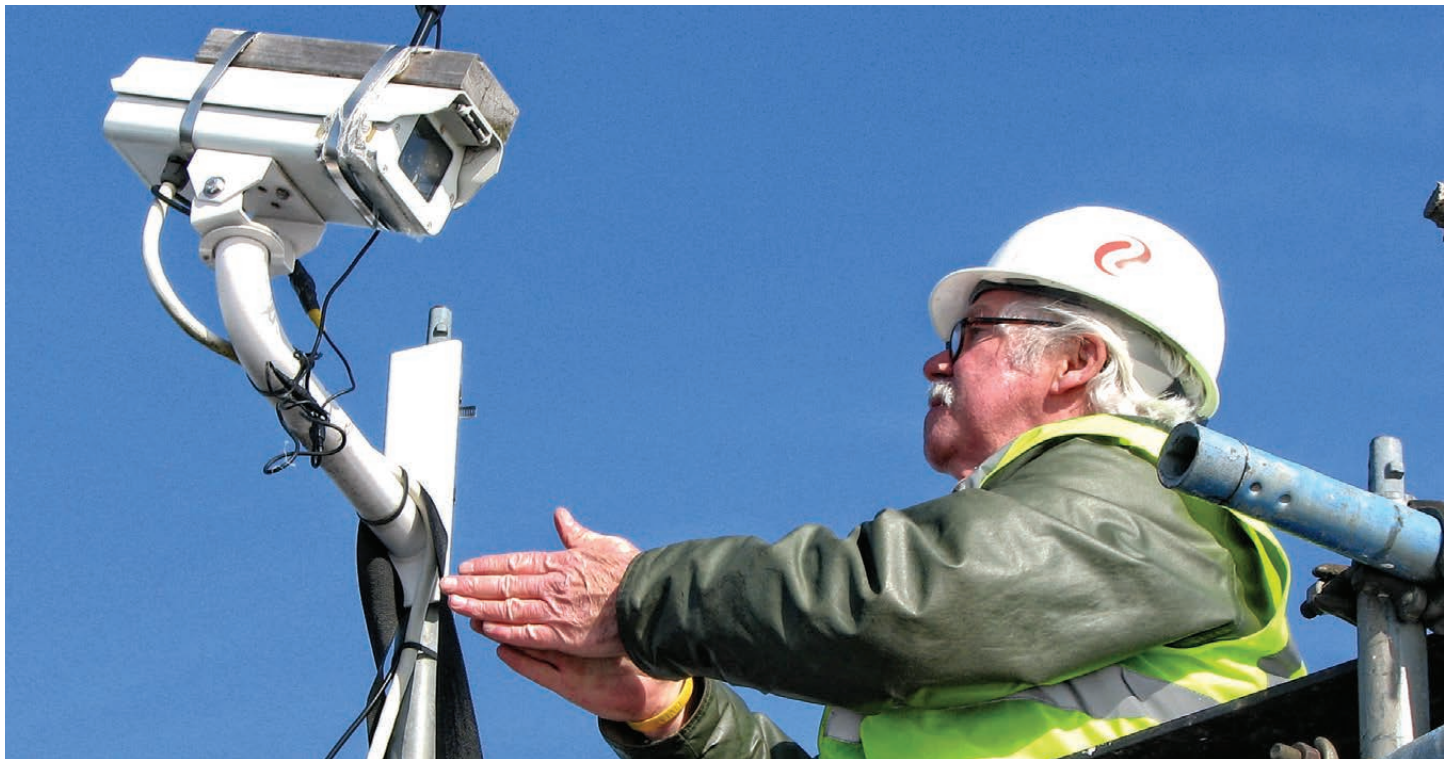
"The peregrine's near extinction and recovery sends a message that we can make a difference," Anderson said at the time. "I can't imagine a more important message to give people today, especially young people."

As the nest-box program evolved, Anderson also worked with the company to establish an Internet viewing site called Bird Cam. In 1998, Anderson's first camera at Minnesota's King Generating Station made the company's website one of the busiest in the world.

Anderson and his team went on to establish and monitor owl, osprey, kestrel and heron nests. His most popular, the Decorah eagle family nest, was viewed by more than 300 million people in the past year.

Bird Cam website stats for the first half of 2015 again proved the success of Andersons' brainchild. The site received more than half a million page views (604,277 to be precise), with the Eagle Top Cam as the most viewed site.

Three eaglets hatched from Fort St. Vrain Generating Station's nest box in Colorado early this spring. The one that survived the harsh spring weather has successfully fledged, but continues to



Raptor Resource

On page 16, Bob Anderson (right) and Mike Miser, now retired employee from Minnesota's King Generating Station, are pictured during a bird-banding excursion after ascending King's stack a few years ago. Both men played key roles in the initial work on the nest-box program. Above, Anderson works on one of the company's many Bird Cams, and at left, fledglings squawk in one of the nest boxes.

make visits to the nest.

Eagle parents continue to provide food after their young fledge. This time is critical for young eaglets as they learn to hunt from their parents before the coming winter.

Meanwhile, it was a banner year for peregrine falcons this nesting season. Anderson had once again completed banding of all the young falcons before his passing.

This year's falcon population was buoyed by a revitalized box at the Riverside plant in Minneapolis and a new nesting location at the Bay Front plant on Lake Superior in Ashland, Wis.

The long-lived but sterile falcon that had owned the Riverside box for many years was displaced, and a new unbanded and productive female took up residence, producing three falcons.

The Bay Front location yielded three healthy female falcons from a nest box that Anderson built a few years ago. At one time the falcons nested on an old nearby iron-ore dock, but the dock recently was removed and the falcons have moved to the plant.

The King, Black Dog, Monticello and Prairie Island nest boxes also had fledglings, although some did not survive after leaving the nest. The Sherco nest box did not have a successful year. Eggs were laid but did not hatch, which is referred to as an "incubation failure."

The pair of kestrels at the Pawnee box in Brush, Colo., laid a second clutch, and three out of the five eggs successfully hatched. The first clutch was not successful. Five eggs were laid and three hatched but did not survive due to adverse weather conditions.

Established in 1988, the nonprofit Raptor Resource Project specializes in the preservation of falcons, eagles, ospreys, hawks, and owls. It creates, improves, and directly maintains more than 40 nests and nesting sites, provides training in nest site creation and management, and develops innovations in nest-site management and viewing that helps bring people closer to the natural world.

Its mission is to preserve and strengthen raptor populations, expand participation in raptor preservation, and help foster the next generation of preservationists.

"By giving ordinary people intimate access to the lives of wild animals," Anderson once said, "our work deepens the connection between people and the natural world, bringing benefits to both." ←

Letters

Employee handled task 'with the utmost professionalism'

Dear Xcel Energy:

I just wanted to drop you a note about the employee who came out to exchange the gas meter for my mother-in-law. His name was Eric Gryniewski [gas tech specialist, Red Wing Service Center, Minnesota], and he was a fantastic representative of your company.

He was very polite and handled his task with the utmost professionalism. In this day and age, most people just want to get it done and move on. But Eric made sure everything was set before he packed up. I thank you for hiring a person and not just a number.

—Chef, Red Wing, Minn.

Quick response to problem appreciated

Dear Xcel Energy:

I'd like to thank Sandi Kaduce [information specialist, Eau Claire, Wis.] for the quick response to the online access problem I was experiencing. The issue was resolved, and I am again able to manage my account online. Thanks again for the great service.

—Walter

'Your folks are great'

Dear Xcel Energy:

I just wanted to thank all of your employees who were involved in the resolution of the resent outage in my area. I have lived here for 25 years, and this was the longest electric outage I have seen. Thank you for your continuous efforts to get us up and running again. Your folks are great!

—Steven Kline, St. Paul, Minn.

'It's all too rare these days'

Dear Xcel Energy:

I just want to let you know I had the most positive experience I've ever had with a utility company when I started service in my name for a rental property where my tenants just moved out.

The customer service rep was courteous, competent and the process was extremely easy. Kudos to your company for really getting customer service right! It's all too rare these days!

—Nancy Davis, Fruita, Colo.

Friends We'll Miss

Timothy Blanford
57, mechanic, Energy Supply, Cherokee Generating Station, Denver, Colo., died on June 9, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1978 to 2015.

People

Robert S. Ciresi
69, utilization lead, Gas Operations, White Bear Service Center, White Bear Lake, Minn., died on July 18, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1978 to 2008.

Jerry E. Cross
75, automatic operator, Substation Operations, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died on June 26, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1968 to 1999.

Larry L. Henry
82, unit manager, Electric Construction, Soutwest Metro Region, Belleview Service Center, Denver, Colo. died on May 18, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1951 to 1993.

Joyce P. Hicks
95, died on May 30, 2014. She worked for SPS from 1955 to 1984.

Harvey H. Hinman
100, communications engineering supervisor, Electric Engineering, Northeast Metro Divison Operations Center, Denver, Colo., died on July 17, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1955 to 1978.

John W. Huggan
83, special meter reader, Centre Pointe, Roseville, Minn., died on May 12, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1959 to 1996.

Joanne E. Husby
83, system maintenance scheduler, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died on June 27, 2015. She worked for NSP from 1988 to 1997.

Kenneth R. Jeffries
86, facility locator, Gas Control, Colorado, died on July 9, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1951 to 1986.

Eric J. Larson
47, district troubleman, Operations, Baldwin Service Center, Baldwin, Wis., died on July 27, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1988 until the time of his death.

Michael J. Larson
20, apprentice lineman, Operations, Western Service Center, Eau Claire, Wis., died on July 27, 2015. He worked for NSP from 2014 until the time of his death.

William J. Martin
83, vice president, Electric Engineering and Planning, 39th Avenue Engineering Center, Denver, Colo., died on July 22, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1957 to 1994.

John L. O'Brien
58, assistant plant equipment operator, Operations, Sherco Generating Station, Becker, Minn., died on July 8, 2015. He worked for NSP from 2006 to 2015.

Daniel P. Ortner
44, fleet asset consultant, Fleet Standards and Performance, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died on July 27, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy from 2013 until the time of his death.

Edward Risoli
88, shipping clerk, died on July 23, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1952 to 1989.

Carlyle W. Roehrich
89, lineman, Southeast Electric Delivery, Faribault Service Center, Faribault, Minn., died on June 24, 2015. He worked for NSP from 1948 to 1987.

Chas E. Simpson
83, lead fitter serviceman, Gas Construction, Pueblo, Colo., died on July 2, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1953 to 1987.

Dale S. Will
88, maintenance supervisor, Metro Production, Arapahoe Generating Station, Denver, Colo., died on July 9, 2015. He worked for PSCo from 1956 to 1988.

Retiring

Tim Aldrich
(tima1@ix.netcom.com), lineman patrolman, Transmission, Golden, Colo., retired on July 10, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Karen Burns
(karen28957@suddenlink.net), commercial credit specialist, Commercial Credit, Amarillo Call Center, Amarillo, Texas, retired on Aug. 3, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Fred Chevalier
(flc0928@aol.com), outage scheduler, Outage Scheduling, Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Monticello, Minn., retired on July 31, 2015.

Charles O. Clark
(santacolo53@gmail.com), lead mechanic, Fleet Maintenance, Gateway Service Center, Aurora, Colo., retired on June 30, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Charles Davis
(cad56mvp@msn.com), senior gas system controller, Gas Control, Lookout Center, Golden, Colo., retired on July 23, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 39 years.

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

Richard Friend
(richardfriendz@icloud.com), field operations supervisor, FasTracks Project, Arvada Service Center, Arvada, Colo., retired on July 17, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 30 years.

Dick (Richard) Hanson
(monsterdh@aol.com), revenue protection specialist, Revenue Assurance Department, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on Aug. 20, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 39 years.

Tom Haville
(tlhaville@gmail.com), line crew foreman, Electric Construction, LaCrosse, Wis., retired on June 4, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Wallace Hill
(wallacewhill@gmail.com), construction and design director, Distribution Operations, SPS Tower, Amarillo, Texas, retired on Aug. 14, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Don Ketterlin
NDE production specialist, Reliability Services and Overhaul Management, Nichols Station, Amarillo, Texas, retired on July 15, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Donald McKenzie
(donalmckenziez28@hotmail.com), senior designer, Design, Dodge Center, Minn., retired on June 30, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 29 years.

Tom Meyer
district representative, Trouble Department, Zumbrota, Minn., retired on July 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Michael S. Meyers
troubleman, Gas Operations, Newport, Minn., retired on Aug. 3, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 23 years.

Gregory D. Mutchler
electrician specialist, Denver Substations, Lipan Service Center, Denver, Colo., retired on Aug. 1, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Chuck Orr
working foreman mechanic, Thermal Energy, Denver, Colo., retired on Aug. 19, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Jeffrey Rihn
line crew foreman, Overhead Operations, Sparta, Wis., retired on Aug. 7, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Charlie Shaw
serviceman, Line Department, Hobbs, N.M., retired on July 13, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 32 years.

Sam Shirey
(sshirey53@gmail.com), component engineer, Maintenance, Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Monticello, Minn., retired on July 6, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 29 years.

Joel P. Sorensen
(joel.p.sorensen@gmail.com), vice president, Nuclear Operations and Performance Improvement, Nuclear, Marquette Plaza, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on July 15, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 36 years.

Randy D. Turner
service working foreman, Service Department, Seminole, Texas, retired on July 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 37 years.

Diane VanDeWalker
senior financial analyst, Finance, Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Welch, Minn., retired on July 10, 2015. She worked for Xcel Energy for 43 years.

Cher Ker Vang
(cherkervang@yahoo.com), credit recovery specialist, Credit Recovery, Centre Pointe, St. Paul, Minn., retired on July 8, 2015.

David R. Williams
(dwill1609@sbcglobal.net), manager, Operational Support, Energy Supply, Amarillo Tower, Amarillo, Texas, retired on June 19, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Leonard A. Zargoza
(culater@goodridence.org), industrial millwright, Maintenance, Hayden Generating Station, Hayden, Colo., retired on July 31, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Douglas J. Zwettler
(djzwettler@gmail.com), service fitter, Gas Emergency Response, Lipan Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., retired on Aug. 28, 2015. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Continuing Education

Heidi Elsner Jones
safety consultant, Field Safety and Training, Riverside Plant, Minneapolis, Minn., received her Bachelors of Science degree in Occupational Safety and Health from Columbia Southern University on July 31, 2015.

Online *Xtra* subscription now available

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 (or visit xcelenergy.com/Retirees).

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 the webpage noted above 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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Kevin Graham, Editor
1800 Larimer Street, 16th Floor
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Phone: 303-294-2417
Fax: 303-294-2968
email: Kevin.Graham@xcelenergy.com

Contributors: Kelly Stone, Anna Koch, Nancy Kluver, Al Lohman, Chris Kelleher and Erin Mulvoy

Design: Steve Berry

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