



Building strong communities
through a well trained workforce

A publication of the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance

December 2019

OMA Board Takes Steps to Move the Association Forward

Beginning in January 2020, Oklahoma Municipal Alliance's (OMA) membership will be open to all Oklahoma cities and towns. Membership will be on a Fiscal Year schedule. Cities and towns interested in becoming members may take advantage of membership rates for all OMA training events through June 2020 without first becoming a member.

"Beginning this past August, OMA has presented Confined Space Basics training across the state for all municipalities." Tom Rider, General Manager stated. "Additionally, we've had non-member participants in our Supervisor Short Course and Cash Handling

Course, all at the current member rate."

Benefits of Membership

Once a municipality becomes a member, it will have immediate access to the following benefits:

- Participation in the OMA Mutual Aid Program upon adoption of the OMA Mutual Aid Agreement. This benefit provides a clearly defined mechanism for members to assist

(see OMA BOARD, page 10)



Association Supports New Energy Incentives Legislation

From the American Public Power Association
November 19, 2019
By Paul Ciampoli

The American Public Power Association on Nov. 19 said it supports the Growing Renewable Energy and Efficiency Now (GREEN) Act for ensuring that all utilities can benefit from incentives intended to encourage critical energy investments.

House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures Chairman Mike Thompson,

D-Calif., and Committee Democrats released a discussion draft of the GREEN Act.

According to a news release from Thompson's office, the GREEN Act extends current renewable energy tax incentives and creates new models to increase the use of green energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The GREEN Act extends current renewable energy
(see ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS, page 9)



*Best wishes for a
safe and happy Holiday Season
From the Team at OMA!*

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UPCOMING OMA & APPA EVENTS

Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities Training

February 4-5, 2020, Jenks, OK
February 12-13, 2020, El Reno, OK

American Public Power Association Legislative Rally

February 24, 2020
Washington, DC

American Public Power Association Lineworkers Rodeo

April 17-18, 2020
Bonner Springs, KS

2020 Public Power Conference

April 25-28, 2020
Tulsa, OK

2020 Lineworkers Rodeo

September 23 – 24, 2020
Claremore, OK

American Public Power Association National Conference

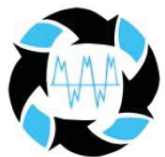
June 5-10, 2020
Long Beach, CA

Supervisor Short Course

Tahlequah
Day 1 – January 7, 2020
Day 2 – January 21, 2020
Day 3 – February 4, 2020
Day 4 – February 18, 2020
Day 5- March 3, 2020
Day 6- March 17, 2020

Henryetta

Day 1 – April 2, 2020
Day 2 – April 21, 2020
Day 3 – May 5, 2020
Day 4 – May 19, 2020
Day 5 – June 2, 2020
Day 6 – June 16, 2020



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FMCSA Opens Registration for Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse

Registration is required by January 6, 2020

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) today announced that registration is now open for the Congressionally-mandated Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. Commercial driver's license (CDL) holders, employers, medical review officers, and substance abuse professionals can now visit <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov> and register to create a secure online user account.

"As this Congressional mandate is enacted, FMCSA's goal is to ensure drivers, employers, and everyone who will be using the clearinghouse are registered as efficiently and effectively as possible. FMCSA is here to be helpful during this implementation, and we strongly encourage all CMV stakeholders to get registered in the clearinghouse now," said FMCSA Administrator Raymond P. Martinez.

Registration is required to be able to access the

clearinghouse once it is fully implemented on January 6, 2020. To access the clearinghouse, authorized users must register. These users include:

- Drivers who hold a commercial driver's license (CDL) or commercial learner's permit (CLP).
- Employers of CDL drivers. This includes those who employ themselves as CDL drivers (owner-operators), typically a single-driver operation.
- Consortia/Third-Party Administrators (C/TPAs).
- Medical Review Officers (MROs).
- Substance Abuse Professionals (SAPs).

There is no cost for registration. Commercial drivers are not required to immediately register for the clearinghouse, but will need to register to respond to an employer's request for consent prior to a pre-employment query or other full query being conducted.

FMCSA's clearinghouse website contains important (see FMCSA OPENS, page 9)



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For more information contact Matt Robinson at MJRobinson@GarverUSA.com



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OMA to Present Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities Training Sessions

OMA will present Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities Training Sessions February 4-5, 2020 in Jenks, OK and February 12-13, 2020 in El Reno, OK.

"Anyone involved in the operations of water and wastewater system or a community's response to an emergency will benefit from this training session," said OMA General Manager Tom Rider.

The National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) — developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security — identified water and wastewater (WWW) systems as critical infrastructures (CI). These systems are vital to the communities' public health and economic development.

The interdependencies between WWW, other CI sectors, and emergency management necessitate a common understanding by stakeholders of water sector impacts. We will guide you through issues concerning preparing for, responding to, mitigating, and recovering from incidents affecting WWW facilities.

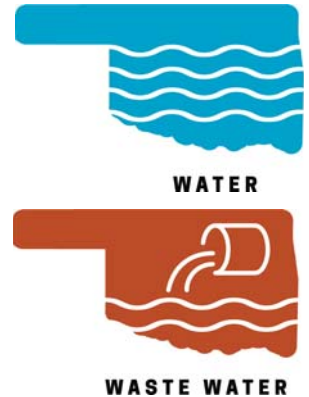
The cost for the two-day program is \$149 for OMA Members and \$299 Non-Members (includes lunch). Non-Member rates take effect July 1, 2020, so until then everyone pays member rates.

The training session will cover the following topics:

- Threats to Water and Wastewater Facilities and Systems
- Disaster Planning and Management
- Disaster Mitigation
- Disaster Response and Recovery

When considering who should participate in this training, it is recommended the following people be included:


- Emergency Management
- Public Works Management
- Utility Management
- Power Providers
- Health Care and Hospital Management
- Water Authorities
- Water and Wastewater Utility Personnel
- Directors
- Department Heads
- Supervisors/Superintendents
- State/Local Regulatory Personnel



Participants successfully completing this course will receive a course certificate of completion. Individuals who complete this course in combination with MGT317, MGT341 and MGT345 are eligible for the TEEX Infrastructure Disaster Management Program Certificate.

Seating is limited and registration will close once all the seats are filled. Questions about the Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities Training Sessions may be directed to Kelly Danner at kelly@okmainc.com.

The 2020 Public Power Conference Registration for Sponsors Is Open

Sponsor registration for the 2020  Public Power Conference is open, and the attendee registration opens mid-January 2020.

More than 200 participants attend the Public Power Conference representing municipally owned electric systems in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas. This annual event draws city managers, supervisors, lineworkers, and customer service professionals, so regardless of who you are looking to partner with, they may be at this conference.

The annual conference will be April 26 – 28, 2020 at the Tulsa Renaissance Hotel and Conference Center in Tulsa.

The annual conference will feature sessions for anyone associated with a municipal electric utility. Sessions will focus on: Electric Superintendents, Lineworkers, Customer Service, Power Generation, and Human Resources.

Any questions about the conference or sponsorships can be directed to Deborah Gonzales at deborah@okmainc.com.

Good News for GRDA from Moody's, Fitch

The Grand River Dam Authority is closing out 2019 with good news from at least two of the big three credit rating agencies.



In early November, Moody's pointed to GRDA's "diverse and competitively priced resource mix" as well as long-term customer contracts and rate setting ability as key factors in its decision to reaffirm GRDA's A1 credit rating, with a stable outlook. In that report, Moody's also noted GRDA's strong financial performance in recent years.

"The stable outlook reflects our expectations that GRDA's cost competitiveness and sound financial profile will be maintained and financial performance to remain in line with expectations," stated Moody's.

This news from Moody's came a few weeks after GRDA received similar word from Fitch Ratings, which affirmed GRDA's A+ stable rating in late October. Like Moody's, Fitch noted that GRDA's "continued strong financial performance and its very low operating costs" were among the key reasons for its affirmation.

Additionally, Fitch noted that GRDA's "very low rate anchors its competitive position and provides customers with an economic incentive to continue purchasing from the Authority." The utility's diverse electric generation portfolio and involvement in the Southwest Power Pool were also listed as key reasons for GRDA's ability to meet customer energy demands in the years ahead.

"This is more good news from the rating agencies and further reinforces our efforts to keep GRDA on strong financial footing," said GRDA President/Chief Executive Officer Dan Sullivan. "However, we continue to seek out even greater efficiencies in our operations to benefit our ratepayers."

GRDA currently maintains the highest credit ratings in its history from the "big three" credit rating agencies: Fitch, Moody's Investor Service and

Forecasts Presented at OMPA Rate Forum

OMPA staff provided power supply forecasts at a rates forum at OMPA offices in Edmond on Nov. 7.

Total revenue requirements are estimated to increase by only 3.3 percent over the next 10 years, from \$181 million to \$187 million. That budgeting includes the assumption that generation will be added to the portfolio that isn't currently there.

In the years in between, there are forecasts for both increases and decreases. The largest one-year increase forecasted is 2.7 percent, while the largest decrease is 3.8 percent.

"Things, of course, can happen that we don't expect, but this gives us a good idea of what we expect rates to be," OMPA CFO John Vansant told those in attendance. "Natural gas has been a big driver in determining costs, and will continue to be in the coming years."

OMPA does a 10-year forecast of revenue requirements each year, and staff presents it to the Board of Directors at its retreat in April.



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LIHEAP Funds Released by Federal Government, Oklahoma Open Enrollment Begins December 10th

On November 1, the United States Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education released \$3.32 billion of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding. Oklahoma received more than \$32 million under the FFY 2020 release.

Assistance for Oklahomans under the Winter Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is administered by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS). Open Enrollment begins Tuesday, December 10th, 2019.

DHS advises Winter Heating assistance is not an emergency program and payment might take up to a full billing cycle for utility provider to reflect LIHEAP credit on your utility bill. DHS strongly advises clients to continue paying utility bills or make any other necessary arrangement to avoid any service interruption.

LIHEAP is federal block grant program that provides money to low-income individuals/families to help them meet their heating and cooling needs and requires an annual appropriation from Congress. LIHEAP assistance continues to play a critical role in helping low-income meet their energy needs. Without LIHEAP funding assistance many low-income

families face the difficult choice between paying their energy bills versus other necessities, such as healthcare, food, and childcare.

The \$3.32 billion accounts for approximately 90 percent of the FFY regular block grant funding to LIHEAP Grantees. The total amount of is \$3.68 billion, level FFY2019, and is provided under the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2020, and Health Extenders Act of 2019 (Continuing Resolution), which the president signed into law September 27, 2019.

From the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, below is information member energy utilities may pass along to their customers:

To apply, you may need the following:

- The most recent 30 days payroll stub or other proof that shows current gross income for all working household members who reside under the same roof with you.
- Documentation showing income from Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Pension Funds, disability, VA etc.

(see LIHEAP FUNDS, page 9)



Cold Versus Flu

From Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

What is the difference between a cold and flu?

Flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. Because these two types of illnesses have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms are more intense. Colds are usually milder than flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations. Flu can have very serious associated complications.

Signs and Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Symptom onset	Gradual	Abrupt
Fever	Rare	Usual
Aches	Slight	Usual
Chills	Uncommon	Fairly common
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Usual
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate	Common
Headache	Rare	Common

Because colds and flu share many symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Special tests that usually must be done within the first few days of illness can tell if a person has the flu.

What are the symptoms of the flu versus the symptoms of a cold?

The symptoms of flu can include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue (tiredness).

Cold symptoms are usually milder than the symptoms of flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems.

Seven Municipal Leaders Complete Initial OMA Supervisor Short Course

Those completing the course are Carol Gilpin, Shawnee; Bobby Lumpkin, Kingfisher; Starland Davis, Prague; Gary Kochenower, Kingfisher; Kacie Eck, Shawnee; Sandy Griffith, Duncan; and, Aaron Michaud, Ponca City.

The new OMA Supervisor Short Course replaced the association's long-time The Supervisor Course with the most significant change being six rather than 12 days and 2 topics being covered in one day rather than 1 topic being covered in a day.

The philosophy of the OMA Supervisor Short Course is that supervisors become effective when they:

- Establish the work group's values and standards based on their character.
- Develop their workers into self-starters who are committed to the organization's success.
- Constantly push for performance excellence through a positive approach and support.
- Communicate effectively with the multigenerational talent within every work group.

"The OMA Supervisor Short Course is an ideal fit for anyone hoping to develop important leadership and supervisor skills designed to address today's workplace challenges," said OMA General Manager, Tom Rider. "The program's focuses on specific aspects of supervisory responsibility in the areas of – Management, Workforce Development, Communication and Performance Success."

The 12 sessions include:

- Understanding the Importance of Character & Ethics
- The Roles of a Supervisor
- The Power of Respect for Others
- Developing Responsible Workers
- Establishing a Change Mentality
- Dealing with Conflict
- Communicating Effectively
- Project Management
- Speaking before Groups
- Effective Business Writing
- Performance Management
- Delegating

The next OMA Supervisor Short will begin in January 2020 in Tahlequah, and it is full at this time.

The next opportunity to participate in this program will be in Henryetta on the following dates:

Day 1 –April 2, 2020

Day 2 – April 21, 2020

Day 3 – May 5, 2020



Front Row, L to R: Carol Gilpin, Shawnee; Bobby Lumpkin, Kingfisher; Starland Davis, Prague. Back Row, L to R: Gary Kochenower, Kingfisher; Kacie Eck, Shawnee; Sandy Griffith, Duncan; Aaron Michaud, Ponca City.

Day 4 – May 19, 2020

Day 5- June 2, 2020

Day 6- June 16, 2020

Registration for the Henryetta Sessions will be open in January 2020.

Designed with flexibility in mind for today's busy worker, participants can complete the course at their own pace. For example, a participant may complete some sessions in 2020 and the remaining sessions at a later date when the program returns. For recognition of course completion, a participant must complete all 12 sessions.

Participants who complete all 12 sessions will be recognized with a certificate acknowledging their effort and commitment.

Tom Rider, General Manager, will present the course. Questions may be directed to him at tom@okmainc.com.

Winter Weather Preparedness Part 2

From the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Editor's Note: This is part two of a three-part series from information made available by OSHA. In Part 1 published in our November 2020 Newsletter, the information covered training workers and providing engineering controls. To read the entire piece today, go to the OSHA website at www.osha.gov.

Employers Should Implement Safe Work Practices

Safe work practices that employers can implement to protect workers from injuries, illnesses and fatalities include:

- Providing workers with the proper tools and equipment to do their jobs
- Developing work plans that identify potential hazards and the safety measures that will be used to protect workers
- Scheduling maintenance and repair jobs for warmer months
- Scheduling jobs that expose workers to the cold weather in the warmer part of the day
- Avoiding exposure to extremely cold temperatures when possible
- Limiting the amount of time spent outdoors on extremely cold days
- Using relief workers to assign extra workers for long, demanding jobs
- Providing warm areas for use during break periods
- Providing warm liquids (no alcohol) to workers
- Monitoring workers who are at risk of cold stress
- Monitoring the weather conditions during a winter storm, having a reliable means of communicating

with workers and being able to stop work or evacuate when necessary

- Acclimatizing new workers and those returning after time away from work by gradually increasing their workload, and allowing more frequent breaks in warm areas, as they build up a tolerance for working in the cold environment
- Having a means of communicating with workers, especially in remote areas
- Knowing how the community warns the public about severe weather: outdoor sirens, radio, and television
 - o The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides multiple ways to stay informed about winter storms. If you are notified of a winter storm watch, advisory or warning, follow instructions from your local authorities: NOAA Weather Radio.

Employers Should Consider Protective Clothing that Provides Warmth

Employers must provide personal protective equipment (PPE), for example, fall protection, when required by OSHA standards to protect workers' safety, and health. However, in limited cases specified in the standard (29 CFR 1910.132), there are exceptions to the requirement for employers to provide PPE to workers. For instance, there is no OSHA requirement for employers to provide workers with ordinary clothing, skin creams, or other items, used solely for protection from weather, such as winter coats, jackets, gloves, parkas, rubber boots, hats, raincoats, ordinary sunglasses, and sunscreen (29 CFR 1910.132(h)(4)). Regardless of this, many employers provide their workers with winter weather gear such as winter coats/jackets and gloves.

EPA and Bureau of Reclamation Sign MOU for Funding Water Reuse Projects

From the WaterReuse Association
November 08, 2019

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enhance federal collaboration on funding water recycling projects.

The EPA provides low interest loans for water recycling through the Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program and Reclamation

provides cost-shared grants through the Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program. Under the MOU, the two federal agencies will seek opportunities to align processes and create efficiencies for recycled water project sponsors.

The WaterReuse Association advocates for robust funding for WIFIA and Title XVI and will continue to work closely with EPA and Reclamation in supporting effective implementation of these programs.



Association Supports

(continued from page 1)

tax incentives and creates new models to increase the use of green energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Thompson's office said the bill will:

- Promote the use of green energy technologies and incentivize the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through new and existing tax benefits;
- Increase energy efficiency and green energy use in both residential and commercial buildings;
- Support the use of zero-emission transportation and supporting infrastructure;
- Invest in a green workforce through energy credits for manufacturers;
- Advance environmental justice through tax credits for research and academic programs; and
- Require the Treasury Department to analyze the feasibility of a price on greenhouse gas emissions, using the Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program.

"Allowing public power utilities to directly benefit from energy tax incentives makes those incentives more effective and more fair," said Delia Patterson, the Association's general counsel and senior vice president, advocacy and communications.

The Association noted that federal tax expenditures are the primary tool Congress uses to incentivize energy-related investments. However, such incentives

do not work for tax-exempt entities including public power utilities.

"That explains why tax-exempt entities – which serve nearly 30 percent of the nation's retail electric power customers — own less than 3 percent of the nation's non-hydropower renewable energy generating capacity," the Association said.

Public power utilities would like to own such assets, but given the current tax credit regime, the only economic way to access these resources is through power purchase agreements with merchant generators, which own more than 80 percent of the nation's non-hydropower renewable energy generating capacity.

While some of the value of tax credits flow through to public power customers in the form of lower rates, the Association estimates about half of the value is retained by merchant generators to pass back to their investors. "This is both inefficient and unfair," the Association said.

While details of the bill are still emerging, it is the Association's understanding that the GREEN Act addresses this problem by allowing for the direct payment of energy production and investment tax credits to whatever entity owns the project.

For public power utilities, this would mean that none of the value of these credits would be diverted to outside investors. Instead, the full value would directly benefit our customers. This will make these tax credits both more effective and more fair.

LIHEAP Funds *(continued from page 6)*

- The most current utility account information. If the account is not in your name, you will need the account holder's information such as name, SSN, DOB, current physical residence address, telephone number, and permission to use his/her name for access utility account information with your provider.
- Proof of household members who reside under the same roof with you (e.g., ID, SSN, DOB, Birth Certificate, etc.)

- Proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residence.

For more information about Oklahoma LIHEAP and where to apply:

Visit the DHS website at www.okdhs.org for more information about our programs.

Application can be complete online during open enrollment period at www.okdhslive.org. If you need password reset, please email live@okdhs.org with "Password reset" on subject line or call (405) 487-LIVE.

FMCSA Opens

(continued from page 3)

resources, including user brochures and instructional aids with step-by-step registration instructions for all users. Users can visit <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov> to access these resources and to start the registration process.

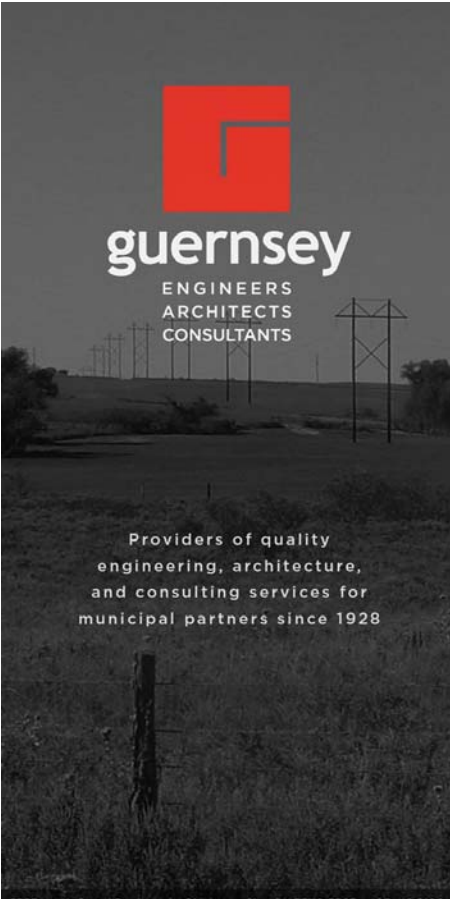
The clearinghouse will be a secure online database that will allow FMCSA, CMV employers, State Driver Licensing Agencies, and law enforcement officials to identify — in real-time — CDL drivers who have violated federal drug and alcohol testing program requirements, and thereby improve safety on our nation's roads.

OMA Board

(continued from page 1)

- other members with personnel, equipment and material in times of a disaster or for routine work when extra hands are needed. Further, the agreement spells out the process for requesting aid and how responding utilities are reimbursed for time and equipment usage.
- Annual Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality renewal training for individuals who hold a water and/or wastewater license. Currently, ODEQ requires licensed personnel to attend four hours of annual training. The cost of the renewal training is covered by membership dues.
- Participation in regional operational and safety training at the member rate. The member rate is usually 50-75 percent lower than the non-member rate.
- Peer-to-Peer Connection. This service will utilize an electronic format where member staff may log in, connect with peers, and discuss issues, ask questions or seek advice. Access to the various peer groups will be controlled for security.
- Quarterly Connections. Two-hour meetings held in mini-regions across the state. The purpose is to discuss issues of mutual concern and share ideas. Membership includes lunch for two people. Additional staff are welcome to attend but will be charged for the cost of lunch.

Look for more information in the months ahead. If you'd like more information now, please contact Kelly Danner, director of business



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