

# COMMITTED TO OKLAHOMA'S MUNICIPAL PROFESSIONALS

A publication of the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance

**July 2019** 

# **Confined Space Basics Training Sessions Scheduled**

OMA's first training events for municipal water professionals are scheduled for August 6 and 7. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a "Confined Space Basics" course in either Prague or Checotah.

Other sessions currently scheduled include:

- September 4 El Reno
- October 8 & 9 Weatherford
- October 24 Collinsville
- November 6 Norman

"We're very excited to begin this phase of our programming for members." Tom Rider, General Manager, said. "While we began this training session with water and wastewater employees in mind, anyone who may enter a confined space to complete work can find value in attending."

The "Confined Space Basics" course covers the proper usage of equipment required for entry into

a qualified confined space. Participants will review proper entry techniques, observe the proper setup of equipment, and can practice a limited entry.

The training qualifies for four hours of Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality re-certification training for individuals holding a ODEQ water or wastewater license.

Seating is limited to 30 for each session. To register for any location, go to the OMA website – <a href="https://www.okmainc.com">www.okmainc.com</a>.

Questions about the training sessions are to be directed to Rider — who will be presenting the training — at <a href="mailto:tom@okmainc.com">tom@okmainc.com</a>. Registration questions can be directed to Deborah Gonzales at <a href="mailto:deborah@okmainc.com">deborah@okmainc.com</a>.

Municipalities wishing to host a training should contact Kelly Danner at <a href="kelly@okmainc.com">kelly@okmainc.com</a> or call, (405) 528-7564, ext. 7.

# Register Today for the 2019 MESO Lineworkers Rodeo and Safety Training

The 2019 MESO Lineworkers Rodeo and Safety Training returns to Ponca City September 25 and 26.

Lineworker Rodeos are a tradition at public power utilities across the country. Professionals come together in the spirit of friendly competition to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Both journeyman and apprentice lineworkers gather in a safe environment to gain valuable experience.

Unique to the MESO Rodeo is an event designed to simulate Mutual Aid circumstances. The event provides lineworkers the opportunity to build relationships which could prove beneficial during real-life mutual aid situations.

The 2019 event will also offer training sessions by Performed Line Products® covering Lineman Best Practices and Care, Maintenance & Testing of HV Live Line Tools presented by Matt Tiffee and Doug Osborn with Fred Oberlender and Associates, Inc.

New for 2019 is a dedicated rodeo hotel. Anyone participating or attending the Rodeo can include a room with their registration. The cost for Training and Competing is \$159 per person. To compete only is \$85 and to only attend the training sessions is \$79.

All guests for Wednesday Lunch and Thursday
Awards Luncheon need to pre-register, so please
(see LINEWORKERS RODEO, page 9)

#### In This Issue

APPA National Conference Addresses Key Issues – Page 3 Heather Bailey Receives Drake Rice Customer Service Award – Page 4 Ponca City Mayor Receives APPA Public Official Award – Page 6 GRDA Is Supporting Education ... All Summer Long – Page 7

# UPCOMING OMA & AMERICAN PUBLIC POWER EVENTS

### Crucial Training: Recognize Substance and Alcohol Abuse at the Worksite

July 31, 2019 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

### MESO Lineworkers Rodeo and Safety Training

September 25 – 26, 2019 Ponca City, Oklahoma

# **American Public Power Association Customer Connections Conference**

October 27 – 30, 2019 New Orleans, Louisiana

## **Job Training & Safety Sessions:**

## **Metering School**

July 17, 2019 Edmond

#### **Tree Trimming Class**

October 16-17, 2019 Claremore

#### **ON-GOING PROGRAMS:**

# Electric Supervisor Development (ESD) Sessions

- Tuesday, August 6, 2019
- Tuesday, October 1, 2019
- Tuesday, December 3, 2019 MESO Training Center, Okla. City

#### **Supervisor Short Course**

Day 1 - August 20, 2019

Day 2 - September 10, 2019

Day 3 - September 24, 2019

Day 4 - October 8, 2019

Day 5 - October 24, 2019

Day 6 - November 12, 2019

#### **Confined Space Basics**

August 6 – Prague
August 7 – Checotah
September 4 – El Reno
October 8 & 9 – Weatherford
October 24 – Collinsville
November 6 – Norman



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# **APPA National Conference Addresses Key Issues**

By Tom Rider, General Manager

After recently attending American Public Power Association's (APPA) national conference, I am energized.

I'm impressed by both the commitment of public power professionals across the country and the forward-thinking actions many systems are implementing for the benefit of their owner-customers. And many of the issues discussed are those that our members are beginning, continuing or taking action on.

My top three takeaways from this year's conference focus on – training & staff retention, efforts to connect with customers, and developing owner-customer loyalty, and, public power's future.

In the area of training and staff retention, New Braunsfel Utilities (Texas) shared their process for ensuring apprentices are trained and developed to include level-appropriate testing. We will be looking at their process as a measure to ensure that MESO's Apprentice program is meeting the goal of developing well-prepared apprentices. Austin Energy discussed their efforts to ensure all employees understood

the whole customer-interaction chain. Their efforts included lineworkers spending time with customer service professionals in the office and on the phone.

On efforts to build customer loyalty, Dave Osburn OMPA General Manager, shared the story of how Oklahoma's "Our Local Power" campaign, a campaign that should be implemented by all members, is creating more recognition and pride in citizen-customers within public power communities. Jeff Stewart, Lafayette Utilities Systems (Louisiana), shared how the strong relationship LUS had with its customer base saved the utility. Through backdoor efforts a private company wanted to buy LUS. When word got out, the citizens came out strong in support of LUS and keeping it public power. LUS won.

Finally – the future. I don't know if there's ever been a time in the electric distribution world where so much change happened as fast as it's happening now. Over one-fifth of the break-out sessions dealt with issues such as the push to go with a 100% renewal supply portfolio; the use of energy storage both in front of and behind the meter; the pros and cons of

(see APPA CONFERENCE, page 9)



## **Heather Bailey Receives Drake Rice Customer Service Award**

Miami's, Heather Bailey, was recently presented her 2019 Drake Rice Customer Service Award.

In her nomination, Jill Fitzgibbon, Administrative Services Director, wrote the following about Bailey in describing her work as customer center supervisor, "she goes out of her way to make sure customers are consistently treated fairly and with the utmost respect."

A co-worker recognizing her ability to work through emotions and bring people together to resolve issues said, "she is great at dealing with issues between co-workers and customers. She is always pleasant and courteous, no matter the situation, and she is a prime example of a team player and is always willing to help others when needed."

Tom Rider, General Manager, attended the Tuesday, May 7 Miami City Council meeting to present the award. Bailey was unable to attend the 2019 MESO Annual Public Power Conference earlier this year.

"On behalf of locally owned and controlled public power utilities, we are honored to recognize Heather for her commitment to serving customers," Rider said.



The Drake Rice Customer Service Award recognizes individuals who best exemplify the qualities of a true customer service professional.

## City of Perry Receives Electric Safety Award

The City of Perry, and Perry Electric, which operates the city's electric system, placed First in the association's annual Electric Safety Competition in Oklahoma. The utility was recognized in the category for cities under 10,000 population.

Perry is being recognized for its perfect safety record for 2018. The utility's personnel went the year without a reportable lost work time incident, either "days away from work," "restricted light duty," or "medical treatment" cases in almost 5,900-man hours.

Tom Rider, General Manager, presented the award to Perry.



## Metering Basics Scheduled for July 17 in Edmond

The deadline to register for Metering Basics is July 12.

The session will be July 17 at Edmond's Cross Timbers Complex.

Both industry veterans and those beginning a career have a lot to gain from this one-day training course. Beginning with single phase meter application and moving through all aspects of metering field – self-contained and CT metering.

Topics to be covered include:

- Metering Terminology
- · Selecting the Correct Meter
- Demand/TOU Metering
- Software Programming Overview

Larry Chapman who founded Chapman Metering in 1960 after working as a metering engineer for many

years will present the training session. The company's history has grounded in metering for more than 5 decades. Kriz-Davis Co. purchased the company in 2015, and it now operates as a wholly owned subsidiary of Border States Electric with Larry "the Old Guy" as General Manager.

The cost for the one-day session is \$99 and includes training, booklet, and lunch. Registration information is available at <a href="https://www.okmainc.com">www.okmainc.com</a>.

Questions about the training session may be directed to OMA's Director of Job Training and Safety, Tom Dougherty, at <a href="mailto:tomd@okmainc.com">tomd@okmainc.com</a>. Registration questions can be directed to Deborah Gonzales, OMA's Director of Administration and Finance, at <a href="mailto:deborah@okmainc.com">deborah@okmainc.com</a>,

# **Eleven Member Utilities Participate in Basic Lineman School**

Two dozen public power professionals from 11 utilities participated in MESO Basic Lineman School June 18 to 20 in Fairview.

"We had a great group for this class, and I think they all gained a lot of information between our classroom work and hands-on field work," said Tom Dougherty, Director of Job Training and Safety. "We appreciate OMPA for hosting this training with us."

The course included classroom training sessions covering the basics of electricity. Hands-on instruction was performed outdoors, where a variety of conventional and not-so conventional equipment was placed in the hands of workshop participants.

The training was designed to assist workers whose job assignments may require pole climbing, assisting journeymen and operating mechanical equipment. The course covered basic materials for Apprentice Linemen.

Instructors include OMA Director of Job Training and Safety Tom Dougherty, OMPA Line Crew Superintendent Anthony Hale and retired Duncan Line Foreman Rusty Brown.

Attendees (by city) were:

City of Altus – Andrew Flowers, Morgan Rogers, and Shawn Winters

City of Collinsville – Matthew Pfeiffer

City of Fairview – John Williams

City of Granite – Josh Brewer and Devyn Sanders

City of Kingfisher – Brent Cox, Brandon McCurdy, Lucious Guthrie,

Mike Ludwig, and Travis Phillips

City of Moorland – Billy Bojorquez and Mitchell Guthrie

OMPA - Lee Brawley and Josh Coulson

City of Pawhuska – Trevor Adkins and Patrick Lynn

City of Pawnee – Christopher Sanders and Kenneth Warnock

City of Purcell - Cole Wartchow

City of Waynoka – Wes Brogan, Michael Jones, and Mike Perot





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# Ponca City, Oklahoma Mayor Receives American Public Power Association's Public Official Award

Homer Nicholson, Mayor of Ponca City, Oklahoma, received the Spence Vanderlinden Public Official Award at the American Public Power Association's national conference in Austin, Texas.

This award recognizes elected or appointed local officials who have contributed to the goals of the American Public Power Association. Mayor Nicholson has been on the American Public Power Association's Policy Makers Council since 2016.

He has been active at both the state and federal level in engaging Ponca City's legislators and educating them on the value of public power and local control. Mayor Nicholson has served on Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority's Board of Directors since 2008 and is currently



the vice chair. He also serves as chair of the OMPA Board of Directors Legislative Committee. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame for City and Town officials in 2016.

## Claremore Power & Light Receives Electric Reliability Award

Claremore Power & Light (CPL), the City of Claremore's electric department, was recognized for Outstanding Achievement in the annual Electric Operations and Reliability Competition. The utility was recognized in the category for cities over 10,000 population for its high level of service reliability for cities within Oklahoma.

The utility had an Average System Availability Index of 99.9931 percent in 2018

Tom Rider, General Manager, presented the award to Claremore Power & Light.



# **GRDA Is Supporting Education ... All Summer Long**

School may be out for summer, but the Grand River Dam Authority's support of Oklahoma educators remains strong all year-round.

In mid-June, GRDA took part in the Oklahoma Career Tech/Northeast Tech Oklahoma Education and Industry Partnerships (OEIP) Teachers Camp by playing host to 60 teachers from across the state. The group visited GRDA's Ecosystems and Education Center where they spent the day touring Pensacola Dam. They also got an up-close look at the GRDA water research laboratory and heard from a panel of GRDA employees that was convened to discuss technical jobs at GRDA.

It was a chance to showcase GRDA careers, discuss workforce development and provide the educators with information that can prove helpful as they guide their students into the workforce in the coming years.

Also in mid-June, GRDA welcomed teachers for the annual "Riverology 101" workshop along the Illinois River. The course was an opportunity for teachers to learn more about the water cycle, the erosion process and other river-related topics. A guided tour of the scenic Illinois River was also on the agenda.



GRDA partnered with the Blue Thumb Program, OSU Cooperative Extension Services 4-H, Ag in the Classroom and the Oklahoma Water Survey to bring the event to teachers.

Finally, June also offered an opportunity for Team GRDA to help "elevate" career aspirations for young (see GRDA, page 10)

## **OMPA Hosts Elected Officials**

The Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority held an educational course for elected officials at its offices in Edmond June 26.

The purpose of the meeting was to help those in attendance learn more about their roles and responsibilities at their own municipal electric utility. Presenters were led by OMPA General Manager, Dave Osburn. Additional presenters included OMPA Chief Financial Officer, John Vansant, OMPA Manager of Director Services, Jennifer Rogers, and OMA General Manager, Tom Rider.

"When you become an elected official, you are governing what I believe is one of the most important assets of your city," Osburn told the group. "And you have a fiduciary responsibility."

Osburn introduced the group to the players in the electric industry, including all the types of utilities that exist, regional transmission organizations and power marketers. He also reviewed the most basic duties of the elected officials, including setting rates and other policies.

Vansant discussed some of the duties within utility rates. These included the items that should be included within a rate structure, how often rates

should be reviewed, the importance of not having one rate for a utility carry the other utilities and the importance of rates keeping up with the times.

"You need something in your rates to provide for the maintenance of the utility," Vansant said. "Most cities also want something left over to provide back to the city, so the citizens get something from the utility."

The session stressed the importance of routine cost-of-service studies, as well as putting thinking into future rate structures like time-of-use rates.

Rogers stressed the need for making reliability a priority, which not only is what the customers seek, but is also part of employee safety. She also talked about the benefits of having a 5-year maintenance plan for upgrades and improvements.

"Maintaining your distribution system requires having adequate personnel, which can be a challenge," Rogers said. "Taking care of your system also involves monitoring how it's doing, for example, do you track your reliability statistics?"

Rogers also went through some of the approaching changes to the industry, including the emergence of solar power, battery storage, electric vehicles and

(see OMPA, page 8)

## Registration Is Open for the Supervisor Short Course

Are you needing to develop important leadership and supervisor skills designed to address today's workplace challenges?

If the answer is "yes," the Supervisor Short Course is for you.

"We have great people working among our membership," said Tom Rider, General Manager. "This program is designed to provide supervisors much needed skills to be successful."

Recognizing employees often move "up the ladder" with limited specific leadership skills training, it is important to note 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 program's 12 discussion courses focus on specific aspects of supervisory responsibility in the areas of – Management, Workforce Development, Communication and Performance Success 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 2019 and the remaining sessions when the program returns in 2020. 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.

#### Sessions and dates:

#### Day 1 - August 20

Session 1 – Understanding the Importance of

Character & Ethics

Session 2 – The Roles of a Supervisor

### Day 2 - September 10

Session 3 – The Power of Respect for Others

Session 4 – Developing Responsible Workers

### Day 3 - September 24

Session 5 – Establishing a Change Mentality

Session 6 – Dealing with Conflict

### Day 4 - October 8

Session 7 – Communicating Effectively

Session 8 – Project Management

### Day 5 - October 24

Session 9 – Speaking before Groups

Session 10 – Effective Business Writing

### Day 6 - November 12

Session 11 – Performance Management

Session 12 – Delegating

To learn more about the Supervisor Short Course, click here: <u>Details about the Supervisor Short Course</u>. To register, click here: <u>Supervisor Short Course</u> <u>Registration</u>.

Tom Rider, General Manager, will present the course. Questions may be directed to him at tom@okmainc.com. Registration questions are to be directed to Deborah Gonzales at deborah@okmainc.com.

## **OMPA**

(continued from page 7)

energy markets. Customer demand and the trend toward their wanting alternate rate designs, online communications and apps was also noted.

"Our industry is spending a lot of time and money on cybersecurity," Osburn noted. "And the weakest link could be one employee."

Osburn also gave a brief run-down of the history of the OMPA, which was created by the members it serves in 1981 and began serving power in 1985.

Rider announced MESO's name and organizational transition to become the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance.

This change will expand services at the request of current members who want the same level of training for other utilities beginning with water and wastewater training in addition to on-going electric training. Rider discussed some of the of the services the organization provides, as well as some of the services including affiliated alcohol and drug testing.

Rogers concluded the session by talking about the Our Local Power campaign, which was launched in 2018 to promote the value a municipal utility brings to the community it serves.

As part of our transition to the OKLAHOMA MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE,

please note the following:



### **NEW WEBSITE:**

www.okmainc.com

### **NEW STAFF EMAIL ADDRESSES:**

Tom Rider, General Manager tom@okmainc.com

Kelly Danner, Director of Business Development kelly@okmainc.com

Tom Dougherty, Director Job Training & Safety tomd@okmainc.com

Deborah Gonzales, Director of Administration & Finance deborah@okmainc.com

Jeff Kaufmann, Director of Communications and Professional Development <a href="mailto:jeffk@okmainc.com">jeffk@okmainc.com</a>

Michelle Danner, Administration Assistant and Certified Drug and Alcohol Tester <u>michelle@okmainc.com</u>

# 2019 OMA Lineworkers Rodeo & Safety Training

September 25-26, 2019 Ponca City, Oklahoma

Register today at www.okmainc.com



# **APPA Conference**

(continued from page 3)

distributed generation (roof top solar) and community solar fields; and, electrifying municipal fleets. These same conversations are happening within our affiliate member's, Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) and OMPA. These are conversations that municipal members should be having also.

As always when I attend the APPA National Conference, I bring back more food for thought. While the pun is obvious, public power's future is bright.

## **Lineworkers Rodeo**

(continued from page 1)

make sure you register your co-workers, friends and family who may be joining us.

Individual Rodeo T-Shirts are available by pre-order and limited sizes and quantities will be on sale at the event.

Registration and information about rodeo events are available at <a href="https://www.okmainc.com">www.okmainc.com</a>. Follow rodeo activities, ask questions, etc. at the MESO Annual Lineworkers Rodeo Facebook page.

### **GRDA**

(continued from page 7)

adults at the annual Elevate Youth Summit, held this year on the campus of Rogers State University in the GRDA municipal customer community of Claremore.

The Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Board and partners of the Oklahoma Works system coordinate the event which allows business and community partners to connect with the young adults who are exploring career paths. GRDA has been part of the event for several years and sees it as another opportunity to help further workforce development not only at the Authority but across the region.

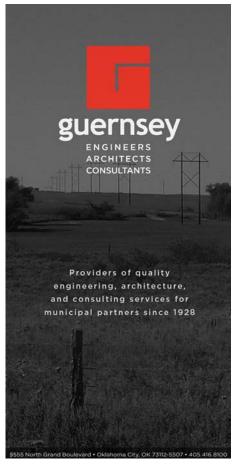
GRDA employees continue to be its greatest asset in meeting its mission in Oklahoma and participation in these education programs each summer help to further that mission.

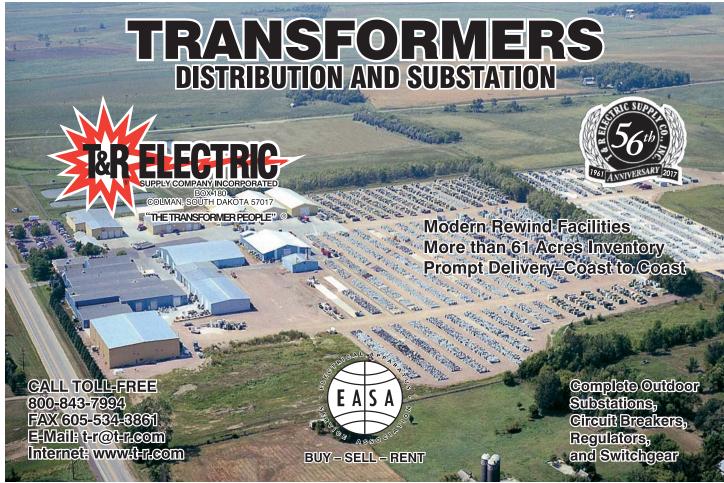
## **Crucial Training:** Recognize Substance and Alcohol Abuse at the Worksite

Wednesday, July 31, 2019 (9 a.m. & 1 p.m. sessions) Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Register today at www.okmainc.com

Presented by Local Government Testing Consortium

(an affiliate drug and alcohol service available to OMA members)









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