



## Building strong communities through a well-trained workforce

A publication of the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance

July 2020

### We're All in This Together – 2020-2021 Dues & Fees Update

By Tom Rider, OMA General Manager

COVID-19 has impacted all of us with both the uncertainty that a continuing pandemic causes and health issues.

At OMA, we're doing what we can to help our members face these challenging times. For FY 2020-2021, members and training partners will pay the same dues and fees as they did for 2019-2020.

With our transition to the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance, expanding our membership and offering more programs to serve Oklahoma municipalities, new dues structures were established by the Board of Directors. But all this happened before COVID-19.

Now more than ever, it is important that we all work together. In recognizing the need for OMA to do its part, the Board of Directors is suspending the new dues structure for members who have been in the association before July 1, 2019.

Existing members will receive their FY 2020-2021 membership invoices within the first two weeks of July. The invoice will show two dues categories. The first is the dues for the Electric Department. The rates set forth have not changed in five years. The second dues are the dues for all other municipal departments under the new dues structure. This second set of dues is being waived for FY 2020-21. This is reflected at the bottom of the invoice.

OMA is committed to the ongoing development of municipal professionals across all departments. We will continue to offer valuable, timely training and programs. We'll be incorporating more online training sessions. We'll continue to provide in-person training utilizing social distancing and face masks when appropriate. Our goal is our members' success.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me hear from you.

### OMA Planning Webinar Series This Fall

OMA is planning its first ever webinar series to begin late September and be completed by early November . . . at no cost for attendees.

Planning for the series includes session topics addressing:

- Municipal financial stability and growth
- Water and Wastewater issues
- Electric growth and sustainability
- Emergency planning for utilities

"As an added benefit to members, in large part due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty it brings, we are opening these virtual

sessions to members at no charge," Rider said. "Everyone who wants to participate will need to register.

"We are assembling a very good lineup of speakers to discuss topics of importance to any municipality," Rider added. "These will be webinars you don't want to miss, and you don't have to leave town to attend."

Registration details are being finalized and will be made available soon. Questions about the webinar series may be directed to Rider at [tom@okmainc.com](mailto:tom@okmainc.com).

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## Registration for the 2020 Lineworkers Rodeo & Safety Training Is Open

The 2020 Lineworkers Rodeo & Safety Training will be in Claremore, OK September 23-24, and registration is now open at [www.okmainc.com](http://www.okmainc.com). The rodeo is hosted by City of Claremore and is sponsored by GRDA and OMPA.

A tradition at electric utilities across the country, the rodeo brings together professionals in the spirit of friendly competition to demonstrate skills and knowledge. Any lineworker — journeyman or apprentice — can compete and gain valuable experience in a safe environment.

### Competitor/Training Participants

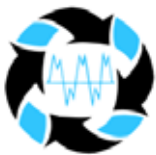
Safety training covering Emergency Preparedness Roundtable presented by Oklahoma Municipal Alliance and Transformer Simulations presented by Utility Solutions are scheduled for Wednesday, September 23. [Rodeo competition events](#) will be Thursday, September 24.

There is an option to register for either the safety training, rodeo competition events, or both. A registration option to include hotel room is also available. Click [here](#) to register.

### Sponsor/Exhibitor Opportunities

For associate members there are [sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities](#). This will be a great opportunity to introduce products. The Expo will be Wednesday, September 23 at the Claremore Conference Center. Click [here](#) to register.

For more information about the rodeo and safety training, contact Tom Dougherty at [tomd@okmainc.com](mailto:tomd@okmainc.com). Registration questions can be directed to Deborah Gonzales at [deborah@okmainc.com](mailto:deborah@okmainc.com).



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## **Perry's Dixie Johnson Recognized with Drake Rice Customer Service Award**

OMA recently presented Dixie Johnson, Perry City Clerk, the 2020 recipient of the Drake Rice Customer Service Award.

In receiving the award, Johnson said, "thank you so much for selecting me for the Drake Rice Customer Service Award! Having known Drake and observed his work ethic for years makes this even more meaningful. Many people in our municipalities are so deserving of this recognition. I am truly surprised and touched!"

Established in 2017, the award recognizes individuals who best exemplify the qualities of a true customer service professional. It is named for Drake Rice, long-time Director of Member Services for the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority and former city manager in Oklahoma communities.

Johnson, known throughout Perry, began working for the City of Perry part time in 2002 before becoming a full-time employee. In 2011, she became the city's City Clerk.

When asked what distinguishes Dixie's commitment to her citizens, her coworkers stated, "She listens to what they [customers] have to say and tries to give them options that will satisfy both the customer and the city. She maintains a level head, no matter the situation, and always has a smile on her face when doing so." As an example, they cited the time when Dixie wasn't feeling well, yet she stayed anyway to help a customer work out payment arrangements because it was cut-off day.

In addition to her clerk duties, Johnson serves on the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority (OMPA) Board of Directors. Perry purchases power from OMPA. Additionally, she oversees the Customer Appreciation Day held during Public Power Week at city hall. She initiated the steps with OMPA staff to have a Perry substation be named after a long-time city employee (Earl Hicks) who was also a strong voice for public power.



## **Level 1 Climbing School Scheduled for August**

As part of Electrical Operations Training, Level 1 Climbing School will be held August 18-19, 2020 in Cushing, OK. Registration is now open at [www.okmainc.com](http://www.okmainc.com).

Two-day school focusing on essential skills distribution linemen need to understand and master to be successful.

The course combines classroom instruction, field practice, and significant time working with experienced, journeyman lineman. Participants must bring hard hat, climbing hooks, belt, leather gloves, safety glasses, and hand tools. Training will begin at 8:30 a.m. both days and is expected to be completed no later than 4 p.m. each day.

Tom Dougherty, OMA Director of Training and Safety, will lead the school. He will be joined by Veteran lineworkers from GRDA and Cushing Utility Services.

The registration fee for the school is \$199 per person and includes lunches on-site. The deadline to register is August 14, 2020.

The school is hosted by Cushing Utility Services and is sponsored by GRDA and OMPA.

For more school information, contact Dougherty at [tomd@okmainc.com](mailto:tomd@okmainc.com). Registration questions can be directed to Deborah Gonzales at [deborah@okmainc.com](mailto:deborah@okmainc.com).



## TPWA's James Taylor Recognized with Hicks-Middleton Award

OMA has selected James "JT" Taylor, Tahlequah Public Works Authority (TPWA), Tahlequah, Oklahoma as the 2020 recipient of the Marvin Hicks-Al Middleton Meritorious Service Award.

The award recognizes and honors an individual who is committed to the success of his or her community through both professional and personal efforts.

Known throughout Tahlequah as JT, Taylor was nominated by TPWA general manager Mike Doublehead.

"JT has a long work history of commitment to his community and his fellow coworkers," Doublehead said. "He has always been a true asset to our department and community."

Following high school graduation, Taylor served seven years with the U.S. Army before joining Edmond (OK) Electric as an Apprentice Lineman. In February 1985, he and his family moved to Tahlequah and began work as an electric lineman with TPWA. One month shy of 35 years of exceptional service, JT retired in January 2020.

Throughout his tenure with TPWA, Taylor was involved in community activities, including as a reserve deputy with the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office. Known amongst his coworkers as "Chigger," Taylor spent much of his career building the infrastructure that continues today to serve the people of Tahlequah and Northeastern State University.



*JT Taylor and his family*

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## OMPA's Dave Osburn Selected for Role with American Public Power Association's Board

At the American Public Power Association Board Directors Meeting during the Public Power Connect: Virtual Summit & Business Meeting, Jolene Thompson, president and CEO of American Municipal Power, Inc. in Columbus, Ohio, was installed as chair of the board.

She then named OMPA's general manager, Dave Osburn, to serve with the officers on the APPA Executive Committee.

"It is my honor to represent APPA Region 4 (Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas) on the APPA Board," Osburn said. "It is an additional honor to be asked to serve on Chair Thompson's Executive Committee.

"The Executive Committee serves a vital role spending more time on the operations of the Association. It is my pleasure to continue the Oklahoma presence on the board previously provided by Dan Sullivan of GRDA whose term ended this year."

Colin Hansen, executive director of Kansas Municipal Utilities in McPherson, Kansas, is chair-elect for 2020-2021. Anthony Cannon, general manager and CEO of Greenville Utilities Commission in Greenville, North Carolina, is vice chair. Decosta Jenkins, president and CEO of Nashville Electric Service in Nashville, Tennessee, is immediate past chair. Layne Burningham, chief operating officer and general manager of Utah Municipal Power Agency in Spanish Fork, Utah, is treasurer.

The other members of the board selected to join Osburn to serve with the officers on the APPA Executive Committee are: Timothy Burke, president and CEO of Omaha Public Power District in Omaha, Nebraska; Nicholas Lawler, general manager of Littleton Electric Light and Water Departments in Littleton, Massachusetts; Kimberly Schlichting, chief operating officer and senior vice president of power supply of Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation, Inc. in Smyrna, Delaware; and Stephen Wright, general manager of Chelan County PUD in Wenatchee, Washington.

Newly elected to the APPA board this year are: Chuck Bryant, general manager of Carthage Water & Electric Plant in Carthage, Missouri; Bret Carroll, CEO of Conway Corporation in Conway, Arkansas; Edward Gerak, executive director of Arizona Power Authority in Phoenix, Arizona; Edward Krieger, power system director of Piqua Power System in Piqua, Ohio; David Leathers, general manager of Jamestown Board of Public Utilities in Jamestown, New York; Gary Miller, general manager of Bryan Texas Utilities in Bryan, Texas; Lynne Tejeda, general manager and CEO of Keys Energy Services in Key West, Florida; and David Walters, general manager of Grand Haven Board of Light & Power in Grand Haven, Michigan.

Two board members were re-elected to new three-year terms: Joel Ledbetter, general manager of Easley Combined Utilities in Easley, South Carolina; and Stephen Wright, general manager of Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County in Wenatchee, Washington.

APPA board members are chosen to represent 10 regions across the country.

### 2020 OMA Lineworkers Rodeo & Safety Training

September 23 – 24, 2020  
Claremore, OK

Register today at [www.okmainc.com](http://www.okmainc.com).



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## Grant Opportunities for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Available

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Office of the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment announced a grant program aimed at building out Oklahoma's light-duty electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Applications will be accepted until September 8, 2020.

The ChargeOK Grant Program has approximately \$1.1 million available for reimbursement grants on a competitive basis for the purchase, installation, and operation of publicly accessible EV charging stations throughout Oklahoma. Through this program, the State of Oklahoma seeks to add to the strategic network of charging stations to increase the use of EVs in place of gas-powered cars to mitigate harmful air emissions.

The program, with consideration for existing and planned investments of charging stations throughout Oklahoma, is offering incentives for additional projects based on 15 site locations chosen to fill in the EV charging network in Oklahoma. Only projects located within 10 miles of the locations listed below will be considered for a grant.

- |               |              |             |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Altus      | 6. Checotah  | 11. Laverne |
| 2. Alva       | 7. Clinton   | 12. Okemah  |
| 3. Atoka      | 8. Duncan    | 13. Perry   |
| 4. Boise City | 9. Hennessey | 14. Poteau  |
| 5. Broken Bow | 10. Hobart   | 15. Watonga |

For a full description of program requirements and eligibility, click here: [Grant Solicitation](#). To learn more about the ChargeOK Grant Program, please visit <https://www.deq.ok.gov/air-quality-division/volkswagen-settlement/> or email questions to [VWSettlement@deq.ok.gov](mailto:VWSettlement@deq.ok.gov).



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## Coffeyville and Comanche Recognized for Operational Excellence

OMA recently presented awards to Coffeyville Municipal Light & Power and Comanche Electric.

### Coffeyville Municipal Light & Power

Coffeyville Municipal Light & Power is recognized for First Place in the association's annual Electric Operations and Reliability Competition. The utility was recognized in the category for cities over 10,000 population and cited for achieving the highest reported level of service reliability for cities within OMA's four-state member region. Average System Availability Index for 2019 was of 99.9992 percent.

The Department was also recognized for having an exceptional safety record for 2019. The utility had four reportable incidents but experienced no lost or reduced duty time over 74,574 work hours.



*From Left to Right: Mike Shook, Steve Pratt, Tom Rider, Don Oneslager, Tony Lawson*

### Comanche Electric

Comanche Electric 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.

Comanche had a perfect safety record for 2019. 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 5,821-man hours.



*From left to right: Chuck Ralls, Lester Lehew, and Tom Rider*

## APGA Hosting Virtual Meetings

The American Public Gas Association is hosting virtual member meetings now through October 1st. The meetings are designed as small group conversations to update members on APGA activities and to learn, firsthand, the challenges members are facing. Each meeting will be 90 minutes in length.

The events are free and open to all municipal natural gas professionals, municipal utility board or council members, and vendors and/or partners of natural gas utilities interested in current industry changes and challenges. Attendance at each

meeting will be limited so that APGA staff can get to know each and every attendee.

Members and interested parties are encouraged to attend the stop closest to their region but are welcome to attend any stop that best fits with their schedule or if their first choice is full. Registration and more information can be found at [www.apga.org/membertour](http://www.apga.org/membertour).

The Oklahoma & Arkansas stop is scheduled for October 1, beginning at 9:00AM CT.



## McPherson Honored with APPA's 7 Hats Award

Jason McPherson, city administrator of Marlow Electric in Marlow, Oklahoma, received the Larry Hobart Seven Hats Award during the American Public Power Association's Public Power Connect: Virtual Summit & Business Meeting June 9.

The award recognizes managers of small utilities serving fewer than 2,500 meters. These managers have a very small staff and must assume multiple roles. The seven hats they must wear are: planning and design, administration, public relations, field supervision, accounting, human resources, and community leadership.

McPherson has been employed with the City of Marlow for seven years. He has represented Marlow on the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority's Board of Directors since 2016 and manages 42 full-time employees, as well as four part-time employees. McPherson was instrumental in securing funding for the redesign of Marlow's substation and he was a driving factor in the city installing a second backup transformer to their new substation.

He was also responsible for the completion of the City of Marlow's new automatic metering infrastructure. He designed Marlow's CINCH (Caring in Neighborhoods with Cooling and Heating) program and worked with the Good Samaritan's group, which is the only United Way group in Marlow, to develop the rules and program. Marlow's CINCH program allows utility rate payers to round up their bill or to donate to a private fund to help those in need pay their City of Marlow utility bills.

McPherson has also served as a Marlow School Board member and is past president of the Marlow Chamber of Commerce and the Lions Club. When he is done working his full-time job as city manager, he volunteers his time to broadcast all the high school football and basketball games on the local radio station.



## EPA Finalizes Water Quality Certification Rule

*From the American Public Power Association*

By Paul Ciampoli

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on June 1 issued its final Clean Water Act (CWA) section 401 rule to clarify timeframes for water quality certification, the scope of certification review and conditions and related certification requirements and procedures.

The final rule, which was issued in accordance with Executive Order 13868, "Promoting Energy Infrastructure and Economic Growth," clarifies that a state's review and action under section 401 must be limited to water quality impacts to waters of the U.S. resulting from a potential point source discharge from a proposed federally licensed or permitted project.

The water quality certification may not address matters unrelated to water quality (e.g., greenhouse gas emissions or transportation impacts) or the applicant's activity as a whole.

Also, the regulations clarify that a state waives its certification authority if it does not act upon a request for certification within a reasonable period of time,

which cannot not exceed one year. This time period does not pause or stop for any reason once the state has received the certification request.

Changes from the proposed rule include requiring a project proponent to request a pre-filing meeting with state officials before formally seeking a section 401 certification and clarifying that federal agency review of a state's certification decision document is focused on compliance with the procedural requirements of the CWA section 401 process rather than the substantive aspects of the document.

The final rule is effective 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

The final rule is significant to members of the American Public Power Association because it should ensure consistent implementation of section 401 and timely issuance of water quality certifications. While the rule may provide clarity for some project proponents, some states have indicated they plan to challenge the final rule on the grounds the rule usurps states' rights under the CWA.

Additional information about the final here is available [here](#).



## OMA Adds Safety Videos, Weekly Safety Messages

The OMA continues adding new online safety videos to help members better ensure a safe workplace.

Newly added videos cover [Cranes & Derrick Safety](#), [Lockout/Tagout Safety](#), and [Trenching & Excavation Safety](#). The other available videos address [Arc Flash Safety](#), [Lightning Safety](#), [Office Safety Awareness](#), [Sling and Lifting Devices](#), and [Tornado Safety](#). Videos are emailed to members and are available on the OMA website – [www.okmainc.com](http://www.okmainc.com).

In addition to the safety videos, OMA continue Weekly Safety Messages every Wednesday. These short messages include links to more detailed information from sources such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration or the National Safety Council. Recent messages:

### Fireworks Safety

While July 4th Holiday celebrations and fireworks seem to go together, fireworks are not safe and can cause serious injuries. On average, 180 people go to the emergency room every day with fireworks-related injuries in the MONTH around the July 4th Holiday and fireworks cause nearly 20,000 fires each year. If you choose to legally set off fireworks, please consider safety suggestions from the National Safety Council. Read more by clicking here: [Fireworks Safety](#)

### National Lightning Safety Awareness Week - June 21 – 27, 2020

National Lightning Safety Awareness Week was started in 2001 to call attention to this underrated killer. Since then, U.S. lightning fatalities have dropped from about 55 per year to less than 30. This reduction in fatalities is largely due to greater

awareness of the lightning danger, and people seeking safety when thunderstorms threaten. The National Lightning Safety Council has numerous resources to help you stay safe during storms. Read more by clicking here: [National Lightning Safety Awareness Week - June 21 – 27, 2020](#)

### Medical and First Aid Programs

OSHA requires employees be given a safe and healthy workplace that is reasonably free of occupational hazards. Accidents may happen, so employers also are required to provide medical and first aid personnel and supplies commensurate with the hazards of the workplace. Recognizing the details of a workplace medical and first aid program depend on various circumstances, we are sharing general information that may be of assistance. Read more by clicking here: [Medical and First Aid Programs](#)

### Working in Outdoor and Indoor Heat Environments

Although illness from exposure to heat is preventable, every year, thousands become sick from heat exposure, and some cases are fatal. Risk factors for heat illness include heavy physical activity, warm or hot environmental conditions, lack of acclimatization, and wearing clothing that holds in body heat. OSHA offers multiple resources to help keep you safe in the heat. Read more by clicking here: [Working in Outdoor and Indoor Heat Environments](#)

Any questions regarding safety or Job Training and Safety may be directed to Tom Dougherty at [tomd@okmainc.com](mailto:tomd@okmainc.com).



## OMA's First Virtual Conference

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# COVID-19 COMPARISON

## CORONAVIRUS vs. COLD vs. FLU vs. ALLERGIES

SYMPTOMS	COVID-19*	COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES
Fever	Common (100F or higher)	Rare	High (100-102F, can last 3-4 days)	No
Headache	Sometimes	Rare	Intense	Sometimes
General aches, pains	Sometimes	Slight	Common (often severe)	No
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Slight	Common (often severe)	Sometimes
Extreme exhaustion	Sometimes (progresses slowly)	Never	Common (starts early)	No
Stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Rare	Common	Common	No
Cough	Common	Mild to moderate	Common (can become severe)	Sometimes
Shortness of breath	In more serious infections	Rare	Rare	Common
Runny nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Diarrhea	Sometimes	No	Sometimes**	No

\* Information is still evolving \*\* Sometimes for children



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## What We Can Do Today to Limit the Spread of the COVID-19 Virus:

- Clean and disinfect regularly
  - Be diligent of surroundings and to increase hand washing and personal hygiene techniques
  - Adopt a "no hand-shake" policy
  - Practice "social distancing" by keeping a 6-foot space between individuals when interacting
  - Use telephone calls, video conferencing and/or email will replace "face-to-face" meetings
  - Restrict workplaces to essential staff and service providers only
  - Self-isolate anyone who has been in proximity to anyone suspected or confirmed having the virus for 14 days.
  - [American Public Power Association COVID-19 Update Page](#)
  - [Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management Gov. Stitt's Website](#)
  - [American Gas Association COVID-19 Update Page](#)
  - [American Water Works Association COVID-19 Resources Page](#)
  - [Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration Home Page](#)
  - [US Department of Labor - OSHA COVID-19 Update Page](#)
  - [FEMA Coronavirus Rumor Control](#)
  - [National Governors Association COVID-19 Update Page](#)
  - [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration COVID-19 Update Page](#)
- COVID-19 Resources:**
- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
  - [Oklahoma State Department of Health](#)



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