



Building strong communities
through a well-trained workforce

A publication of the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance

June 2020

OMA COVID-19 Update — June 1, 2020

The OMA office opened June 1. To ensure safe operations and social distancing, a few selected staff members will continue to work remotely.

Our on-site training — ODEQ renewal and On-Site Professional Development — also began June 1. The OMA staff has developed both procedures to follow and guidelines for members during training visits. (See page 3.) The first session of the Electric Supervisor Development Course begins June 24 at the OMA office.

OMA discourages visits to our offices. Anyone needing to conduct in-person business must contact Deborah Gonzales, Director of Administration and Finance, at 405-528-7564 ext. 1 or deborah@okmainc.com.

OMA Welcomes 8 New Members

With a new member year about to kick off July 1, the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance is pleased to welcome eight municipalities to the association. The towns of Francis, Keota, Lamont, Leedey, Longdale, Prue, Taloga, and Tyrone have become members since February.

“We are excited to have these eight communities join,” said Tom Rider, OMA General Manager. “Their commitment to ensuring safe operations through a well-trained workforce is a testament to the commitment they have to their citizens.”

OMA members have immediate access to benefits including renewal training for Department of Environmental Quality licensed personnel and regional training on a wide range of operational best-practice trainings to enhance and improve job skills. Additionally, all members may participate in OMA’s Mutual Aid Programs.

The Mutual Aid Program establishes a mechanism whereby members can assist other members with regular work needs and in times of natural disaster including tornados, floods, and earthquakes. The program lays out a process for reimbursement that is known before the assistance is needed, allowing a member to plan and respond quickly when necessary.

For more information about OMA membership, contact Kelly Danner, Director of Business Development, at kelly@okmainc.com or Rider at tom@okmainc.com.

Remember to vote in Oklahoma’s Primary Election/Special Elections June 30.



Deadline to request absentee ballot: 5 p.m., June 24

Early voting:

Thursday, June 25, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Friday, Friday, June 26, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday, June 27, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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New Member Resources Coming July 1

With the start of the new fiscal year July 1, OMA members will have access to new resources through OMA's newly revised website – www.okmainc.com.

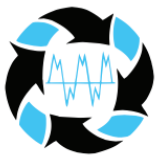
"When OMA's new website comes online, members will have access to resources and networking opportunities and training resources," said Tom Rider General Manager said.

These new resources are designed to better serve the municipal professionals who work for OMA members. In a 'Members Only' area, individuals will have to opportunity to watch safety and operational training segments developed by OMA staff and members. Further, they will have the opportunity to access the Peer-to-Peer information exchange.

"The Peer-to-Peer Information Exchange is a great opportunity to connect with municipal professionals who perform the same work that you do," Rider noted. "Peers will have the opportunity to ask questions, share best practices, and learn from one another."

As with all new opportunities, OMA will be seeking feedback from individuals who use the website features. "Any resource must meet the needs of the people who access it", Rider added. "So, we will constantly be listening to our members and working to enhance and refine the website features to best meet their needs."

Deborah Gonzales, Director of Business Administration and Finance, is the primary contact for the OMA website. Questions or comments may be directed to her at deborah@okmainc.com.



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Distancing & Safety Response to COVID-19 for all OMA On-site Training Until Further Notice

Effective June 1, 2020, OMA trainers will be back with our Members in member facilities. To ensure the health and safety of all who participate, the following are the steps we are asking Members to take and the steps we will take for everyone's safety.

What we are asking from you:

Prior to an OMA training event, ensure all flat surfaces in the training room have been sanitized including a table for the trainer that is a minimum of six feet (6') from participants when possible.

Participants are required to wear a face mask before, during and after the training. The masks must meet the Member's requirements for a face covering. Social distancing will be observed throughout the trainer's time on-site.

What we will do:

OMA trainers will arrive a minimum of 15 minutes prior to the start of the training session. The trainer will wear a protective mask when entering the building and training room and anytime outside the training room.

Trainers will place any class material out on the training tables prior to participant arrival. In doing so, they will work to ensure that there is safe separation between participants, subject to space limitations.

OMA trainers will maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance from participants. Trainers may remove their masks during their presentations, once participants are seated.

Water Heroes Sacrifice Time at Home to Ensure Service Continues

From the American Water Works Association

To protect critical water treatment plant employees from being exposed to COVID-19 while maintaining business continuity, some utility members of the American Water Works Association are housing operational teams on site.

"This is what it takes to ensure we can treat the water and distribute it to half a million people in central Iowa," said Ted Corrigan, interim CEO and general manager with Des Moines Water Works (DMWW). The utility provides retail and wholesale service to about a sixth of the state's population.

On March 23, DMWW sequestered 21 willing employees based on operational needs at its three water treatment plants, rotating them through 12-hour shifts and housing them for two weeks at a time in campers with access to food, laundry facilities and internet access.

After four weeks, the practice was suspended at its two smaller treatment plants but still continues with 11 employees at DMWW's main plant, where the system's centralized control center and plant operators are located. They include operations, maintenance, and supervision staff from the water production department.

"We have a limited number of operators who are trained and certified to operate our system," said Corrigan. "With the challenges of our limited number of qualified staff and a single control center, we felt sequestering staff on-site was the best way to meet

our obligation to continue service to our customers. Every employee in the department agreed, voluntarily, to participate in the sequestration process."

In taking this unprecedented step, DMWW drew from a Contagious Disease Response Plan it had developed in 2009. The plan included an isolation phase, which had not been implemented until the current COVID-19 pandemic.

"Everyone, including our Board of Trustees and union leadership, recognized their critical role in supporting the public health of our community and agreed with the decision to sequester," Corrigan said. "Once the decision was made, it took about two weeks to prepare."

Sharing knowledge and strategies

In North Carolina, Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA) officials concerned about employees' exposure to COVID-19 also came to the decision to house essential operational crews at treatment facilities.

"We spoke with staff at Des Moines Water Works and Greater Cincinnati Water Works about how they were planning to reduce their operators' contact with the general community, and by April 1 we had trailers rented, provisioned, and fully set up at our Sweeney Water Treatment Plant and the Richardson Nanofiltration Plant," said Carel Vandermeiden, CFPUA's deputy executive director.

(see WATER HEROES, page 5)

New OMA Website to Debut After July 1

If the coronavirus pandemic has taught us anything, it's that OMA needs a stronger internet presence to better meet the needs of our members.

While plans were in the works before COVID-19 came knocking, the new website is expected be up and running July 1. Members will see a new website with a more dynamic look and feel, and more resources and options.

"I think members will be excited about the features the new website will offer," said Deborah Miner-Gonzales, OMA Director of Administration and Finance. "It will be much more interactive and, over time, have a wealth of resources for members."

Any questions about the new OMA website – www.okmainc.com – may be directed to Miner-Gonzales at 405-528-7564 ext. 1 or deborah@okmainc.com.

OMA Continues Safety Videos, Weekly Safety Messages

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the OMA staff have been unable to travel to member cities to deliver in-person training sessions. To fill the immediate gap, the association continues to produce safety videos for members.

Newly added videos cover [Lightening Safety](#) and [Sling and Lifting Devices](#). The other available videos address [Arc Flash Safety](#), [Office Safety Awareness](#), and [Tornado Safety](#). Videos are emailed to members and are available on the OMA website — 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.

Recent messages addressed Chemical Hazards and Toxic Substances and recognized Work Zone Safety Awareness Week in Oklahoma — May 15-22 — as proclaimed by Gov. Stitt.

Work Zone Safety Awareness Week (published May 20)

In the past five years, 95 people were killed in highway and turnpike work zones in Oklahoma, including four ODOT workers who were on the job. May 15 – 22 is "Work Zone Safety Awareness Week" in Oklahoma, so we are reminding you work zones need traffic controls identified by signs, cones, barrels, or barriers. Here is a quick reference guide from OSHA. Read more by clicking here: [Work Zone Safety Awareness](#).

Chemical Hazards and Toxic Substances (published May 27)

Chemical hazards and toxic substances pose a wide range of health hazards (such as irritation, sensitization, and carcinogenicity) and physical hazards (such as flammability, corrosion, and explosibility) to workers. OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) allows workers to understand these hazards and associated protective measures. Read more by clicking here: [Chemical Hazards and Toxic Substances](#).

Any questions regarding safety or Job Training and Safety may be directed to Dougherty at tomd@okmainc.com.

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GRDA's Dan Sullivan Elected to LPPC Leadership Role

Recently elected as the Large Public Power Council's newest Chair and Vice-Chair, Dan Sullivan, President and CEO of Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA), and Jackie Sargent, General Manager of Austin Energy, offer their expertise and insight on how utilities have kept the nation's lights on through the coronavirus pandemic as well as how public power is at the forefront of supporting America's reopening plans.

Sullivan has served as President and CEO of GRDA since 2011. Under his leadership, GRDA operates a diverse portfolio of assets to generate, transmit and sell electricity to Oklahoma municipalities, electric cooperatives and industrial customers across a four-state footprint. Before joining GRDA, Sullivan served as a member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives for seven years and practiced law in Tulsa for 23 years.

"LPPC has been advocating for public power for over 30 years, and I'm honored to serve as the organization's newest Chairman," said Sullivan. "As we look to reopen America and stimulate our economy, advancing issues critical to the electric power industry has never been more important. I'm excited to work with LPPC to ensure public power has the tools we need to continue delivering reliable power to communities across our nation."

A 32-year veteran of the utility industry, Sargent also joins the LPPC leadership team as Vice-Chair. Prior to serving Austin Energy as General Manager, Sargent was the General Manager and CEO of Platte River Power Authority in Fort Collins, Colorado.

LPPC President John Di Stasio has high praise for LPPC's new leaders.

"Dan and Jackie are CEOs of the highest caliber and strong advocates for public power," said Di Stasio. "As leaders of major public power systems, serving wholesale customers and public consumers across both

(see Dan Sullivan, page 7)



Water Heroes

(continued from page 3)

"We didn't want our licensed operators to get sick or potentially expose others on their crews," he added. "You can't just pick somebody off the street to replace them; they have years of education and experience."

On April 6, rented trailers at the Sweeney Water Treatment Plant and the Richardson Nanofiltration Plant became home, sweet home, for seven operators working 12-hour shifts for seven-day periods. At the end of each week, the team disinfects their trailers and another crew of seven operators takes over. Before returning to the plant, staff take their temperatures and report any potential COVID-19 symptoms.

"The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency made it very clear that ensuring drinking water services remain fully operational is critical to containing COVID-19 and protecting Americans from other public health risks," Vandermeiden said. "These multi-day shifts reduce opportunities for these operators to become exposed to COVID-19. CFPWA will continue this plan for as long as the situation warrants."


Committed to serving community

A similar approach is being taken in central Tennessee by Clarksville Gas & Water, a municipal utility that provides water and wastewater services to about 160,000 residents in Clarksville and Montgomery County. CGW also provides natural gas service to more than 28,000 customers.

"With the uncertainty of what was ahead of us, we felt that operating both our water and wastewater treatment plants with a limited staff for

(see Water Heroes, page 9)

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Purcell Lineworkers Complete Training Towards Journeyman Certification

Three lineworkers for the City of Purcell Electric Department have completed their educational and practical training towards earning their Journeyman Lineman certifications.

Dillon Gardner, Anthony Lamirand, and Brian Morris were recently recognized by the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance (OMA) and the City of Purcell for their efforts. The three who participated in the OMA Apprentice Program are on their way towards earning Journeyman status. The Apprentice program is a comprehensive four-year program. Participants are required to complete four levels of classroom-style training and then 8,000 hours of practical training to qualify as Journeyman linemen.

Gardner, Lamirand, and Morris work for Purcell Electric, a customer-owned public power system that serves the citizens of Purcell. Purcell, which purchases its power from the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority, has been a public power city for more than 100 years.



L to R: Tom Rider, Trey Phillips, Brian Morris, Dillon Gardner, Anthony Lamirand, and City Manager, Dale Bunn.

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Marlow Honored for Electric Achievement in Enhancement and Safety

The City of Marlow, and its power authority, the Marlow Municipal Authority, received two OMA honors at a recent meeting of the city council and authority trustees.

Marlow received OMA's Clarence Fulkerson Electric System Achievement Award and the Don Howland Electric Operations and Safety Award. Both awards were presented by Tom Rider, OMA General Manager.

The Fulkerson Award recognizes an OMA member that has distinguished itself for its exemplary system enhancement, improvement, reliability, or other innovative efforts to improve municipal power in Oklahoma. The award is named after Ponca City's long-time utility director.

Beginning in 2014, the Marlow Municipal Authority undertook a long-term commitment to improve its electric system. The commitment includes doubling electric capacity by installing an additional transformer in its substation, establishing a vegetation management program to improve and maintain reliability, and install an automated metering system to streamline operations and improve customer service and confidence.

"Since 2014, the city has invested over \$5 million in the electric infrastructure to improve reliability, stabilize rising costs and to better serve the citizens of Marlow," said Mayor Brian Davis. "I am proud of the work that the city's electric department and utility billing staff have done."

The Howland Award recognizes safety in electric operations. It is named after long-time Duncan utility director, Don Howland. This is Marlow's fifth time to receive the award. The previous awards came in 2017, 2016, 2015 and 2008.

In April, Marlow Electric was recognized for their safety record for 2019 by the American Public Power Association, as well.



Marlow Municipal Authority Board of Trustees, L to R: Nuell Brown, Tom Wheat, Brian Davis (Chairman and Mayor), Jeff Prater, Neal Moore. Not shown: Joe Marciano.



Linecrew L to R: Brian Davis, James Seabolt, Chris Dilbeck, Jacob Thompson, and Jason Russell.

Dan Sullivan

(continued from page 5)

urban and rural communities, Dan and Jackie bring unparalleled expertise to the table. They understand how important public policy is to the delivery of affordable and reliable electricity, and I look forward to working with them as we continue to advocate for our industry in Washington, D.C."

Sullivan succeeds Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) President and CEO Pat Pope, who has served as LPPC's Chair since 2017.

To learn more about LPPC's policy priorities, visit <http://www.lppc.org/policy>.

LPPC represents 27 of the largest locally governed and operated not-for-profit electric systems in the United States. Our member utilities are headquartered in 13 states and Puerto Rico, and own and operate more than 72,000 megawatts of generation capacity and more than 30,000 circuit miles of high voltage transmission lines. LPPC member utilities supply electricity to 21 states and some of the largest cities in the country including Los Angeles, Seattle, Omaha, Phoenix, Sacramento, Jacksonville, San Antonio, Orlando and Austin.

GRDA Holds Virtual Customer Meeting

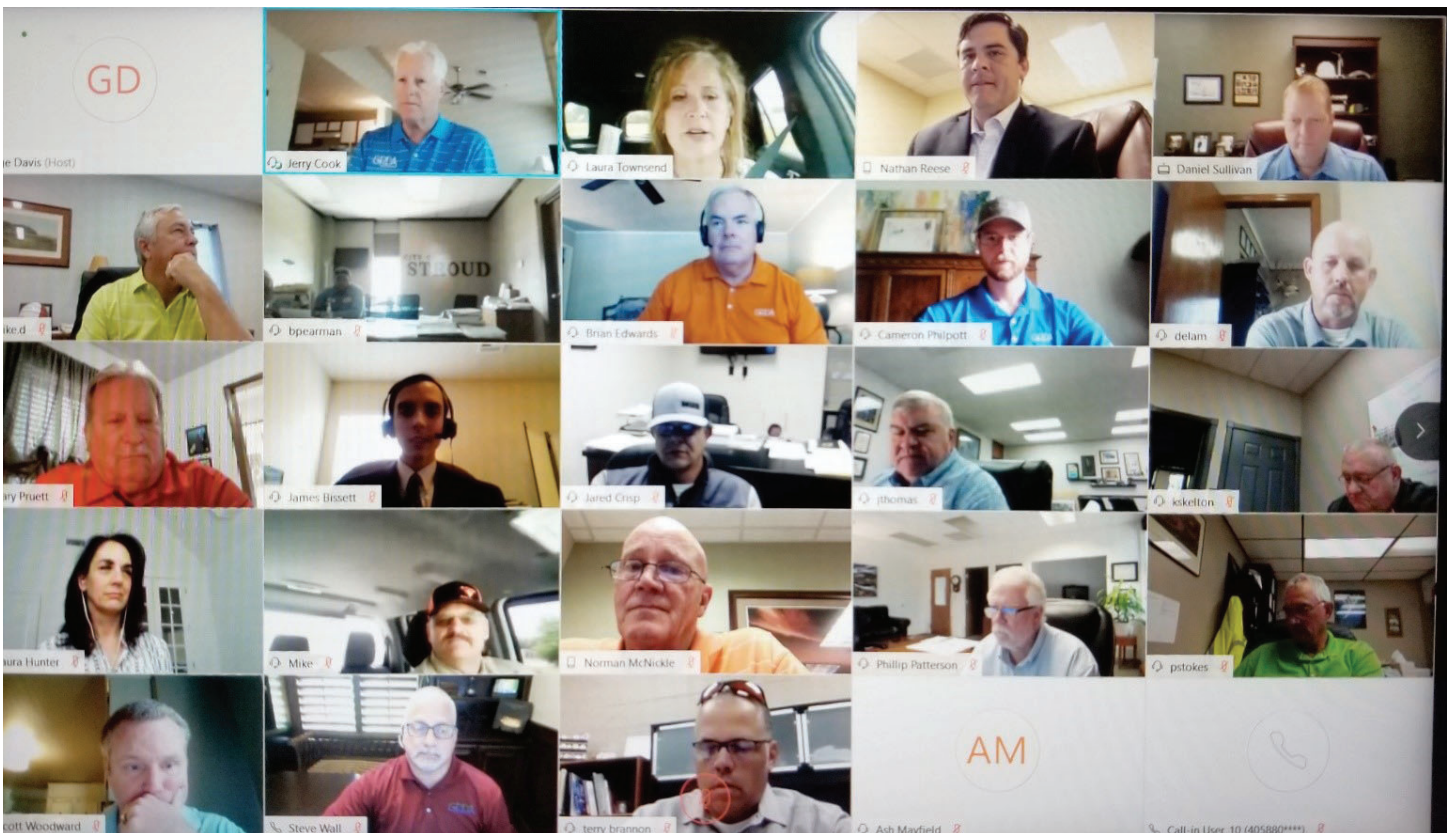
Although the COVID-19 circumstances may have altered the methods for interaction during the last few months, staying in touch with its customers has continued to be a priority for the Grand River Dam Authority. On May 7, GRDA held its first virtual municipal customer meeting, with approximately 35 customer representatives and GRDA staffers taking part in the dialogue via the internet.

The meeting was an opportunity for GRDA Chief Executive Officer Dan Sullivan to provide an update on how his organization continues to deal with the COVID-19 issue, while also providing updates on operations and other issues that could impact customers.

At the same time, municipals were able to “meet” to share their own experiences, discuss common issues each have been facing as well as offer lessons learned for the benefit of all involved.

“The meeting seemed to go really well,” said GRDA Vice President of Corporate Communications Justin Alberty. “I think it was very beneficial to hear how each entity was dealing with the unique challenges they have faced over the last couple of months. A lot of good information was shared.”

GRDA is planning another virtual meeting in the near future.



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U.S. Coal-fired Electricity Generation in 2019 Reached Lowest Level in 42 Years

From the American Public Power Association
By Taelor Bentley

Output from the U.S. coal-fired generating fleet dropped to 966,000 gigawatthours (GWh) in 2019, making it the lowest level since 1976. The decline in last year's coal generation levels was the largest percentage decline in history (16%) and second largest in absolute terms (240,000 GWh), the U.S. Energy Information Administration reported on May 11.

The primary reason for the decline was increased output from natural gas-fired plants and wind turbines. Natural gas-fired generation reached an all-time record of nearly 1.6 million GWh in 2019, up 8% from 2018. Electricity generation from wind turbines also set a new record, exceeding 300,000 GWh, up 10% from 2018.

The increased availability of low-priced natural gas has been the biggest factor in decreasing coal-fired generation. Highly efficient combined cycle gas turbine plants burning relatively low-cost natural gas have reduced the amount of time a coal plant is called on to dispatch power into the grid. This factor has lowered average coal plant utilization rates and pushed some coal plants into early retirement.

Average delivered prices for coal at power plants have also been declining. Through 2015, the cost of coal averaged \$2.25 per million British thermal units (MMBtu) before decreasing to less than \$2.00/MMBtu in late 2019.

Although coal at U.S. power plants has cost less than natural gas, for coal to be competitive, its delivered cost must be at least 30% lower to make up for the differences in efficiency between a typical coal-fired plant and a typical natural gas-fired plant. These differences are even larger for more efficient natural gas-fired combined-cycle plants. Coal plants must also offset higher costs for emission control equipment and other operations.

U.S. coal-fired capacity peaked at 318 gigawatts (GW) in 2011 and has been declining since then because many plants retired or switched to other fuels and few new coal-fired plants came online, EIA reported. By the end of 2019, U.S. coal-generating capacity totaled 229 GW.

The coal fleet's rate of operation, or utilization, has also decreased. The U.S. coal fleet generated as much as 67% of its capacity in 2010, based on the operating capacity at the time. Coal's utilization rate has declined since then, and in 2019, it fell to 48%.

Water Heroes

(continued from page 5)

seven days on shift and seven days off was the best approach," said Mark Riggins, CGW's general manager.

"We work in a specialized field that never stops and only a few people can fill the roles of our state certified plant operators," he added. "If these operators were affected by the coronavirus pandemic, our plant operations would suffer tremendously and put a strain on our ability to serve the community."

Prior to implementing an on-site strategy, CWG's plant managers discussed the approach with their staffs. All employees said they were ready and willing to step up to the challenge, which involves sequestering teams of operators to stay in makeshift living quarters within the two treatment plants, segregated from other employees and vendors.

The water plant alternates two groups of four Grade 3 and 4 water treatment operators, which perform

laboratory analyses and operate water distribution pumps to maintain tank levels. The wastewater plant rotates four groups of five employees, including a lab technician, mechanic, solids dewatering operator and two plant operators. Operators are segregated from other plant employees and vendors.

Each Monday the groups on shift go home for a week and the next group takes over. Plant managers ensure food and daily supplies are stocked, operations run smoothly, and stringent cleaning and hygiene protocols are followed.

"We commend our entire team of 268 employees for stepping up in this time of crisis to maintain continuity in all areas, including water and wastewater treatment plants, gas and water distribution, wastewater collections operations, customer service, engineering, and administrative support staff," Riggins said. "Our priority is to ensure customers continue to receive essential services efficiently and safely."



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](#)
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