



Building strong communities  
through a well trained workforce

A publication of the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance

September 2019

## Registration Deadline for all 2019 MESO Rodeo and Safety Training Activities is September 15

The 2019 MESO Lineworkers Rodeo and Safety Training will be in Ponca City September 25 and 26. The deadline to register as a competitor, training attendee, sponsor, volunteer, or judge (and be guaranteed a rodeo t-shirt) is September 15.

All registration information may be found at [www.okmainc.com](http://www.okmainc.com).

- To register as a competitor/training attendee click here: [Competitor/ Training Attendee Registration](#).
- To learn more about sponsoring the event, click here: [2019 MESO Lineworkers Rodeo and Safety Training Hosted Sponsor/Exhibitor Registration Packet](#)
- To volunteer for the event, click here: [2019 Rodeo Judges & Volunteers](#)  
(see LINEWORKERS RODEO, page 6)



## City of Collinsville Benefits from Mutual Aid for Major Highway Project

The City of Collinsville recently faced a roadblock, literally, after the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) gave the city a tight timeline to move utilities along Highway 20 for an expansion project.

The work includes moving all water and sewer lines, as well as more than 86 utility poles. The utility work was put out for bid because, with a project of this magnitude, city crews would not be able to complete the work on time.

Bids were accepted and awarded for the water and sewer work, while only one bid was submitted for the electric work. The single bid for electric work was more than \$200,000 higher than the approved engineering estimate.

Contractors and utility companies are experiencing a shortage of qualified lineworkers as many are approaching retirement age and there is a limited number of apprentice workers taking their places. Another cause of the shortage is high paying jobs on the east and west coasts are attracting workers from the area.

City officials decided to reach out to the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance/Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma (OMA-MESO) to request assistance through the Mutual Aid Agreement. The Mutual Aid program provides a method for electric utilities that sustain physical damage from natural disasters to obtain emergency assistance in the form of  
(see MUTUAL AID, page 4)

### In This Issue

APT Cash Handling Training/Certification Scheduled in Miami, OK – Page 3	If You Have Public Infrastructure You Need to Attend – Page 5	Comanche and Sallisaw Earn Safety Awards – Page 6	Understanding Oklahoma's Marijuana Mystery "Hiring in CDL Drivers" – Page 8
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## UPCOMING OMA & AMERICAN PUBLIC POWER EVENTS

### **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

### **Disaster Management for Electric Power Systems**

October 22 – 23, 2019  
Edmond, Oklahoma

### **APT Cash Handling Training/ Certification**

November 6, 2019  
Miami, Oklahoma

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

#### **Electric Supervisor Development (ESD) Sessions**

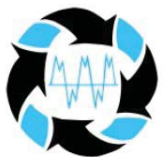
- Tuesday, October 1, 2019
- Tuesday, December 3, 2019

#### **Supervisor Short Course**

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**

October 9 & 10 – Weatherford  
November 5 – McAlester  
November 6 – Norman  
November 7 – Collinsville  
November 13 – Perkins  
December 4 – Blanchard  
December 5 – Woodward



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## APT Cash Handling Training/Certification Scheduled in Miami, OK

OMA will host two APT (Association of Public Treasurers of the United States) Cash Handling Training/Certification sessions Wednesday, November 6, 2019 in Miami, OK.

This program provides resource materials and guidelines for municipalities and organizations wanting to strengthen their internal cash handling procedures and practices. Anthony Francisco, CTP, CPFO, ACPFIM, CPFA, Finance Director, City of Norman, will present the sessions.

The morning session begins with registration at 7:30 a.m. and will be completed by 12 noon, and the afternoon session's registration begins at 12:30 p.m. ending by 5 p.m.

The cost for the program is \$75 per participant and includes Cash Handling Manual and Certificate (upon completion of the training session).

APT provides this 4-hour training throughout the United States. This program is intended to provide

resource materials and guidelines for governments and organizations attempting to strengthen their internal cash handling procedures and practices.

The Cash Handling Manual is an excellent resource as it includes: a comprehensive training guide; sample legislation ensuring that the treasurer has the power to oversee and enforce proper cash handling practices; a sample training syllabus; application information for treasury officials interested in having their government's cash handling program reviewed and certified.

To register online click here: [APT Cash Handling Training Course](#). The deadline to register is October 30.

The training sessions will be held at the Miami Civic Center (129 5th Avenue NW).

Questions about this training session may be directed to Kelly Danner, OMA Director of Business Development, at [kelly@okmainc.com](mailto:kelly@okmainc.com).



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## Mutual Aid

*(continued from page 1)*

personnel, equipment and materials from other electric utilities. The agreement now includes assistance to municipalities for linework needed in the case of highway expansion and other major projects.

Within hours of making that call the City of Collinsville started receiving offers from other municipalities to come to Collinsville and help with getting the power poles moved and electric lines relocated.

Five utilities — Edmond, Pryor, Claremore, Siloam Springs, and Grand River Dam Authority — have sent manpower and equipment. Crews are working 12-hour days, 7 days a week to meet the October 20 deadline.

Some crews are working their regular 40-hour weeks in their hometowns and coming to work up to an additional 24 hours on the weekend. Some utilities chose to put their projects on hold in order to help Collinsville.

The Mutual Aid Agreement requires the municipality requesting aid to pay the wages, lodging accommodations, and food allowances for all workers lending aid. Area restaurants have been gracious enough to work with the City to make sure the workers have been well fed during their stay.

Work is moving forward as planned, and it is expected the ODOT timeline will be met. If the timeline is not met, the entire \$27 million Highway 20 project would be in jeopardy.

The only minor setbacks are rock beneath the surface and weather. Drilling through the rock in some places has taken longer than expected and slowed down work.

Once the work is completed ODOT plans to put the project out for bid in the late fall 2019 for road construction to begin in early spring 2020.

"I join our entire team here and our city leadership in thanking those who helped with this project," said Craig Stokes, Collinsville Assistant City Manager of Operations. "It shows just what kind of association we're involved in when they care enough to take care of us in time of need."



## If You Have Public Infrastructure, You Need to Attend

OMA will present the FEMA approved Disaster Management for Electric Power Systems training October 22 and 23 in Edmond.

"While the course title refers to electric power systems, anyone with any public infrastructure will benefit from attending this training session," said OMA General Manager Tom Rider.

Who should participate:

- Emergency Management
- Public Works Management
- Utility Management
- Power Providers
- Water Authorities
- Utility personnel
- Municipal personnel
- Police, Fire and EMS personnel
- Electrical Power Transmission and Distribution Suppliers (T&D) personnel

Topics to be covered:

- Threats to electric power systems
- Mitigating risks
- Responding to disasters
- Recovering from disasters
- Handling public information requests
- Preparing for disasters

To learn more about the training session, click here: [Disaster Management for Electric Flyer](#).

Seating is limited and registration will close once all the seats are taken. Questions about the session may be directed to Rider at [tom@okmainc.com](mailto:tom@okmainc.com).

## Disaster Management for Electric Power Systems October 22 – 23, 2019 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. each day

Edmond Cross Timbers Complex  
2004 Old Timbers Drive  
Edmond, Oklahoma

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## Comanche and Sallisaw Earn Safety Awards

The City of Comanche, and Comanche Electric, which operates the city's electric system, and the City of Sallisaw and Sallisaw Electric were presented safety awards for their respective 2018 Safety Records.

Comanche had a 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 4,300-man hours.

Sallisaw also achieved a perfect safety record for 2018. Approximately 14,300-man hours were completed by the utility's team without a reportable lost work time incident, either "days away from work," "restricted light duty," or "medical treatment" cases.

OMA-MESO General Manager Tom Rider traveled to both Comanche and Sallisaw to present the awards.

"As important as electric system reliability is to citizens, knowing that each and every day, the work is being performed correctly and safely should be a source of pride for customers," Rider said. "The current operational standards and employee training standards of these utilities are superior."

Both Comanche and Sallisaw participate in the OMA-MESO Job Training and Safety program as one resource for ensuring safe work practices. To learn more about our safety programs, contact Tom Dougherty, OMA-MESO Director of Job Training and Safety, at [tomd@okmainc.com](mailto:tomd@okmainc.com).



*OMA-MESO General Manager Tom Rider  
with the Comanche team*



*OMA-MESO General Manager Tom Rider  
with the Sallisaw team*

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## Lineworkers Rodeo

*(continued from page 1)*

All guests for Wednesday Lunch and Thursday Awards Luncheon will need a ticket. If co-workers, friends and family may be joining us, please ensure they have a ticket. Meal tickets may be purchased online.

Questions about the event can be directed by email to Deborah Gonzales at [deborah@okmainc.com](mailto:deborah@okmainc.com) or Tom Dougherty at [tomd@okmainc.com](mailto:tomd@okmainc.com).

The 2019 event offers training sessions by Performed Line Products® covering Lineman Best Practices and Care, Maintenance & Testing of HV

Live Line Tools presented by Matt Tiffie 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.

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

Follow rodeo activities, ask questions, etc. at the MESO Annual Lineworkers Rodeo Facebook page.

## Karrie Bevan Joins OMA Team

Karrie Bevan has joined the OMA Team as an Administrative Assistant and Certified Alcohol and Drug Tester in our affiliate alcohol and drug testing program, LGTC (Local Government Testing Consortium).

"Karrie will be a great addition to our staff," said Tom Rider, OMA Executive Director. "She brings a great combination of municipal and other experience to her new role."

She most recently served as the Utility Clerk and Code Enforcement Officer with the Town of Okeene. She was with Okeene for four years. Prior to that, she owned and operated her own small business and held a leadership role in a customer service capacity.

Bevan and her family recently relocated from Okeene to the Oklahoma City area. She and her husband have 4 children.

LGTC is available to all OMA members and provides services including random testing, pre-employment testing, on-site collections, and regular training sessions. For more information contact Deborah Gonzales at [deborah@okmainc.com](mailto:deborah@okmainc.com).



## Municipal Gas Professionals Attend Annual

Natural gas distribution professionals from several municipal gas systems participated in the 2019 Oklahoma Gas Association annual conference, August 26 – 28. The conference brought together personnel from various aspects of the natural gas industry including midstream, large distribution companies and municipalities.

During the conference, participants had the opportunity to attend sessions that focused on dehydration with gas pipelines, changes that are coming to the 811-notification system and damage prevention systems. The first day's general sessions focused on the role of the Oklahoma's Department of Emergency Management for all utility infrastructure and developing a safety culture that positively impacts workers and the public.

The 2020 OGA Annual Conference is set for October 24-26.



*Mark Gower, Director of the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, was one of the conference's featured speakers.*

## Two more Public Power Professionals Complete OMA-MESO Lineworker Apprenticeship Program. Join us in congratulating them!



Mike Colwell,  
Granite



Steven Armstrong,  
Sallisaw

## Understanding the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Mystery "Hiring in CDL Drivers and/or Safety Sensitive Positions"

(Part two of a three-part series)

By Suzanne Paulson, General Counsel, Oklahoma  
Municipal Assurance Group

In our previous article, there was discussion about "Hiring in General" in a state where medical marijuana is now legal while it is illegal on the federal level.

Sometimes it must feel like mom and dad disagreeing, regardless it is our challenge to continue to work towards unraveling the Medical Marijuana Mystery. Regardless from the last article, "The best-practice advice currently is to avoid asking applicants if they possess a Medical Marijuana license during the hiring process." Pre-employment drug and alcohol testing will identify any potential issues.

To further help you, we will explore "Hiring CDL Drivers" and "Hiring other Safety Sensitive Positions."

### Hiring CDL Drivers

Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL) are regulated at the federal level, where marijuana remains illegal.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has made its position clear as to both Medical and Recreational Marijuana laws adopted by the various states. DOT and the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana statutes (OMM statutes) prohibit a person from performing safety-sensitive functions after they test positive for marijuana.

The OMM statutes consider driving a safety-sensitive task or duty regardless of whether the position requires the driver to possess a CDL or not. This may preclude an applicant from being hired if they cannot pass the drug screening regardless of whether they have a State issued Medical Marijuana license.

Refusing to hire an applicant for a safety-sensitive position because of the legal consequences of their failing a drug test is lawful since your decision would not be based "solely" on the failed test but, rather, the consequences of the failed test.

If an applicant possesses a license but does not fail a drug test, then OMAG is aware of no reason that the applicant could not be hired. If the applicant advises that they have been issued a license, OMAG suggests that you remind the applicant that DOT regulations and OMM statutes prohibit use of medical marijuana for positions that require driving.

### Hiring other "Safety Sensitive" Positions

The OMM statutes prohibit employers from refusing to hire an applicant based on their holding a Medical Marijuana license or their testing positive for marijuana on a pre-employment drug test if they have a license. However, the OMM statutes carved out an exception to this general rule and allows an employer (see *HIRING IN CDL DRIVERS*, page)

## OMA Continues Confined Space Basics Training Sessions

Following successful sessions in Prague and Checotah, OMA has eight more Confined Space Basics Training sessions scheduled. These sessions are geared towards municipal water and wastewater professionals.

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 practice a limited entry.

Sessions currently scheduled include:

- October 9 & 10 – Weatherford
- November 5 – McAlester
- November 6 – Norman
- November 7 – Collinsville
- November 13 – Perkins
- December 4 – Blanchard
- December 5 – Woodward

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

Seating is limited to 30 for each session. To register for any location, go to the OMA website — [www.okmainc.com](http://www.okmainc.com).

Questions about the training sessions are to be directed to Rider – who will be presenting the training – at [tom@okmainc.com](mailto:tom@okmainc.com). Registration questions can be directed to Deborah Gonzales at [deborah@okmainc.com](mailto:deborah@okmainc.com).

Municipalities wishing to host the training should contact Kelly Danner at [kelly@okmainc.com](mailto:kelly@okmainc.com) or call, (405) 528-7564, ext. 7.



## Jim Richie Begins Term as GRDA Board Chair

Jim Richie (Tulsa) began his tenure as Chairman of the Grand River Dam Authority Board of Directors at the board's September 5 meeting in Tulsa. Richie's term will run through August 2020.

He succeeds outgoing 2018-19 Chairman Tom Kimball (Owasso). Mike Lewandowski (Grove) will serve as the board's chair-elect for the coming year.

Originally appointed to the board in January 2014 by then-Oklahoma Speaker of the House T.W. Shannon, Richie is co-founder and chief auctioneer for Kruse Energy & Equipment LLC. He is currently in his second term as a director.

Lewandowski was appointed to the GRDA Board by then-Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin in August 2018. For 31 years, he owned and operated McDonald's locations in Jay, Miami and near the I44/Highway 43 interchange.

At its August 14 meeting in Langley, the board recognized Kimball for his leadership over the last 12 months. A founding member of the Owasso Economic Development Community, he is also active in the Grand Lake community and brings nearly 60 years of retail industry and business experience to his role at GRDA.

"We couldn't ask for a better GRDA ambassador," GRDA President/CEO Dan Sullivan said of Kimball at

the August meeting. He also presented Kimball with a plaque and framed photo of Grand River Energy Center Unit 3, made up of hundreds of smaller photos of GRDA employees.

"I have had the pleasure of serving on this board for seven years," said Kimball. "And as most of you know, there is nothing more near and dear to my heart than our GRDA employees."

Though his year as chairman has ended, Kimball will remain on the GRDA Board, serving in his second five-year term as the appointee of the Oklahoma Senate President Pro Tempore.

GRDA is governed by a seven-member board of directors, comprised of representatives from each GRDA customer class (municipals, electric cooperatives and industrials) as well as the GRDA lakes area. Two at-large representatives also sit on the board. Appointments are made by the Oklahoma Governor, Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives and President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate. Two other board positions are ex-officio, filled by the general manager of the OAEC and the executive director of the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma (MESO) or by their designees.

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## Hiring in CDL Drivers

*(continued from page 8)*

to refuse to hire, discipline, discharge or otherwise penalize an applicant or employee if the position is one involving safety-sensitive job duties, as defined in the Act.

"Safety Sensitive" means any job that includes tasks or duties that the employer reasonably believes could affect the safety and health of the employee performing the task or others including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- the handling, packaging, processing, storage, disposal or transport of hazardous materials,
- the operation of a motor vehicle, other vehicle, equipment, machinery or power tools,
- repairing, maintaining or monitoring the performance or operation of any equipment, machinery or manufacturing process, the malfunction or disruption of which could result in injury or property damage,
- performing firefighting duties,
- the operation, maintenance or oversight of critical services and infrastructure including, but not

limited to, electric, gas, and water utilities, power generation or distribution,

- the extraction, compression, processing, manufacturing, handling, packaging, storage, disposal, treatment or transport of potentially volatile, flammable, combustible materials, elements, chemicals or any other highly regulated component,
- dispensing pharmaceuticals,
- carrying a firearm, or
- direct patient care or direct childcare; and,

In our next article, we will discuss in a very important step required before an employer may take disciplinary action against an employee based on the safety-sensitive exemption.

DISCLAIMER: OMAG members seeking advice on the medical marijuana statutes should be aware that there may not be clear-cut answers on some of the issues for some time. OMAG offers this guidance to help your municipality make informed decisions about policies and procedures, directly or indirectly related to medical marijuana, until some of the issues can be decided by the Legislature or the Courts.

## GRDA Seeks Up to 200 MW of Renewables Through Solicitation

GRDA on August 23 issued a request for proposals to procure up to 200 megawatts of renewable energy, capacity and environmental attributes from solar, wind, and/or hybrid generation projects.

In the RFP, GRDA said it would consider proposals to contract for the output, with option of future ownership, of renewable energy projects located in the Southwest Power Pool.

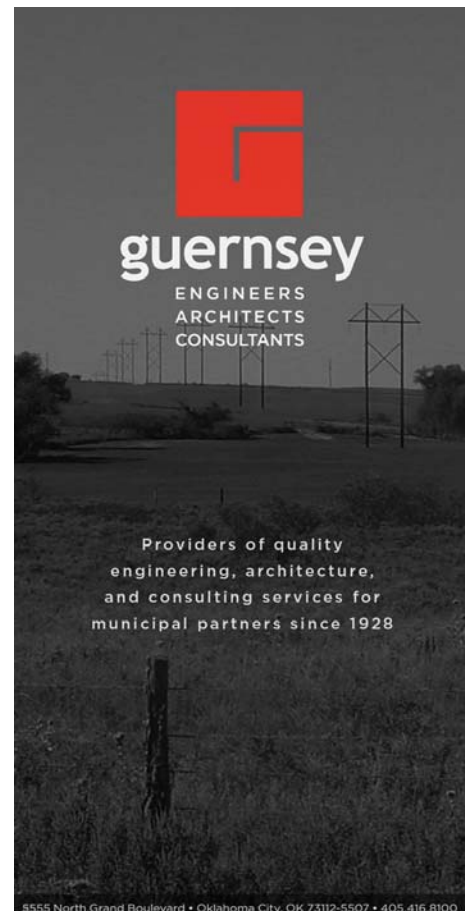
GRDA is seeking to purchase power from new or existing solar or wind generation projects that provide the best value to GRDA customers.

Proposals in response to the RFP will be due by 2:00 PM CT on September 30, 2019.

GRDA's current, active generation fleet totaling approximately 2,100 MW includes gas-fired combined cycle units, a coal-fired unit, conventional hydroelectric facilities and a pumped storage hydroelectric facility.

GRDA also purchases power and energy from several municipally-owned generating facilities. GRDA's supply portfolio also includes four contracts for the purchase of wind power and energy.

Additional information is available [here](#).



The advertisement for T&amp;R Electric Supply Company features an aerial view of a large industrial facility with several large buildings and a vast parking lot filled with cars. The text 'TRANSFORMERS DISTRIBUTION AND SUBSTATION' is prominently displayed at the top in large, bold, black letters. Below this, the T&amp;R Electric logo is shown, which includes a red starburst graphic and the text 'T&amp;R ELECTRIC SUPPLY COMPANY, INCORPORATED BOX 180 COLMAN, SOUTH DAKOTA 57017 "THE TRANSFORMER PEOPLE" ©'. To the right of the logo is a circular anniversary seal that reads '56th ANNIVERSARY 1961-2017'. Below the seal, the text 'Modern Rewind Facilities More than 61 Acres Inventory Prompt Delivery-Coast to Coast' is written. At the bottom left, contact information is provided: 'CALL TOLL-FREE 800-843-7994 FAX 605-534-3861 E-Mail: t-r@t-r.com Internet: www.t-r.com'. At the bottom center is the EASA logo, which is a globe with the text 'EASA' in the center and 'ELECTRICAL APPARATUS ASSOCIATION' around the perimeter. Below the EASA logo is the text 'BUY - SELL - RENT'. At the bottom right, the text 'Complete Outdoor Substations, Circuit Breakers, Regulators, and Switchgear' is written.





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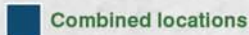
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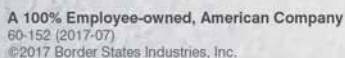


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