

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Spring 2001



Commonwealth Electric Company
of the midwest

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Price's Points

Tom Price – President



I was very much moved this last Christmas when our Safety Director, Ruben Bera, showed videos at our Omaha Christmas party. Videos of Commonwealth Electric's employees were shown while "I'm Proud to be an American" was played. I don't think there was a dry eye at that dinner.

The point I am trying to make is that Commonwealth Electric is people – not trucks, not locations, not buildings but people working as a team, doing the best and most ethical work that they can achieve. I am very proud to be part of a company such as ours. Throughout our newsletter are articles about our people, the things that they do outside of work to "give back" to our children and our neighborhoods. This is what makes us strong and makes us a great company—the work ethic, the team concept and the caring.

God Bless You!

Tom Price, President

Aerial Services Now Available in Des Moines

Michael Price – Branch Manager, Des Moines

In the spring of 2000, Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest in Des Moines, Iowa committed to the investment of a new Aerial Lift Truck. The truck was added to our fleet after a 2-year period of not having a boom truck of any kind, due to the retirement and red tagging of our 1964 Elliot mounted on its 1982 Chevy chassis. During this period, we had to turn away a lot of service work and rent equipment on a job-to-job basis to meet our customers needs. We had received a lot of requests for parking lot maintenance, new pole installation, and holiday lighting, so we knew the demand was there. After a long analysis of the numbers, the company made the commitment to purchase the truck.

The Des Moines location does not have a line crew and we hope that this truck and the work it generates will eventually bring us into that market.

We are actively marketing our Aerial Services and it has paid off. Not only are we able to further service our existing customers but we are also generating new customers by offering the services this truck allows us to perform.



Our Service manager, Michael Duffy, is heading up the implementation of the new truck under Aerial Services. This truck is working as a specialized service vehicle, taking all the service calls for site lighting work, ballast retrofits, holiday lighting and

parking lot maintenance. We have set this truck up as its own profit center, working under its own service job number, which we call Aerial Services. Mike Duffy and our electricians working under the Aerial Services job number have done an outstanding job of implementing this truck and making the first year of Aerial Services a profitable one. We are looking forward to expanding our customer base in 2001 and continuing to service our existing customers with this new addition to our fleet.

Coaching Kids is Challenging, Rewarding

Matt Briggs – Electrician

I am an electrician at Commonwealth Electric. With some of my spare time, I coach a 12 and under roller hockey team for the Lincoln Thunder Roller hockey (which is similar to ice hockey except with a few less pads and a few less rules).

Thunder is one of three roller hockey clubs in Lincoln. We are currently holding our practices at the Abbott Sports Complex indoor facility and host three tournaments each year.

Our season begins the first week in January and can run through July if we qualify for a national tournament. Last season, we took a team to the Nationals in Rockford, Illinois and placed fourth

among an extremely tough field.

I was introduced to roller hockey five years ago when my son, who was seven at the time, first played the sport for Paul Hoegemeyer who was a Thunder coach. Last year, I took on a reserve team as my first coaching experience. I found that while I'm not so good at playing the sport myself, I seemed to have a knack for coaching and really enjoy it. It has become a very rewarding part of my life and I think I learn as much as the kids. I didn't grow up with the sport so it has been a real challenge to try to learn and teach at the same time.

This year I am coaching a very talented group of kids and we are currently in the middle of our season. We travel to tournaments about every other weekend and include places like Des Moines, Kansas City, Omaha, and Hastings. We are

“It has become a very rewarding part of my life and I think I learn as much as the kids.”

hoping to end up in St. Louis for the Elite National Tournament in July and have a strong showing.



Power Cell Installation Goes Smoothly

The following is an excerpt from the November 2000 issue of *Electrical Contractor*.

Gary Demmel, vice president of Commonwealth Electric's Omaha, Neb. office, said that although [First National Bank of Omaha] was his firm's first fuel cell installation, no major problems were encountered. This fact was borne out by William Cratty, president of Sure Power Corporation, Danbury, Conn., the general contractor who reported that fuel cell manufacturer ONSI's equipment guidelines were clear and straightforward.

In reviewing the project, Demmel emphasized the critical need for coordination among HDR Engineering, the primary consulting firm; Sure Power, the provider of the entire power system; ONSI, the manufacturer of the fuel cell; Commonwealth Electric, the installer; and First National Bank of Omaha, the customer.

Demmel observed that there is big potential for critical power with high availability,

especially for data centers. Contractors, he said, need to be aware of the necessity for these requirements. For actual installation, contractors should review the process well ahead of time. Space was at a premium with the FNBO installation, so most of the conduit and wire layout had to be done in the concrete slab. This took foresight and planning.

OSHA Class Teaches Safe Work Habits

Ruben Bera – Safety Director

One of the most important parts of an effective safety and health program is management support. It can be difficult for safety directors, project managers and field employees to focus on safety matters if they feel they don't get the support they need and deserve.

As many of you know, OSHA has a program called the OSHA 10 Hour Safety and Health class. This class is designed to give our employees a good overall view of the OSHA safety requirements. This class covers many of the daily obstacles we face and offers guidelines that will help reduce exposure to unnecessary accidents and OSHA fines. Many of you carry the OSHA 10 hour card.



On Saturday, April 7th, I conducted an OSHA class for the Omaha and Lincoln project managers and branch managers. Also in attendance was Dave Firestone, Vice President. The topics covered were the same that you were taught. Having these managers in the class certainly sends a message that management is supportive of all of your safety efforts. I feel that the class will help managers better understand what is expected of you and also make them aware of the potential exposures you face day in and day out. Many times a project manager will come to your site and not fully understand why we do the things we do. They now know why we test the air in confined spaces, why we wear fall protection, why we purchase the best safety



equipment available and why it is so important that safety rules are followed. I heard many positive comments and I believe this is another big step towards making our company the best there is. Not only do we provide quality service, we also provide well-trained and safe workers, and this includes upper management.

The next time you see your project manager, ask them about your safety. You'll be surprised on the new support you'll receive and how much better they understand your work environment.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. We must all stay informed and work safe.

Birthdays

April

David Firestone	4/2
Spencer Sanborn	4/3
Cassandra Vachal	4/6
Douglas Standage	4/8
Melvin Saalfeld	4/14
Roger Othling	4/15
Clayton Anderson	4/20
Dallas Hall	4/25
Louis Havlat	4/30

May

Jon Carstens	5/2
David Maurice Scobie	5/2
Robert Dean Carper	5/4
Thomas Price	5/5
Matthew Briggs	5/6
Robert Maise	5/7
Justin Stone	5/15
Steven Layton	5/16
Andrew Ingwerson	5/19
Alan Pendleton	5/28
Scott Virus	5/29

June

William Thielen	6/8
Daniel Limbeck	6/9
Russell Adams	6/11
Michael Vollertsen	6/23
Todd Havlat	6/25
Jason Oltman	6/25
Brian Cheney	6/25
Sean Knego	6/28
Kevin Kuta	6/28

Anniversaries

Richard Kirk	13 yrs.	4/25/88
Gregory Derks	12 yrs.	5/15/89
Ricky Maas	12 yrs.	6/26/89
JoAnn Asch	11 yrs.	4/16/90
David Robel	9 yrs.	4/27/92
Benjamin Burns	9 yrs.	5/4/92
Cassandra Vachal	9 yrs.	5/18/92
Ronald Savicky	8 yrs.	6/22/93
Clayton Anderson	8 yrs.	6/24/93
Larry Lahman	7 yrs.	4/4/94
Gary Prevetie	7 yrs.	6/1/94
Douglas Standage	7 yrs.	6/6/94
Doyle Horwart	7 yrs.	6/20/94
Juan Lopez	6 yrs.	6/26/95
Matthew Firestone	5 yrs.	5/13/96
Sean Tooker	5 yrs.	5/13/96
Richard Garcia	5 yrs.	5/23/96
Gerald Vanamerongen	4 yrs.	6/19/97
Joshua Phipps	3 yrs.	4/16/98
Chad Behrends	3 yrs.	4/27/98
Spencer Sanborn	2 yrs.	6/1/99
Alvin Duba	2 yrs.	6/2/99
Melvin Saalfeld	2 yrs.	6/28/99
Pat Klausen	1 yr.	4/24/00
Jon Carstens	1 yr.	5/31/00
Nicole Schmid	1 yr.	6/22/00
Jeremy Carbonneau	1 yr.	6/30/00

Orchard Place Child Guidance Center

Mike Duffy – Service Manager

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest has started renovation work of an existing church in downtown Des Moines. The renovated facility will house the PACE Academy, a division of The Orchard Place Child Guidance Center. Orchard Place offers a vast array of services to at risk youth in the Des Moines area. Highly trained clinical social workers, mental health counselors and psychologists, joined by educators and youth service workers work with residents ranging in age from 5 to 17.

The renovated facility will include classrooms, administrative offices,

gym facilities and conference areas. The electrical portion of the renovation includes new power distribution, new lighting, new branch circuit wiring for lighting and power, new fire alarm system, new telephone and data cabling and equipment and new mechanical systems. The general contractor on the project is Neumann Brothers Construction Company. This is a nice project for the Des Moines location and we are happy to be involved with a project that will mean so much to the at risk kids of the Des Moines area.



New Younkers Store Nears Completion

Michael Price – Branch Manager, Des Moines

The Younkers project in Muskegon, Michigan consists of the construction of a new 106,000 square foot retail anchor store for Saks Incorporated. Younkers will be one of several anchor retailers of the new "Mall of the Lakes" in Muskegon. This project broke ground in July of 2000 and the store is scheduled to be open in August of 2001. The Muskegon project is an electrical design build consisting of service equipment, power distribution, lighting, emergency generator, phone and

data cabling, fiber optic cabling and loss prevention systems.

Our relationship with Saks has grown over the years and is one of our most valued professional relationships here in Des Moines. Over the last two years, we have completed major renovations and new store construction projects for Saks Inc. in Milwaukee, WI; Chicago, IL; Brainerd, MN; Great Falls, MT; Minneapolis, MN; and Wilmar, MN.

Bob Scheer is the Project General Foreman and Stacy Markel is the project Foreman learning the ins and outs of Saks retail construction. We have partnered with The ME Group to provide our drafting services and engineering supervision. We have teamed with a local NECA contractor for our labor force. These types of out of town projects present a unique set of problems but Bob and Stacy are doing a great job. The project looks to be done on schedule and within budget.

