

# The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Summer 2004



**Commonwealth  
Electric Company  
of the midwest**

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## A Look Back in Time

David F. Firestone – President/COO

On the eve of CECM's 18th anniversary, I think we need to reflect back not only on the past 17 years of our own history, but to a time 60 years ago when our fore fathers invaded the mainland of Europe to fight for freedom. The sacrifices were many and in some cases, more devastating than we ever could imagine. Loss of life and the destruction of all the buildings and cities are almost too much to fathom here in 2004. But thanks to our fore father's efforts, we enjoy our freedom today.

There certainly is much turmoil around the world and we are seeing the effects here in our own backyard with the gas prices skyrocketing, the price of our raw materials at the highest levels they ever have been and the continuing loss of life in Iraq just to name a few. We certainly can wonder if it ever will get any better. We do have reasons to be thankful. We do live in a democratic society which allows us much more freedom than any other nation in the world. It also gives us an opportunity as a company to exercise this freedom by pursuing all our endeavors, making CECM a stronger company. But our own growth has not been without sacrifice. We see the economy struggling which in turn forces us to compete; sometimes in a very risky and cheap market. We are seeing slower payments from our customers than we ever have seen before. It is very easy to want to look at all the negatives and not see any of the positives that are out there for us as opportunities. We should be thankful for our customers that have helped us grow and our workforce that has given us the ability to perform. These all have been a vital part to what has made CECM the company that it is today.

We should feel very fortunate, that as a company through the course of the past 17 years, we have provided a livelihood on an average year-



David F. Firestone  
President/COO

ly basis for over 400 families along with being a giving company, giving back to the community to which we owe our existence. You have heard the old saying "When times get tough, the tough get going". I think it really applies to us today. We have had some tough roads that we have come across and there will continue to be tough roads ahead, but we are tough and we will persevere as we enter into our 18th year of business. There are a few of the old guard left and I want to thank all of you for your commitment to CECM. And to the new guard, you should look at the foundation the old guard put forth that has allowed Commonwealth to grow and prosper. As we go forward, let us do it on a united front, not as five separate locations, not as the field against the office, but as one. And that is Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest.

## The Servants of Mary Chapel Renovation

**Eric Hoge** – Project Manager

The Servants of Mary (OSM) is an order of Catholic nuns based in Omaha. The convent buildings include a 1920's era Mother House, a 1950's era residential/office building, and a chapel adjoining the residential building. Commonwealth Electric was selected by The Servants of Mary and AOI to participate on a design assist basis with Morrissey Engineering as well as provide all electrical construction.

The first phase of the project was the total refurbishment of the chapel. The chapel was in need of updating from top to bottom. Mark Ross and Eric Hoge provided design assistance and project management. Matt Burnham, Scott Logan, and Kurt Demmel are the onsite electricians.

The project posed multiple challenges for completion. First and foremost was the tracing of the existing electrical circuits so that a new electrical service to the chapel could be created. First and foremost was the tracing of the existing electrical circuits so that a new electrical service to the chapel could be created, and several electrical changes made through the years made tracing of circuits a challenge. In addition, the chapel is in the center of the 1950's building



Servants of Mary Chapel - Before



Servants of Mary Chapel - Before

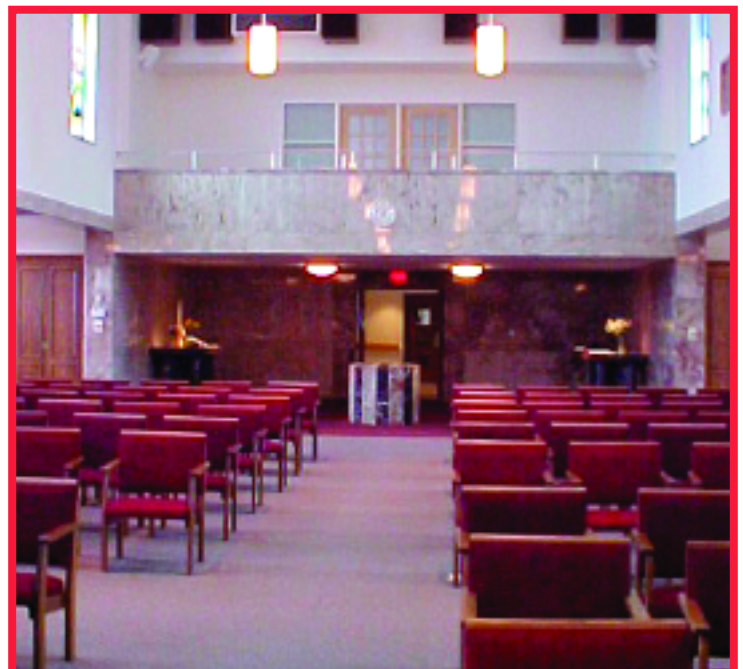
and the balance of the building was to remain operational throughout the construction process. Any changes to the chapel electrical service had to maintain power to the rest of the building which houses offices and residence rooms.

With the challenges presented by the existing structure and infrastructure, the construction team had to find creative solutions. One example of innovation was the solution to an unsightly panel in the chapel. A power panel had been installed flush with a marble wall. To make matters worse, all conduits going to the chapel plaster walls passed through the same location. All parties wanted a more aesthetically pleasing solution. AOI and Commonwealth Electric brainstormed and decided to put a junction box inside the wall so that the conduits could be re-used. AOI installed a "hinged" piece of marble over the junction box so that the box was hidden and accessible.

ing in the nave and narthex all connected to a new dimming panel. The difference in the chapel is spectacular. All trades worked very hard to have the chapel available to the sisters by Easter. The chapel was indeed available for Easter services and was formally re-dedicated by Archbishop Curtis on May 9, 2004.



Servants of Mary Chapel - After



Servants of Mary Chapel - After

## Saks Off 5th Stores and 2004 Sensormatic Projects

**Paul Marsh** – Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric in Des Moines has completed the low voltage systems installation for Saks in Gurnee, IL and Destin, FL. The Off 5th Stores are an outlet store for Saks located in outlet malls across the nation. Commonwealth provided voice and data cabling, security cabling, and camera cabling installations at both locations. The construction of these stores is a turn key contract with the developer absorbing a large portion of the construction costs. Commonwealth was chosen for the low voltage systems installation due to the owner's comfort level and relationship with our company.

Doyle Horwart handled the Gurnee, IL store while finishing Sensormatic installations around the Chicago area. Stacy Markel traveled around the Midwest earlier this spring performing Sensormatic installations and on to Florida for the Off 5th Store.

Doyle and Stacy both took off the second week of January for the 2004 Sensormatic project. You have probably seen the Sensormatic pedestals at store entrances while out shopping. These systems help eliminate inventory shrinkage within a store due to shop lifting and theft. This project consisted of power and raceway installations at 26 locations throughout the Midwest. Doyle focused

on 13 locations throughout Illinois, while Stacy handled locations to the west from Iowa to Montana. These installations take anywhere from 3 to 5 days to complete depending on the amount of entrances at a given location. Commonwealth provides 120V power and underfloor raceway installations at each store entrance to facilitate the equipment installation performed by Sensormatic. Doyle and Stacy have done a great job completing these projects within the given timeframe.



Saks Off 5th, Destin, FL



Sensormatic Installation

## U.S. Arid Land Research Center, Maricopa, AZ

**Gene Hayes** – Project Manager

Ground was broken on February 20th adjacent to the Maricopa Agricultural Center, in Maricopa, AZ for the new U.S. Arid Land Agricultural Research Center. When completed in approximately 18 months this \$28 million research facility will house 30 scientists plus support staff for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), chief scientific research agency for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This facility will be co-located with the University of Arizona's Maricopa Agricultural Center.

When completed this new facility will be one of the premier agricultural research centers in the world dealing with issues of arid and semi-arid lands. The new facility will combine in one center ARS's U.S. Water Conservation Research Laboratory and Western Cotton Research Laboratory, both currently located in Phoenix.

CORE Construction is the General Contractor. CECM is the electrical contractor, also responsible for the fire alarm and access control systems for the project. With a contract value of nearly \$2.3 million dollars, this is one of the more significant electrical projects recently in this region.

Gene Hayes is the Project Manager and Alan Zombolas the Project Superintendent for the new facility. At this time, our work is just beginning, concentrating on underground electrical and communications conduit ductbank installations.



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# Summer Safety Cookout

**Ruben J. Bera** – Corporate Safety Director

Back in early March, I thought it would be a good idea if we had a “Safety Cookout” at all locations. The thought behind this was to provide everyone an opportunity to come enjoy good food, cold beverages and see an excellent safety demonstration and promote teamwork.

Our first stop was the Des Moines location. A memo was sent to the field employees and we arranged for a fall protection demonstration. As we all know, falls are the leading cause of deaths and injuries in the construction industry. It is my



Paul Marsh cooking burgers

understanding that OSHA is again targeting fall protection on construction sites. It is so important that we all understand and follow the safety rules regarding fall protection. As I travel between locations I am impressed with the awareness towards safety that is shown at the job sites.

A trailer was brought in by Mike Kent of Kel-Welco. Mike did an excellent job showing everyone the different types of fall protection available and reviewing the OSHA standards. Following the review Mike did two drop tests. These tests illustrated how important it is to wear the correct PFA (personal fall arrest) equipment and the effects on the human body that occurs during a free fall. There were many questions asked and we all thought it was a success.

Thanks to Mike Price and the entire Des Moines staff, especially Carolyn Cole, Brenda Gagne, Allison Petersen and Marilyn Finnell for all their behind the scenes help. It could not have been done without them. (I hear they are still talking about how delicious Carolyn’s brownies were). Also a big thanks to David Oliver and his crew for helping set up the area.

Having Safety Cookouts is just another effort to provide safety training to help keep all of our employees safe.

Look for the traveling chef at your location soon. Have a safe summer and remember,

**Think smart. Work safe.**



Des Moines Employees



Mike Price and Carolyn Cole



Mike Kent - fall demonstration

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## Live Your Life

**Gil Stensrud** – Project Manager

It seems that as of late a whole bunch of my friends and acquaintances have been having “milestone” birthdays. I’m amazed at how some of them get bummed out because of a numerical occurrence. One of them even refused to attend a surprise party we had for him for his 50th...so we partied without him. Sure, we all wake up on some mornings and wonder what the heck we did to make that muscle/joint ache. But so do my 20 year-old children. And I’m not suggesting that some serious things can’t happen in our life that can be a set back. They do.

I recently read an article in which the author challenged people to “Live their life, not their age.” Makes sense to me. Thank God I didn’t take people too seriously when they asked me if I was ever going to “grow up”. I’ve been having too much fun, I guess. I’m active in scouting, mentoring and other stewardships. I still enjoy my job. Along with its struggles, I still enjoy the challenges and competition.

Is your personal time what you want it to be? Is your job still enjoyable? What are you doing to “live your life”?

# Common Ground

**Jay Hoobler** – Branch Manager

For the past three years Commonwealth Electric has been performing work on the Gila (pronounced “heela”) River Indian Community located between Phoenix and Tucson. We recently began work on the 5th and largest of the projects that we have done on the reservation. These projects have been unique in the sense that we have utilized resources from both our Tucson and Phoenix branches to perform this work. All five projects have been performed under subcontract agreements with Lloyd Construction in Tucson.

For those of you not familiar with the region of land between Phoenix and Tucson it is mainly inhospitable desert landscape with no shade present for as far as the eye can see. However, within this vast expanse of brutal desert terrain sits the Town of Sacaton, the governmental center for the Gila River Indian Community. The Pima and Maricopa Indian tribes are using profits generated from two tribal owned casinos to expand the tribe’s economic development, to provide additional social services to community members, and for tribal operations. In and around the area surrounding Sacaton, the GRIC has cre-

ated one of the most successful Indian industrial parks in the nation.

As a result of this increased economic activity, Commonwealth Electric has been able to provide our electrical construction services and be a part of the community’s recent growth. Two projects have already been completed with three more currently under construction. The two projects that we have already completed are the Tribal Courts Complex and the Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Center which were constructed simultaneously on adjacent parcels of land. Commonwealth projects currently under construction are the Criminal Justice Facility, Building G which is an expansion to the existing jail facility, the District Five Elder’s Center which provides social services to tribal elders, and the recently started GRIC Governance Center. The Governance Center is a 120,000 square foot office facility that will be the center for tribal operations. This project began in February and is scheduled for completion by March of 2005.

Tim Beatty has served as project manager for all of the GRIC projects. We have utilized supervision from both the Phoenix and the Tucson branches to complete the field work. Steve Harrell from the Tucson location was our general foreman for the Juvenile Detention Facility and the Tribal Courts Complex. Steve is in the process of completing the Criminal Justice Facility Expansion and is also the general foreman on the Governance Center. Joe Amavisca from our Phoenix location served as a foreman on the Tribal Courts Complex. Joe is currently in the process of completing the District Five Elder’s Center. Upon completion of this project we expect that Joe will be providing a supervisory role on the Governance Center.

All work on the reservation is performed subject to an “Indian Preference” employment policy that has been implemented by the tribal employment referral office. All other electricians have been referred from Local 640 out of the Phoenix area. We have received cooperation from both the tribal employment office and Local 640 that have allowed us to successfully man these projects.



Tribal Courts Complex



Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Center



GRIC Governance Center

## The Cheesecake Factory – Jordan Creek Town Center, West Des Moines, Iowa

**Matt Masters** – Project Manager

Commonwealth Des Moines broke ground on The Cheesecake Factory located at the Jordan Creek Town Center, which is the new mall under construction in West Des Moines. Commonwealth was selected from a pool of applicants that went through an interview process by Shawmut Design and Construction out of Boston Massachusetts, the General Contractor.

The Cheesecake Factory is a high end luxury restaurant based out of California that serves a full menu of pizzas, pastas, seafood, steaks, sandwiches, breakfasts, and of course a large dessert menu including cheesecake.

The project consists of a 1200 Amp service entrance, swarms of lights, power distribution, energy management, and various other systems. It has a top of the line kitchen, several dining rooms, lobby, bar, and bakery.



The crew which is led by Gary Hagen, Project Foreman, is fully devoted to the project and its aggressive time frame. April 5 marked the start and July 2 is substantial completion. In order to meet this objective, the crew must work weeks consisting of five tens and an eight on Saturdays.

Commonwealth Electric is excited to take part in this fast paced highly recognized restaurant and to get the opportunity to work with Shawmut Design and Construction.

## Merle Hay Mall Monument Wins International Sign Awards

**Michael Duffy** – Service Manager

In 2003, Commonwealth Electric performed the electrical work for the installation of Merle Hay Mall's new monument sign. The monument sign was part of an overall project to update Merle Hay Mall's site lighting, signage and entrances. The sign was awarded "First Place" and "Best of Show" honors in the 2004 ISA International Sign Contest. Michael Madden takes care of the Merle Hay Mall's electrical project and maintenance needs and performed the work on the monument sign. Merle Hay Mall has been and continues to be a wonderful customer for the Des Moines office. We appreciate their business and congratulate them on their new monument sign awards.

