

# The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Winter 2004-05



**Commonwealth Electric Company**  
of the midwest

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## Merle Hay Mall Nears End of 2004 Revitalization Project

Michael Price – Branch Manager

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest was selected to perform the electrical work associated with Merle Hay Mall's most recent revitalization project. Commonwealth joined the team consisting of the owner; Abbell Associates, the general contractor; Wietz Construction, and the engineer KJWW Engineering.

The project consists of major anchor store changes, tenant relocations, new entrances, new parking lot lighting, new electric and telephone utility work, construction of a new stand alone Starbucks Coffee shop and several smaller projects aimed at revitalizing the affected portions of the mall. The project started in August of this year and will extend into 2005.

Room was made for the new Target store by demolishing the old Younkers building after Younkers had moved to a new location. Under a separate contract with Younkers, Commonwealth performed all the electrical services required to facilitate Younker's relocation to the old Famous Barr location.

## The Final Touch

Paul Claus – Project Administrator

We have just finished the final touches on the Hospital Tower at St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center. We installed LED lights on the architectural concept of the cross on the east side of the new hospital tower. This is the final touch that the owners wanted before we could close out the job. Tom Kortus, and Kris Swanson used a swing stage and scaffolding to accomplish this task. The LED's were attached to stainless steel tubing that defines the cross on the building.

The tower project has been ongoing for the last few years and has kept many people employed. I wish to thank all the Local No. 265 brothers that helped bring this all together. Your crafts-

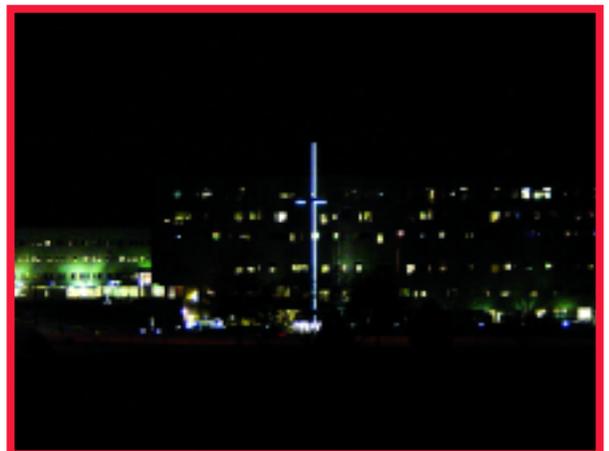
*"It is great to see the mall revitalizing itself. The shops are great and the people with Abbell Associates, Wietz and KJWW have been great to work with. I enjoy being part of this type of project with a long time customer like Merle Hay Mall."*

Michael Duffy – Project Manager

Mike Madden has taken care of the Merle Hay Mall account in the field for several years and has been the foreman on this project. He has had a crew of 3-4 men throughout the project and they have really done a great job. Michael Duffy is the project manager.



Merle Hay Mall Entrance



Night View of Hospital Tower

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## Daring and Challenging

**Ruben Bera** – Corporate Safety Director

Electrical work in itself can be challenging and if not done safely, it can be very dangerous. One never knows what may be needed to complete a project. Many times things are not quite what they look like on the drawings.

Our Omaha location recently assisted in the completion of the new Union Pacific Railroad headquarters building. This is a very beautiful building that added to the ever changing Omaha skyline. The building designer felt the building needed a little extra ambience to the already open design, so they added a fixture called an “Eyebrow”.

Once installed, this eyebrow hung out over the main entrance to the building from the roof. As with any structure here in the Midwest, snow and ice can accumulate. Once the ice melts it will fall approximately 300 feet to the ground below. Realizing this had the potential to cause serious injury, we were asked to install heat tracers on the overhanging beams.

Omaha Branch Manager Gary Demmel was in charge of this project. Working with a local scaffold builder and UP engineers, a plan was formulated to get the men and material up 300 feet. Every conceivable safety issue was reviewed. In addition to the height, weather was also a major factor. Being suspended 300 feet can get pretty cold. The wind was constantly monitored with a safety factor built in. After several trips up and down the elevator, cell calls from the stairwells and group meetings a plan was near. Once the plan was in place, the crew had to be assembled. It’s not easy finding individuals to get onto a platform and be suspended 300 feet in cold weather for several hours at a time. The crew was very involved with the design of the system and suggested changes that were implemented. A safety meeting was held before each lift. Every one had a voice and every voice was heard. A daily checklist was developed and used as a reminder to the crew of what to look for and what to check. Although the view was spectacular there was work to concentrate on. Minds had to remain focused and sharp.

Hats off to a very fine and brave crew. This work was completed without incident except for the occasional re-adjusting of the system. Bill Capps was our foreman on the plat-

form along with Scott Hopkins, Tim Little and Dave Zenchuk. Assisting on the ground and roof and coordinating the building of the system was Will Fabian. Kelly Jansen took a trip up and assisted Will.

This is just another example of the dedication and workmanship our employees possess. Another reason why we say we are “Committed to Excellence”.



Union Pacific Eyebrow



Working Crew on Eyebrow



Scott Hopkins and Bill Capps



Working Crew

# Des Moines Adds New Service/Small Projects Manager

**Michael Price** – Branch Manager

Des Moines Adds New Service/Small Projects Manager

I am excited to announce that Mark Ramsey joined our office in November to transition into the service manager position and pursue small projects. Mark comes into the office with over 20 years of field experience as an IBEW electrician and 6 years of project management/service management experience.

Mark is a welcome addition to the Des Moines office and will allow us to better serve our customer's service needs and expand our service operation. Mark will also be pursuing new account business and small projects of all types.

Mike Duffy has managed the Des Moines service group since he came into the office in 1999 and took the service department over from Milo Ware. The service department has grown during Michael's management to include over 10 service vehicles and dozens of accounts. Michael will transition the service manager duties to Mark and continue to pursue his growing account and project customers.

Please take some time and welcome Mark to the Commonwealth Team.



Mark Ramsey

# Vatterott College and AAA Call Center

**Neil Davidson** – Sr. Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric's Omaha branch just completed work on two projects for Workstage. Workstage is a general contractor / developer based out of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The projects were Vatterott College, a 103,000 sq. ft. building housing class rooms and laboratories, and AAA Call Center, a 45,000 sq. ft. call center for the Auto Club Group.

Workstage designed both buildings with an 18" raised stage floor. The stage houses the HVAC, electrical, and voice data systems. The buildings were pre-cast concrete, and went up very quickly. Both buildings were completed in just (5) months.

Vatterott College has labs for Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant, Veterinary Technician, Pharmacy Technician, Computer Technology, and Graphic Art & Design. The design of this building allows rooms to be easily reconfigured for

different programs. Ed Gable was the electrical foreman for Commonwealth on Vatterott College.

AAA Call Center will have 450 employees to handle calls from AAA members in Nebraska, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Indiana. The call center is a 24/7 operation. Commonwealth installed two diesel generators, a 400KW and a 600KW, and two 100KVA UPS systems. Keith Burnham was the electrical foreman for Commonwealth on the AAA Call Center.

The projects were both finished on time under a very tight schedule. We had no accidents or loss time injuries on either project. The electricians who worked on these projects did an excellent job.



AAA Call Center



Vatterott College

## Lozier Woodshop Automation Project

Eric Hoge – Project Manager

Lozier Corporation makes shelving for retail stores such as Wal-Mart, K-Mart and others. They also make various types of wood products in their woodshop in Omaha. One machine that is used is a two pass saw that cuts different grooves in the sides of wood depending on the product selected. The woodshop contracted with Commonwealth Electric to replace the controls in the machine as the old controls were failing and expensive to repair.

The project had two nuances that complicated the solution. First, there are over three hundred different products that the machine can produce. Each product has a different height, width, and combination of saws that are used. Second, high speed encoders are used to position the machine to make the width and height cuts. To complicate matters even more, the old control system went down during the last week of September, and Lozier asked that we expedite the install to as soon as possible since they had production that needed to run.



To meet the project demands, we had to work quickly. The new control system was based on the Allen Bradley Micrologix 1500 controller and Paneview 550 graphical interface. The products were at our office, but the programming had barely even started when the call to expedite came. Roger Troupe and Keith Rudeen were asked to com-

pletely assemble the new control system in a Hoffman enclosure without the benefit of drawings (see pictures). In addition, Roger and Keith had to connect the new control system to the existing power controls at the site again without drawings.

While Roger and Keith worked on the physical assembly, Eric Hoge developed the computer program using Allen Bradley software. The programming used a “recipe” format which contained all of the product combinations. The user selected a product by paging through screens on the Panelview. The height and width would then automatically adjust to within one millimeter of product specification using high speed encoders to calculate actual position. The user then selected start and the corresponding saws turned on and the belt feeder would start so that product could be loaded.



From the time when the call came in to expedite the install until production was ten days. It was an extraordinary effort by the entire team to get the unit operational in such a short time. There were several long nights, but it was worth it to help the customer start producing on that line again.

Many of our customers company-wide are increasing their use of automated systems to retrofit outdated controllers as well as improve efficiencies in their operations. Commonwealth Electric has the technical expertise to design, program, document, and install complete control system solutions. For more information, call Eric Hoge in the Omaha office.

## The Final Touch

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manship and skill have given Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest and St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center a quality product that we can all be proud of.

We are still working in the old hospital remodeling the areas that moved into the new tower. This should keep a small crew working until February or March of 2005, that is when the General Contractor is to be complete with their portion of the work. We are hoping at that time to work with the hospital staff and complete the other areas that need to be remodeled. We are still working on tying the old hospital and the new tower together on the new fire alarm system.



Hospital Tower