

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Winter 2007-08



Commonwealth Electric Company
of the midwest

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Past, Present, Future

Apprentice of the Year

2007 Safety Recap

Costco Warehouse
in Omaha

Nebraska Career
Dream Team

Old Chicago
Merle Hay Mall

Verizon Call Center

Lincoln Street Work

Veterans' Project
Des Moines

OPS Data Projects

Grandview College
Campus Improvements

Expo Division

Past, Present, Future

Tom Price

Coming to the age of retirement I have thought a lot about the Past, Present and Future in relationship to Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest.

The company has a past that has been marked by brilliance; the company's growth, the winning of awards, the completion of projects on time and under budget to name a few. The company's present operations are just as brilliant as the glimmer of our past with the growth of our locations to seven, increasing our work force three fold and the diversity of projects we have completed.

Commonwealth Electric's future is going to be more brilliant than the other two put together. How do I know this? We are a very ethical company that is growing by adding excellent people for future roles in our operation. Our organization is dynamic. We are constantly striving to be the best we know how. We are COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE.

As of December 31, 2007, Commonwealth Electric has achieved another milestone. The company has passed a hundred million in volume. We have achieved this goal profitably and without debt. However, is that a measurement of Commonwealth's success? Not really. Our success has come from you, our employees from your dedication and hard work. It has come from all of you making our client's goals your goals and accomplishing those goals profitably and on time.

In the cost control class I teach at the University of Nebraska in Construction Management, I always ask the students to take a small test the first day. Outside of the opposite sex, I ask them to tell me what their passion in life really is. I ask them what truly turns them on. I am amazed at the answers I get but most responses revolve around faith, family, and commitment to their work ethic. If you ask the employees of Commonwealth Electric the same question, you will find they are also focused on faith, family, and commitment to work. I think this focus is why the Construction Management Department is ranked as one of the top schools in the country. It is also, why Commonwealth Electric has been so successful.

This last year I had a student from the University of Nebraska's School of Business interview me about what I thought a successful company management structure should be. I told him I did not know. He was somewhat taken back and asked about Commonwealth Electric's structure since we have won so many awards for having a successful company. I told him that we had achieved our goals by committee and that I would not recommend to anyone starting out in a new company using our management structure. He then asked me if our structure was so bad how we could be so successful. I told him the answer was and is very simple. You hire and keep ethical people who are smarter than you are. That is what we have done the last twenty years at Commonwealth and it works. You treat people the way you want to be treated.

The people we have in place as managers and the people below them that are learning to become leaders is why I am so excited about the future. For the most part, Commonwealth Electric has the people in place to run for another 20 years.

Just think what my generation has accomplished. We have walked on the moon. We have invented the internet. We have invented the cell phone. What is the next generation going to accomplish? Are you going to find new ways to do electrical construction? Are you going to build projects by computer to see if everything works, or are you going to find new innovative construction techniques



Tom Price

continued on page 2

continued from page 1 - Past, Present, Future

that will allow us to become more efficient? Whatever it is Dream big. The future is yours and is going to be amazing.

Commonwealth Electric has always been on the cutting edge in electrical construction techniques. Commonwealth however has always checked to make sure the cutting edge worked before implementing it.

Our company is focused and ready to have the next generation lead it for the next 20 years. If we stay committed to

excellence, our company will be even more successful in the future.

Effective this past January 1st, I retired from Commonwealth Electric and have resigned as Chairman/CEO. However, I will remain a member of the Board of Directors. I am excited to have been a part of this dynamic operation. Thank you for being part of Commonwealth Electric.

Apprentice of the Year

Ed Gable – City Superintendent

Mike Sheldon graduated from the Electrical Apprenticeship program last May and was named the Apprentice of the Year for his class. The Apprentice of the Year is selected based on top grades, outstanding work reports throughout their apprenticeship along with good attendance. However, often we overlook their ability to work with others while maintaining a good attitude and adapting to overcome problems on the job site. Mike did this as a 3rd year apprentice on the Horseshoe Casino project in June of 2005. Mike assisted his foreman, Don Gerjevic, in laying out every electrical stub up for the equipment, transformers, power panels and lighting

panels in one of the four electrical rooms that fed the casino floor area. Mike combined all of the prints so as to lay out all of these underground services to the entire electrical room. It is very rewarding to see a young man come up through the program and be as successful as Mike. Thank you, Mike and good luck in the future.



Mike Sheldon

2007 Safety Recap

Ruben Bera – Corporate Safety Director

The end of the year is fast approaching and again we take a moment to look back at what achievements we have made towards worker safety in 2007. We had a few hiccups in areas, but overall we will have another good year. As mentioned before, Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest was awarded the 2nd highest award for safety from our insurance company for outstanding safety performance. As I indicated, this award belongs to every employee. We should all be proud of this but it's not about awards. As we look forward to the upcoming year, we look ahead to the challenges we will be faced with.

As many of you have heard me say, "OSHA has considered construction the highest hazard industry and electrical work is considered the highest hazard of all trades".

Working with electricity demands skill and attention to detail. Knowing this, I believe we are prepared to make the challenge to show people that although we may be considered the highest hazard, we are the safest of all trades. I believe our record speaks for itself.

In the coming year, we will be focusing our attention on making sure all electricians are aware and trained in 70E – arc flash protection. Recently an article was written by one of our electrical engineers outlining some of the requirements. Business will have to step up to the plate and properly label electrical panels; but we need to know the possible exposures we face and what steps we need to take to protect ourselves. 70 E is here to stay and we will be ready to meet the demands and demonstrate our ability to our customers that we are the electrical contractor that can deliver a quality product in a safe manner.

Safety is a culture that must be accepted by everyone in order for it to succeed. It begins with commitment. Our motto is "Committed to Excellence", which says a lot. We are committed to installing pipe and wire correctly, making sure the underground work will not fail, making sure the terminations are correct and making sure the product not only works well but looks good and making sure all this is done safely.

Our tool box meetings say, "Think smart, work safe". I believe we do this.

Costco Warehouse Comes To Omaha, NE

Lynn Kahnk – Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric of the Midwest was the selected electrical contractor for the first Costco Warehouse in the Omaha Area. The building is a 153,409 sq. ft. member's only warehouse. The project had a very tight schedule, starting the building June 15, 2007 and opening for business October 18, 2007. The months of August and September broke a 17 year old record for rain fall, which delayed some areas of the project.

The general contractor for the project was Jackson Dean Construction out of Seattle, Washington, which has been the contractor for Costco stores all over the country. Their expertise helped all trades coordinate what needed to be done so we could meet the tight schedule. Everybody worked well as a team with no major problems and no lost day accidents.

Much of the material was bought prefabricated and ready to install. One of these items was the precast pole bases made locally in Omaha. They greatly speed up the on-site installation.

The entire floor was poured in five pours, done at night due to the heat in July. Then they set the structural steel, which took



only one week. As soon as the steel was safe to work under, Commonwealth Electric started hanging the 506 hi bay light fixtures before the roof decking was installed.

Ron Castro was our Project General Foreman and did an excellent job on this extremely fast pace project. Commonwealth's electricians all sacrificed time away from their families and other activities while working the long hours involved in a project of this type. Thanks to all of you!!

This project is just another example of the fine workmanship our electricians have done. Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest and all the electricians involved can take pride in this project knowing that it will serve the community now and in the future.

Nebraska Career Dream Team

Gary Demmel – Sr. Vice President

Matt Dierks, a 5th year apprentice in Omaha, was selected as a member of the Nebraska Career Dream Team for the Nebraska Advanced Manufacturing Coalition (NAMC). NAMC started the Nebraska Career Dream Team as a way to help spread the word about the great careers in manufacturing and related industries. This campaign is about helping young people identify their passion, then giving them tools to find a great career in manufacturing and related industries. Besides the many agencies and companies sponsoring this campaign, the IBEW Local #22 out of Omaha is also a sponsor.

After being selected, Matt was interviewed on the radio as part of the pregame show for one of Nebraska's football games. Then on November 26th, Matt and his wife along with the rest of this year's Dream Team were invited to the Governor's Mansion to have lunch with the Governor. Besides his Electrical Apprentice training, Matt also has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Midlands College in Fremont. Congratulations to Matt. We know that he will be a great representative for NECA and the IBEW on this Dream Team.



Matt Dierks

Old Chicago – Merle Hay Mall

Matt Masters – Project Manager

Merle Hay Mall, a long time valued customer for Commonwealth Electric, is the new home to the first Old Chicago Restaurant in the City of Des Moines. Old Chicago prides itself on their pizza, pasta, and most importantly the 110 brews on the World Beer Tour.

September 24th marked the grand opening for the project. Commonwealth's work included a new 800 amp service, electrical distribution, light fixtures and

various other systems. Mike Madden was the Project Foreman and Matt Masters was Project Manager and Estimator. The General Contractor was Terwisscha Construction out of Willmar, Minnesota.

We appreciate that Terwisscha Construction gave us the opportunity to complete another successful project at Merle Hay Mall.



Verizon Call Center

Bob Philipps – Project Manager

“Can you hear me now?” is being said by more than 800 Verizon employees in the new 130,000 sq ft call center located in the UNL Technology Park in northwest Lincoln. The call center was completed in mid October and received its first official call shortly after. The long road to completion of this project started in October of 2006 when we were contacted by a number of developers including the successful bidder Gioffre Companies of Dublin, Ohio. After numerous pricing exercises and scope changes, we submitted on the core & shell portion of the work in December 2006 and were awarded that contract in early January of this year. We then started on the Tenant Improvement (TI) portion of the design and pricing that was to bid in early March. Matt Firestone and his group handled the major portion of the estimating for this project working numerous hours in a short period of time. We were awarded the TI contract in late April.

Schmidt & Stacy of Dallas, Texas provided all the electrical engineering for the project with Strider Steele being the lead man for them. Our field crew was lead by Jason Rieckman serving as General Foreman and Kirk Cosaert along with Justin Stone serving as Foremen. The crew size was on average 15 men with a peak of 22 to 28 depending on work schedules. The contract values for this project were \$1,024,000 for the core and shell and \$2,123,542 for the TI package. The TI portion of the project did not include CECM providing the fixtures as this was supplied by Verizon. The meat and potatoes of the project included a 3000 amp 480/277 service with a 3000 amp and a 400 amp UPS systems. The Square D equipment is distributed throughout the building in three electrical rooms. This was all backed up by a Caterpillar 2000kw generator to make sure there would be no lost calls

for the center. Some of the other features of the center are a cafeteria complete with

kitchen, serving area and seating. There is also a large break room that is open 24 hours with vending machines. There are several conference rooms, training rooms and executive offices to go along with 40,000 sq ft of cubicle space. The building has a complete lighting control system provided by LCD, a very complex grounding system along with a lightning protection system. One of the unique obstacles we needed to overcome was to complete the Verizon Data center and have it functional by July. The data center was completed and operational complete with lights, equipment, floor covering and paint on time. Throughout the remainder of the project we needed to maintain uninterrupted power for the center while completing the remaining areas around the data center.

This was a high profile project for Lincoln as it brought in new jobs into a market that had numerous existing companies shut down in the recent months costing hundreds of Lincoln area workers their jobs. I feel our company and in particular, our electricians performed above and beyond what was expected of them. We have received numerous compliments both from the developer and Verizon about our performance. I would like to thank all of those involved in the project and the support of it from the electricians in the field to the office staff to the warehouse personnel. Without everyone’s great attitude and professionalism, this project would not have been the success it was.



Street Work for Lincoln

Paul Claus – Project Administrator/Estimator

We are just finishing up two projects in Lincoln - one at South Street between 9th and 17th and one on 84th and Havelock Avenue. This South Street project consists of six intersections and pedestrian lighting for the entire project. Due to Adrian Voss and Jeremy Hoegemeyer’s hard work keeping up with the trenching and the intersections, we were able to keep ahead of the paving and concrete work. This has been a wet season and working condi-

tions have not been the best. We are in the finishing stages now and it looks like we will be successful.

The other project is one intersection at 84th and Havelock Avenue. This was an executive order by the mayor to get this intersection completed as soon as possible. We were given permission to pull off of our South Street job and concentrate our efforts on the Havelock project to get it completed.



Adrian Voss



Juan Lopez

A Project for Our Veterans in Des Moines, Iowa

Mark Ramsey – Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest is beginning the construction of the new Veterans Administration Extended Care Building at the VA campus in Des Moines, Iowa. The project was delivered on a Design Build/Assist basis to the Veterans Administration with Russell Construction leading as the general contractor for the project. The 80,000 square foot, 3 story, 140 bed Extended Care Building will include a 1200 amp 480 volt electrical service, a 600 amp 480 volt emergency power system, lighting, fire alarm, voice/data, nurse call, paging, security, patient wandering, lightning protection system and temperature controls. The project also includes extensive site work including new duct banks for power and systems; new parking lot and roadway lighting and additions to the campus fiber optic communication system.

“Through the construction of this project, we are excited to be part of the VA’s vision of bringing world class healthcare services to our veterans in Des Moines, Iowa.”

*Michael Price
Vice President, Commonwealth Electric*



Veterans' Extended Care Addition Northeast Perspective

Commonwealth's team includes Project Manager Mark Ramsey, Commonwealth Communications Project Manager Jeff Gero, Estimator and Project Coordinator Dianna Merritt and Project Foreman Steve Hansen. Construction began this fall and is scheduled to be complete by June 2009.

OPS Data Projects

Chris Gall RCDD – Manager

For the past 8 months, Commonwealth Communications has been working with 2 of the local school districts and Morrissey Engineering to install interactive whip boards into selected classrooms. This project has allowed us to become distributors of the Extron product line as well as the chief line. We buy the products direct from the manufacturers and provide labor and material installations to the customers. The customers then provide the interactive boards and the projectors for us to install.

Currently we have completed work on approximately 400 rooms in 25 different schools. As a result, we have become a preferred provider for the Millard School district and also have completed numerous time and material installations with the other district. This project has allowed us to be in

constant communication with the district IT and electrical personnel as well as the local personnel at the schools. The relationships we have formed have allowed us the opportunity to do work outside of what was in our original scope of work when we began the first project almost a year ago.

With the help of our Electrical Service Department and our Communication Division, we have been able to provide our customer with a seamless integration of technology and power which our competition can't offer. The Audio Video field in our area has no contractors who can provide both areas of expertise "in house" which helps us be competitive with the local non-union A/V suppliers who have to hire the installation out.

More Campus Improvements at Grandview College

Michael Duffy – Special Projects Manager

Commonwealth Des Moines has completed work on Grandview College's latest campus improvement project. Grandview has added much needed parking for their west campus buildings and Commonwealth was able to assist with lighting these new lots as well as walkway lighting between campus buildings. The east campus also got another facelift with new walkway lighting that connects the student housing buildings to the Student and Wellness Centers. Commonwealth has been able to assist Kim Butler and her staff for many years in facility upgrades but this project has been one of the most

visible to date. John Schoolen and Jason Lane worked closely with Grandview's Greg Spooner to make this project a success for Grandview. Grandview is very proactive in updating their facilities and we look forward to helping Kim and Greg with future projects.



Expo Division

Dan Shannon – Branch Manager

What a great year it has been for the Expo division. As 2007 comes to a close, we have a lot to be proud of. We have maintained our stance in the Arizona market as one of the premiere electrical contractors in the Convention and Trade Show industry. Our relationships continue to grow stronger with our exclusive contracts at the Phoenix and Tucson Convention Centers as well as many of the states finest hotels and resorts. We have made it through the rigors of developing our new computer system which puts us ahead of the competition by way of efficiencies and customer service. This process was long and tiresome but we now have a system that we can be very proud of and we can now focus on our primary mission: We will provide every customer, both internal and external, the very best hassle-free service available. This is, in fact, the core of our business and we have every intention to continue to grow and learn to be better every day.

In January of 2008, the Phoenix Convention Center will host the Media Center for Super Bowl XLII as well as the Taste of the NFL. Both of these events bring tremendous opportunities to our organization, the Phoenix Convention Center, the City of Phoenix as well as the State of Arizona. Every bit of media coverage and press conferences in the two weeks leading up to the big game will come out of the Phoenix Convention Center's west building. Media coverage will come from everywhere around the world and will continue to run 24 hours each and every day. This will take a lot of resources and diligence but we welcome the challenge and we are confident this will be the best operation the NFL has experienced since the last time the Super Bowl was in Phoenix in 1996. Another fantastic event to be held at the Phoenix Convention south building will be the 17th Taste of the NFL. This charitable event will bring the finest chefs from every location that an NFL team represents to offer its

attendees a sampling of fine food and drink from their respective cities. This organization's mission statement is "To address the needs of the hungry and homeless by raising awareness and money through special events and programs." We are very happy to provide our service for this well respected and most giving event.

With the construction of the new Phoenix Convention Center, businesses have not grown dramatically but as we look forward to the completion of this project due to open in January of 2009, we are very excited about the opportunities that this will bring. This facility will literally be tripling in size and we will now be able to host trade shows, conventions and special events that are among the top events in the country such as Mary Kay Cosmetics and the National Rifle Association. Along with the facility growth, our staff will certainly need to grow as well. From what we can see at this point, staffing will double by early 2009. We look forward to our growth along with the accomplishments and victories associated with it.

While all of this is happening, let's not forget our other exclusive contract at the Tucson Convention Center. Tucson will also be adding a new arena and convention space to their facility. Construction for this facility has already begun and this too will offer many new opportunities to our organization in the Tucson market.

It's hard to believe that we are nearing the end of another year but with everything that we can see coming at us in the future, we truly look forward to next year and many more success stories.

From all of us in the Expo Division, Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season.