

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Winter 2009 - 2010

Columbus Commonwealth Growing and Expanding.....

Ruth Chermok - Business Development

Our Columbus office continues to work many hours getting the ADM project completed. In response to our excellent work thus far, we continue to be awarded some smaller projects and jobs during the final stage. Although we are at about 50% of our workforce, we still have over 100 electricians employed at the site.

A flurry of bidding activity has occurred within the last quarter. We have been very close on a number of important projects and bids. Even though we are frustrated with not winning more work, we are comfortable that our numbers are accurate. The good news is that we have picked up a few contracts outside of the ADM plant, and are partnering with some new General Contractors and gaining exposure in the Norfolk area.

Recently a core crew completed a project for Cargill in Schuyler and did an excellent job of representing our quality, well-trained workforce. We have since bid some work at the Cargill plant in Columbus as well. In addition, Steve and I have made some inroads at B D Medical and it is anticipated that there is a large amount of work rolling out there. We have been assured that we will have bidding opportunities and get a chance to earn their work.

Numerous contacts have been made, and most recently Brian Orton assisted our branch with a client,

CSS Farms. This installation handles potato processing for Frito Lay and ships 10+ semi loads daily out of their facility. Brian is working on an engineering study to support some new variable frequency drives and controls, for these massive bins that temperature control and support their potatoes.

The Omaha Low Voltage Division continues to offer great support to our branch. We are working with them to develop some joint marketing methods, to find our "first step" with customers thru their services where we are competing against local electrical contractors. It was their "introduction" that gained us our first opportunity at Cargill, Schuyler.

Our local team continues to represent the company very effectively within the community and chamber activities. Thanks to the support of the IBEW/NECA LMCC, Commonwealth was the major sponsor of "Santa's arrival" in the town square. This event gets us a lot of attention and notice! Our team put together a Holiday open house as part of the Downtown Christmas Stroll. We partnered with the IBEW Hall at their site and handed out goodies and treats to over 300 residents and spoke to them about our training and electrical services.

Matt Schumacher, a fifth year apprentice, represents Commonwealth on the Columbus Dream It Do It Team. This team of young professionals appear in the community and classrooms to encourage young people to pursue careers in manufacturing and related occupations. Matt most recently spoke to 6th and 8th graders at Columbus Middle School and fielded a number of questions about the electrical field and working at ADM. Matt is one of our local team members that represent and "sell" our services very effectively!

We anticipate numerous projects and opportunities after the first of the year. There are a number of City projects in the planning stages, as well as opportunities coming at BD Medical and other facilities in the area!



Matt demonstrates Arc Flash Protection Gear to Students!!!



Commonwealth Electric Company
of the midwest

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Columbus Commonwealth Growing & Expanding

Cowie Cleanup Day

Novozymes North America MMU/Loadout Building, Blair, Nebraska

Safety Update

Sunsation Spa Comes to Drake Campus

Norwalk Gets New Kum & Go

Commonwealth Lincoln/Corporate Going Green

Raytheon Missile Systems Multi-Project

MidAmerican Energy

Cowie Cleanup Day

Allison Petersen – Service Coordinator

In Des Moines, we have always thought of our employees as one big Commonwealth family. One of those family members is Jeff Cowie, the stockman/delivery driver for the Des Moines location. Early in the fall, a tragic accident left Jeff's father's life hanging in the balance. Fortunately over time and through a lot of ups and downs, Doug Cowie is recovering. After the accident, Jeff and his family were not able to keep up with the chores around his father's acreage. So, as Jeff would do for any of us, his Commonwealth family decided to pitch in and help out.

On a chilly morning in November, several members of the office staff and a number of electricians and spouses dropped by the Cowie place to lend them a hand. Workers showed up with rakes, chainsaws, trimmers, leaf blowers and plenty of initiative. A mountain of leaves were raked and burned, a number of trees were trimmed, some electrical work was done in the house, and whatever else needed to be done was done. And as a reward for all of their hard work, volunteers were treated to chili, hot dogs, beverages and a lot of cookies and brownies prepared and served by Doug and Jamie Cowie.



When the day was done, the Cowie acreage was ready for winter. We were able to help out a wonderful family and have a great time doing it. Thanks to all who volunteered their time and thank you to the Cowie family for welcoming us in and showing us such great hospitality.

Novozymes North America MMU/Loadout Building, Blair, Nebraska

Lynn Kahnk - Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric of the Midwest was the selected electrical contractor for the first of nine buildings on a 30 acre site in Blair, NE. The facility will produce enzymes for existing corn-based ethanol and later enzymes for cellulosic ethanol production. Enzymes are needed to break down the starch or the cellulose in the raw materials. Novozymes' enzymes account for about 60% of the enzyme market in the biofuel industry.

The 45,560 square foot 65 foot high building included a 2,500 amp 480/277 volt electrical service, 600 amp motor control center, 75 KVA transformers, distribution panels, panelboards, 30 KVA UPS, high bay fluorescent lighting controlled by a lighting control system, fire alarm and voice/data. The project also included extensive site work including new duct banks, hand holes and vaults for power, data, fiber optics and a scale house.

The warehouse fluorescent lights use eight type T5 lamps and were installed 60' above finish floor.

The MMU unit and chiller was an existing unit that was being used in North Carolina and had to be shut down, disassembled, transported to Blair, reassembled and making product in a two month time frame. All went well and product was being produced by the end of October as scheduled.



Commonwealth's team included Project Manager Lynn Kahnk, Commonwealth Communications Project Manager Lance Nuzum and Project Foreman Richard Neal. Construction started this summer and was completed on schedule.

Commonwealth is very pleased to be a part of the early stages of the building of the biotech facility in Blair, Nebraska.

This project is just another example of the fine workmanship our electricians have done. Commonwealth Electric 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.

Safety Update

Ruben Bera – Corporate Safety Director

Commonwealth Electric had another successful year in safety. Our incident rates are down and safe work habits continue to improve. We are improving our safety supplies and introducing new ways to maintain a safe work force. We constantly look for new and improve methods to help our employees get the job done in a safe and effective manner. As with many companies, we track numbers as they are an indicator of how safe we are working. As I have mentioned previously, more and more owners and general contractors are looking closely at our incident rates and safety plays a major role identifying safe electrical contractors. If the incidents are down, it enables us to show potential customers that we are not just a quality electrical contractor, but a contractor who believes that the safety of our employees has and will continue to be our top priority. I once heard a statement that I believe we at Commonwealth Electric believe and support. “If we take care of our workers, the numbers will take care of themselves.”

This past year we got a new Secretary of Labor – Hilda Solis. During an interview she stated,

“When it comes to workplace protection, workplace health and workplace safety, let me be clear: the Labor Department is back in the enforcement business”.

What does that mean to us? It means we need to remember all of our safety rules and make sure we follow them. It also means that OSHA will be enforcing more rules with increased inspections and large fines for contractors who fail to provide their workers with a safe work environment. An area I talk about a lot is documentation. According to OSHA, if it isn't written, it didn't happen. This is especially true when it comes to employee training. Records must be kept and available. We at Commonwealth Electric do well in this area. Branch Managers allow me the time to conduct training in class room settings and on the job training. To illustrate this further, during a recent trip to Phoenix, I had the opportunity to conduct an all day safety class with our Expo division personnel and the Phoenix branch electricians. Dan Shannon, Expo Manager provided excellent facilities for this class. We spent the day reviewing all of our basic safety rules and discussed new ways to improve site safety. There are many people to thank for making this happen, Dan Shannon and his staff as well as Joe Graham, Phoenix Branch Manager and his staff.

Another example is the first aid/CPR training that Jennifer Harris, my administrative assistant, provided for the Lincoln branch line crew and other field electricians. Jennifer is an EMT which allows us to provide in-house training rather than using outside vendors. Having Jennifer conduct these classes is another demonstration of the safety

support we provide all our employees.

During the coming New Year, we plan on doing more and more training. Records will be kept to show OSHA and customers our commitment to employee safety. There are many challenges ahead and we will do our part to make sure our employees stay safe and healthy.



EXPO Safety Training



Expo Training



Lincoln
First Aid/CPR
Class

Sunsation Spa Comes to Drake Campus

Michael Price – Vice President

A few months ago Commonwealth Electric in Des Moines was contacted by Hubbell Construction Services requesting a quote for some work related to a new tenant they had moving in. Sunsation Spa was opening a new tanning salon and had requested that Commonwealth quote the electrical portion of the project. One of the spa owners, Renita Brand, had worked with CECM on another project and was very pleased with the work that was done. She and co-owners Curt Brand, Ashley Brand, and Stephen Roney hoped we could work with them on their new venture. Hubbell Construction awarded Commonwealth the project which is located in the Drake West Village at 1315 31st Street in Des Moines, Iowa. The project consisted of adding an additional 400 amps to the existing service to accommodate the (12) new tanning beds and additional mechanical equipment as well as wiring the beds, mechanical equipment, and office space.



Ashley Brand, Sunsation Spa owner

"I really enjoyed working with Hubbell Construction and the owners on this design build project" said Project Manager Mark Ramsey, "it was fun to see the excitement on the owners' faces as the project came together".

Mike Van Der Hart was Commonwealth's electrical foreman on the project. Heather Talbot and Low Voltage Project Manager Jeff Gero handled the low voltage portions of the project.

Norwalk Gets New Kum & Go

Michael Price – Vice President

Commonwealth Electric Company recently completed the construction of a new Kum & Go convenience store in Norwalk, Iowa. The new store which is located at 530 North 2nd Avenue in Norwalk, replaced a much smaller store which was demolished prior to the new construction. The standard duration of construction for a new store this size is 3 months. With some creative scheduling by the general contractor, Henning Construction, and the past experience Commonwealth's foreman Robin Pearson had working on several other Kum & Go stores, this store was completed in just 2 months at the owner's request.

"We have had a very successful relationship with Henning Construction and Kum & Go L.C." says Project Manager Mark Ramsey, "and hopefully it will continue for years to come."



Commonwealth Lincoln / Corporate Going Green

Lyndsey Harms - Accounts Payable/Payroll

On November 23rd, 2009 CECM launched its recycling program for both Corporate and Lincoln Branch offices. We use the service called Recyclink and are proud to say as of 1/10/10 we have saved 2.19 trees, 146.29 gallons of oil and have recycled almost 300 lbs. Our pick up is once a week and with the help of Gary, Kelly and Andrew in the warehouse we have our recycling out and waiting Monday mornings. With Recyclink we have a website recording our “impact”, points and pounds recycled. Recycling has cut our trash down significantly and will help us soon save money with our garbage bill for both locations. Saving a little green in more than one way!

The recycling program started as a way to help reduce our office garbage and take some responsibility for our environment. Many thanks to Bob Philipps and Matt Firestone who helped get this program started. It has also changed our work place; you can often hear “Hey, can this be recycled?” The participation has been great! This is also a perk for our customers that are environmentally conscious since we are LEED certified and also offer electronic billings; this is one more step toward a greener work place.



Lyndsey Harms - Recycle Coordinator

Raytheon Missile Systems Multi-Project Design Build

Jay Hoobler - Vice President

The Tucson office of Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest was awarded a multi-project design build contract to provide electrical construction services at the Raytheon Missile System's Airport Site Facilities. The contract is being constructed with a local Tucson contractor, Concord General Contracting.

The project, which was awarded in late September, consists of six separate projects in five separate buildings. The projects are all of the fast track nature with all work, including the design, being completed in a time frame of approximately four months. A large portion of the work was completed during Raytheon's annual holiday shutdown period. The work included upgrades at several of Raytheon's Data Centers including the installation of several UPS units, a new emergency generator, new distribution panels along with power and control work associated with the computer room HVAC systems.

In order to meet the customer's schedule the work on all six projects needed to be performed concurrently. As a result, numerous CECM foremen got involved in this work. Commonwealth foreman Quang Tran, Kevin Tamayo, Tom Barnes, Ken Kitchen, Tom Jackson, Matt Merriman and James Luper all had supervisory roles in the project. Our project manager Clay Gideon did a great job of working with the design team, procuring all required equipment and materials and coordinating the installation of the work. At the time this article was written five of the six projects were complete with the last job scheduled to finish up in early February. This was another great effort by our team here in Tucson.

MidAmerican Energy

Mark Ross - Project Manager

Over the past year, in addition to our service work, we have had four major projects at the MidAmerican Energy power plant in Council Bluffs. We ended up working in three of the four generating stations on site.

In Unit #1 we did a controls upgrade job that was similar to the job we did in Unit #2 the previous year. We worked with ABB on the Unit #2 job so when this project came around they contacted us and we negotiated a contract with them. This project was scheduled for MEC's spring outage, so it gave us six weeks to get the work done. This project completed the overhaul of the common control room for the Units 1 & 2 generating stations. The work involved installing new control racks and associated wiring behind the main control panels, replacing and adding new I/O cabinets and their associated wiring and then removing the obsolete instruments in the control panels and installing painted metal sheets over all of the control panel surfaces. We could do some of the conduit and partial wire installation prior to the outage but all the equipment demolition and new installation plus the hundreds of wire terminations (along with checkout and verification by ABB) were done during the outage. My foreman for this job was Pat Nary and he received many compliments throughout the job for his efforts to get the job done on time.

We had two projects going on in Unit #3. The first job was the dust collector replacement project that was located a few levels from the top of the boiler building. Two new dust collectors were being installed just south of the existing collectors while the plant was still in operation. All the existing controls, PLC inputs/outputs and power were going to be relocated to the new collectors in addition to new power and control requirements of the new collectors. CECM generated new control drawings in addition to red-lining existing MEC drawings for use during construction. A lot of conduit and wire was installed prior to the shutdown (6 -7 wks) and then all power and controls were transferred during the shutdown and everything was started up and tested. MEC asked that we hire the company that does their PLC program modifications to incorporate the new inputs/outputs to the system and to make sure that the PLCs are talking to the equipment. Scott Gleason was the foreman on this project and did a great job of coordinating all the work before and during the outage.

The second project in Unit #3 was the total ignitor replacement on the boiler. We had a contract with Hamworthy Peabody Combustion, who provided all the construction documents. This work again was going to have to be completed during the 6-7 week spring outage. This was a very critical project for MEC since this would shut down their generating capacity and they would not get it back until all the work was completed. MEC brought in one

person a couple of weeks in advance just to generate and maintain a schedule for this project so that their management team had confidence that the work would be done on time. With this schedule in place all trades were forced to look at the worst case scenarios and make provisions in the time frames that we had in order to keep the project on schedule for start up. We again were able to get a good portion of the work in place before the outage, which included pulling multi-pair control cables from each boiler level down to the relay room, but once the boiler was shut down everyone jumped in. There are eight sets of ignitors each on seven different levels, three levels on the back and four levels on the front of the boiler housing. Commonwealth lead the way going in and disconnecting all the power and controls to each ignitor and then letting the mechanical contractor come in and remove the old and then install the new ignitors. We then followed behind and connected the new power and control cabling and then assisted in the check-out and start up of the ignitors. The project went well and HBC was pleased with Commonwealth's craftsmanship and commitment to the job. Pat Nary was the foreman for this project and again did an excellent job. While Pat was working the ignitor project we picked up a contract with Emerson Process Management to do a controls upgrade on Unit #3. This involved installing new Ethernet and computer cabling between the relay panels and the main control console. We also installed new and larger flat screen monitors at the control console so that the operators could see the system displays better.

On Unit #4 we were contracted by Diamond Power International to do the electrical work for modifications to the ash transport system to the newest of the generating stations on site. DPI would be installing two 150HP blower skids, which included solenoid valves and control boxes. There was additional work involved with new diverter valves and instruments that were being added. We had to furnish and install two starters for the blower skids into live MCCs, install control conduit and wire from the MCCs to the Fly Ash Control Panel and install control conduit and wire from the Fly Ash Control Panel to the new blower skids. The MCCs and the Fly Ash Control Panel are located in an elevated (+30') electrical room with short runs of cable tray providing access out to a common area. Pat Nary was the foreman for this project and coordinated the work with DPI's man in the field.

For the most part the projects above were done during the 6-7 week spring outage, with us having a 2-3 week window for pre-outage work. Pat Nary and Scott Gleason coordinated multiple projects and were able to show MEC's vendors why MEC has Commonwealth do their electrical work. Even as the economy slows down, MidAmerican Energy still uses Commonwealth electric for the service work.