

# The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Summer 2002



**Commonwealth  
Electric Company**  
of the midwest

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Let's Roll

New ING  
Document  
Imaging  
Center

Haymarket  
Pedestrian  
Connector

St. Elizabeth  
Regional  
Medical  
Center

Douglas  
County  
Landfill Gas  
to Energy  
Plant

Herberger's  
Department  
Store

Des Moines  
Foremen  
Training

Foremen  
Safety  
Training

## Let's Roll Thomas Price – Chairman/CEO

June 30, 2002 marked the close of Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest's 15th year in business. All of CECM should take pride in our accomplishments. Over these last 15 years, our operations have grown and changed but our purpose has always been the same. Our purpose has been and still is to operate efficiently, ethically and profitably in all of our locations. We do this by focusing on our major goal: Customer satisfaction—providing our customers with the highest quality of service on time and done right the first time.

I wanted to thank all of our employees and customers who have committed to the company's well being these past years and ask that you continue with us in the future.

The events of 9-11-01 have had a major impact on our industry. We need to always remember how blessed each of us are to live in this country. We need to always realize that working together as a team will insure our success in overcoming any future challenges CECM might have in this market.

In order for us to move forward in the next millennium, the Management Committee has made some major calculated changes to our management team. I have assumed the C.E.O. responsibilities of the company as Chairman of the Board. David Firestone has accepted and been promoted to President and Chief Operating Officer. Glen Moss is continuing to be Secretary/Treasurer of our company and has been promoted to Chief Financial Officer. Pat Campbell has accepted the duties of Executive Vice President in charge of the Phoenix operations. Gary Demmel has been promoted to Senior Vice President and will work to coordinate the northern locations.



The Management Committee has completed, submitted and approved its strategic planning and cost projections for the next five years. We feel the company is poised to go to the next level in electrical construction and sales.

Commonwealth has grown from an \$8 million to \$65 million a year operation.

We have expanded into 16 states and now have an average of 400 employees. CECM has obtained accolades along the way—Top 50 Electrical Contractor as recognized by E.N.R., Entrepreneurship of the Year and the Chamber of Commerce's Cornerstone award just to name a few.

Our successes with our customers can be attributed to hard work and commitment on the part of the employees of Commonwealth. I thank each and every one of you for your loyalty and work ethic.

I feel that all of you are a personification of what's right in American business. Your work, your commitment, your willingness to help others, your focus on customer satisfaction and doing the work right the first time have made Commonwealth a great company.

So what now? Let's get even better. As we conservatively grow, let's think outside the box on how we can best service our customers and maximize the potential of our people. As Beemer said on 9-11-01, Let's roll! Let's take charge of our company as he took charge of Flight 93. Let's make our company, our employees, our customers and our country the best they can possibly be.

## Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center

Paul Claus – Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric Company has been selected by Kraus-Anderson Construction Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota to be the electrical contractor on the Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center. The project consists of a new five-floor parking garage with 1200 parking stalls, a new four-story medical office building, a new six-story hospital tower, and a new addition to the existing utility plant.

We have started work on the parking garage and have completed most of the site work and temporary power. The parking garage is scheduled to be completed by October of 2002. The utility plant is to be on line by February of 2003, the medical office building is to be completed by the end of March of 2003, and the Hospital Tower by March of 2004.

Ron Lannin is the General Foreman on the job, with a good group of foremen to assist in the project. The foremen are Dave Filbert, Sam Pulec and Dennis Mohlman.

Our Chief Estimator, Matt Firestone, has been very instrumental as a team member on the design, review, and pricing requirements for this project.

This is a great opportunity for Commonwealth here in Lincoln and should keep a crew of people working for a couple of years. There will be additional information on the job as it progresses.



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There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.

—Sam Walton

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# Des Moines Invests in Foremen Training

Bob Philipps – Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric has always tried to provide its electricians with the most up to date training and this is just another example. On April 25, 2002 the Des Moines office called all of its traveling foremen back to Des Moines for a two day training seminar. Classes were held in the Des Moines office April 25th to April 27th. Foremen Roy Lamb, Stacy Markel, Jason Rieckman, Matt Walsh and Doyle Horwart were trained in Square D Powerlink Systems, Kohler Generators, Sensormatic, Energy Management Systems and miscellaneous administration functions. All of these foremen spend a great deal of time on the road running projects for the Des Moines CECM branch.

and Stephanie Harrellson talk with all of the foremen about their job duties. The foremen were shown how the paper work they do in the field affects accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, safety and project coordination.

We also reviewed some current projects in Lansing, MI, Rochester Hills, MI, Rochester, MN and Las Vegas, NV. We also talked about all the various Loss Prevention and Cash



## Left to Right:

Bob Philipps, Todd Asche, Roy Lamb, Jason "Forrest" Rieckman, Stacy Markel, Sandy Meyer, Doyle Horwart, Steve Watson, Matt Walsh, Mike Price

warehouse and applied what we had learned from Square D pertaining to the new Powerlink Generation 3 equipment. This "Lab" allowed the class to have hands-on training and have all questions answered as they encountered problems relating to programming of the panels. The days were long and with all the items that we needed to cover, we had to keep on a tight schedule, but in the end everyone benefited. This was the second time we had conducted these classes but the first time where it was over two days.

The decision to have these classes represents a large investment on the part of CECM. The rewards of having well trained foremen in the field representing CECM are well worth the investment.

Both Michael and I would like to give a special thanks to Jennifer Santi in the Des Moines office. Jennifer effectively coordinated the classes, quests, travel arrangements, etc. Without her help, our class would not have been as successful as it was. Thanks Jennifer!

“ The meeting provided an opportunity to have all questions answered. Having the reps there to show their products, and the hands-on training we received cut the learning curve in half. Well worth the time!

—Jason Rieckman, Foreman



To stay on the cutting edge of electrical installation and to continue to provide good service to a great customer as Sak's, Branch Manager, Michael Price and myself felt that we needed to round up the troops and touch on all aspects of running jobs on the road and more importantly provide a custom type training class for Sak's projects.

The first day was spent on in house training. We had Marilyn Finnell, Brenda Gagne, Jennifer Santi

Wrap projects that we have been installing all across the country. We also introduced our new project located in Peoria, IL to everyone. We even had the local Verizon telephone representative answer questions about our cell phones and service.

On the second day we called in the experts to help us with the specialty training. We first contacted two representatives from the Memphis and Nashville Square D offices respectively.

Then we called upon representatives from Electronic Engineering and Kohler Generator. The class was also attended by an owner's representative.

After listening to all the speakers, we then went out to the new "Lab" located in the



## Foreman Safety Training

Ruben Bera – Corporate Safety Director

Recently Commonwealth Electric conducted foreman safety training at different branch offices. At our Des Moines location we've conducted lockout/tagout, fall protection and confined space safety training. At our Tucson location, we conducted foreman safety training covering safe behavior and electrical safety. On May 23, 2002 the Lincoln Branch office conducted foreman safety training. There were 29 field foreman, 3 project managers, the branch manager and 2 administrative persons in attendance. This meeting covered:

- The importance of following lockout/tagout procedures.
- Aerial lift training
- Understanding safety behavior.

This safety meeting was an example of the commitment management has made towards providing all workers a safe work environment. The meeting was well received. There were many questions and positive feedback.

It is important that we as a company consider the needs of all customers; including you, our internal customer. When we look at projects to bid, we must consider the customer's needs and wishes. What is it they expect of us? How can we best provide that need? This is true with our internal customers. What can we do to insure your safety needs?

Training is a basic need that we all must have. This process starts at birth and carries throughout our lives. Everything we do or how we act is from something we've learned.

Safety is also something we have been taught. Safety programs are designed to provide rules and guidelines. Safety training is designed to provide detailed training. Your toolbox safety meetings are designed to provide information on topics of electrical safety as well as topics of general safety. Safety training is actual hands-on training as the one conducted in Lincoln. It is important for all of us to remember that the safety training you receive is only as good if you understand what is being presented. This is a form of behavior safety.

Our culture is one of ever changing processes. Our work site changes from minute to minute. We must be prepared for these changes. Knowing how to react is what we must train for. Safety training is not a waste of time. It is part of management's responsibility and must be the responsibility of all of our internal customers.

Always remember to think smart/work safe.

Safety Training in Lincoln, Nebraska



Safety Training in Tuscon, Arizona



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# Commonwealth Des Moines Begins Work on ING Document Management Center

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Ron Saf – Project Manager

Work has begun on a 65,000 square foot warehouse that is being converted to a printing, copying, office and storage facility for the ING Corporation. Commonwealth Electric won the negotiated bid early last month.

ING is a new customer for the Des Moines office. We are very excited about the opportunity to be of service to ING. A quote from ING's website best explains the company. *ING, which stands for "Internationale Nederlanden Group," is one of the*

*world's largest integrated financial services organizations. From their headquarters in the Netherlands, ING Group employs more than 100,000 people in 60 countries. In 2001, Fortune ranked ING Group 24th out of the 500 World's Largest Corporations. In North America, ING Group companies offer wide array of services, including banking, insurance, and asset management.*



The project schedule is fast track at only two months. Commonwealth manpower has peaked at nearly 20 men for the project. The project consists of high bay fixtures, reworking of the main electrical service and distribution, new electrical panel boards, new 250KW Generator system, ZTR system for monitoring, security rough in, cable tray, Data/Phone system, new Fire Alarm system, HVAC



controls and new 160 KVA UPS unit. A large amount of this work is overhead so large numbers of man lifts have been needed on the project.

The aggressive schedule has tested Commonwealth, our vendors and suppliers. The submittal and buyout process had to be done virtually overnight to keep the men working. Commonwealth has been able to meet the project schedule thus far and looks to complete the project as scheduled and within budget.

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## Haymarket Pedestrian Connector

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Pat Klausen – Project Manager

In October of 2001, CECM was contacted by Sampson Construction to handle another landmark project after another electrical contractor declined to take the project as planned. The decision to accept was important to CECM-Lincoln, as it is to be another Lincoln landmark that would serve both local residents and Midwest visitors alike. Another important factor was that CECM-Lincoln had been the selected electrical contractor for Haymarket Park that was completed in 2001, which would allow CECM-Lincoln to follow through with all development phases for the area.

This project consists of a bridge link that connects Lincoln's Haymarket Park

over the main tracks of Burlington Northern Railroad with the Haymarket business district and also allows a walking access to UNL Memorial Stadium. This ballpark is home to the Lincoln Salt Dogs (semi-pro baseball team), UNL baseball and UNL softball.

The bridge consists of two 264-foot clear span trusses and four 73-foot girder sections that cross the BN tracks along with abutment ramps that meet existing sidewalks. Upon final completion, one lane of the bridge will be used for a motorized tram shuttle with the other side used as a pedestrian walkway and a bike path.



This is another quality project that Commonwealth employees can take pride in knowing that the work that they did will endure for many years to come that will serve our children of tomorrow.

## Douglas County Landfill Gas to Energy Plant

Neil Davidson – Project Manager

In December of 2001, Commonwealth Electric started work on the Douglas County Landfill Gas to Energy Plant. This project was a partnership between Waste Management Inc., who will operate the plant, and Omaha Public Power District, who will own it.

The plant takes methane gas given off from decomposing garbage and burns it as fuel. This fuel powers four 800-kilowatt internal combustion engine/generator sets,

which produce electricity. The landfill gas plant is expected to produce 25.3 million kwh of power per year. This is enough electricity for more than 2000 homes. The project was finished on time for an April 1, 2002 start-up, and produced 1,611,234 kwh during that month. With time, the landfill size and landfill gas supply should increase, thus increasing the potential generation of power. There is already talk of expanding this plant by installing four more generators.

This was a very interesting project and we look forward to working with Waste Management and OPPD in the future. Matt Burnham was the Foreman for the project with Larry Lahman and Roger Troupe assisting with startup and checkout. This project was completed without any injuries or accidents.

Our thanks to the entire team of electricians who participated on this project. Great job!

## Commonwealth Begins Conversion of Existing Anchor to House New Herberger's Store

Bob Philipps – Project Manager

Rochester, Minnesota is best known for being the home of the Mayo Clinic, and will also soon be home to a new Herberger's store. In the shadow of the Mayo Clinic is the beautiful Apache Mall and the future site of the Herberger's store.

Long time CECM foremen, Roy Lamb started out the project as the on-site foreman but has since been moved to the new Bergners Store in Peoria, IL. Matt Walsh, who had worked out of the CECM Des Moines office, has taken over the duties as the lead man.

The project consists of the conversion of an existing, 2 story, 80,000 SF anchor store into a new Herberger's Department store. The project is an electrical design build consisting of service equipment, power distribution, lighting, emergency generator, energy management, phone and data cabling, fiber optic cabling and loss prevention systems.



Currently we have 8 electricians on site and will be adding an additional 4 before the 8th of May. Most of the demolition has been completed and we are in the process of roughing in walls, installing panel feeders and core drilling for floor boxes.

Commonwealth, along with the rest of the project team, are working to insure a quality installation while



providing it at a competitive cost through our value engineering and effective project management. The project is on schedule for completion in October 2002.