

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Summer 2003



Commonwealth Electric Company
of the midwest

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Committed to Excellence

Tom Price – Chairman/CEO

This year Commonwealth Electric has started a Strategic Planning program for the entire company. The Strategic Planning Committee consists of the four owners, the managers of each location, the Corporate Controller and the MIS Director. These people represent over 426 years of experience in the construction industry. The objective was to first define our company, what it stands for and what level of commitment there was to carry our organization to the next level. This approach required the committee to look hard at each element of our organization and ourselves and come up with a vision that described our soul. This program is on-going with the committee meetings twice a year in person and intermediate meetings via conference telephones. The committee had to define the company's challenges and changes over the last three to five years. It also had to list the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that the company has right now. The committee looked at both internal and external conditions in the industry and spent many hours in discussion of what our company stands for. At the end of the session, the vote was unanimous for our simple statement that defines our souls "Committed to Excellence".

Since this decision, "Committed to Excellence" has been put on all of our corporate stationery. It has been put on all of our trucks and equipment. It is being placed on all of our company clothing.



Tom Price
Chairman/CEO

After each meeting, the committee establishes an action record defining goals, responsibilities, target dates and actual dates of completion. Each one of the committee members report back to their departments for feedback. This program is improving our communicative network and response time. This is an on-going strategic process that all of our employees will benefit from. The company will communicate back to the employees on all developments on a quarterly basis.

Thanks to all of you for being part of the Commonwealth team and making "Committed to Excellence" our vision.

Commonwealth Represented Well to Help a Great Cause

Matt Firestone – Chief Estimator

On Saturday, April 16, The Weitz Company hosted their 1st annual Volleyball tournament to benefit the American Parkinson's Disease Association – Nebraska Chapter. This event raised over \$15,000 for the association. The tournament was held at McCormick's in Omaha and had 32 teams competing in an afternoon and evening of volleyball. The Commonwealth team showed up to play going 9-0 for the day

and winning the tournament.

The team members were Angie Rieckman, Tom and Tammy Kortus, Matt Firestone, Jason Oltman, Jill Heywood, Rick Evans and Chris Gall. We are all looking forward to going back next year to defend our title and help a great cause.

Let's give the team and Commonwealth a big hand for supporting this event.

OPPD Cass County Station

Neil Davidson – Project Manager

OPPD recently began operation of two Cass County combustion turbines that added 320 megawatts of capacity to the utility's generation base. The turbines serve as peaking units, supplying electricity primarily during the hot summer days, when demand is at its highest.

Commonwealth Electric started working at the OPPD Cass County Station site in May of 2002. The project started with a Design Build contract to provide the electrical design and installation for OPPD's Service Building. This building included offices, warehouse space, and electrical equipment to support the Turbines.

Commonwealth was then selected to provide the underground ductbank system for the Turbines. This included the installation of approximately 65,000 feet of conduit, most of which was 5 inch.

Once the ductbank was finished, Commonwealth then started work on the above ground electric system for the two natural gas-fueled Simple-Cycle Combustion Turbines (160 MW each). This included installation and testing of the iso-phase bus duct, cable tray, conduit, cable, and instrumentation systems for the two turbines.



Aerial view of OPPD Cass County combustion turbines

Matt Burnham and Paul Jaksich were the Project General Foreman, Chuck Fintel was the Site Estimator, and Larry Lahman and Roger Troupe provided Testing Services. This project had a very tight schedule and took a lot of coordination on everyone's part. Thanks for a job well done.



Medium Voltage Class

Bob Philipps – Project Manager



On the 26th of June, Commonwealth Electric's electricians became certified in Medium Voltage Terminations and Splices. It was a long day but all felt it was well worth it. Steve Simonson of PowerCon Inc. came in from Omaha and was the lead instructor for the class/certification.

It all started at 7:30 am with class time instruction, short films and a PowerPoint presentation followed by a hands-on lab where all the electricians performed cold shrink terminations and heat shrink splicing. Assisting Steve Simonson was Doug Amen, Ron Lannin and Larry Lahman. Ron and Doug had attended a previous class and Larry has been directing our Power and Testing Division for many years so their guidance and help was invaluable. I would also like to thank Nicole Roach for arranging lunch and other details and last but not least Mike Scharfen of Kriz-Davis who helped in arranging the class and providing the terminations and splices.

Those attending the class were: Troy Bear, Greg Derks, Jerry Chorowicz, Frank Koenig, Steve Layton, Stacy Markel, Roger Othling, Jason Rieckman, Sean Tooker, Chad Trompke and Steve Wilken.

I would also like to thank the other Project Managers and Mike King for allowing these men to attend this class during a busy time. It shows the commitment CECM has for education and training.

Commonwealth Des Moines Begins Work on Urbandale Elementary School Upgrades

Paul Marsh – Project Manager

As the kids of Urbandale, Iowa gear up for trips to the local neighborhood pools, Commonwealth of Des Moines begins work on Urbandale High School and 3 elementary schools. We can thank Dianna Merritt for her estimating skills that provided us the opportunity to work on such a project. The project team consists of the Urbandale School District, Shive Hattery Inc., and Excel Mechanical of Des Moines. Trevor Schmidt will be the foreman for this project.

The project scope includes installing a new service at two of the schools to facilitate the installation of new chillers, new distribution panels, lighting fixture upgrades, along with miscellaneous work at the High School.

A large majority of the work within these schools will occur during the summer, starting June 7 with a finish date of August 14. This will be a tight schedule to follow, but aside from the occasional administrator the buildings will be clear from kids, and busy teachers allowing us to achieve our target date.



Midwest Manager's Meeting

Mike King – Branch Manager

Our annual Midwest Manager's meeting was held at the Embassy Suites on August 6 in Omaha. Prior to the meeting on the 6th, some of the attendees were given the opportunity (thanks to Gary Demmel) to tour the Desert Dome project at the Henry Doorly Zoo on Tuesday evening. What a challenging project and well done by our Omaha location.

The group meeting was chaired by owner, David Firestone and covered topics including vision for the future, branch manager's location report, tax laws that will affect all of us, insurance, safety, estimating and present and future jobs.

These meetings are essential for the continued growth of CECM. All in attendance came away from the meeting with a clearer understanding of the vision and goals of CECM. "Committed to Excellence" is the vision statement for our future. We are extremely proud of all of our employees and their commitment to excellence. Keep up the standards of work that Commonwealth has hung their hats on for many, many years.



Left to right bottom row: Stephen Kuchar, Matt Firestone, Sue Schlake, Ruben Bera, Cassie Vachal

Back row left to right: Mike King, Bob Philipps, Paul Claus, Clayton Anderson, Nick Cole, Todd Havlat, Pat Klausen

Des Moines Expands Its Control

Michael Price – Branch Manager

The Des Moines location has been active in the HVAC control market for several years. However, we have seen an increase in the number of these type projects this year. More and more building owners are installing building automation control systems to help conserve energy and maintain their facility costs.

Several different school projects are currently underway throughout the Des Moines metro area. In addition to the school work, we were recently awarded the temperature controls contract for the new Iowa Events Center Arena and Conference Facility.



The school projects encompass installation of systems in new buildings, extension of existing systems, and complete system retrofits. The arena control sys-

tem is an extensive energy management system incorporating DDC controls. Our work includes a complete conduit system, cable, terminations, installation of devices and assisting with system start up.

Michael Duffy is managing this work from our office and Trevor Schmidt is our Foreman in the field. Michael, Trevor and the Commonwealth crews have done a great job with coordinating our work with the onsite electrical and mechanical contractors. The project teams include members from several school districts, Johnson Controls, AJ Allen Mechanical and The Waldinger Corporation.

I have enjoyed working with the team members on these projects. Trevor's ability to coordinate and complete these projects on time and within budget has been a great asset for not only the owners but Commonwealth. This has been a great opportunity to bring another one of our services to the table.

Michael Duffy
Service Manager



Electrician Brenden Shanahan and some of his control work.



Henry Doorly Zoo – Kingdoms of the Night

Gary Demmel – Sr. Vice President

The Kingdom of the Night which is the World's Largest Nocturnal Exhibit opened up to the public at Henry Doorly Zoo on April 2, 2003. This exhibit is in the basement of the Desert Dome which is the largest indoor desert exhibit under a geodesic dome. The upper level exhibit of this Dome opened in April of 2002. Commonwealth Electric did the electrical for both exhibits.

The Kingdom of the Night had a lot of interesting electrical items particularly on the lighting side. The exhibit is kept dimly lit during the day to make the animals think that it is night. These nocturnal ani-

mals come out only at night so they are then available to be viewed by the public. The exhibit is then brightly lit at night to make the animals think that it is day time. A lot of fiber optic lighting was also utilized. It also features a bat cave, a Eucalyptus Forest, a wet cave, a swamp, a trapper's cabin and an Australian stream. It is a fantastic exhibit, so you really need to see it if you haven't viewed it yet.

Our foreman for this project was Kevin Kalal. He was assisted by Dusty Elsasser. They helped with a lot of the layout and revisions to help accommodate the many unique characteristics of this facility. They



Desert Dome at Henry Doorly Zoo

did a fantastic job. The Zoo has been so impressed with their work that they are now having Commonwealth work on the new Gorilla Exhibit which will be open in April of 2004.