

# The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Winter 2011/2012



**Commonwealth  
Electric Company**  
of the midwest

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## Expo Division

**Dan Shannon** - Vice President

2011 was a great year for the Expo Division. We had another successful year at both the Phoenix and Tucson Convention Centers and had the opportunity to work in many new facilities as well. Through our many successes though, we were forced to say goodbye to one of our longest standing employee with the Expo Division, Arlen Rowland. After 15 years of providing great customer service at the Phoenix Convention Center, Arlen decided it was time to kick back, put his feet up, and retire.

Arlen started with the Expo Division in 1997 when he moved from our Phoenix construction office and came over to the Phoenix Convention Center. It didn't take long for Arlen to take charge and he quickly became the lead foreman which he maintained until the day he retired. It's because of Arlen's tireless dedication and commitment to our success that Commonwealth has maintained a flawless customer service record and has maintained our exclusive contract here at the PCC. Arlen developed many great relationships with not only coworkers but many of our customers who looked forward to working with Arlen at their event year after year. We will miss Arlen's vast knowledge and commitment but wish him well as he now gets to actually spend weekends and Holidays with his wife and daughter.

With Arlen's departure, Kurt Dinkel will be taking the lead at the PCC. Kurt has been with Commonwealth since 2000. He worked in the field for many years until he joined the Expo Team in 2009. Kurt's knowledge and professionalism make him a great fit and we look to him to lead the Expo Division to many more successes.

Finally, our newest member of the Expo Team is Josh Castro. Josh has worked for Commonwealth for approximately ten years. He took a bit of a hiatus from Commonwealth this past year where he worked for the University of Phoenix Stadium as a lead electrician. We lured him back and are very happy to have him. Josh's vast knowledge of



*Arlen's Retirement*

events coupled with his extraordinary customer service skills will make him a tremendous asset to our team. Welcome back Josh.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to thank the rest of our Expo Division Team for a great 2011. In Tucson, Jennifer Sutherland and Tom Jackson are our dynamic duo. They have held this operation together and have made us what we are today in Tucson which is nothing less than outstanding. We continue to improve in every way in Tucson and this is all because of these two tremendous employees.

Finally, our Phoenix Account Managers, LeAnn Whitehead, Amy Dolan, and Jenny Bryant continue to "wow" the Phoenix Convention Center staff as well as exhibitors and show managers. I usually don't go more than a week without hearing about or reading letters of kudos for the service that a customer has received from our PCC team.

Thank you to my entire team as well as all of the Phoenix, Tucson, and Lincoln offices for their support in 2011. I look forward to a happy, healthy, and successful 2012.

## Hilton Hotel Expansion and Renovation

**Mark Ross (Electrical) & Dan Maca (Low Voltage),** – Project Managers

Just after Thanksgiving 2010, Kiewit Building Group awarded Commonwealth Electric the Hilton Expansion Project. This project would involve the addition of 150 guest rooms to the end of their existing east-west wing and the addition of 165 parking spaces to their existing parking garage. The foundation for the new room expansion was the existing columns of the parking garage, so the new work going up was ready to go. The room floors were all poured concrete with post-tension cables so drawings had to be generated showing the in-slab conduit layout for approval by the structural engineer. Kiewit's goal was to make a floor pour every two weeks and that schedule was met most of the time, weather permitting. The electrical design (Alvine Engineering) had the new transformers and panel boards being installed in the existing electrical rooms of the west wings so we were not able to put the guest room branch circuits in the slab but had to run them overhead in less than 5" of corridor ceiling space. We were able though to put conduits in the slab that would tie walls together in the guest rooms and for fixture switching circuits. We were allowed to use MC cable in the guest rooms so with the help of Ed Gable (City Superintendent) and Bob Bohling (Project Foreman) we came up with about a dozen pre-fab device box details. These pre-fab units consisted of the box, box mounting bracket, plaster ring and MC cable attached in the length required. These were made up in our shop, numbered and sent to the job site to be distributed per room. Our labor cost for the manufacturing of the pre-fab was low and allowed us to cut installation time on the job. Probably the toughest part of the job was getting the 480 volt feeders to the new transformers and air handling unit. The electrical room that we had to get this power from was on the opposite end of the hotel which left us a 600 foot plus horizontal run for these conduits; all being installed while the hotel was in operation. We also had to get some large conduit installed for the new low voltage cables back to existing communications rooms.

The phone and data cabling would be installed similar to the existing hotel, in that it would be via vertical risers from a cable tray above the third floor parking garage ceiling. Commonwealth Communications would perform this work. One challenge we worked through during the Hilton Expansion project was finding real estate for all of the low voltage systems equipment and cabling that had not been allocated adequate space to be mounted in the initial design of the building. Early in the

construction process we learned the low voltage closet needed to house a phone wall field, 1 data rack and equipment, 1 phone switch rack and equipment, a coax cable wall field, 1 parking equipment rack and servers, as well as miscellaneous wall mounted equipment for BMS systems. The original design showed all low voltage systems equipment housed in a 7'x8' closet that has two doors, one opening into the room and the other opening out of the room, which further limited the usable square footage of the room.

Kiewit Building Group turned to Commonwealth to help with finding solutions to the lack of space as well as coordination with the various vendors that needed to mount equipment within the equipment room. Kiewit arranged coordination meetings with the various system providers and with Commonwealth's project managers input, was able to allocate adequate space for these systems through the design of 2 additional closets to house the itinerant systems. It became very clear that Kiewit's field management had trusted Commonwealth to coordinate much of this work because they felt comfortable with our expertise of the vendor's needs and they felt confident that Commonwealth would see the changes through to completion.

In March 2011 two additional bid packages came out, one for a new ballroom addition and the other for the existing hotel renovation. Commonwealth Electric was the only contractor from the original project that would be used on these two new projects.

The ballroom was approximately a 15,000 square foot addition (including ancillary space) that would be erected above the existing roof area on the south side of the existing building. A portion of the existing 2nd floor west exterior wall was removed to provide entrance from inside the hotel to the new ballroom. Most of our work was in or at the ceiling level installing all of the new recessed light fixtures and Owner provided chandeliers. The new ballroom was connected to the existing food service area by a new covered walkway over the existing roof. Commonwealth installed a new Lutron dimming system and Electronic Contracting installed the new A/V system.

The renovation work was a new experience for all parties involved. The scope of work for this project was basically to remove everything in the 436 guest rooms and 12 suites and then put new back in. This included carpet, wall paper, light fixtures, sinks, and

furniture. Did I mention that they thought they would do one floor every two weeks? Well that never happened but averaged at three weeks. Since the electrical tends to be looked upon as the last to finish in a project, we pushed the project hard so that we were never an excuse for something not getting done. Our peak manpower was 16 men but never for more than three days at a time. The renovation and expansion work would share manpower at critical times and prevented delays in having men for the jobs. Our contract for this work was with Frazee Inc. from Orlando, Florida.

Bob Bohling was the foreman for the expansion and ballroom, with Andrew Chapman being his right hand man. Pat Nary was the general foreman for the renovation work with Richard Neal as a foreman. J.J. Marsh was the foreman for the low voltage work. This work was a challenge since portions of it had to be shut down for the College World Series and consideration had to be given to guests staying in the hotel. Overall, the project went really well. The leadership by our foremen gave Kiewit and the hotel confidence that we would be done when we said we would and that we would take that extra step to help accomplish all the project goals.

*Hilton Hotel Expansion*



## **B D Medical Posi-Flush Building – Fast Paced Project**

**Ruth Chermok** – Business Development

Our Columbus team is hard at work on an expansion to the BD Medical facility. A Posi-Flush building addition to house several new lines is on a fast track. The General Contractor is Bierman Contracting, and the project has been quite challenging as the metal building components have been installed in stages, and once sections are completed the challenge to get our work “hot” is almost immediate.

Jake Gable is our Project Manager on this nearly \$1,000,000 project; and Andy Brinkman is leading our team. With their experience and expertise, they have imparted a lot of best practices and methods to our Columbus crew. Our Columbus team has risen to the challenge, and we continue to meet the timelines and expectations of this project.

In addition to the building structure itself, the service and controls for the equipment is very intensive and varied. We will also be working with the equipment vendor to install and wire specialized equipment and provide

service to the lines under subcontract with them.

We were also delighted that Chris Gall and our Low Voltage Team have earned a separate contract package on this project with the installation of all related IT, door access, alarm, etc. Previously, B D Medical has worked with multiple vendors for each of these specific services; and they were not coordinated as part of an entire project. B D’s Manager of Information Technology is very excited about one vendor delivery – and we are hoping to win more work with this facility, and possibly gain an opportunity at the B D East facility thru this work.

In a recent review meeting with B D Medical facility manager, he complimented our crew and stated “previously we had a couple of electrical contractors doing all our work”; “we now see the difference in the installation methods of Commonwealth Electric, and your crew has opened our eyes to better practices”. High praise from a very valued customer!



## Safety in 2011

**Ruben Bera** – Corporate Safety Director

Another year is nearing an end, and again we celebrate another successful year in safety. We will end 2011 without a lost time accident and we will have one of the lowest accident rates in our company's history. I could go on and on about how we achieved this but the fact of the matter is it was our field workers who made this possible. Your work as an electrician demands many things of you and can take a toll on the body. Lifting 6 inch rigid pipe overhead isn't as easy as people think, nor is climbing into open trenches in the cold of the winter or the heat of the summer. Although many take electricity for granted, many don't understand what it takes to make the lights come on or the dangers associated with making it happen. Congratulations to all of us for making 2011 one of our safest years.

One of the things that have helped us to be successful is making sure you, the worker, are informed on how to work safe and know how to recognize hidden dangers. The best way this can be done is through training. Each branch allows time to make this happen. Omaha sets a yearly schedule for safety classes. Ed Gable takes the lead and makes this happen, Des Moines and Columbus schedules foreman training where a lot of information can be given. Lincoln has regularly scheduled service meetings and

allows me time to do training on the job site. Our AZ branches, Phoenix and Tucson, conduct yearly training where all key foremen come in for a whole day of safety training. Dan Shannon with Expo provides a great training environment for the Phoenix location. Every branch supports safety training and the results speak for themselves. Safety training and maintaining records are vital to keeping everyone safe. I see more and more prequalification forms from owners and GC's that want our safety numbers. Not only are they looking at our bid, safety is taking an important role on who gets the job. Expect to see more safety classes in 2012. We need to make sure our workers get the latest updates and ideas to prevent injuries.

In 2011, we were fortunate to hire a former employee to be my new administrative assistant. Ann Curtis joined us in February. Her past experience with Commonwealth Electric has enabled us to make a smooth transition. Ann has settled in and is doing a great job.

As I look at the end of 2011 and look ahead to 2012 I'm reminded of the strides we've made in safety since I arrived 16 years ago. It's all attributed to worker attitude and management commitment. This is not my safety program, it's ours, and we will continue to make it grow and make it even more successful. As I have always said, if we take care of you the worker, the numbers will take care of themselves.

## Scottsdale Healthcare Shea Medical Center Generator System Upgrades

**John Mackay** - Project Manager

On August 23, 2011 Commonwealth Electric's Phoenix office was awarded the contract for the Scottsdale Healthcare Shea Medical Center Generator System Upgrade. The project, due to complete in March 2012, consists of replacing the majority of the existing emergency switchgear with the installation of (2) 3000A, 277/480V emergency switchboards fed from a new 3000KW/3750KVA generator, (4) 2000A, 277/480V emergency switchboards, and (1) 1600A, 277/480V emergency switchboard. From the new emergency switchboards (17) ATS switches will be refed.

Due to the critical nature of the project, close coordination is paramount between our project team, Barton Malow, Inc. (general contractor) and the hospital staff to ensure continuous emergency power during the demolition and installation phases.

The project team consists of Carl Pollock, Project Foreman, John Mackay, Project Manager and Jim Lucia, Project Estimator.



*Scottsdale Healthcare*