

# The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Fall 2016



**Commonwealth Electric Company**  
of the midwest

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## Awards

Ruben J. Bera - Corporate Safety Director

It's with great pleasure that I announce that Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest has won the Award of Honor for the 2nd straight year from our insurance carrier. This is a tremendous accomplishment for our company. As a member of a Captive insurance company, this is no easy task. We were rated on our safety performance this past year and were judged along with other members of the Captive.

There is a lot that must happen before awards are given out. Maintaining our safety policies, training of employees in safety recognition are just a small part of what it takes to be "the best of the best". With the help of all employees, our accidents continue to go down and awareness to safety continues to increase. All branches and locations should take pride in the fact that our safe work efforts are recognized.

Keeping up with safety awards, Omaha recently was awarded the Award of Honor from the Omaha Safety Council for the 10th year in a row. This award is given to local and state companies who have met all requirements and have demonstrated their commitment to employee safety. Another great achievement to all who make this happen.

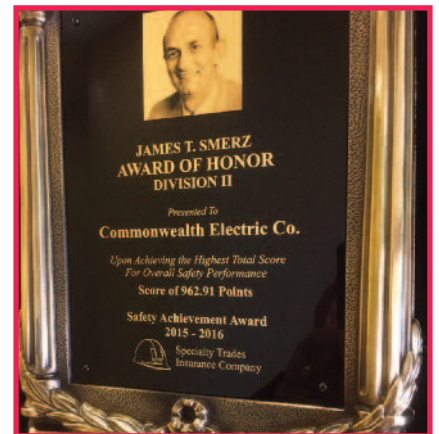
Also, Lincoln was awarded the "Spirit Award" for safety performance for 2015. There were many companies in the running for this award and only a few companies received them. We were the only construction company to receive an award. Another congrats to all in Lincoln.

Other branches have demonstrated a commitment to safety. Des Moines recently completed two shut down operations with employees working around the clock for 5 days. No incidents occurred. The customer was very satisfied with the performance and detail. Great job!!

Our Columbus and Kearney offices continue to work in remote areas of western Nebraska. This type of work requires planning and coordination to make sure all safety supplies are on hand. Getting supplies can sometimes take time and safety cannot be over looked. It's refreshing to go on these sites and see that sometimes we are the only ones wearing safety glasses and hard hats. Great job!

Our employees in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona have performed work on top of department stores. This work was done on the hottest of days. Hydration was a key factor and knowing and understanding this, the crews did a great job. Work began early in the morning to compensate for the heat. Tough job in tough conditions.

With 2017 coming soon, we are looking forward to even greater safety success. Training will be a key item as many customers require proof of training. We are up to the challenge and with the commitment and dedication to safety that all employees have demonstrated, we will continue to be the "Best of the Best".



Commonwealth Safety -  
**Promote it, Sell It, Be Proud of It!!**

Back to Back award of Honor  
2015-2016

## UNO Milo Bail Student Center Renovation

Mark Ross - Project Manager

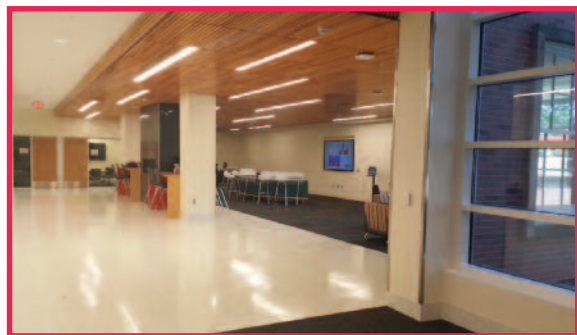
The Milo Bail Student Center on the campus of the University of Nebraska Omaha has been a main stay since 1960 when it was officially opened. Since then two major renovations, including an addition of a third level and eight minor renovations have taken place, so this current renovation project presented a challenge or opportunity however you want to look at it. This was a negotiated project with The Weitz Company. They invited MMC and Commonwealth to partner with them, providing budgets in the early stages of design. Not all of the building was being renovated. The bookstore was 20% affected and the cafeteria was not included except that the fire alarm in these areas had to be replaced with the new system. We had several meetings to discuss building systems, equipment and phasing of the project in order to confirm our budgets. Once construction drawings came out we estimated the project to confirm that our budget would now be our hard dollar contract cost.

The project was scheduled to start after graduation in May of 2015 and to be completed before school started in August of 2017. During this construction schedule the building would have limited occupation and would introduce another level of coordination and safety practices. The phasing of work was not done on a "per floor" plan but on smaller areas on a given floor; so you might have two areas on one floor and a different area on another floor and the two areas on one floor are not adjacent but around an occupied area. We used a staggering amount of Romex and temporary cable to keep the building operational throughout construction.

The new design removed the existing roof over the common first floor walkway and raised it up one level to create an atrium with four glass enclosed roof monitors to let in natural light. With this design concept the building code requires a smoke evacuation system with all electrical components having backup power from a generator. Each of the roof monitors had an exhaust fan in it which pulled a total of 112,00cfm of air through the building. In order to offset the vacuum effect, an air handling unit in the basement had to be programmed to come on to draw in outside air and three exterior doors had to open automatically when a fire alarm signal was initiated in the atrium area. This system was a separate inspection by the State Fire Marshall.



All the new fixtures purchased for the renovation were LED. This was a plus due to the fact that the building has a 120/208V service entrance thus the lighting load was reduced significantly, freeing up power to be used elsewhere. We also replaced 80% of the existing panels, either in place or providing new panels and picking up the existing circuits as needed. Because some areas were cross fed from different panels it was again critical to coordinate when power needed to be shut down if circuits needed to go to a new panel. A new 125KW generator was added with three transfer switches, one for life safety, one for the communications closets and the last for the smoke evacuation system.



Commonwealth Communications was heavily involved in this project, working on access control, security cameras, phone/data distribution and fire alarm. The fire alarm system for the building was being replaced throughout all areas whether renovated or not. This became a challenge since we needed to keep the old control panel working for the areas not yet demolished but have the new control panel installed for the fire alarm devices installed in the completed new areas. The State Fire Marshall's office was very cooperative to make multiple trips to inspect areas as we got them finished, which was eleven in all as well as the final whole building test. Dan

Maca was the project manager for the low voltage work and had Jon Bethers as his foreman on site. They both did a tremendous job of coordinating with the University's representative for the different low voltage disciplines making sure that they were satisfied with our work and still keeping within the design intent.

Dan Mohatt was the electrical foreman on site from the start of the project through the month of June. When Dan was needed at another project Ron Rubel stepped up and finished the job out. Both did an excellent job of coordinating the electrical work as well as coordinating with the other disciplines. Anyone familiar with a renovation project and being able to go in and start on a floor and just knock it out knows the challenges but this project being a hopscotch renovation sometimes pushed everyone to their limits. Using phone calls, emails, texts and meetings we talked through all issues and provided the university a quality project; from the outside looking like not too much changed but the inside a whole new student center for the start of classes.

We would also like to say thank you to Bill Lamme, Kyle LeMay and Dave Rezac from The Weitz Company for being a critical part of the construction team in leading the project and running interference for us.

# All Work and No Play?

April Samuelson & Cheryl Keyes



Omaha had their annual employee picnic for employees and their families. We rented Papio Fun Park exclusively for an afternoon of go-karts, laser tag, miniature golf, batting cages, face painting, wax hands, arcade games and great food from Tim's Wild West BBQ!



This year brought a record crowd of over 270 adults and children enjoying all of the fun. This is always a nice time to bring the field and office together to show our appreciation for their hard work. The weather was perfect for fun in the sun!



# Council Bluffs Athletic Stadium

Tony Boyd - Assistant PM

Commonwealth Communications Omaha just completed a new sports complex for the City of Council Bluffs and Council Bluffs Public Schools. Commonwealth worked with its suppliers to contribute a portion of the labor and materials to help make this project happen.

Project Manager Russ Williamson worked with low voltage technicians KC Jones, Kolby Sunken, and Ben Beranek to get this project completed for the 2016 fall athletic season. With the number of jobs in progress and the strict time constraints on the stadium, our technicians rose to the occasion to complete the project in an amazing show of teamwork.

The complex is a state of the art stadium that houses a football field, new track with 6 lanes, 2 softball fields, a baseball field, 2 soccer fields, and a shotput/discus field. Commonwealth ran 10,000' of 12 strand fiber to 6 buildings and 7,000' of copper across 5 of the buildings.



Commonwealth will be recognized for their contribution by being named on the donor plaque that will grace the front entrance of the stadium. The City of Council Bluffs and Council Bluffs Public Schools were very pleased with the final results and we are hoping to work with these groups on many projects to come.

## Boone Central Schools Remodel

Danny Cahalan - Project Manager

Commonwealth Columbus was selected to perform the electrical & low voltage work for Boone Central Schools in Albion, NE. This job is made up of two separate portions of work; the first being a new addition and the second a remodel. The project timeline is July, 2016 through May, 2017 for the expansion. The remodel will be a much shorter duration running May 2017 through August 2017.

The expansion portion of this project is approximately a 46,000 SF single story addition to both the elementary school and the high school. This addition will become a gym, weight room, locker room, and wrestling room for the school. We are installing a new 2,500 Amp switchboard to feed this new expansion. This project consists of precast walls with stub-outs below grade. We will be running a lot of underground conduit to a central panel for the expansion. We will be on heightened awareness while school is still in session with special consideration for students and staff safety. Safety is our number one concern. It is projected we will max out around 6-8 people to complete this scope of work on this project.

The remodel portion of this project includes an approximately 36,000 SF renovation of the existing elementary school building. This remodel includes new walls, ceilings, lighting, power, and data. This scope of the project will be the most difficult due to the short schedule timeline and the amount of work. We will easily have double the manpower on site to complete this scope versus the expansion.

The project has been designed by Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects, Ltd. and electrically engineered by Engineering Technologies, Inc. both out of Lincoln. Additionally, Bruce Niesen, Sampson's superintendent and Sampson's project manager, Nate Kastens have been a pleasure to work with.

The crew, run by Foreman Trey Burdick, has come together and been productive through the first 5% of the project. The office staff supporting Trey is Branch Manager Jake Gable, Estimator Dusty Romscheck, and Project Manager Danny Cahalan. We are excited for this project to take off and complete the work for all the students, staff, and community of Boone School District.



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## JBS Swift – Grand Island, NE

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**Kurt Hellbusch** - Service Manager

Commonwealth Grand Island is proud to be working with JBS Swift in Grand Island on a design build for a new production area within their existing plant. JBS has been a huge part of the Grand Island area for years and we are extremely happy to be part of their growth now and into the future. JBS in Grand Island employs over 3,500 workers between two shifts and their facility covers over a million square foot of production area.

Back in April we began working with JBS on this design and mid-summer, we were awarded the design build contract and went to work from there.

Electrically the project consists of a new 200 amp MCC, seven 30 amp buckets for motors and conveyors in the production area. Two 100 amp buckets for vacuum motors that will transport their product from existing production area to the new production line. We are adding a 480 volt and 120 volt panel as well. We are installing all new wet location LED lighting throughout the production area. There is also a fair amount of demo work we have done. We had to relocate their battery chargers for their fork lifts and move an office area.

The project is going well and is on schedule for completion early fall of 2016. We are happy to be partnering with JBS Swift and look forward to a very long relationship.



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## Fullerton Public Schools LED Relighting

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**Andy Sueper** - Service Manager

Commonwealth Electric Columbus recently completed a project for Fullerton Public School Systems, upgrading the existing lighting to energy saving LED lighting. Careful consideration and planning had to be in place due to the age of the school with multiple additions being added over the years. Older wiring and circuitry issues had to be taken into consideration while determining the best way to upgrade their lighting to more energy efficient LED Lighting.

This project consisted of replacing 138 eight foot direct/indirect T12 lighting fixtures, and retrofitting approximately 100 four foot fixtures with LED bulbs. Rural schools, such as Fullerton Public schools, are under constant pressure to balance rising operating costs and trying to stay within a tight budget. The challenge given by the school board was to find a way to not only replace the existing, inefficient lighting, but also to come up with solutions of saving time and money on the project. One solution Commonwealth used was by retrofitting the older four foot fixtures with LED bulbs. Rather than replacing all of the four foot fixtures, Commonwealth Electric instead removed the ballast and the T12 bulbs, and used the existing tombstones to install the four foot LED bulb. This solution of LED retrofits was a quick means of improving the school's lighting quality and performance while significantly reducing operating costs. This compromise helped to create a long term relationship with Fullerton's school district for many years to come.

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## Omaha Public Schools McMillian Telecom Upgrades

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**Tony Boyd** - Assistant PM

McMillan Magnet Middle School just completed a telecommunications upgrade throughout the entire school as part of the Omaha Public Schools recent bond. Commonwealth Communications partnered with Rife Construction on this project, which needed to be finished in time for the start of the 2016 school year.

The upgrade consisted of 5 closet build-outs, installing 2,000 feet of fiber, conduit, and 134,000 feet of copper for a total of 900 data locations. Commonwealth also completed the demo of all existing closets, copper, and fiber cabling.



Demo of Existing Closet

Due to the large size of the job and tight deadline, foreman Marshall Brandt and his crew had to start working nights while school was still in session in March. With strict constraints on the areas they were allowed to work in, the crew jumped ahead of schedule on the main contract and succeeded in completing the project early. By this time the scope had grown to include various changes, such as adding multiple lines and the cabling of 4 portable classrooms.

Omaha Public Schools and Rife Construction were extremely pleased with the high quality of work and quick turn-around by Commonwealth. We are looking forward to teaming up with Rife Construction on future opportunities and continuing to grow our long standing relationship with Omaha Public Schools.

## Hastings College Jackson Dinsdale Art Center

Dusty Romshek - Project Manager

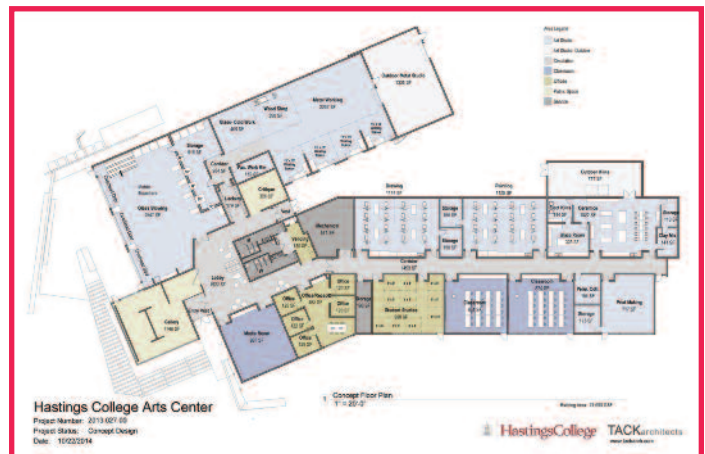
Commonwealth Grand Island recently completed a very unique memorial project for Hastings College in Hastings, NE. The Jackson Dinsdale Art Center is a newly constructed building on the Hastings College campus for the Art Department. Commonwealth was awarded the electrical contract in the fall of 2015 and construction was completed in August of 2016. The general contractor was Hawkins Construction of Omaha. Upon the project's completion, a large dedication ceremony was held on August 20th, 2016 with prestigious guest speakers such as Governor Pete Ricketts and former US poet Laureate Ted Kooser.

The \$8.5 million Jackson Dinsdale Art Center was made possible by many private donations. The primary gift was a \$5 million legacy leadership gift announced by Kim and Tom Dinsdale of Grand Island, whose son, Jackson, was an art student at Hastings College prior to his death in 2014. Jackson's love of visual art and awareness for the need of a facility like this on campus charged the design and finally the construction of this facility in his memory.

The Jackson Dinsdale Art Center (JDAC) is a 25,000 ft building designed by TACKarchitects of Omaha. The building features classrooms, studios, and galleries for art display. The art center will focus on the subjects of glassblowing, sculpture, ceramics, and printmaking to name a few. The new facility has state of the art accommodations for hands-on teaching of these art techniques. TACKarchitects focused on designing a building that would reflect the creativity and energy of the art students working inside of it and all would agree that this venture was very successful.

On the electrical side of the project there were many challenges to this project. We did a great job of getting onsite early and utilizing the Tremble system to get most of our conduits under slab. This was a high priority for us since most of the building features an open ceiling for an industrial look. Being able to get conduits under slab early saved us a lot of time in running exposed conduits overhead. One of the most unique things we dealt with on this project was building two large ceiling grid systems out of unistrut in the art gallery and critique rooms. These grids housed acoustical ceiling pads and also served as a raceway for the track lighting in those rooms. This was a really "artistic" design that required a lot of coordination efforts with the architect and all other trades. Another unique item to this project is a large sculpture light fixture that hangs in the lobby area at the main entrance. It is the first thing that catches your eye when entering the building. We worked very closely with the artist that created the sculpture as we installed all of the lights and wiring throughout the sculpture once it arrived on site. Our electricians had definitely never done anything like that before and it was a unique challenge.

At the end of the day, this was overall a great project for us. Both the owner and general contractor were pleased with our work through the duration of the project. In the process we acquired some great new electricians from the Hastings area and we hope to continue to do more work, not only for Hastings College, but in Hastings and the surrounding communities.



# Commonwealth Electric Assists ACH Food Keep Their Facilities Running Safely with Preventative Infrared Scans and Arc Flash Studies

Allison Thomas - Service Coordinator

ACH Food Companies, Inc. in Ankeny, Iowa is one of the largest spice plants in the world. The 768,000 square foot facility produces and distributes products in retail, club and food service channels across North America. Their number one asset is their people followed by their valued partnerships with key service providers such as Commonwealth Electric Company.

Commonwealth Electric was approached this past year by ACH Food Companies to provide preventative infrared scanning and arc flash studies in an effort to ensure safe work practices within their facility.

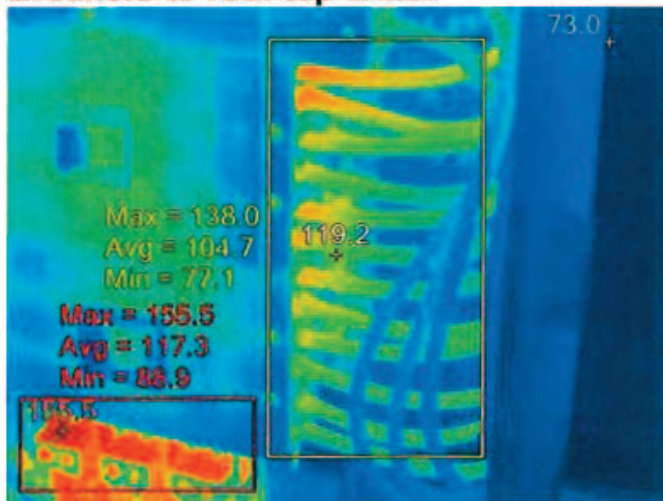
Commonwealth Electric's service technicians are trained to locate potential problems by using an IR scan to detect relative heat differential, compiling a report, and rendering a decision on how to repair any problem. IR scans can locate hot spots, reduce unscheduled power outages, increase energy efficiency, avoid unscheduled maintenance, and most importantly increase the safety of your facility. Commonwealth also provides arc flash studies which help prevent dangerous electrical explosions.

*"Safety is our first priority and annual infrared scanning of our electrical systems is essential to providing a safe work environment for our employees and protecting the investment in assets to deliver great products to our customers. The thorough review conducted by Commonwealth Electric's technician, Lee Beck, has been key to maintaining the electrical distribution system that is crucial to our daily operation. Mr. Beck is teamed up with our employees to assess and correct any findings during the audit. We appreciate the thoughtfulness and flexibility of the audit which allows us to maintain our manufacturing schedule. Mr. Beck represents Commonwealth well and my entire staff enjoys working with him and the crews that have assisted us on other projects. Keep up the great work and we look forward to growing our relationship."*

*-Tony Bolletta, Engineering Manager of ACH Food Companies*

Commonwealth Electric ranks safety as one of its highest priorities and is excited to be working with ACH Foods to make certain their workplace safety is the best it can be. CECM looks forward to a longstanding relationship with ACH in the future.

**Breakers to roof top units.**



IR\_00016.IS2



Visible Light Image

Infrared scan (left) detecting the heat differentials from the image on the right

## Commonwealth Security Division

Clinton Stoffer, - Security Manager

Commonwealth is securing facilities throughout the Midwest with our experienced security technicians and best of breed product lines. We have been providing full service security solutions for the last 5 years for all types of commercial properties, and continue to grow into new technologies every day. Though our security teams focus has primarily been on access control, video surveillance, and intrusion systems, we also provide and support many related products such as intercoms, parking gates, turnstiles and emergency phones to name a few. With the industry evolving as technology advances, we have invested a great deal towards the training and education of our technicians, which has given us the ability to provide support for other network based technologies as well.



Turnstiles installed by Commonwealth in Omaha, NE

Our security team has been growing at a steady rate and we have design professionals on staff that allow us to provide design build services as well as security audits. We offer service and maintenance contracts to protect and maintain security systems, as well as guaranteed response times for critical infrastructures. As a part of our full service security offerings, we maintain a security technician in addition to our 24/7/365 electrical and low voltage on call staff. We have a support office in our Omaha branch that is setup specifically for large scale programming and remote support. We have utilized this facility for programming several hundred cameras at a time, simulating field issues to find resolutions, and giving us the leading edge in large scale deployments. The Security division of Commonwealth is quickly becoming known for providing secure environments and protecting our customers' most valuable assets.

## Kelly Cortum, Inc. Expands Storage Facility

Ashley Huinker - Project/Safety Coordinator



The Wright Storage facility

This past summer, the Des Moines' office of Commonwealth Electric was selected by Kelly Cortum, Inc. to perform the electrical work for four additional self-storage buildings at their Wright Storage facility in Norwalk, IA. In 2013, CECM completed the first phase of The Wright Storage facility with the construction of five new self-storage units including an office space build out. This work consisted of a new electrical and network services, electrical distribution equipment, exterior LED lighting, radiant floor heating, voice/data cabling, card access, and CCTV security.

Phase Two work of the facility expansion consisted of exterior LED lighting, power and motor branch circuits for garage doors, voice/data cabling, and CCTV security.

Kelly Cortum, Inc. has been a full service excavating and trucking company in the commercial construction sector for nearly 30 years. KCI routinely self performs its own work and has a reputation for delivering superior quality and customer service on its projects. KCI and Commonwealth Electric have a long standing working relationship and continue to work on numerous projects in the Des Moines' area collectively.

*"Kelly Cortum, Inc. and Commonwealth Electric have continued a strong and successful relationship over the years and we look forward to future projects with them."*

*-Nathan Findlay, Project Manager*

Michael Lovelace was Commonwealth's foreman on site and Nathan Findlay led our efforts in the office. CECM enjoys working with KCI and their team and anticipates many more successful projects with them yet to come.