

# The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Summer 2017



**Commonwealth Electric Company**  
of the midwest

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## Happy Anniversary CECM!

David F. Firestone - President/CEO

July 1, 2017 marked the 30th anniversary of CECM. It seems like just yesterday that the company first started in business with 90 full-time employees on the payroll. We now have eight construction offices and two EXPO locations and have an average work force of 650 people.

There are a lot of new faces in our company which is very exciting to me, knowing the next generation of employees will be the Commonwealth of the future. What a great opportunity for those who share in the new ESOP ownership to have a positive impact on their own futures.

Reflecting back on our past, I must say that technology has had a significant impact on the growth and success of our company. I remember when we first started using a computer based estimating system in 1989 and we needed to hire someone who could help us learn to use a computer. Our first fax machines were given to us by a large material vendor to help them gain more business with us. The fax machines used the old heat sensitive paper on a roll and you had to cut the pages with scissors.

Cell phones, GPS devices, tablets and all the new tools that help our staff both in the office and field to do their jobs more efficiently have made a tremendous impact on productivity. The speed of information is so much faster today than it was in 1987, it blows me away. I still tell people it's a conduit and wire business – we just put it in faster.

I would like to thank everyone for your dedication and support of our company. From our bankers, our bonding company, our suppliers, our customers, but most importantly our employees. You all have made a significant impact on our success for the past 30 years. I believe we have created a culture here. I call it the "Commonwealth Culture". This has been a very important part of the company's success and will be an important part of its success going forward! I would like to leave you with these two quotes from Henry Sy and Don Davis.

*"In life and in business, you need to be good-hearted and trustworthy, and to have integrity. This is the way to build long-term relationships. It is also important to be optimistic and look at challenges as opportunities". – Henry Sy*

*"Every business has two financial objectives. One is to make money and the other is to make money consistently." – Don Davis*

This is a great company with great people, so thanks again to all and "Happy Anniversary Commonwealth."



Original Group of Employees



Corporate Office

## He Will Be Missed

### Ashley Braithwait -

Office Assistant/Service Coordinator

Kurt Daniel Hellbusch, 36, of Shelton, passed away peacefully on Thursday, May 25th, 2017 at Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha after a long courageous battle with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

Kurt was born September 20, 1980 to Dennis and Marilyn (Schaad) Hellbusch in Fullerton. He graduated from Fullerton High School in 1999. He received his Associate's Degree from Northeast Community College in Norfolk. Kurt started working for Commonwealth Electric in 2007 where he started as a dedicated Journeyman and then worked his way up to a Foreman. In May of 2016 he was promoted to a Project Manager where he worked until his passing. On April 10, 2010, he married Kristina Frauendorfer of Humphrey at St. Anthony Catholic Church in Cedar Rapids. In July 2014, Kurt began his battle with cancer. He underwent many different types of chemotherapy treatments and was in remission until September 2016 when he relapsed. Even though the odds were against him Kurt fought until the very end. He was surrounded by a lot of family and friends who supported him until his passing.

He enjoyed hunting, fishing, grilling, but most of all spending a lot of time with family and friends. He enjoyed his work and everyone he worked with. He always had a witty sense of humor and make light of a tough situation. He also loved watching Husker football and Royals baseball.

He is survived by his wife Kristina, and children Cory, Dylan, Emma, and Austin.



*Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free, I'm following the path God laid for me. I took his hand when I heard his call, I turned my back and left it all.*

*I could not stay another day, To laugh, to love, to work, to play. Tasks left undone must stay that way, I've found that peace at the close of the day.*

*If my parting has left a void, Then fill it with remembered joy. A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss, Ah yes, these things I too will miss.*

*Be not burdened with times of sorrow, I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow. My Life's been full, I savored much, Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch,*

*Perhaps my time seemed all too brief, Don't lengthen it now with undue grief. Lift up your heart and share with me, God wanted me now, He set me free.*

## United Way Award

### Sharon Meyer - Executive Assistant

Commonwealth Electric was recognized for their 2016 employee campaign increase to United Way. CECM employees from the Lincoln and Corporate offices have been donating to this worthy cause for many years. Due to their very generous increase in donations, Commonwealth Electric received an award at the United Way Annual Meeting luncheon at the Cornhusker Marriot on April 24. Approximately 500 local community members attended this meeting. Campaign Chair's Connie and Todd Duncan came to each location to congratulate us.

Way to go Team!



CECM Corporate Office Employees



CECM Lincoln Office Employees



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## The Kearney Office Is Growing

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**Coleen Wedige** - Office Manager

Kevin Dart has been brought in from the field and is the new service manager. Kevin was hired by the Columbus office in July 2016. When the Kearney office needed a leader on a job in Holdrege, we “borrowed” Kevin to run the project.

Kevin was an electrician for Krieger Electric in Hastings for 12 years and worked for Protex for three years. Kevin is married to Janice, an elementary school music teacher. They have two daughters and one son. His hobbies are golf, woodworking and music.

With the completion of the Holdrege job, the Kearney office offered Kevin a management position and he accepted.

We are glad to have Kevin on our team. His eagerness to help the Kearney office grow is just what we need!



Kevin Dart

## Commonwealth Partners with Scottish Rite to Provide New Fire Alarm System

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**Clint Bailey** - Low Voltage Project Manager, Commonwealth Communications



David Traeger - Scottish Rite Park

When Scottish Rite Park, a modern 13-story retirement residence located in Des Moines, had a need to enhance the safety of their residents, they chose Commonwealth Communications as a partner to accommodate their need. Scottish Rite Park provides a quality living facility, with many amenities to enhance the active lifestyle of its residents and should the need arise, a medical wing that provides medical and memory care.

Once Dan Boor, Scottish Rite Park President/CEO/Administrator and Jim Putney, Scottish Rite Park Facilities Manager determined that the safety of the residents could be enhanced with a voice evacuation fire alarm system, they began their quest to find a potential partner. During the process of seeking a potential partner in accommodating their fire alarm system need, Dan was looking for more than just a fire alarm contractor. If you are

observant, when you enter the Scottish Rite lobby, it does not take long to see that Dan and his team have established an environment where the Scottish Rite Park residents and staff are treated and interacted with as members of one large family. When Dan became aware that Commonwealth Communications considers customers not just as a one-time business relationship, but instead values each customer as life-long partners, it convinced Dan to look no further. Dan convinced the Scottish Rite Board of Directors that the staff and residents would be better served by partnering with Commonwealth Communications, rather than pursuing a competitive bidding process.

Another significant consideration that factored into the Scottish Rite Park team in choosing Commonwealth Communications as a partner was the installation partnership of Commonwealth Communications and Simplex Fire Alarm Systems. It had been understood by the Commonwealth Communications team that the Scottish Rite Park project was a perfect facility to introduce the new Simplex TrueAlert ES addressable speakers as a means of providing enhanced safety. This new technology allows for targeted audio messaging so that specific speakers can be selected to provide an evacuation or mass-notification message, to provide appliance self-testing and by design, can reduce cable and labor costs.

Currently, the design for this 10-month project is progressing through the approval process and should begin in late August of 2017. Leading the Commonwealth field installation team will be David Traeger, a technician with superior skills and knowledge in the fire alarm, access control and security industry. David's professional demeanor and ability to interact with the residences of Scottish Rite Park make him the perfect fit to lead the field team.

## Habitat For Humanity Project

**Brian Lund** - Service Manager

Commonwealth Electric's Omaha office recently had the opportunity to participate in the 2017 Habitat for Humanity Omaha Builders Blitz as part of the Kiewit Building Group team. Each year Habitat for Humanity Omaha partners with several local general contractors to build new houses and renovates existing homes to provide modest and affordable housing for those in need. Families who partner with Habitat Omaha are required to attend homeownership workshops and complete up to 350 hours of sweat equity by helping on the build site or at Omaha's Habitat ReStore.

While acquiring the properties, coordinating utilities, and pouring the foundations for the new homes is a long process, the majority of the construction of the homes happens in just ten days. Commonwealth's first crew was on site June 6th and the presentation of the home to the family took place on June 17th. Crews from multiple trades worked side by side along with volunteers to achieve the common goals of providing a new home for a family and improve the community.

Commonwealth Electric is proud to be involved in the Habitat for Humanity project, but this would not be possible without great people who are willing to donate their time and trade skills to make this happen. We would like to thank the following employees for their outstanding contributions:

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|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| ◆ Bob Burgin     | ◆ Don Buckley   | ◆ Steve Sears   | ◆ Troy Savich  | ◆ Jason Walker   |
| ◆ Shea Connolly  | ◆ Colton Yeager | ◆ Colin Weikle  | ◆ Tim Kotrous  | ◆ Coleman Wright |
| ◆ Mitch McColley | ◆ Dan Mohatt    | ◆ Brian McGlynn | ◆ Justin Wiles | ◆ Dan Maca       |

Additionally, Commonwealth would like to thank United Electric Supply Company and Echo Electric Supply for their generous material donations to the project.

Thanks to all of them, as well as the rest of the CECM Team!



## Johnston Community School District Revamps Old High School with New Remodel Project

**Kevin McCarty** - Low Voltage Project Manager, Commonwealth Communications

On June 6th, the Des Moines Low Voltage Department began remodel work at the new Johnston Middle School, formerly the Johnston High School.

Currently, CECM technicians have taken down over 200 paging speakers, audio video speakers, cameras, wireless access points, and classroom projectors. They have removed the antiquated analog camera cabling and replaced it with a new Panduit/General Cable Cat 6 cabling solution. Work yet to complete includes adding cable TV locations to the classrooms and pulling new Cat 6 cables for wireless access points throughout the school.

After the paint and new ceiling grid is installed, CECM technicians will have the daunting task of re-installing all the devices they had previously taken down. Once all the equipment is in place, our technicians will test and focus the speakers and projectors in the newly remodeled classrooms and hallways.

Typically, this would be a normal everyday cabling installation. Unfortunately, the timeline has been accelerated immensely and must be finished by August 11th, 2017.

This project marks Commonwealth's first experience working with Johnston Schools I.T. Department. They have stated that they are more than impressed with the quality of work they are seeing from CECM's technicians, even considering the condensed schedule CECM is working under.

This project has been an all hands-on deck with nearly every CECM technician being on-site at some point. The field has been led by Travis Briggs with the help of Austin Pruitt, Evan Garr, Joe Schaff, Lindsay Leslie, Will Tucker, Andrew Fitzlaff, Jake Belcher and a few others.

When we asked Travis Briggs, our low voltage foreman on this project, what he thought of the tight schedule, he replied "No hill for a climber" and proceeded to climb up the ladder to pull more cable.

Even with a tight deadline, CECM is determined and motivated to meet their completion date and deliver a quality product everyone can be proud of. As always, we are "Committed to Excellence".



Travis Briggs, Low Voltage Foreman, installing a paging speaker for the Johnston Middle School Remodel project.