

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Fall 2019



Commonwealth Electric Company
of the midwest

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Compute North NE 05 Data Center – Kearney, NE

Jacob Svoboda – Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric of Greater Nebraska was recently awarded a design build contract for the Compute North NE 05 Data Center project in Kearney, Nebraska. Thank you to Gary Demmel for the work that has been put in to get this project. This project is going to be challenging due to the schedule, but we have a great team working on it. This project consists of small modular buildings that are manufactured offsite. They will be trucked in, lifted into place and then we must get power to them. Each of these buildings is roughly the size of a large Conex shipping container and will need 2.5 MW of power. The project includes bringing a 35KV service from an NPPD substation. When all is complete, the site could require 100 MW of power. Per NPPD at the ground breaking, the city of Kearney's peak energy usage is around 110 MW. This data center will be capable of being used for numerous applications including crypto mining, blockchain, artificial intelligence, and machine learning.

"It is nice to have an Owner, like Compute North, that is accessible and personally involved with the project. Mike Harms, the Owner's representative for the project, has been wonderful to work with and very understanding of all the issues involved with the project."
– Gary Demmel – Former Sr. Vice President

"Commonwealth has been a tremendous partner for our computing campus construction in Kearney. They've been responsive, smart, and simply great partners. I'm impressed with their company and would highly recommend their work."
– Dave Perrill – CEO, Compute North

Anthony Brown is the Foreman on the project and Jacob Svoboda is the Project Manager. Zachary Tupper and Doug Coleman have worked closely with Gary Demmel on the design. Thanks to everyone for putting in the hours to help this fast track project meet the customer's schedule.



Ground Breaking Ceremony for Compute North

Verizon Wireless/University of Nebraska Small Cells

Jerry Van Amerongen – Low Voltage Systems Manager



Brian Ridder, Stacy Markel,
Matt Abbott

A “Small Cell” is a radio access point with low radio frequency (RF) power output, footprint and range. It is operator-controlled, and can be deployed indoors or outdoors, and is licensed, shared or unlicensed. Small cells complement the macro network to improve coverage, add target capacity, and support new services and user experiences. (www.smallcellforum.org.) Small cells are becoming the big wave in rolling out the supposed 5G network. We appear to have a very good strong hold on this type of installation from start to finish.

Commonwealth is currently installing 15 new Verizon small cell units on the main campus of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. This project is very collaborative between Edge Consulting Engineers, Verizon Wireless, University of Nebraska, Pierson Wireless, and CECM. The University and Verizon requested that CECM was the installation contractor for this project.



Brian Ridder

Brian Ridder & Stacy Markel with their crews and the assistance of Bauer Underground are installing the underground conduit bores, foundations, pull boxes, and poles. Brian and Stacy are also completing the work in the tunnels and basements to utilize existing power to the new pole sites. Jacob Malcom and his crew are getting all the new fiber optic cabling installed and assisting in setting up both new and old equipment rooms. CECM installed new backbone fiber (288 strand) from the head-end to a new centrally located hub. From this, there are five small cells being served. An existing hub is serving the remaining 10 small cells. Each individual pole location has 48 strands of fiber close by. In total, we will have tested over 335 miles for fiber on this project. The extra fiber leaves a lot of room for expansion for the University. They are already looking to utilize some of this fiber for security cameras and Wi-Fi just to name a few.



Kudos to Jacob Malcom and the crew that assisted on getting this project done before the very first Husker home football game (even a week early). Thanks also goes out to Brian Ridder, Stacy Markel, and their crews for helping make this all come together for our TEAM!

Home for visiting Airmen taking shape at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base - Tucson AZ

Richard Lewis – Branch Manager

The home away from home for Air Force personnel is nearing completion at Davis Monthan AFB. The NAF (Non Appropriated Funds) Visiting Quarters is a 4 story VQ building will include 262 guest rooms with approximately 164,200 SF inclusive of appropriate back of house areas, guest laundries, central laundry facility, house-keeping function spaces, multifunctional lobby, business center, conference rooms, exercise room, restrooms, and on site dining facility called “Rickenbacker’s” named after the famous World War 1 fighter pilot.

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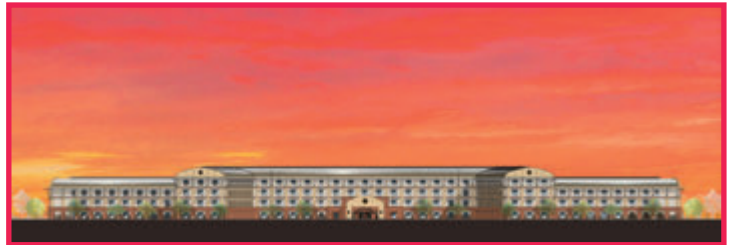
CECM is working as the electrical subcontractor on this project for Archer Western who is the general contractor. The project is being constructed for the Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USACE – Los Angeles District. Once completed, the facility will be turned over to a third-party hotel operator as part of base housing and lodging.

The project, which began in July of 2017, has been delayed on several occasions but now appears to be headed into the home stretch with completion expected to occur in late November or early December.

At \$4.8M, this is currently the largest project being worked on by the Tucson location. Some of the challenges we have faced on this project were bringing the medium voltage power to the site from nearly a mile away and then keeping up with an aggressive pour schedule on the concrete decks while installing the majority of our branch circuit power and fire alarm conduits in the slab. Commonwealth made a significant contribution to the energy efficiency of the project by proposing and procuring an LED lighting package as a value-added substitution to the specified design package. In addition to the energy savings, the hotel guest will benefit from superior lighting while at the time significantly reducing maintenance issues for the operators of the hotel.

Heading up our field crews on this project is our General Foreman Tony Doar along with crew foreman Daniel Palacio. Project management duties are being performed by Jay Hoobler with significant contribution from Daniel Miranda who is our Project Engineer splitting time between the field and the office.

We are looking forward to the successful completion of this project to provide first class accommodations to the men and women serving in the Air Force here in Tucson.



Phoenix Branch Begins Utilizing McCormick's DEP Software

Jeffrey Campbell – Sales/Marketing Manager



(L) Bob Philipps, Jeffrey Campbell, Rich Scheuermann

The Phoenix branch has recently begun its well overdue switch to on-screen take-off. Long gone are the days of colored highlighters, counters, and scale masters. On July 15th, Rich Scheuermann, Jeffrey Campbell, and Bob Philipps completed the Design Estimating Pro (DEP) course, held at the McCormick Systems office in Chandler, AZ.

This course provided a detailed overview of the McCormick System, as well as, a hands-on experience performing a full electrical estimate on the DEP software. The DEP software is exclusively offered by McCormick Systems and gives contractors a new way to perform fast and accurate take-offs from digital drawings. Since completing the course, Phoenix has utilized DEP on 100% of their estimates, saving hundreds on printer expenses and minimizing our ecological footprint.

TPI Composites Blade Transition

Cory Lueth – Project Manager

The Des Moines branch is wrapping up another blade transition at TPI Composites in Newton, Iowa. This is the fourth blade transition that the plant has gone through since it was built in 2008. Over the last decade, the blades have increased in length from around 37 meters to over 62 meters long.

Our work consists of electrical distribution equipment, feeders, LED lighting, power and motor branch circuits, fire alarm and data cabling.

Mike Ertl has been Commonwealth's on-site foreman since the plant was built, he has been a critical part in the design-build process throughout each transition. As the plant remained in full production, Mike and his crew safely coordinated with the owner's management and production teams.

We look forward to continuing our relationship with this valued customer!



L to R - Mike Ertl, Jake Levench, Aaron Johnson, Cameron Hundwardsen, Robin Pearson, Jordan Palmer, Gary Wessels, Jon Bunting

Safety News

Todd Longenecker – Senior Safety Manager

There are many times our employees in the field do some remarkable things that often go unnoticed, or don't get the recognition they deserve. Recently, a crew in the Omaha branch was recognized for a task they were doing by some of the owner's representatives from a very large company. Not only has the process they came up with drastically saved time and money for the customer, but it also made their job much safer. This company was so impressed, they have decided they want to use our methods globally. That's some cool stuff. Often, it's the Safety Department that gets applauded for our safety record and the lack of injuries. When really, it's the efforts of our employees in the field trying to constantly improve, being cognizant of their safety and the safety of others every day.

In other safety news, our branches are getting onboard and starting to hold regularly scheduled safety meetings. These meetings are designed to bring the office management and the field workers together to help improve safety on the job. Many good ideas have come from past committee meetings. Who knows better than the worker in the field about safety concerns? Safety recommendations also benefit the warehouses and offices. Everybody benefits. Employees are encouraged to contact their safety committee member and express concerns or, better yet, volunteer to be a part of the committee.

We are excited to announce that we are developing a new employee orientation safety video. Our previous one is outdated. New improvements are being made with a new crew of cast members. Once completed all employees will have an opportunity to watch the video. This video will give all new employees an idea of what their safety expectations are and hopefully give them the tools and ideas to work safe. We, in the Safety Department, are constantly looking for new ways and ideas to ensure everyone has a safe work site, whether in the field, office, warehouse, service, Expo, the street crews, or wherever Commonwealth Electric works. Everyone's safety is key to our success.

Safety – Sell it, Promote it, Be Proud of it!

Building Bench Strength with Our Apprentice Appreciation Event

Jon Folkers - Business Developer & Marketing Manager



Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest – Omaha held its 2nd Annual Apprentice/CW/Cabler Appreciation Event on Wednesday, Aug. 28th. Once again, this event was held in the fabrication shop and Troy Savich and his team had the place looking great prior to the arrival of our guests.

The Omaha office takes this time to show this group appreciation for a job well done. Parker's Smokehouse Bar-B-Q was brought in and drinks were also provided.

We had a good response to our RSVP request and had 57 of our Apprentice/CW/ Cablers attend the appreciation event. We also had an additional 20-25 office staff members come to show their support for this group.

Ron Castro, Field Operations Manager, addressed the group and emphasized the importance that each Apprentice, CW and Cabler plays in the overall success of Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest. Neil Davidson, Branch Manager, followed Ron's talk and delivered a message of his own. Delivering an overall message of appreciation and genuine care for this group and for their future with CECM, Ron and Neil both spoke on the importance of showing up to work on time, practicing good communication with their Foreman, and working hard every day - in essence, being the best in all that we do.

Commonwealth believes developing this group into well-rounded electricians and growing our bench strength for the future. We know that the best companies have the best Apprentices to help them go the distance. We feel by developing our people, while they are in the Apprenticeship Program, with all our industry-wide projects, we'll be ready for unexpected occurrences that happen all the time. We know it will lead to an increase in employee retention, cultural fit and adaptability. Expected growth has always been the plan, and we feel the only way to do this is to embrace our Apprenticeship program. It is our intent to provide a safe working environment that fosters the empowerment, team building, and growing of great employees.

All Apprentices/CW's/Cablers in attendance also had a chance to win a gift during our raffle give away. Each member who attended also received a hoody & a t-shirt made specifically for this appreciation event.

Walking away from our event, our guests of honor left here understanding they have a bright future with Commonwealth. They are clear on the vision of where we are going and understand what a special time it is for them to be in the trades.



Summer Party/Family Fun Day is Held at Papio Fun Park

Jon Folkers - Business Developer & Marketing Manager

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest – Omaha treated our employees and their families to a Summer Party/Family Fun Day at Papio Fun Plex on Sunday, September 8th, from 2 - 6 pm.

We had approximately 240 in attendance. All staff members in attendance, their children and their spouses were treated with food from Tim's Wild West Bar-B-Q, while the beverages were provided by Cornhusker Beverage.

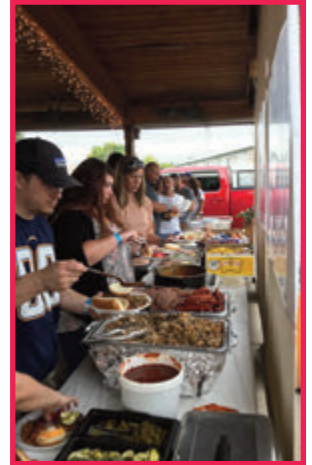
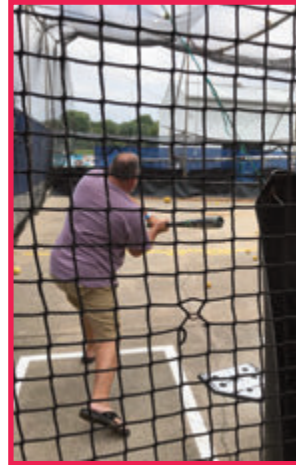
Our employees, and their families, were able to choose what activities they wanted to do with each other or against a co-worker. The selection of activities at Papio Fun Park is diverse and was enjoyed by all. There was unlimited use of Laser Runner, Spaceball, Jump-shot, Miniature Golf, Batting Cages, Water Wars, Pool Tables, Dance Video Game & Go-Kart Track and all were available for the duration of the Summer Party for our employees, their spouses and children to enjoy.

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Papio Fun Park also provided face-painting & wax hands throughout the day for all the kids to enjoy and have fun with.

Everyone knows how important it is to invest in your people. We feel that by having a Summer Party, it sends a different message to our employees. The party didn't happen because of a special date on the calendar and it didn't happen because everyone else was doing it; however, it did happen because we wanted to show everyone who works at Commonwealth Electric – Omaha our appreciation for the job they do. The party gives us a chance to meet the family behind the employee. We heard a lot of laughter and we saw a lot of smiling faces on Sunday, so whether they were swinging a bat, putting a golf ball, or racing a co-worker it was clear to see that we have a competitive group. There is an old saying that states, "Those who work hard - play hard". It's clear to see, we have ourselves a lot of hard workers.



Commonwealth Des Moines Improves its Service Department

Danielle Thompson – Project Coordinator



Harley Wilson

The Des Moines location is excited to announce the addition of a new face in the Service Department. Harley Wilson has joined our team as Service Manager. Harley brings more than 25 years of operations and management experience managing large teams and a large client portfolio. His experience managing cross functional teams across varied lines of business and multiple client relationships will be a nice addition to the team.

Harley is a Des Moines native who recently moved back to the area with his wife of 30 years Terri Wilson. Harley has three kids who are all currently in college. He's a big KC Royals fan, UFC fan and loves to fish.

March Bracketology Contest

Cathy Maddox – HR/Benefits Administrator



Blake Morgan

The Commonwealth Employee Owner Committee recently held a March Bracketology contest company wide, with the proceeds being split evenly between the top winners and the American Red Cross. The Midwest was hit very hard this year with monumental flooding and the American Red Cross resources were stretched very thin. It was a unanimous committee decision to target the organization as a recipient.

As soon as all 64 teams had been identified, everyone who wanted to participate went online through ESPN and chose their bracket. Weekly updates were sent to the entire company, so everyone knew who was ahead in the bracket. And, rather than having employees pay to participate, the company funded this event 100%.

Our 1st and 2nd place winners came from our Des Moines office. Blake Morgan won \$150, Greg Wobeter won \$70, and our 3rd place winner, who is in our Omaha office, Jeanette Brecher, won \$30, which she promptly donated to the Red Cross! The Red Cross received a check in the amount of \$280 and they were extremely appreciative!



Greg Wobeter



March Madness Dollars

New JATC Training Center

Kelly Reames - Project Manager

The Des Moines Branch was the successful bidder on the Missouri Valley Line Constructors JATC project in Indianola, Iowa. This will become the new training center for lineman apprentices from Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Missouri.

The project is a 49,500 square foot facility located on a 40-acre site and a 12,000 sq. ft. future dormitory planned. The facility will include classrooms, truck bays, an indoor pole yard, lab rooms and simulators.

Commonwealth will be completing the electrical, low voltage and technology components of the project and Jeff Hoover has been selected to be the designated foreman for the project.

Commonwealth is looking forward to working with Neumann Brothers on this project.



Neumann Bros. and CECM Partner With LMC

Tom Washington – Project Manager

LMC Insurance was looking to do a facilities upgrade at their West Des Moines location. Partnering alongside Neumann Bros, we are remodeling their multi-level office space.

To go with a more energy efficient lighting solution we have installed a Lutron system that includes daylight harvesting, power and lighting occupancy sensors. Included in the remodel they are upgrading their structured cabling system from category 5E to Panduit category 6.

CECM has worked hand and hand with the LMC IT department ensuring a better solution. It's been a privilege to work alongside Project Engineer Blake Morgan and Project Foreman Chase Kohler as we strive to complete this project. Our team looks forward to building future relationships with Neumann Bros. and LMC Insurance.



(L) Cole Hyler, Cory Schmidt, Lindsay Leslie, Taylor Brown, Joe Schaff, Derek Smith