

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Winter 2019/2020



Commonwealth Electric Company of the midwest

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Safety Update

Ruben J. Bera – Corporate Safety Director

As we look to close out 2019 and look ahead to 2020, we are encouraged by the commitment of all employees continuing to demonstrate good safe work practices. We completed some great updates to our safety program. Two big projects included:

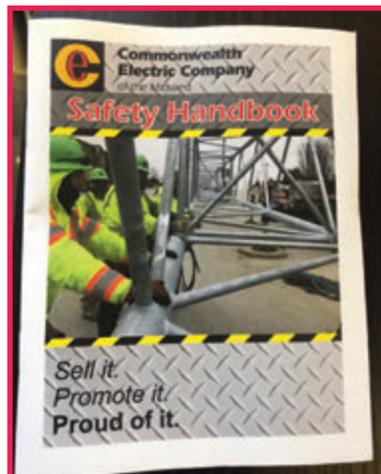
- Our new employee handbook. This handbook was given to all new employees to keep and use as reference. All the information contained in the handbook has been designed to give employees the information they need to complete their job in a safe and effective manner. Employees are encouraged to use this handbook as a daily reference.

- We have developed and updated our new employee orientation video. This video contains valuable information that will let all new employees know what our safety expectations are. With the changes that have been made in the safety world, our goal is to keep all employees updated and informed.

Recently, Commonwealth Electric received two more safety awards. The “Spirt Award” was given to us by the Nebraska Safety Council. The other was a “Certificate of Commendation” for safety excellence from the AGC for 2018. Both awards are another reflection of our safety performance that is recognized by others in the communities we work in. We are leaders in safety, and this is something we can be proud of.

We look forward to 2020 and other changes that will enhance what we already have in place, Safety Excellence!

Commonwealth Electric Safety, we Sell it, Promote it, Proud of it



New Employee Safety Handbook



Safety Awards and Recognition

Helping the Community

Billy J. Friesen – CFO/Treasurer



On Sunday, September 29, Commonwealth Electric fielded two, 4-person golf teams and sponsored a hole in the 12th annual Ferris Financial/Nebraska Cigar Society golf tournament benefiting the Friendship Home of Lincoln. The Friendship Home is a nonprofit organization serving victims of domestic abuse.

Often times women feel trapped in abusive relationships because they lack the money and resources to leave their abuser. Monies raised by this tournament go directly to help these victims. Currently there are more than 80 people, mostly women and children, on the wait list to receive shelter services offered by the Friendship Home.

This year the tournament raised approximately \$1,500 to support this charity. From the sponsors, *“Thank you so much for your support of this tournament and the reason we host it. Lincoln continues to be a great community because of the support given by private sector businesses.”*

Lincoln Firefighters - Operation Warm

Crystal Corea-Martinez – Estimating Assistant/Community Outreach Coordinator

This fall, the Corporate Office and the Lincoln Branch teamed up with Lincoln Firefighters Local #644 for the 6th Annual Operation Warm Winter Coat Drive. This was our 5th year participating as a sponsor. Operation Warm is a 501(c)3 charity that raises money to buy new winter coats for children in need in our community. Operation Warm was started in 2014 and has collected enough donations each year to provide new winter coats to over 3,000 Lincoln children. Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest is proud to be included each year to help make this coat drive a success.

In the past, two elementary schools have been chosen each year based on their enrollment in the free/reduced lunch program. To qualify for that program, a family of four must make less than \$33,475 annually. This year, the Lincoln Firefighters were fortunate enough to help three Lincoln elementary schools based on the amount of donations from sponsors and the people in our community. Donations to Operation Warm are tax deductible and always stay in Lincoln.

Each year, Commonwealth employees are welcomed to help hand the coats out at the schools. This year's schools were Elliott Elementary, Lakeview Elementary, and Clinton Elementary. Each family with children who attend the chosen schools have the option to accept or decline a new winter coat for their child. The children are also provided with a new winter hat and gloves from a sponsor.

Operation Warm is a great program for the less fortunate in our community. It's a pleasure to participate each year and do our part to help these children stay warm during the cold winter months. If you are interested in finding out more information about Operation Warm, please contact Crystal Martinez at the Corporate Office in Lincoln.

lincoln firefighters OPERATION warm



Papillion Project Comes to a Close, but the New Facility is Open to the Public

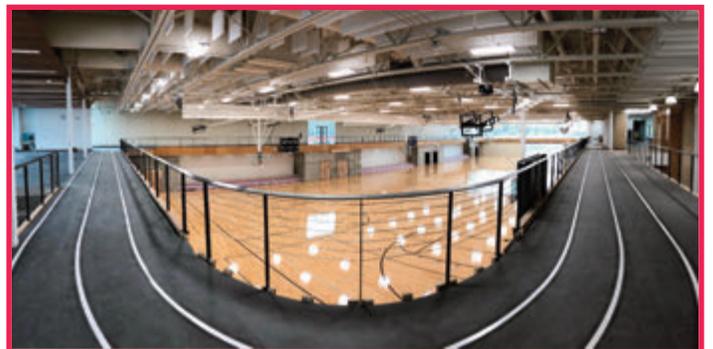
Edgar Tello – Assistant Project Manager

The last phase for the Papillion Community Center is finally coming to an end. For the past year, the Field House has been in operation and the community of Papillion is anxiously awaiting the Community Center's grand opening. Jared Gable, General Foreman, along with Aaron Strong, were supported with a strong field team. Our field team did a phenomenal job the past few weeks keeping up with the schedule and working alongside Sampson Construction to complete the project.

The community of Papillion is already benefiting from the new facility. The soccer field sport's lighting is now up and in use. The soccer fields are already being used and the first soccer game took place at the beginning of November. The outdoor soccer fields have also been home to its first Quidditch game. Whether it be soccer, baseball, softball or Quidditch there will be many games, in the near future, that will be played at either the Papillion Community Center, Field House, or surrounding fields.

The 117,000 sq. ft. Community Center building is at its final stage and since Winter weather is just around the corner, the Community Center will be the perfect spot to enjoy the indoor pool, lazy river, and water slide. Other great attractions included in the Community Center is the 6,300 sq. ft. fitness center, basketball courts, volleyball courts, and the elevated walking/jogging track to name just a few.

The Omaha office is proud of the work that our field team performed. The professionalism of our team was consistently on display while working long hours throughout the hot summer. The emphasis our team placed on safety is recognized and appreciated by everyone who participated in this challenging work environment. Some members of our group are shown. Commonwealth team pictured from left to right are Austin Quick, Ryan Roetman, Jesse Trede, Connor Rohe, Jared Gable, Aaron Strong, and Mike Rice.



(L to R) Austin Quick, Ryan Roetman, Jesse Trede, Connor Rohe, Jared Gable, Aaron Strong, and Mike Rice

3rd Annual Chili Feed Contest & Cornhole Tournament Caps off a Successful ESOP Month

Jon Folkers – Business Developer & Marketing Manager

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest – Week 4 of ESOP Month was capped off with a successful Chili Feed and Cornhole Tournament on Friday, October 27th. Employee ownership committee members of Dan Maca, Cheryl Keyes and Brian Lund planned and organized this team-building event, which we held in our fabrication shop. All members of our office were welcome to be part of the event and the turnout was great.

This year we had 12 participants to our chili contest. Each pot of chili was given a number and was voted on anonymously by all members of our office staff. The winner of this year's chili cookoff was Dan Cahalan, Project Manager. His white-chicken chili met the hungry-appetite-needs of our Omaha Office Team and for it, he takes home the traveling chili cook-off trophy for being voted best in class. Great job Dan! Dan's winning recipe is here for you to enjoy.

AWARD-WINNING WHITE CHICKEN CHILI

Ingredients:

- 2 onions diced
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 pounds COOKED chicken cubed (or 2 lbs. cooked shredded rotisserie chicken)
- 32 ounces low sodium chicken broth
- 4 cans great northern white beans (15.5 oz. cans, fully drained and rinsed)
- 3 cans diced green chiles (4 oz. cans, drained)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro chopped
- 8 ounces low fat cream cheese cubed
- 1 cup heavy cream

1. In a 6 qt dutch oven or stock pot, sauté the onions and garlic in the olive oil and lime juice over medium high heat. Cook until the onions are fragrant and translucent.

2. Add in the cooked chicken, chicken broth, beans, chiles, and seasoning. Bring to a boil, stirring often, and then reduce heat to simmer. Simmer uncovered for 30-45 minutes, or until it's the thickness you desire. Stir occasionally. I let mine simmer for a full hour to let all the flavors blend fully and to get a nice thickness. It would have been ready to go after 30 minutes, so just do what you like best!

3. Turn off the heat and stir in the cubed cream cheese. Stir constantly until the cream cheese melts and incorporates completely. Stir in the heavy cream.

4. Top with as many or as few optional toppings as you desire. I used them all! The more the merrier.

5. Enjoy!



Dan Cahalan Chili Cookoff Winner

Dan Cahalan, Ron Castro, Fay Klock, Lance Nuzum

This year we added a new twist to our chili-cookoff by combining a cornhole tournament. Twenty-four members of the office staff signed up to be part of the double-elimination cornhole tournament. The twelve teams were randomly selected into groups of two.

The competition was fierce, and everyone was trying to survive and advance in their respective bracket. The route to the championship bracket would be challenging and it would

take 3 wins to get there and 4 to win it. Successfully maneuvering through four levels of competition was no easy task for this year's championship team of Ron Castro and Fay Klock. Ron & Fay withstood the efforts of all other opposing team members and finished first, while the distinction of runners-up went to Dan Cahalan and Lance Nuzum.

Our competitive spirit was on full display with both of our contests, and even though some were named 1st & 2nd place prize winners, while others could not claim the same distinction, on this day we all won.

Commonwealth Communications Des Moines Installs Small Cell Projects

Clint Bailey – Low Voltage Systems Manager



Matt Kirby (standing) and Michael Oliver (bucket)



Commonwealth Communications has been partnering with Pierson Wireless to install small cellular antenna equipment on light and utility poles throughout Iowa. These projects are increasing in number and show no sign of slowing down in the next few years.

Just look around you in most metro and urban areas, you will see small cellular antenna equipment being installed on street lighting poles and buildings. These low-power antennas are being installed to relieve traffic from existing regional large-scale cellular towers. In areas where high concentrations of people gather, such as stadiums, malls, concert venues, etc., these antennas provide additional access to the cellular network. Another reason for the large demand for the antennas is to assist with supporting the eventual 5G network deployment. Since each antenna can only support a single wireless carrier, each carrier such as Verizon, AT&T or CenturyLink must install antennas in identified areas. With each carrier having a need to provide the small cell service, the amount of these installations number in the thousands throughout the state.

With Foreman Technician Joe Schaff leading the field team, each site may require coordination of installing the power supply and the optical fiber service to the antenna equipment from a source near the pole. The installation may also include providing a new concrete pole base, installing the new pole, directional boring conduits, installing a new light fixture at the pole, installing the new antenna equipment and making connections to all radios and antennas on the pole. The field team consists of Technician Derek Smith, Technician Matt Kirby, Installer Michael Oliver and Electrician Cory Schmidt.

Southwest Group Expansion

Bob Philipps – Phoenix Branch Manager



Dave White

To better serve our Southwest based customers and try to capture more of the market share the Phoenix and Tucson offices have teamed together to bring in a Low Voltage Manager to the SW Group.

Jerry Van Amerongen, the Low Voltage Manager in Lincoln, will be relocating to the Phoenix branch office starting in April 2020. Jerry has been with our company for 20+ years and has been in the low voltage portion for over 15 of those years. He has overseen all of our low voltage installations in Lincoln from a on the job foreman's view to project manager's view. Jerry has obtained the BICSI RCDD (Registered Communication Distribution Designer) and NICET LEVEL 1 (Fire Alarm).

We are excited to get Jerry on board here in the southwest to help facilitate our market growth in his areas of expertise and move CECM forward. Jerry brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience and will help us grow overall as a company. This endeavor has been helped and supported by many of the branches and from our Leadership Team. The Lincoln Branch Manager, Micah Edson, helped facilitate the move seeing the future company growth versus the immediate impact and we want to thank him for that.

Along with Jerry relocating to Phoenix we have made some changes in our office relating to our Service Department. We have moved Dave White from the Project Engineer position to the Service

Manager position starting on 11/1/19. Dave brings with him a wealth of electrical experience of more than 40 years starting in the field and holding various supervisory and leadership positions along the way.

We are very excited about the new additions to our Phoenix office and the overall potential to our Tucson and Phoenix markets.

ESOP MONTH 2019

Cathy Maddox - HR/Benefits Administrator

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest became an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) on January 1, 2017 and this was our second year of celebrating Employee Ownership Month. And boy did we celebrate! The Employee Ownership Committee set the theme for this year's month of activities as "Tailgating". Each Commonwealth location decorated around the theme and every week an event was held that also followed that theme.

Week One we handed out stress balls in the shape of footballs, with our Employee Ownership logo on them, and at the same time brought in a cookie shaped like a football for all employees to enjoy.

Week Two we shared our favorite tailgate snack (we seem to plan a lot of activities around food!), and there were some tasty snacks brought in!

Week Three was donation week, and the amount of donations, and the variety of donations was truly heartwarming, and incredible. Each location chose their own specific charity to donate to, and no two locations were alike. At our Phoenix Expo location, they chose to donate children's books to the local Children's Hospital. Our Phoenix Branch donated over a pallet and a half of bottled water to the homeless. The Tucson Branch did a food drive this year that was incredible. Des Moines, Iowa held a bedding donation week for the Youth Homes of Mid-America – there were quite a few blankets, pillows and sheets that were brought in! Omaha collected toilet paper for Sienna Francis house, which monthly goes through over 2400 rolls of toilet paper. Both Lincoln locations collected and donated over 850 pairs of socks to Peoples City Mission. Columbus collected winter clothing for the Center for Survivors. Every employee who made a donation received an ESOP Owners Month 2019 long sleeve t shirt, in appreciation for their donation.

Our final week of ESOP month we had a true tailgate at each location, with cookouts and lots of food for all the employees. A couple locations had a chili cook off contest that was delicious, with a Cornhole tournament and Jenga games. Each location had a great time with plenty of team building time.

Throughout the month we also had a few contests that employees could participate in, and at the same time, they learned more about the nuts and bolts of our ESOP plan. We know with being new to an ESOP there are always lots of questions and concerns, and this was a great opportunity for employees to ask questions, and, be rewarded with gift cards for submitting questions!



Des Moines Employee Ownership Month Cookie



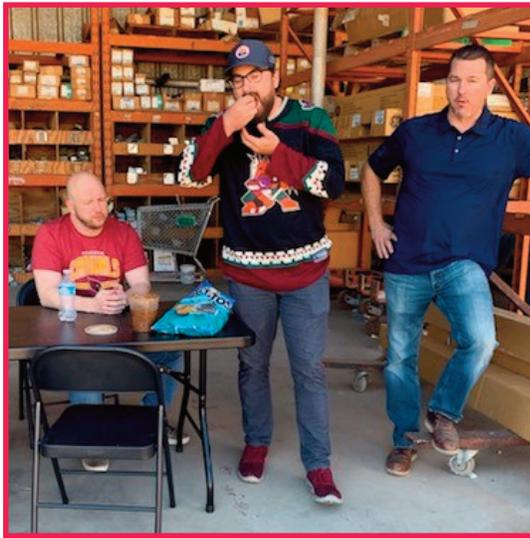
Cathy Maddox with Football Stress Ball



Columbus Branch Employee Ownership Month Tailgate



Omaha Donations



Phoenix Tailgate



Tucson Tailgate



Tucson Donations



Omaha Tailgate



Omaha Cornhole Tournament



Phoenix Expo Donations



Des Moines Donations to Youth Homes of Mid-America



Michael Price Judging Chili Contest in Des Moines



Corporate Sock Donation - Left to Right - Cathy Maddox, Nick Page



Tucson Cake

Employee Ownership Month for the Des Moines Branch

Dylan Busby – Project Engineer



Over the month of October, the Des Moines branch participated in many activities to celebrate Employee Ownership Month. There were arguably two activities the employees enjoyed the most. One being the week-long donation drive to benefit Youth Homes of Mid-America, YHMA and the other was the 1st Annual Chili Cookoff Contest.

YHMA is a nonprofit organization in Johnston (a suburb of Des Moines) that provides troubled youth and their families a path to independence. For over 75 years, Youth Homes has been helping kids deal with the stress of everyday life as well as teaching them the skills to do well in school through their on-campus school. The Des Moines

branch chose YHMA for two reasons: a few of the employees have close connections to YHMA, and Youth Homes' commitment to helping local kids throughout not only the Metro Area but across the state. Commonwealth was able to help the kids by donating over 20 new pillows and over 30 new blankets/sheet sets.



The first ever Chili Cookoff Contest was a fun, competitive event to conclude Employee Ownership Month. A total of 11 contestants competed for top honors and the associated year-long bragging rights.



In the spirit of unbiased competition, we brought in three celebrity judges: Kelly Cortum (owner of Kelly Cortum, Inc., a local dirt working contractor), Tom Patava (Des Moines' Assistant Fire Chief and life-long friend of Mike Duffy), and last but not least Michael Price (Commonwealth Electric's President).



Winners from L to R - Dylan Busby, Tom Washington, Cory Lueth

All three judges took their responsibilities very seriously. After much time deliberating the results were in. Cory Lueth took 3rd place, Dylan Busby 2nd place, and top honor went to Tom Washington.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed all the events for Employee Ownership Month and look forward to next year. A special thank you goes out to our three judges for taking the time to spend the afternoon with us.

St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center in Lincoln, NE

Angie Kelly – Service Coordinator

The Lincoln Service Team is currently wrapping up two projects that started ramping up this Fall at St. Elizabeth hospital in Lincoln. The Burn Unit and Pediatrics remodels have both undergone major facelifts now that Dignity Health has merged with CHI to create CommonSpirit Health. These projects will allow the facility to more adequately house and service the additional staff and clientele impacted by the merger. McCarthy Building Companies was the general on both projects and we worked closely with their team to make this project successful for all.

Pediatrics has moved from the fifth floor down to first floor across from the Emergency Department. Nate Jakob and his crew expertly orchestrated this move. The old observation area, that had been sitting empty for about a year, required some unique changes in order to be more inviting and comfortable for these young patients and their families. The area, now including fun paint schemes on the walls and oversized circular fixturing on the ceilings to match, required a team effort to install as well as the gridding surrounding it. The result, however, was well worth the effort; it has made a big impact in this area! We will soon be working with our Low Voltage team to install a new infant protection system that will allow GPS to track every patient located in Pediatrics on first and the NICU on fourth.

The Burn Unit remodel presented plenty of challenges of its own. This area has been remodeled numerous times over the years to accommodate different needs; creating an arduous demolition process. James Haake and his crew did an outstanding job creating a structured plan to address the various components of the rebuild. Each room needed new head walls for the patient beds as well as upgrades to the LED lighting. The nurse's station that sits in the center of the Burn Department is now updated including LED recessed lighting and custom LED's along the sky lights creating a bright and modern atmosphere. All hallways throughout the entire area received new lighting including more of the circular fixtures. This team pulled together to overcome the hurdles of tight clearances and oversized light fixtures.

Overall, everyone is very pleased with both projects and we are looking forward to continued work with St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center.

