

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Winter 2021/2022



Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest

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Michael Price – CEO/President

A new year. If you are like me, you take stock of the previous year and look to the new year with optimism and anticipation. As we entered 2021, I am sure we never would have imagined what the year would entail. I know our leadership teams across the company lost many nights of sleep worried about what 2021 had in store for us. However, I am extremely happy to say that despite all the challenges, our employees and owners rose to the occasion and did a fantastic job.

We stayed focused on our core values of Customers, Employees, Character, and Mastery. Our focus on our employees, our customers, and doing the right thing and doing it well saw us through another year and put us in a great position for the future.

Our annual company revenue grew by over 20% in 2021--a testament to the hard work of our nearly 900 employees and owners. Not only did we hit record revenue goals for 2021, but we have booked some really good work and are entering 2022 with the largest backlog of work we have had since the company opened its doors in 1987.

I am excited to report that, once again, Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest was listed in the ENR Top 600 Specialty Contractors of 2021.

We saw our ranking rise to #162 in 2021 compared to our #191 ranking in 2020. This accomplishment could not have been achieved without our committed workforce and loyal customers.

We received the 2021 Recognition of Achievement in Safety Excellence award from NECA and have been able to maintain our above-average EMR rating. I am also extremely excited to announce that in 2021 we achieved the lowest OSHA Recordable Incident Rate that our company has ever achieved! It is an outstanding accomplishment and totally a product of the culture of safety we have built. A special thank you to ALL our project management, our field leadership and field teams, and our safety department staff that make working safely THE priority.

Most significantly, in 2021 our company became 100% employee-owned through our ESOP--our Employee Stock Ownership Plan. In only four years we have transitioned full ownership from our original owners to our employees which has created a company culture of shared responsibility, mutual respect, and commitment to improve and grow our company every single day. When we started, I never imagined we could accomplish this so many years ahead of our original schedule.

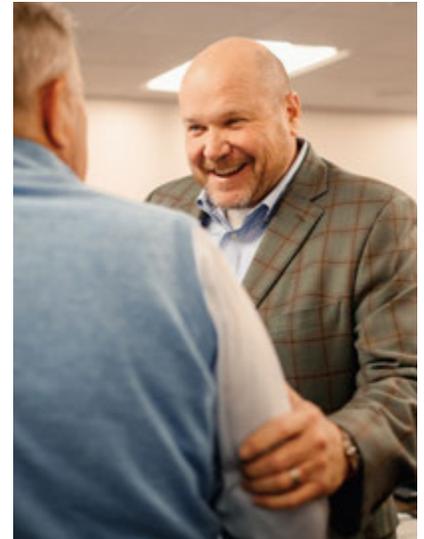
These highlights bring me back to our employees. It is our employees who make the difference and 2021 has showcased that. Our marketing team was digging through some old company records and found a decades-old quote from one of our company founders that I thought I would share.

"Commonwealth Electric is People...not trucks, not locations, not buildings but people working as a team, doing the best and most ethical work they can achieve."

--Thomas M Price, CECM founder.

Thank you to our hard-working and dedicated employees and owners. Thank you to our customers who entrust us with their work. Thank you to our partners, our subcontractors, our vendors, and suppliers who help us perform! 2021 has been a good year for our company and our future is bright going into 2022 and beyond.

Remember...we are just getting started!



CECM President/CEO Michael Price shares congratulations with David Firestone, former Commonwealth CEO.

Commonwealth Electric Makes Donations on Behalf of Original Owners

Kristin Callan – Senior Marketing Coordinator

On December 23rd, members of the Commonwealth Electric corporate office presented checks to representatives from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Construction Management Department and the Hastings College Foundation. These donations were made to the alma mater institutions of David Firestone and Glen Moss, two of Commonwealth's original owners, as they transition into retirement.

Lance Perez and Justin Carlson represented the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at the presentation. Lance is the Dean of the UNL College of Engineering, where the Construction Management Department is housed. Justin works for the University of Nebraska Foundation, where he is the Director of Development for the College of Engineering. Gary Freeman represented the Hastings College Foundation, where he is the Executive Director. Donations were made to each institution to support their current education programs and efforts.

Dave and Glen are transitioning to retirement at the end of 2021. Thank you to Lance, Justin, and Gary for traveling to our Lincoln-Corporate office to accept the donations and thank you to everyone who attended the event. Finally, we cannot forget to thank Dave and Glen for all of their amazing years at this company. Without their hard work, determination, and vision for this company, Commonwealth Electric would not be where it is today.



Pictured (from left to right): Billy Friesen, Lance Perez, Michael Price, Justin Carlson, David Firestone.



Pictured (from left to right): Billy Friesen, Michael Price, Glen Moss, Gary Freeman.

The 38th Festival of Trees and Lights Returns in 2021

Dianna Merritt – Executive Assistant | Des Moines, IA

Blank Children’s Hospital Festival of Trees and Lights was held this year with a different look than previous years. The Festival committee and countless volunteers came together to create a fun, safe, and family-friendly way for the community to support Blank Children’s Hospital. This annual event is the largest fundraiser for Blank Children’s Hospital and is a central Iowa tradition to kick off the holiday season.

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest has over 30 years of history working with UnityPoint Health and Blank Children’s Hospital. As always, we were excited to be part of this event again. Over 80 Commonwealth employees donated their time and hard work during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend to help unload crates, set up holiday decorations, and assemble over 80 Christmas trees. At the end of Festival, we had our volunteers come back to help with tearing down, repacking the crates, and loading the 80 Christmas trees for delivery.

A big thank you to all the Commonwealth employees and their families who volunteered for this very special and worthwhile event.

*“Your team at Commonwealth – we could not be more thankful for you ALL!! This year *more than ever* we truly could not have done Festival without Commonwealth. At times, you and your team brought Alissa and me both to tears. A genuine, heartfelt THANK YOU!!!”*

-Rachel Oppold, Director of Development, Blank Children’s Hospital



2021 Set-Up Crew



2021 Tear Down Crew

The AACE Award

Cathy Maddox – HR Coordinator

The ESOP Association recently announced the winners of the Annual Awards for Communications Excellence (AACE) at a special event held during the 2021 Employee Owned Conference at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada. We are VERY proud to announce that Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest was a recipient of the award in the Printed Material category and was named runner-up for a 2nd award in the Virtual and In-Person Events category!

The AACE Awards are among the most coveted in the ESOP community and honor excellence in communicating the value of employee-owned companies—and ESOPs in general—to employees, communities, the media, and all other stakeholders. To recognize the importance of communications during the unprecedented circumstances created during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ESOP Association moved this year’s awards to their annual Employee Owned Conference, which was held November 10-12, 2021. The conference is one of the world’s largest gatherings of ESOP companies and their employee-owners and showcases the latest trends and innovations in the ESOP world.

“During these unprecedented times, effectively communicating about ESOPs and employee ownership is more important than ever,” said Jim Bonham, President and CEO of the ESOP Association. “This year’s AACE winners demonstrated outstanding creativity and innovation in communicating the value and benefits of ESOPs and set a great example for our entire community.

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Congratulations to all of the AACE recipients, and thanks for all your work in helping tell our story and expanding employee ownership in America.”

Commonwealth Electric submitted our Vesting Magnet, our 3-ring Ownership Binder that is given to all employees, and the bi-weekly “Smidges” for the Printed Materials category.

Our ESOP Month 2020, with a theme of Fiesta, was submitted for the Virtual and In-Person Event(s) category. The Ownership Committee had numerous educational flyers that followed the theme, along with Fiesta events for the entire month of October 2020. We were awarded Runner-Up for this category.



Members of the Commonwealth ESOP Committee accepting the award!

This was the first time the Employee Ownership Committee has applied and submitted for the awards, so we were thrilled to be recognized for our efforts!

About the ESOP Association

The ESOP Association is the largest organization in the world supporting employee-owned companies, the more than 10 million U.S. employees who participate in an ESOP, and the professionals who provide services to them. Headquartered at the International Employee Ownership Center in Washington, DC and operating as a 501(c)6 organization with the affiliated Employee Ownership Foundation, The ESOP Association conducts and funds academic research, provides more than 160 annual conferences and events attended by nearly 15,000 individuals, and advocates on behalf of employee owners and their businesses to federal and state lawmakers.

EveryStep Kavanagh House Renovation

Clint Bailey – Low Voltage Systems Manager | Des Moines, IA

Commonwealth Electric and Communications has partnered with Graham Construction on the renovation of the EveryStep Kavanagh House in Des Moines, Iowa. This facility is home to a 17-bed hospice house named after Sister Eve Kavanaugh. In addition to the facility receiving a facelift, an ambulance garage, new main entry, and large outdoor sitting area will provide additional patient comfort.



Pictured (from left to right): Kay Mealey, Joe Schaff & Corey Jacobe

The lead LV Systems Technician on this project has been Kay Mealey, working with Project Manager Clint Bailey. Kay has led the installation of multiple systems, including structured cabling, fire alarm, nurse call, surveillance, and access control. The lead electricians on this project have been Nick Perkins and Corey Jacobe, working with Project Manager Andrew Lawrance. Nick and Corey have accommodated the electrical needs for the specialty equipment in this facility.

As with any design-build project, the customer has been heavily involved in the primary design aspects while still relying upon the expertise of the Commonwealth team. Commonwealth is proud to have been involved in such a vital project serving the needs of the Central Iowa community.

Phoenix Service Adds Ian Boggs to the Team

Dave White – Service Manager | Phoenix, AZ

In an ever-expanding world, Commonwealth Electric's Phoenix branch is expanding too!

We are excited to welcome Ian Boggs to the Phoenix service department, who joined Commonwealth to provide better service to our customers. Ian has visions that will help the company and be best promoted in the Phoenix service department, where he will work as Assistant Manager. Welcome aboard, Ian!

Our service department has been planning to expand our services to offer InfraRed scanning and Arc Flash Studies alongside our central engineering group. We purchased the equipment and invested in the training and qualifications of our new Level 1 Technician – Leo Meraz – who has commandeered a service van and is providing his electrical skills to our clients.

Almost before the door closed on his first day, Ian was able to secure our first two InfraRed scan contracts. Using his past experience and some input from our engineering department, he was able to develop a comprehensive report with all relevant data and photos in an easy-to-understand format for our clients. Both scans provided a solid baseline for future work, and we gained some valuable experience.

Our old office also benefitted from the impetus Ian brought to the table. We now sport some very large visual aids – TVs, to the rest of the world – that allow us to present and update our scheduled work and job assignments. It took a while, but even a fellow like me, who helped Moses carry the tablets down the mountain, can understand and work this new invention. Ian has a lot of energy and ideas, and we are looking forward to future developments and services as we increase our footprint in testing and other services we can provide.

It was a busy summer for the Phoenix service department, as we were working on several Amazon locations as well. We serviced multiple outages and worked on on-going installations at multiple sites, the largest of which was 2.5 million square feet with 32 miles of conveyor belts. We now have a plan and can divide our responsibilities to manage these busy times and have a crew that has become adept and knowledgeable about how Amazon does business. This experience has also reflected on our maintenance work at Dexcom. The construction crews, headed by Ian, did such an amazing job that Dexcom invited Commonwealth to perform some of their maintenance and electrical upgrades.

As we continue to build a solid customer base in the Phoenix service department, we are looking forward to expanding our workforce and our skillset to allow us to provide the quality service Commonwealth Electric is known for. Again, welcome aboard, Ian. We wish you a great future here at Commonwealth!



The City of Ames Gains a New Access Control System

Lisa Steenhoek – Office Manager | Des Moines, IA



Pictured (from left to right):
David Vander Horst & Lindsay Leslie

Commonwealth Communications is nearing the end of a new access control project for the City of Ames in Iowa. Until now, Ames did not have an enterprise class access control system in place. A Lenel access control solution is being installed at all Ames Fire Stations, the City Hall, and at the stand-alone Ames Power Plant. The access control system that is being installed will control many different types of access points in the facilities, such as vehicle gates, heavy vault doors, and historical wooden doors. Installing electronic hardware at the City Hall was going to be challenging due to the masonry construction and historical nature of the facility. The concern of protecting the historical look of the facility while still providing access control was resolved by using Assa Abloy wireless locking hardware.

Terry Huss is the project manager for this job and David Vander Horst and Lindsay Leslie have been our lead technicians. The Des Moines Communications team has done a fantastic job at communicating and tracking the progress of this large project. There were a lot of different elements and moving parts and the Commonwealth Communications team handled it with professionalism!

Commonwealth Electric Employees Make Fleece Blankets to Give to Friendship Home

Kristin Callan – Senior Marketing Coordinator

Commonwealth Electric wanted to give back this holiday season by hand-tying ten fleece blankets to donate to Friendship Home in Lincoln, Nebraska. Employees from our Lincoln and Corporate branches worked together to create nice, warm blankets to support people in need.

Friendship Home's mission exists to support, shelter, and advocate for victims of domestic violence and their children. It helps victims find physical and emotional safety by providing crisis services, emergency shelter, and transitional housing. By making these blankets, Commonwealth Electric might be able to comfort a family in need during the cold fall and winter months.

More information about Friendship Home and

how you can get involved can be found on their website: <https://friendshiphome.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer/>.

Pictured are some of the individuals who attended our blanket tying event. Thank you to everyone who was able to help!



Pictured Left to Right:

Crystal Corea-Martinez, Gus Fulton, Sharon Meyer, Kelsey Drexel, Cathy Maddox, Jeremy Carbonneau, Rick Maas and Kristin Callan

Creative Visions

Bill Schaff – Project Manager | Des Moines, IA

Our branch in Des Moines, IA, has begun volunteering at a non-profit known as Creative Visions. Creative Visions, founded by state senator Ako Abdul-Samad, is an organization in Des Moines that has enabled thousands of individuals to build stronger lives, stronger families, and stronger communities through its core program of services, which focuses on self, family, and community betterment.

We are working alongside several of our trade partners, including Turner Construction, Cupertino Electric, and Waldinger, to provide several electrical upgrades, as well as a much-needed facelift to the building. The scope of onsite work consists of a complete service upgrade, including new panels and transfer switch to accommodate the 30Kw generator.

This project would not have been successful without our teams' efforts. The onsite foreman was Andrew Stoll, assisted by journeyman John Bunting. Constructability Manager Joe Folsom provided coordination and technical support. We are very grateful for their hard work and dedication.

Here at Commonwealth, we are always looking for ways to make an impact within our community, and we're excited to continue this tradition by being a part of this project.



Pictured left to right: Andrew Stoll, John Bunting, Joe Folsom