

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Spring 2022



Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest

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An Exciting Year for the Safety Department

Todd Longenecker – Corporate Safety Director

On record, 2021 was the best year for Commonwealth Electric in regard to safety. We matched our lowest incident rates all while we reached new heights in total man hours worked. But for 2022, we are not resting.

With our growing workforce and many project demands, we decided to bring on a few new safety professionals to support our jobsites that require full-time safety supervision, as well as a Corporate Safety Manager. A few months ago, we brought on Becki Kennedy to lead our efforts on a large data center project in the Des Moines area. In addition to Becki, we brought on Beau Feris to oversee another large data center project in the Des Moines area. Jacob Thralls is a safety professional that has taken the lead on a large pharmaceutical expansion in the Omaha area. Lucas Simpson is the newest of all and was added to our Corporate team to help support our safety efforts across the company.

On top of these new additions, our company was recently awarded the Safest Company Award by the National Safety Council. The National Safety Council identifies the safest companies by examining the company's safety logs and safety programs. We were given this award with Distinction, which means that our organization's safety records are 50% better than the industry national average!

This accomplishment is a testament to the hard work and dedication to safety from all of our field and management staff. Thank you, everyone, for making safety a priority every day you step into work. As I look to the future, I see only bigger and better things for Commonwealth Electric and the Safety Department.



May is Electrical Safety Month!
Here at Commonwealth, we are proud to work safely



Senator Deb Fischer visits the CECM Corporate Office

Cathy Maddox – HR Coordinator

Senator Deb Fischer, a representative of Nebraska, visited the Commonwealth Electric Corporate Office on Friday, April 1 to learn about our journey to becoming 100% employee-owned. President and CEO Michael Price welcomed Senator Fischer and her staff member, Phil Romberg, to Commonwealth and talked with them about the many positive changes in our culture since becoming employee-owned. Michael also spoke about the sustainability of our company during COVID, and how we were able to continue employing most of our employees during this time.

Billy Friesen, CFO, shared various slides with 2021 information that highlighted total hours and dollars for Commonwealth both company-wide and Nebraska specific.

Brian Lund, Service Manager in our Omaha branch and co-chair of the Employee Ownership Committee, thanked Senator Fischer for her support of employee ownership, and for introducing legislation that supports companies that become employee-owned.

Seth Richert, Corporate Estimator, and Cathy Maddox, HR Coordinator and co-chair of the Employee Ownership Committee, shared various stories with Senator Fischer and Mr. Romberg regarding employees who have recently retired, or will be retiring, and how participation in our Plan has enabled them to look forward to retirement due to the funds the company has been able to contribute to their individual Employee Stock Ownership account.



Left to Right: Seth Richert, Brian Lund, Billy Friesen, Michael Price, Cathy Maddox, Senator Fischer, Micah Edson.



Michael Price, President and CEO, gifts Senator Deb Fischer a Commonwealth Electric Challenge Coin.

Senator Fischer was taken on a tour of the Corporate Office and spent time in the Estimating Department who gave her a brief demo of online estimating. They compared this method to the way that projects were estimated previously using blueprints.

At the conclusion of the visit, Michael Price presented Senator Fischer with a Commonwealth Electric Challenge Coin. Senator Fischer remarked that she is a member of the Armed Services Board and has received challenge coins in the past. She stated that she is very much aware of the significance of the coins and greatly appreciated being presented with this gift.

Nic Bittle Inspires Our Des Moines Team

Dianna Merritt – Executive Assistant | Des Moines, IA

In an effort to thank the Des Moines office and field staff for the many hours worked and the difficulties experienced during the COVID pandemic, Commonwealth provided our staff the opportunity to spend a few hours with Nic Bittle, the founder of Work Force Pro. Nic works with contractors to prepare and develop workforces for the challenges they meet every day and help them have pride in the hard work they do. Nic provided some much-needed inspiration and a chance to refocus and recharge. For anyone who hasn't been fortunate enough to sit in on one of Nic's workshops, he is one of the best in the industry. Along with some fun and laughs, there were many takeaways and a lot of positive feedback from both our office and field.



“What you do is important and why you do it is equally important”

-Nic Bittle

Nic Bittle shares his insight with our Des Moines teams!

Commonwealth Electric Takes Part in Historical Project

Jeremy Braun – Project Manager | Columbus, NE

Commonwealth Electric's Columbus, NE, branch is working alongside Columbus Public Schools with their latest project: the Kramer Education Center. This historical building is being renovated into a child development center, day care center, and administrative offices.

The Kramer Education Center, from 1925 to 1958, was formerly known as Kramer High School. Then, in 1958, the school became Columbus Middle School. In 2016, the middle school moved into a brand-new building, leaving the former building vacant. Now, salvaging much of the building's history and naming it after the old high school, Kramer Education Center will provide the much-needed space and programs for the growing community, which has increased by 8.34% since the 2010 census.

Commonwealth will complete four phases, which include adding a new generator, an elevator, new lighting, and a new fire alarm system. We are also working on bids for two more phases of this project.



The Kramer Education Center's preschool program will fully open in the fall of 2023, with the day care and offices following close behind. Commonwealth is proud to be a part of this vital project that serves the needs of Columbus and the surrounding areas.

The Kramer Education Center will soon become a child development center, day care center, and administrative offices

Omaha Team Hosts Bowling Event

Jon Folkers – Business Development & Marketing | Omaha, NE

Our Omaha, NE, location met at Mockingbird Lanes, a local bowling alley, on Thursday, March 31st to spend a day having fun with fellow colleagues. Although the NCAA March Madness tournament was on the TVs above those who bowled, the real madness happened between the lanes.

We were pleased to have a good turnout with close to 50 in attendance. We had nine lanes of bowlers and another 10-15 office staff in attendance.

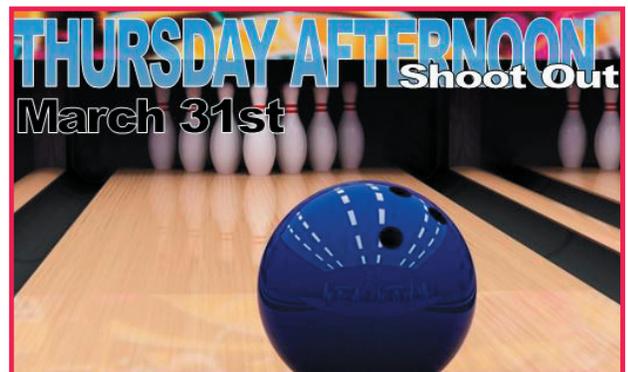
Cheryl Keyes and Jamee Strickland were in charge of the festivities. All bowlers were assigned lanes, and tickets were handed out by the bowling committee for every strike or spare achieved by each participant. Employees entered themselves into a drawing for giveaways at the end of the event by writing their name on the back of the ticket and placing it in the team event bucket.



For having the highest score of the day, J.T. Holmes was awarded the King Pin trophy!

Pizza was provided for all who attended, with the awards immediately following the end of play. Once the tallying was done, the bowler with the most strikes and spares this year was J.T. Holmes. At one point, J.T. had achieved seven strikes in a row! By having the most strikes and spares for the day, J.T. was awarded the traveling King Pin trophy. Winning the event also entitles J.T. bragging rights for a year.

Great job, and thank you, to all who attended!



Our Omaha employees enjoyed getting the afternoon to relax, snack, and compete with their coworkers.



Commonwealth Electric Celebrates Tim Maschmeier

Cathy Maddox – HR Coordinator

This past March, members of the Lincoln and Corporate offices celebrated a very special individual. Tim Maschmeier is an estimator at our Corporate Office and has been an integral part of our company. While Tim's official hire date with CECM is 2/28/88, Tim actually worked for the "old" Commonwealth previously, so has been with our company for most of his working career! Tim started with CECM working in the warehouse, and at the time of his much-deserved retirement, he was a full-time estimator. Tim has witnessed many changes within CECM – process changes, leadership changes, location changes – he has seen it all! Tim has truly lived up to all of the Core Values of Commonwealth.



Corporate Estimating Team
Left to Right: Nick Manes, Aron Beck, Seth Richert, Nick Page, Brian Millard, Tim Maschmeier

Over the years, Tim has been one of the most dedicated and driven employees Commonwealth has seen. He has proven his commitment to excellence at every turn, always going above and beyond in his work. As he begins to transition to retirement, we wanted to gather and celebrate him and all the amazing work he has done for this company. Thank you so much, Tim! And enjoy your time on the golf course in the coming days – you deserve it!



Estimating manager, Brian Millard, gives Tim his retirement gift.

Commonwealth On Site at the Lincoln Hudl Building

Brad Owen – Project Manager | Lincoln, NE

This spring, one of our Lincoln, NE, field teams will complete construction on a tenant fit-out at the Hudl headquarters in downtown Lincoln. Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest was the electrical contractor on site for this project, which included complex lighting installation, high-end lighting controls, and extensive AV technology.

This phase of construction was on the 6th floor of the building. Hudl had previously rented this floor to other tenants, but due to recent growth they were looking for places to expand.

Hudl is a Nebraska-based sports technology company that provides tools for coaches and athletes to review game footage and improve team play. If you get the chance to go inside their headquarter building, you'll see there is no limit to their imagination when it comes to interior design. The building features many accent walls with their signature bright orange color. There are also accent walls covered in AstroTurf and nerf guns, among other unexpected things.



A CECM electrician installing lighting fixtures to the signature orange walls

Because of the building's unique interior design, Commonwealth had to work hard to have the lighting fixtures and devices match the fun and modern look. This project was a challenging opportunity for Commonwealth to showcase our abilities.

The general foremen for this project were Kirk Cosaert and Dan Katt.



Field electricians problem-solving on the Hudl job site

Des Moines Low Voltage Team Completes Project with DFA

Kalee Iversen – Project Coordinator | Des Moines, IA

The Low Voltage Systems team in the Des Moines branch recently completed a job with Dairy Farmers of America located in Allerton, Iowa. Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) is a new customer to Commonwealth Electric and Communications. DFA is a dairy cooperative that works with over 12,500 dedicated family farmers. Each DFA Dairy location is a family-owned and family-run business that commits to preserving their farm, land, and communities. This plant in Allerton produces milk-based dry infant formula for large companies in the United States. Commonwealth is honored to be part of the bigger picture with DFA as they continue to serve their communities.

Clint Bailey was the Project Manager with Jake Belcher as the lead Low Voltage Systems Technician. This project included structured cabling, access control, and surveillance camera systems. Due to the unique environment, much of the cabling was installed using rigid aluminum and PVC-coated rigid conduit systems. Therefore, a team from the Electrical Division of Commonwealth installed conduit systems in advance of the low voltage systems. The electrical team consisted of Serouan Ngan and Jose Garcia. Jake and his team went above and beyond to ensure the customers' requests were met through the quality of work that Commonwealth continually offers. Clint, Jake, and the team involved with this job have since developed a lasting relationship with Dairy Farmers of America that has already led to additional cameras and a video intercom system!



Ryan Bettcher (left) and Jake Belcher (right) both worked on this project from start to finish!

Des Moines Service Team Awarded 'Sweet' New Project

Kalee Iversen – Project Coordinator | Des Moines, IA

The Service Team at our Des Moines, IA, branch was recently awarded a project with Chocolate Storybook. Chocolate Storybook produces large amounts of cotton candy and sells it both locally and nationally, as it ships to many theme parks and other locations around the United States. Due to a consistent pattern of high sales, they are needing to add an additional cotton candy production line.

Chocolate Storybook is a valued customer of Commonwealth Electric, and Tom Washington, the service manager, has worked hard to keep this relationship strong and growing. With the help of new service coordinator Kalee Iversen, the estimating process of this job was a great learning experience from start to finish, and will help us see the job through to completion. Chase Kohler is the lead foreman on this job, and we are hoping to utilize his skills to help cultivate our younger apprentices. This job will have an array of electrical skills to learn, including reading blueprints, becoming familiar with new gear, and working with branch circuitry, lighting, and fire alarm systems. Chase has been a great asset to our service department over the years and we are glad to see him flourish in new opportunities.



Not every item from the Chocolate Storybook is sweet! Here you can see their bacon flavored cotton candy...would you try it?

Phoenix Branch Welcomes Michele Dean to the Team!

Bob Philipps – Branch Manager | Phoenix, AZ



The Phoenix Branch recently added a new teammate and employee owner, Michele Dean! She will be working as our Phoenix Office Manager. Michele comes with a very diverse and robust work history ranging from a Customer Service Specialist, Logistics & Safety Coordinator, Resource & Asset Manager, scheduler/planner, and even an elementary school teacher. The common thread between all of these is that she has always been a team-orientated employee, and we are so excited to add her to ours.

Michele is a Phoenix native but has spent time in all areas of the United States, and even overseas. She is a graduate of Grand Canyon University and the University of Guam. In her spare time, Michele enjoys drone photography, traveling, history, motorcycle riding, reading, and supporting military veteran activities. She also is currently looking for work on a pit crew for any type of racing!

Michele has two sons, Zachary and Jacob, and three grandsons in the Phoenix area. Michele would also like to thank the entire Corporate office for help with the training and support she has received she started at Commonwealth. She also wants to thank Nicole Roach (Lincoln Office), Terri Bellman (Tucson Office), and Emily Schamber (Corporate) for traveling down to Phoenix to help her learn the ropes and get the office back on track. I would also like to personally thank all of the offices for allowing your personnel to take time away from their daily responsibilities to invest time in Phoenix's office.

Dog Day Fridays at the Des Moines Branch

Michelle Kaldenberg – AP | Des Moines, IA

At the Des Moines Branch, Fridays are no longer “ruff” thanks to the addition of Dog Day Fridays. Every week, someone volunteers to bring in their furry friends to share with the office.

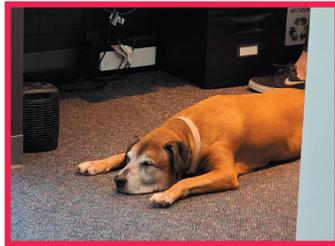
The benefits of bringing your dog(s) to work include, but are not limited to:

- Reducing Stress
- Encouraging Conversations/Connections Between Colleagues
- Promoting A Positive Work Environment
- Increasing Productivity



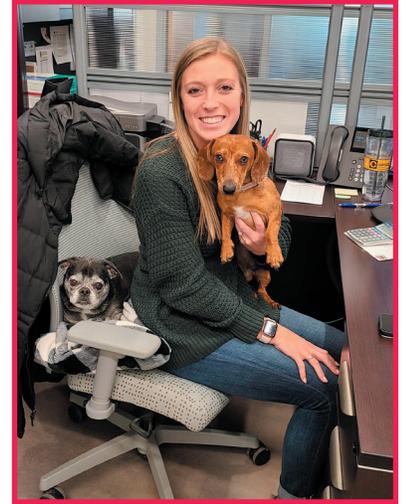
Beautiful Luna showing her support for Iowa State

We have seen these benefits firsthand. When feeling overwhelmed or just needing a break, people will go interact with the visiting dog. Colleagues walking by usually stop and chat, which leads to conversations between employees that might not normally happen. These conversations are usually non-work-related, allowing people to get to know each other on a more personal level. Better relationships lead to increased productivity and a positive work environment.



Gixxer taking a nap on the job!

We can all agree that Dog Day Fridays have been a paws-itive addition to our work weeks!



Kalee Iversen and her two new coworkers, Olivia (left) and Brick (right)

New Faces at the Des Moines Branch

Ashley Huinker – Project/Safety Coordinator | Des Moines, IA



**Back row from left to right – Dave Theisen, Chris Fisher, Mitch Shaw
Front row from left to right – Kate Kriegel, Anyi Overlin**

The Des Moines location is excited to announce the addition of a few new employees that have joined our office over the past few months.

Dave Thiesen is the Corporate Fleet and Equipment Manager. Dave’s home office is here at the Des Moines branch, but he works with location leaders across the company to assist with our fleet and equipment management.

Chris Fisher also houses out of here in Des Moines. Chris, a Systems Engineer, works with our Corporate IT department to take care of Des Moines specific IT needs. In addition, Chris assists Steve Hernandes and his team on Corpo-rate-related matters.

Mitch Shaw joined Commonwealth as a Project Manager in November. Mitch comes to us with both field and management electrical experience. His role will be to help lead the team for the newly acquired large data center project in Waukee, Iowa.

Anyi Overlin came aboard in January as a Project Coordinator. Anyi will work alongside Mitch and the rest of the team on the data center project in Waukee.

Kate Kriegel also joined the Commonwealth team in January. Kate, a Project Engineer, assists the healthcare and small projects team in the Des Moines office.

Welcome everyone! We are thrilled to have you as part of our Commonwealth family!