

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit | Spring 2023



Inside this issue:

**Commonwealth
Helps Upgrade
UNMC**

**Commonwealth
Employees Visit
College Campuses**

**Rydalch Electric,
Inc. Hosts Safety
Training**

**Omaha Branch
Volunteers at
NAWIC Blood
Drive**

**Greater NE
Awarded
Permanent Casino
Project**

**Lincoln Team
Helps Power
Monolith Facility**

**Construction
Begins on ISU Vet
Diagnostic Lab**

**Omaha Team
Welcomes New
Member**

And more!

Estimating Department Hosts Training at New and Improved Office in Lincoln

Brian Millard - Estimating Manager

Our Corporate Estimating Department is very proud to unveil a new and improved workspace to all Commonwealth employees. With our company's continued growth, our department recognized the need to expand our space and improve our ability to train employees in estimating for every location and potential job. The Estimating Department has a strong culture of support for branch locations and understands the importance of operating more efficiently to help them do the same.

Kingery Construction Company recently completed a 5,000 sq/ft working space on the second floor of our branch office in Lincoln, Nebraska. With 22 workstations, the open-concept space will promote more interaction among the department and facilitate collaboration on large projects. The new area also provides us with the capacity to support all branch location estimate projects while also securing more work for the company.

The space also features a large training room that accommodates up to 12 employees at a time, enabling our department to host training sessions in estimating and utilizing McCormick, the software we use to estimate projects. As our department believes that education is the key to empowering employees in any estimating capacity, we are committed to bringing employees into the training room and teaching them all the tips and tricks of McCormick to produce the most accurate estimate.

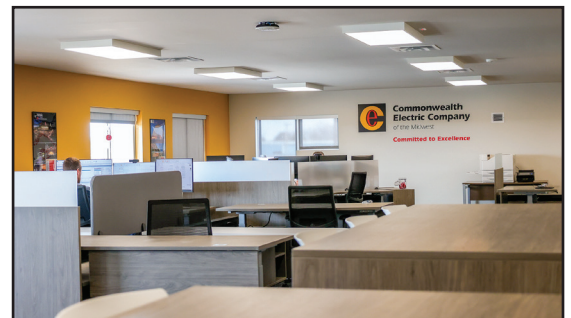
To break in the new space, our department recently concluded a two-week basic estimating/McCormick class with 12 attendees from various branch locations across the company. Our team was proud to showcase the new space and welcome the "students" into the office to learn. Overall, the new space not only facilitates collaboration and growth but also provides a robust training facility to help all employees succeed in their estimating roles.



Employees from across the company attend the estimating/McCormick training session on March 27.



Nick Page (pictured left) hosts a McCormick training session at the new Estimating office in Lincoln.



The new 5,000 sq/ft space features 22 work stations and a training room for up to 12 employees.

Commonwealth Helps Upgrade UNMC

Brian Eledge - Project Manager | Omaha Data/Communications

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in Omaha realized that significant upgrades were needed for their building security systems. Over the last three years, Commonwealth Communications has been upgrading the card access and camera systems at UNMC in both Omaha and the surrounding metro area. We started assisting UNMC with site evaluations at the main campus, and our engagement has only grown since then.

The first stage of the upgrades started with securing all vulnerable entry points at the main UNMC campus. The Commonwealth security team, led by Low Voltage Foremen Ken Sheldrick and Christine Baez, secured the campus by going building by building and adding card access to all of the identified exterior doors. This included a lot of overnight work and extended hours. Overall, we added card access equipment to over 140 doors.

The second stage of this project was upgrading and adding Internet Protocol cameras. We started by adding cameras at 10 remote clinics in the Omaha area. These cameras provided complete coverage of the exterior of the buildings, along with high-traffic areas inside the clinics. After the clinics were completed, we started replacing the analog cameras in all hospital, clinical, and employee parking areas of the main campus. We are currently working on upgrading cameras within the education/university buildings on campus. We are currently designing and bidding for additional cameras in all the other parking lots that currently have little to no camera coverage.

A huge thank you to Christine, Ken, and all of the supporting Commonwealth team members who have worked on this project over the last three years. Without the commitment and quality work of these employees, this ongoing project wouldn't be as successful.



The University of Nebraska Medical Center's main campus, located in Omaha, Nebraska



Commonwealth Communications has been upgrading the card access and camera systems at UNMC for the last three years.

Commonwealth Employees Visit College Campuses

Zach Lomison - Internship Coordinator

Since February of this year, several Commonwealth employees have spent extra time in college classrooms and clubs, spreading their industry knowledge and experience with students. Our aim is to meet students where they are, fostering a better understanding of who we are and what we do at Commonwealth, while also helping them learn and discover the industry options available to them upon graduation.

Design Manager Zack Tupper and Electrical Engineer Sarah Kwapnioski spent time with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Chapter, discussing their daily duties as electrical engineers. The 3D modeling software and examples of projects the Engineering team is working on were a great way to get the students excited about the career field and what we do within the department.

Project Estimator Nick Manes and Andy Sueper, service manager at the Greater Nebraska branch, presented to students at the Southeast Community College Milford campus. Nick showed students what electrical estimating is, how we complete estimates, and what qualities make a good estimator. Andy talked to the students about careers and apprenticeship opportunities that Commonwealth offers, as well as the different routes people have taken to be in the positions they currently hold with us.

Project Engineer Dylan Busby has been involved with the Iowa State University Student Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association all year. This winter, Dylan presented the history, progress, and current events at Commonwealth to the students.

Human Resources Director Lindsay Selig attended an Employer in Residence booth at UNL in the College of Business to promote our administrative roles. Senior Project Manager Dan Maca attended a similar event at the University of Nebraska-Omaha in the Peter Kiewit Institute building to promote our Omaha branch's project and engineering roles. We love the opportunity to be the only employer with a booth on campus, so students can start recognizing the Commonwealth brand!

Finally, Estimator Melissa Brown, Estimator/Project Manager Adam Cheever, and Project Manager Brad Owen are working with Professor Tony Roebuck at UNL to help teach and grade a take-off project for two of his classes. It is a fantastic opportunity for Commonwealth to take several visits to the classroom and be hands-on with the teaching and knowledge the students are receiving on electrical estimating. They are utilizing the recently remodeled second floor of the Lincoln branch to teach the students how to complete a project take-off. At the end of the semester, Melissa, Adam, and Brad will take part in watching and grading the final project presentations that the students will give this spring!

Commonwealth will continue to have a presence on campuses across the company as we grow the intern program together. We look forward to welcoming our intern class of 2023 joining us in May!



Lindsay Selig stands by Commonwealth Electric's booth at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Business.



Melissa Brown and Adam Cheever present to electrical systems students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Rydalch Electric, Inc. Hosts Safety Training

Todd Longenecker - Safety Director

As part of our ongoing commitment to our employees and their safety, our employees at Rydalch Electric, Inc. recently completed two important safety training programs: Safety Leadership training and NFPA 70E.

The Safety Leadership training emphasized the importance of supervisors in maintaining a safe working environment, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and tools to prioritize safety. The NFPA 70E training focused on guidelines that need to be followed when working with electrical equipment to prevent accidents and injuries. NFPA 70E is the standard that all our employees must follow for safe electrical work practices.

Mark Rydalch, president of Rydalch Electric, Inc., had this to say about the event:

"Both of these programs are critical for ensuring the safety and well-being of our employees. We strive to continuously improve our safety practices and procedures, and I believe that our recent training initiatives were very effective in doing so. We are dedicated to ensuring that our employees work in a safe environment, and these training initiatives are just one example of our commitment to safety."



Safety Director Todd Longenecker leads a training session in Salt Lake City.



Field Operations Manager Tyler Wahlberg addresses the group.



Back Row (L to R): Clint Rydalch, Kenny Wilkerson, Mike Gentry, Will Dunkle, Kelly Kolb, Spencer Shook, Jordan Worthington, Sandy Rydalch, Tim Webster, Kendall Johnson, Chris Jensen, Cody Nalder, Richard Otteson, Dave Smith, Shane Wilkinson, Steve Clark, Maloni Tuikolovatu, Chad Gardner, Kip Francom, Todd Longenecker

Front Row (L to R): Judd Rydalch, Ben Howard, Ryan Clement, Charlie Anderson, Mark Rydalch, Jody Wahlberg, Tyler Wahlberg, Jesse Bankhead

Greater Nebraska Sponsors JAG NE Zoo Trip

Taylor Bruce - Service Coordinator | Greater Nebraska



Two JAG students watch the jellyfish inside the Aquarium.

On March 31, 2023, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Nebraska took students from Columbus High School on a field trip to Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium. The trip was designed to give students the opportunity to learn about the variety of careers that are available in the field of zoology and animal care.

JAG Nebraska is a program that helps high school students in the state explore career options, identify their interests, and develop the skills they need to prepare for life after graduation. JAG students receive a range of services, including job placement assistance, career counseling, and support for continuing education.

Taylor Bruce, a graduate of JAG and service coordinator from our Greater Nebraska location, chaperoned the group as Commonwealth's representative. The students began their day at the zoo by taking a tour of the different exhibits and learning about the animals that live there.

After the tour, the 50+ students and their chaperones took a break to enjoy a delicious lunch provided by Commonwealth. The students had the opportunity to connect with each other and talk about their experiences at the zoo so far. It was a great opportunity for them to build relationships with their peers and with the adults who were supporting them.

Following lunch, the students met with two workers from the zoo who shared information about the variety of careers needed to keep the zoo running smoothly. The students were given an activity to learn about the architecture and landscaping that plays a crucial role in keeping the animals happy and healthy. They learned about the diverse range of careers needed to care for the animals, including welders, plumbers, engineers, mechanics, electricians, grounds maintenance, and many others.

Overall, the trip was a great success and gave the JAG students a valuable opportunity to explore career options in the animal care field. Commonwealth was proud to sponsor the trip and support the students in their journey toward a successful future.



Taylor Bruce (Pictured 3rd from the left) and several JAG students sit in the shark tunnel at the Suzanne and Walter Scott Aquarium.



The 50+ students and their chaperones learned about the many careers involved in taking care of the animals.

Omaha Branch Rolls Up Their Sleeves and Lends an Arm During WIC Week Blood Drive

Brianna Ouedraogo - Estimator | Omaha

This year, the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) celebrated its 25th annual Women in Construction (WIC) Week, an event that honors and highlights the vital role of women in the construction industry. NAWIC founded WIC Week in 1998, and it has grown in scale and impact since then.

As part of the 2023 WIC Week celebration, NAWIC sponsored four blood drives in the Omaha/Lincoln area of Nebraska, with the goal of supporting the local community and promoting the importance of donating blood. Commonwealth's Omaha branch hosted one of these drives in front of its prefabrication shop.

Throughout the day of the drive, 13 donors came forward to donate blood. Their contributions made a significant impact, potentially saving or positively impacting the lives of 39 individuals! Thank you to all the donors, and thank you to our wonderful team for making this blood drive a success!

If you would like to learn more about WIC Week or NAWIC's work in promoting women in construction, please visit [NAWIC.org](https://www.nawic.org). If you're interested in donating blood, please schedule an appointment at [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org). The Nebraska Blood Bank is still in a 'Blood Emergency' and desperately needs donors. Every donation counts and can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need.



Brianna Ouedraogo donates blood during NAWIC's 25th annual WIC Week.

Des Moines Service Team Modernizes Camera Systems

Jenae Frisch - Project Coordinator | Des Moines

Commonwealth Communications is excited to announce its partnership with Mary Greeley Medical Center in Ames, Iowa, to modernize and update its surveillance system. We have been working closely with Mary Greeley's IT team to migrate over 300 existing cameras currently connected to an isolated network. The cameras will be migrated to Mary Greeley's main local network to help ensure network security and to track the system assets.

Our team, led by Low Voltage Technician Taylor Brown, has been working diligently to ensure a smooth migration process, documenting the existing equipment locations, and identifying outdated equipment that the manufacturer no longer supports. While upgrading and replacing their aging cameras, we are also working with them to locate camera technology that can record video and work with the system to provide analytic information for security and other departments. This comprehensive approach to the project ensures that Mary Greeley's surveillance system will be up-to-date and fully operational for years to come.

We at Commonwealth Communications are excited to be a part of this project, and we look forward to continuing to work with Mary Greeley Medical Center to ensure that their security system remains cutting-edge and effective in the years to come.



Taylor Brown is leading our Low Voltage team on this project.

Greater NE Hits the Jackpot on Permanent Casino Project

Riley Fischer - Project Manager | Greater Nebraska

Commonwealth's Greater Nebraska branch started 2023 by hitting the jackpot! Being awarded the Harrah's Columbus Casino & Racetrack project in Columbus, Nebraska, helped our branch get things started in the right direction for what looks to be a busy year. As things look to wrap up at Harrah's temporary casino location at Ag Park in Columbus, all eyes turn to the permanent location. Once again, Commonwealth has partnered with the Whiting-Turner Contracting Company for this project.



A Commonwealth employee completes work on site at the new permanent casino.

Traveling north out of Columbus on Highway 81, it's hard not to notice a change in scenery. Where Wishbones, the Columbus event center, was once located, there is now a large construction site with many moving parts and hardworking individuals pushing to bring the next big thing to the area. Caesars Entertainment, the parent company of Harrah's, is all in on this project, as they plan to invest \$75 million into a permanent casino and horse track. The grounds will feature a 28,000-square-foot casino with over 500 slots, 14 table games, a restaurant, and a Caesars Sportsbook. On the east side of the casino will be a one-mile racetrack, making Harrah's Columbus home to the longest thoroughbred racetrack in Nebraska. The track will be complete with grandstands and horse barns.

All cards are on the table for this project. Commonwealth's electrical and low voltage teams are working with several other departments within the company. Building Information Modeling has been—and will be—a huge asset for our field team in utilizing 3D models. Virtual Design and Construction (VDC) Manager JT Holmes and his team have been a great help to this side of the project. Seeing and identifying any physical barriers will help eliminate wasted resources. Prefabrication (prefab) will also be pushed heavily on this project as we try to grow the amount of prefab used in the Greater Nebraska area. Vice President of Engineering Eric Hoge and VDC Manager Stewart Bohrer have also been working hand-in-hand with the Columbus team. The engineering and design will be done out of the Omaha branch, while the physical build of the prefab will be run out of the Greater Nebraska locations.



Members of our electrical construction team in Columbus, Nebraska, help lay the foundations for the project's electrical work. Our Greater Nebraska team is working alongside our Engineering team in Omaha, Nebraska, for this project.

Lincoln Team Helps Power Monolith Olive Creek Facility

Owen Gubbels - Project Engineer | Lincoln

Commonwealth has had a hand in constructing the Monolith Olive Creek manufacturing plant—a facility that is the first of its kind in the world—located in Hallam, Nebraska, since breaking ground in 2016. Monolith is a global leader in clean hydrogen and low-emission carbon black production and has received widespread support from investors, customers, industry experts, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Final completion for the operation was reached in 2020, and we are regularly involved in day-to-day operations along with frequent projects.

The Monolith Olive Creek facility in Hallam, Nebraska, is an innovative and complex facility that produces clean hydrogen, a promising and sustainable energy source. The same process also creates the low-emission carbon black. Carbon black is one of the top 50 industrial chemicals manufactured worldwide and can be found in many household materials like printer inks, mascara, batteries, toys, electronics, and plastics. Most notably, it's estimated that carbon black is used to make up 30% of every tire on the road today.

Commonwealth has performed various types of work throughout the industrial facility, ranging from cable tray and heat trace to controls, programming, and even pneumatic tubing. Our crew, led by Foreman Will Volzke, along with Low Voltage General Foreman Shiloh Menter and Apprentice Electrician Marshall Joy, has utilized their extensive electrical knowledge to complete larger projects on the site. Several other technical service electricians have also contributed to the project.

We are proud to provide our valuable experience, skills, and great customer service to ensure Monolith executes its current and future goals.



Monolith's Olive Creek facility in Hallam, Nebraska
(Photo used with permission)

Greater NE Team Renovates Schuyler Police Department

Charlie Simmons - Project Manager | Greater Nebraska

Our team in Greater Nebraska is excited to begin work on the renovation and addition of the Schuyler Police Department in Schuyler, Nebraska. The building, originally constructed as the Schuyler City Hall in 1909, is over a century old and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building was eventually converted into what is now known as the Schuyler Police Department, located in the Downtown Historic District. Currently, the original building is being reconstructed in accordance with the Schuyler Comprehensive Plan.

The renovation project consists of a two-story addition, spanning 3,500 square feet and containing a new stair tower, elevator, restrooms, storage rooms, locker rooms, evidence processing room, and interview rooms. Additionally, the project includes an 8,000-square-foot interior renovation with the build-out of interior office spaces, a training room, and installation of a new electronic clock in the existing clock tower. A new outdoor generator for electrical backup will also be installed. Once completed, the renovated police department will serve a population of over 6,500 residents and greatly extend the life of the building.

The construction of the renovations and addition began in January 2023 with a target completion date of December 2023. Rogge General Contractors, based out of Lincoln, Nebraska, is partnering with Commonwealth Electric of the Midwest's Greater Nebraska team to complete the project.



Schuyler City Hall, as seen in 2010
(Image: Ammodramus, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

Construction Begins on ISU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab

Ashley Huinker - Project Coordinator | Des Moines

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest has been diligently working on the first phase of construction for a state-of-the-art Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) on the Iowa State University campus in Ames, Iowa. Construction began in early 2021 and is on target for a fall 2023 opening of the first phase.

As a subcontractor of Johnson Controls Inc., Commonwealth's scope of work includes installing a Johnson Controls building automation system for the entire facility. This includes work associated with the facility's four air handling units, chilled water system, hot water system, steam boilers, emergency generator monitoring, carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide gas detection, blower and fan coil units, cabinet unit heaters, variable air volume boxes, and numerous third-party system control monitoring.

The new VDL will provide essential infrastructure for sample receiving and processing, pathology, bacteriology, necropsy, histopathology, and an incinerator. The new construction will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the process flow while addressing critical issues of space quantity and quality. It will also provide the necessary biosafety and biocontainment.

The VDL has been a national leader in protecting animal and human health since it was established in 1947. Processing more than 100,000 submissions a year—and more than a million tests in total—the laboratory plays a crucial role in ensuring animal health, including wildlife and companion animals, public health, world food safety, and the competitiveness of Iowa's \$32 billion animal agricultural industry.

Recently, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds announced the \$60 million in federal and state funding for phase two of the VDL. A second phase is necessary because 80 percent of the existing lab's work and services could not be included in the first phase. These critical diagnostic services include molecular diagnostics, serology, virology, analytical chemistry, toxicology and pharmacology, genetic sequencing, bioinformatics, BSL-3 lab, and the VDL's research and development function. The investment into this project will greatly enhance the state's diagnostic service and discovery capabilities. The new VDL will help support the animal health, food safety, public health, and competitiveness of Iowa's animal agricultural industries for current and future generations of Iowans.

Keenan McBroom is the project foreman for the VDL. He is led by Project Manager Travis Powell and Estimating/Project Coordinator Ashley Huinker in the office. The completion of the VDL's first and second phases will signify a significant milestone in the effort to improve animal and human health while creating a better future for Iowa's animal agricultural industry.



Apprentice Electrician Frank Sposeto works on site at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

City of Des Moines Service Work

Jenae Frisch - Project Coordinator | Des Moines

During the first quarter of 2023, the Des Moines Service Department has been working on a few projects with a longtime customer, The City of Des Moines. The first completed project involved retrofitting lights in eight downtown Des Moines skywalks. This project helped save energy and brighten the area, which has made the skywalk safer for those utilizing them.

The service team also installed multiple car charging stations in the downtown parking ramps. The city aims to meet the growing electric vehicle demands and upgrade its facilities for the general public.

Both projects were led by Service Foreman Jake Leverich. Looking forward, we will be working on installing a new generator in a downtown parking ramp. This will be utilized as backup power for the city's information technology infrastructure.



One of eight skywalks in downtown Des Moines.

Safety Spotlight

Lucas Simpson - Corporate Safety Manager

This quarter's safety spotlight focuses on the Des Moines Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) team, which services 15 different locations across the Central Iowa Region, from underground mines to pit mines and sand dredging operations. The team is comprised of General Foremen Kevin Harris and Alex Van Den Broek, with Project Manager (PM) Andrew Lawrance and a rotating crew of several apprentices. Andrew, Kevin, and Alex have been leading the charge in Iowa mine work since the beginning of 2019. They boast an impressive record of zero MSHA citations, zero reportable accidents, and zero lost time injuries since beginning this work.

Here is what PM Andrew Lawrance had to say about the team:

"Kevin Harris and Alex Van Den Broek have been the lead foremen since day one and cannot be doing a better job! We currently are working at 15 different sites. Each one of these sites is essentially a different project entirely with different onsite management. This creates many challenges as there are many variables that impact each site's individuality. Commonwealth's team of electricians are required to complete a 40-hour MSHA 48 safety training course, as well as a yearly refresher. Kevin and Alex can be inspected by MSHA inspectors at any given time, so the constant upkeep of records and training is crucial. Over an almost four-year period, we have had zero compliance failures, which is almost unheard of for the type of work we do daily."

Thank you to Kevin, Alex, Andrew, and the rest of the team for their incredible safety performance in a challenging environment.



Pictured left to right: Kevin Harris, Brian Neuenkirk, Alex Van Den Broek

Omaha Branch Welcomes New Member

Jon Folkers - Business Development Manager

Our Omaha, Nebraska, location is excited to welcome Noah Thornton, senior project manager, as our newest Omaha team member. Noah officially joined the team on March 20, 2023, and we couldn't be happier to have him on board.

Although Noah is new to Commonwealth Electric, he's not new to Omaha. He comes to us from a local competitor where he held the position of project manager/estimator. He has been hired to oversee industrial projects for the Omaha location and will be working with a strong team of around fourteen other project managers.

Noah started in the electrical field at the age of 14 while working for his uncle. He got his first taste of industrial electrical experience at the age of 16. He continued working on industrial projects throughout his schooling. During his eight years in the field, he has held various positions, including construction wireman, apprentice, journeyman electrician, and general foreman. Noah has also achieved his master electrician license.

Originally from Bedford, Iowa, Noah attended and graduated from Southwestern Community College in Creston, Iowa, where he studied electrical technology. He also has a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Arizona State University.

When asked what he likes best about his job, he remarked that he enjoys the challenges. He enjoys creating creative solutions to his customers' needs. When not at work, Noah enjoys spending his spare time with family and friends. A self-confessed sports fan, Noah is a fan of the Kansas City Chiefs and Chicago Bulls. He also participates in a local basketball league, where he plays point guard for his team.

Noah's Other Interests:	
Favorite movie:	"Inglourious Basterds"
Favorite motivational quote:	"Rise and rise again until lambs become lions" -Robin Hood
Favorite book:	"Meditations" by Marcus Aurelius
Favorite type of music:	Country and gospel
Favorite hobby:	Woodworking
Best advice to live by:	"Happiness and freedom begin with a clear understanding of one principle. Some things are within your control, and some things are not." -Epictetus



Welcome, Noah! We're glad to have you on our team!

Committed to Excellence

CUSTOMERS | EMPLOYEES | CHARACTER | MASTERY



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Be the first to hear the latest and greatest from Commonwealth! We'll never share your information and only send one email per quarter filled with great content.

FOLLOW US

