Rising Leaders in Public Power Page 4 Member Scores Big Energy Payback Page 6

Help Power the Navajo Nation in 2026 Page 9



# **BIG SAVINGS REALIZED IN BOND SALE**

Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (WMMPA), Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) and its members have something to celebrate with the recently completed bond

sale that will save millions in future debt service payments.

The \$27.155 million bond sale, held on Sept. 30, 2025, drew overwhelming investor interest. In total, there were more than \$118 million in bids, more than four times the amount offered.

Why so much interest in the bonds? According to Chris Olson, MRES vice president and chief financial officer, it comes down to WMMPA's strong financial standing. With Aa2 and AA- credit ratings from Moody's Ratings and Fitch Ratings respectively, investors saw the bonds as a safe and attractive opportunity.

"This was one of the best transactions I've ever seen from a savings perspective," said Mike Berwanger, financial advisor with PFM Financial Advisors LLC, who worked closely with WMMPA and MRES on the deal.

The overall transaction included both a bond refunding and the termination of an interest rate swap, which locked-in an extremely low interest rate in 2020 and resulted in a net all-in True Interest Cost of just 1.215 percent for the transaction, far below today's interest rate market. That translated into net present value savings of about \$9.8 million, or 28.05 percent of the refunded bonds, significantly above the five percent minimum savings threshold set by the WMMPA and MRES boards.

Olson emphasized that WMMPA and MRES only pursue bond

refunding opportunities when there's a clear financial benefit. "We are very thoughtful and deliberate about pursuing these transactions," he said. "If there are savings to be had, we act,

and this time, the results exceeded expectations."

The MRES and WMMPA boards officially ratified the bond sale in early October, with signing on Oct. 9 and closing on Oct. 15, 2025.

After months of preparation, the successful sale marks a major

financial milestone for MRES and WMMPA. "It was a long process," Olson noted, "but it went incredibly well."

transactions I've ever seen from a savings perspective."

— Mike Berwanger, financial advisor with PFM Financial Advisors LLC

"This was one of the best



MRES and WMMPA board members ratified the bond sale. Present at the signing were (back row from left) Dave McLaughlin, WMMPA general counsel; Matt Schull, MRES president and CEO; Chris Olson, MRES vice president and chief financial officer; Dan Harmelink, MRES general counsel and vice president of legal; (front row from left) Vernell Roberts, MRES board chair; Travis Schmidt, MRES board director and WMMPA board secretary; Scott Hain, WMMPA board president and MRES board 2<sup>nd</sup> vice chair; and Steve Lehner, MRES board secretary/treasurer.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS AND RETIREMENTS**

# PETE WYFFELS NAMED GENERAL MANAGER OF MARSHALL MUNICIPAL UTILITIES, JOINS WMMPA BOARD

Pete Wyffels has been named the new general manager of Marshall Municipal Utilities (MMU). Wyffels also joined the Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (WMMPA) board of directors at their October meeting. He succeeds David Schelkoph, who announced his retirement earlier this year.

Wyffels stepped into the general manager role following an extensive search that began in spring 2025. He brings more than 30 years of experience in the utility industry.

A Marshall native and graduate, Wyffels began his utility career as a lineworker with MMU more than 34 years ago. He has held several leadership positions, including instructor for Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA), manager of the lineworker training center in Marshall, and supervisory and director-level roles at Glencoe Light and Power and the city of Chaska.

His return to MMU as general manager marks both a professional milestone and a homecoming rooted in community values.



"What inspired me to enter the electric utility industry was the opportunity to help people, especially in times of need," Wyffels said. "Knowing that your work directly supports the community, whether it's restoring power after a storm or maintaining reliable service day to day, gives you a strong sense of purpose."

In his new role, Wyffels will continue MMU's legacy of providing reliable, affordable service, strengthening community partnerships and supporting a high-performing team.

He also emphasizes modernizing infrastructure, integrating renewable energy, and adapting to changing customer needs.

Wyffels sees smart grid technology, distributed energy resources and energy storage as key tools to improve reliability and empower customers.

"Public power plays a critical role in building resilient communities," he said. "Our crews live here, our decisions stay local, and our commitment is to the people we serve."

Outside of work, Wyffels enjoys spending time with his wife, two daughters and six grandchildren. He is also an avid outdoorsman who enjoys pheasant hunting and mentoring youth hunters.

#### **BOARD MEMBER RORY WEIS RETIRES**

At the September board meeting, Rory Weis stepped down from the MRES board of directors after eight years of service. He also retired Sept. 19 as general manager for Denison Municipal Utilities (DMU).

Weis brought a lifetime of dedication to public power, including roles as general manager for DMU and electric/water superintendent for Woodbine Municipal Light and Power in Iowa. He also served two years as the MRES board's 3rd vice chair.

Beyond MRES, Weis was active in the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities and served 30 years as a volunteer firefighter.

"Rory's leadership and dedication to public power have left a lasting impression on our board and the entire MRES membership," said Vernell Roberts, chair of the MRES board. "His unwavering character, deep technical expertise, and commitment to mentoring others made him an invaluable voice at the table. We're grateful for his service and the legacy he leaves behind."

# **FULL-CIRCLE OPPORTUNITY FOR LINEMAN ZACH BREDMAN**

From scholarship recipient to full-time employee, Missouri River Energy Services

(MRES) welcomed Zach Bredman Oct. 13 as the newest full-time apprentice lineworker of the Barnesville Distribution Maintenance Crew. Bredman's journey with MRES is a full-circle moment marked by dedication, local roots, early career ambition and commitment to community.

A 2024 graduate of Barnesville
High School and a 2025 graduate of
the Electrical Line Worker Technology
program at Minnesota State Community
and Technical College, Bredman was also
a recipient of an MRES scholarship — an early
indicator of the promise and commitment he had for
the field and his hometown.

Bredman's connection to MRES runs deeper than just his education. He first job-shadowed with the Barnesville crew before joining as a summer intern, gaining hands-on experience and earning the respect of his

future colleagues. The experience not only strengthened his technical skills but also reinforced his desire to serve his hometown community through his work. His strong work ethic and enthusiasm for the job made a

lasting impression, ultimately paving the way for his current role as a full-time employee.

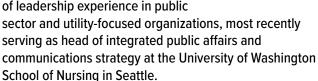
Bredman's path from scholarship recipient to full-time crew member is a testament to the value of investing in local talent and providing clear pathways for growth within our communities.

"Since he has been an intern with MRES this summer and fall, Zach has found that giving back to the community in which he grew up is a priority," said Jeremy Cossette, Barnesville city administrator. "Zach has been a volunteer football coach for our Barnesville Trojans. He's not only a lineman for MRES in Barnesville, but someone that we can count on to give back and make Barnesville a better place to live."

# **ABPLANALP NAMED VP AND CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER**

Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) is pleased to welcome Alex Abplanalp as its new vice president and chief strategy officer, effective Oct. 20.

"We are very fortunate to have Alex joining the MRES team," said Matt Schull, MRES president and CEO. Abplanalp brings more than 15 years of leadership experience in public



Before joining the University of Washington, Abplanalp spent more than five years at Tacoma Power, where she led executive and internal communications and played a key role in strategic planning, Advanced Metering Infrastructure



(AMI) deployment, smart grid implementation and demand response initiatives. Her background also includes workforce development and organizational change leadership, with a focus on public service and utility operations.

"Her varied background with community-serving organizations, strategic focus and a solid understanding of public power brings a unique perspective and great value to MRES and its members."

Abplanalp holds a bachelor's degree in communications and a master's degree in communication leadership from the University of Washington.

"I'm honored to join MRES and excited to collaborate with the dedicated members who power their communities every day," said Abplanalp. "I look forward to building on the strong foundation here and helping shape strategies that support a resilient, reliable and community-focused future."

#### RISING LEADERS IN PUBLIC POWER

#### **2025 LEAD GRADUATES**



Utility professionals earned their leadership certification Oct. 2, 2025, as part of the Leadership, Excellence and Development (LEAD) Course, a workshop presented by Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). The course includes high-level leadership training over the course of four separate two-day sessions throughout the year. Coursework covers communication, collaboration, change, accountability, learning from failure and practicing leadership.

Interested in being part of the LEAD Course in 2026? See pg. 10 for details.

Adrian Public Utilities: Sarah Lenz, city clerk/treasurer ALP Utilities: Josh Waldorf, manager of electric distribution

City of Benson: Val Alsaker, city clerk

City of Hartley: Nick Galm, public works superintendent

City of Hillsboro: Casey Eggermont, city auditor

**City of Luverne:** Aric Uithoven, water/wastewater supervisor **City of Pierre:** Josh Bible, construction & operations manager,

and Lacey Walz, finance officer

City of Sioux Center: Zeke Ellis, wastewater department head

City of Vermillion: Nick Doty, deputy finance officer

**Denison Municipal Utilities:** Kevin Georgius,

general manager

Marshall Municipal Utilities: Amy Karbo, human resources/

payroll coordinator

**Moorhead Public Service:** Adam Benhardt, construction manager, and Paul Steffen, lineman-in-charge

**Pella Municipal Electric Utility:** Luke Rolffs, electric distribution superintendent

Watertown Municipal Utilities: Rodney Sutten, purchasing, facilities & accounting supervisor, and Cheryl Mack, HR & risk coordinator

MRES: Angie Halter, graphic designer; Corey Bird, system administrator II; Greg Mifflin, operations and maintenance technician — RRHP; Joe Peters, energy services field representative; Jesse Robertson, energy services technical specialist; Nate Hadrick, senior systems administrator; and Colby Pierret, smart grid technical specialist

#### 2025 MUNICIPAL POWER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

MRES hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Municipal Power Leadership Academy (MPLA) Sept. 17-18 at the Clubhouse Hotel & Suites in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.



The two-day workshop offered policymakers and utility staff from member communities an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the relationship between their municipal utilities and MRES, as well as governance practices that can enhance the relationship between the utility and the community it serves. Topics covered include power supply, member support, distributed generation, rates, energy services, technology and smart grid solutions and cybersecurity.

Don't miss next year's MPLA. It will be held September 2026.



Terry Wolf (left), MRES vice president and chief operating officer, and Brian Remme, MRES distribution maintenance crew leader for the City of Luverne, at 2025 MPLA.

#### 2025 SUPERVISOR ESSENTIALS GRADUATES

#### **Brookings Municipal Utilities**

Todd Swanson, electric maintenance foreman Mike Collins, electric construction crew leader

#### **Fort Pierre Municipal Utilities**

Terry Schroer, head electrician Joey Montana, water/wastewater supervisor Brett Fergen, general maintenance supervisor

#### **City of Hillsboro**

Jay Alfson, public works superintendent Zach Anderson, supervisor

#### **Moorhead Public Service**

Adam McCallister, chemist
Tyler Mathison, senior electric field technician
Mandy Sauvageau, records manager
Shane Werre, laborer/equipment operator
Justin Malland, lineman

#### **City of Pierre**

Rachel Salvetti, maintenance technician Shane Lehrkamp, building inspector Mark Lee, senior water plant/ system specialist Korina Billings, sign/marking technician

#### **Pierre Municipal Utilities**

Dan Bowman, crew leader Ken Onken, crew leader

#### **Watertown Municipal Utilities**

Chad Kranz, gas foreman

#### **Willmar Municipal Utilities**

Tom Leenstra, lead water operator Maritza Rodriguez-Ocampo, lead customer service representative Dylan Berg, line technician-in-charge Aaron Nelson, AMI technician

#### **MRES**

Nick Fanning, senior resource engineer Jon Edwards, assistant plant manager Randy Hewitt, energy services technician I Congratulations to the 26 utility professionals throughout the MRES membership who completed the recent 2025 Supervisor Essentials Course, a leadership development program offered by MRES.

This year-long program, made up of four in-depth sessions, is designed to give up-and-coming utility leaders the tools, knowledge and confidence they need to step into (or grow within) supervisory roles. Geared for utility employees who are supervisors, managers or crew leaders, or working toward one of those roles, the course provides practical leadership skills and helps participants build strong peer connections along the way.

The program is facilitated by leadership education experts from the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association and tailored specifically for public power professionals.

"At MRES, we're proud to invest in leadership training that helps utility employees grow in their careers and serve their communities even better," said Matt Schull, MRES president and CEO. "Strengthening the skills of those who keep our systems running every day helps us ensure reliable, safe and responsive service across all of our member communities."

Member utilities with graduates this year include Brookings Municipal Utilities, Fort Pierre Municipal Utilities, City of Hillsboro, Moorhead Public Utilities, City of Pierre, Pierre Municipal Utilities, Watertown Municipal Utilities and Willmar Municipal Utilities, including three from MRES.

Interested in being part of Supervisor Essentials in 2026? See pg. 10 for details.



# MASABA SCORES BIG ENERGY PAYBACK WITH NEW VERMILLION FACILITY

#### BRIGHT ENERGY SOLUTIONS® REBATES SUPPORT EFFICIENCY AND GROWTH

A Vermillion, South Dakota, company is reaping the benefits of making smart energy decisions.

In July, Masaba, Inc., a leading manufacturer of mining and aggregate equipment, received \$38,278 in energy efficiency rebates through the Bright Energy Solutions (BES) program for their newly expanded manufacturing facility in Vermillion. The rebates were earned through strategic upgrades to lighting and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in the 147,500-square-foot addition to their existing 211,000-square-foot plant.

These upgrades weren't just about saving money; they reflect Masaba's deep commitment to long-term sustainability and smart business practices. The project was a true team effort between Masaba, their design engineers, Vermillion Light & Power (VLP) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), with Todd Halverson, electric superintendent for the City of Vermillion, and Wade Sand, energy services field

representative with MRES, playing key roles in guiding the project through rebate qualification.

"We've always had a strong working relationship with Masaba," said Halverson. "They consistently reach out to us when they're planning new equipment or expansion. This open communication helps us connect them with energy efficiency programs like Bright Energy Solutions that can bring real value."

The rebate process was smooth, thanks to ongoing collaboration. Masaba worked closely with VLP and MRES, meeting just a few times during the process. From beginning to end, the teams kept the project moving efficiently.

Masaba's decision to prioritize energy efficiency in the expansion was driven by the scale of the new space, 120,000 square feet of production area and 27,500 square feet of office space, which promised to be a significant

# MASABA ENERGY EFFICIENCY PAYBACK



# LED Lighting Rebate: \$29,026

- Demand Savings: 121.06 kW
- Annual Energy Savings: 683,398 kWh

HVAC Rebate: \$9,250

- Demand Savings: 36.01 kW
- Annual Energy Savings: 199,195 kWh

To discover how your utility can help local businesses tap into energy efficiency rebates and resources, visit: **brightenergysolutions.com**.



energy user. Recognizing this, Masaba reached out early in the planning phase to partner with VLP and MRES. "We brought Todd and Wade in before the blueprints were even finalized to make sure energy efficiency was part of the plan from day one," Dustin Buchholtz, Masaba director of technical services, explained.

"Their hands-on approach, walking the site, identifying rebates and suggesting practical improvements, was invaluable. I've said it before, but it's worth repeating. They make the entire process incredibly simple," Buchholtz said.

"I've said it before, but it's worth repeating. They make the entire process incredibly simple."

— Dustin Buchholtz, Masaba director of technical services

Sand. "Masaba's expansion reflects a vision for the future, and energy efficiency is part of that vision."

Masaba encourages other businesses to explore programs like BES, noting that the support and savings are well worth the effort, whether building new or upgrading existing facilities.

Masaba's new state-of-theart fabrication facility began processing steel in May 2025, and the company hosted an official grand opening on Oct. 16, 2025, welcoming the community, partners and employees to tour

the facility and celebrate this major milestone.

"This is a great example of how utilities and businesses can work together to support energy-smart growth," said Wade Share your Bright Energy Solutions stories at info@mrenergy.com.



Todd Halverson (far left), electric superintendent for the City of Vermillion, and Wade Sand (far right), MRES energy services field representative, present a check to Dan Brinkman (middle left), engineering manager at Masaba; Dustin Bucholtz (middle right), director of technical services at Masaba, representing \$38,278 in energy efficiency rebates awarded to Masaba through the Bright Energy Solutions program. The rebate recognizes energy-saving upgrades to lighting and HVAC systems in Masaba's newly expanded 147,500-square-foot manufacturing facility in Vermillion.

# **PUBLIC POWER WEEK 2025 IN PICTURES**



# JOIN THE EFFORT: HELP POWER THE NAVAJO NATION IN 2026

# DID YOU KNOW, IN 2025, THERE ARE WHOLE COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES WITHOUT POWER TO THEIR HOMES?

"It's life-changing for people receiving

power for the first time, and it's life-

changing for volunteers, because you

definitely get more from the experience

than what you put into it."

— Dan Joel, superintendent for Westbrook Public Utilities

Missouri River Energy Services' (MRES) member utilities have a unique opportunity to help fix this by inviting your lineworkers to experience a project that blends teamwork, service and community impact. MRES is once again joining the national Light Up Navajo effort and this time doubling its commitment.

The MRES board of directors recently approved plans to expand participation in the project, coordinating a member-led effort to recruit two four-person line crews for each

of the project's first two weeks, set for April 12-18 and April 19-25, 2026. This will mark MRES' largest volunteer effort yet and an incredible opportunity for members to be part of something that makes a lasting difference.

Often called "mutual aid without a storm," the Light Up Navajo initiative

was launched in 2019 by the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) and the American Public Power Association. Each year, public power utilities from across the country send lineworkers to the Navajo Nation to extend power to homes that have waited for years to be connected.

Missouri River's participation in the 2025 project, Light Up Navajo VI, was a tremendous success. Five volunteer lineworkers from member utilities in Minnesota — two from ALP Utilities, one from Detroit Lakes Public Utilities and two from Westbrook Public Utilities (WPU) — and three lineworkers from MRES Distribution Maintenance crews spent a week along the Arizona-New Mexico border connecting four homes to electricity. The team also framed and set about 30 poles across 2.5 miles of rugged terrain. Their work was part of a larger national effort involving more than 200 lineworkers from 44 utilities. Together, those crews powered up more than 200 homes in four months

during Light Up Navajo VI. Yet, despite that progress, NTUA estimates that around 10,000 homes on the Navajo Nation remain without electricity, so the need is still great.

For those who volunteered, the experience was deeply moving.

"It's a life-changing experience for everyone involved," said WPU Superintendent Dan Joel, who joined the 2025 project. "It's life-changing for people receiving power for the first time, and it's life-changing for volunteers, because you

definitely get more from the experience than what you put into it. Everyone down there is so thankful. From the people at the hotel to restaurants in town, they all know why you're there and what you're doing, and they're all so appreciative. It's a big issue to them."

Both journey and apprentice lineworkers are invited to volunteer. The project also

doubles as an excellent training opportunity, helping apprentices complete overhead work hours while gaining hands-on mutual aid experience. Member utilities can send a single lineworker, a pair or a full crew. Participating members cover labor and travel costs for their volunteers, while NTUA provides lodging and a daily meal stipend.

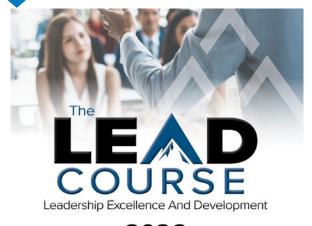
If more volunteers sign up than needed, a random drawing will fill the available slots, with priority given to members and lineworkers who haven't yet participated.

MRES is currently requesting volunteers for up to 16 available spots. To learn more or sign up, contact Andrew Johnson, MRES member programs coordinator, at 605-338-4042 or info@mrenergy.com.

The deadline to volunteer for the 2026 project is Dec. 12, 2025.

See the impact from this past spring how MRES members brought light and hope to the Navajo Nation: mrenergy.com/news/missouri-river-employees-light-up-navajo

## DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2026



2026
APRIL 8-9 | JUNE 3-4
AUG. 5-6 | OCT. 7-8

# SUPERVISOR ESSENTIALS COURSE

# **FOR MRES MEMBERS**

The **2026 Supervisor Essentials Course** dates are:

April 29-30 | June 17-18 Aug. 19-20 | Oct. 14-15

Deadline to Register: March 1, 2026

For more information on either the LEAD Course or Supervisor Essentials, and to get registered go to mrenergy.com > Services > Leadership & Supervisor Development.

## MRES DISCUSSES 2026 PLANS AT ANNUAL AREA MEETINGS



Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) recently hosted its annual fall Area Meetings in all four member states Oct. 22 in Minnesota, Oct. 23 in North Dakota, Oct. 29 in Iowa and Oct. 30 in South Dakota. More than 150 representatives from 40 member communities attended the meetings to learn more about the programs and services MRES has planned for the upcoming year.

During the meetings, MRES staff discussed Missouri River's current financial picture, its planned rate increase for 2026 and the long-term cost forecast for members. Staff also outlined current and future transmission projects; legislative and regulatory updates at both the state and federal levels; and member program updates and opportunities.

Mark your calendars for the 2026 Area Meetings, which will be held again next October.

# FREE GRANT WRITING WEBINAR FOR MEMBERS

Missouri River Energy Services is proud to offer members an exclusive opportunity to strengthen their impact at the local level through a free, expert-led virtual webinar: Grant Writing 101, presented by Baker Tilly. Taking place on Dec. 11 at 1:00 p.m. CST, this one-hour session



is tailored for city and utility staff, as well as community and economic development partners who are new to grant writing or seeking a refresher.

This session isn't just about skill-building, it's about equipping city and member leaders to unlock funding that directly supports the needs and aspirations of each community. As many federal grant programs shift or sunset, identifying and securing alternative funding sources at the state, local and regional levels has become more critical than ever.

Participants will gain practical strategies to:

- Locate relevant grant opportunities
- Understand what makes a proposal stand out
- Write compelling, competitive applications that get noticed

Led by two doctorate-level experts from Baker Tilly with decades of combined experience, this session will provide real-world insights and immediately usable tools to strengthen grant applications and, ultimately, bring new resources into each community.

Whether as lead grant writer or in a supporting role, this is a chance to build capacity that not only benefits each member utility, but the people and places each serves.

Registration is open now to members through Baker Tilly. A recording will also be available on the members-only site for those unable to attend live.

For more information, contact Amy Collins at info@mrenergy.com.

# **TECH DAYS DRAWS MEMBERS**





MRES employees participating in one of the Tech Days panels were (from left) Rick Bueltel, senior energy services technician; Chris Toenjes, energy services field representative; Colby Pierret, Smart Grid technical specialist; and Jesse Robertson, energy services technical specialist.

> Lisa Fischer (far right), MRES energy services field supervisor, moderated a panel with (from left) John Eggert, Willmar Municipal Utilities outreach coordinator; Sonya Skinner, ALP Utilities energy services representative; and Todd Halverson, City of Vermillion electric superintendent.

MRES hosted Technology Days Sept. 24-25 at The Canopy in Sioux Falls. South Dakota. Forty-three attendees representing 21 members attended the two-day conference held every other year.



The full Tech Days conference offered a keynote titled "The Brain Science of Communications" as well as member panels showcasing the Value of Public Power and innovative ways members are working within their communities. WattSTAR awards were also presented to those members successfully promoting public power, energy efficiency and beneficial electrification through the Bright Energy Solutions® program.





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# **EVENTS CALENDAR**



FORT PIERRE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING Fort Pierre, South Dakota fortpierre.com



LIGHTS ON BROADWAY HOLIDAY LIGHT PARADE Alexandria, Minnesota explorealex.com



WINTERFEST Luverne, Minnesota Iuvernechamber.com



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS Brookings, South Dakota downtownbrookings.com



AND FIREWORKS
Atlantic, Iowa
atlanticiowa.com



& CLAY CLASSIC
Winner, South Dakota
winnersdchamber.org

To have your event listed, send the event's date, name, location and contact information to info@mrenergy.com.

Visit mrenergy.com/events to see a full listing of calendar events for MRES.



