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MRES Today

A NEWSLETTER OF



WMMPA successfully closes on power supply refunding bonds



Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (WMMPA), which finances the construction and acquisition of all electric generation and transmission facilities used to serve MRES municipal members, closed Oct. 20 on power supply refunding bonds of approximately \$43.2 million.

The 2022 WMMPA Series A Revenue Refunding Bonds (2022 Bonds) resulted in annual savings of approximately \$823,000 through 2030, or nearly \$6.6 million total. Net present-value savings are over \$5.7 million, or 11.6% of the refunded bonds. Nearly \$4.2 million of the savings is attributable to the termination of an interest rate swap executed in 2020, which was an integral part of the refunding process.

Chris Olson, vice president and CFO at Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), noted that 24 different investors submitted bids for the 2022 Bonds, which resulted in

total orders exceeding seven times the amount of the initial offering.

“This refunding allowed us the opportunity to substantially lower our debt service on the pre-existing bonds and reduce our long-term interest costs,” Olson said. “Strong investor demand for the bonds, WMMPA’s solid credit ratings and terminating the interest rate swap were key factors in achieving these savings.”

Moody’s Investors Service recently upgraded WMMPA to a rating of Aa2 from Aa3 with a stable outlook on WMMPA’s power supply revenue bonds. At the same time, Fitch Ratings reaffirmed its AA- rating with a stable outlook.

WMMPA and MRES have a power supply agreement under which WMMPA sells to MRES all of the output of its generation and transmission facilities. MRES provides all administrative services for WMMPA.



MRES® Area Meetings draw high numbers



Orange City, IA



Sioux Falls, SD

For the first time since 2019, MRES was able to host in-person Area Meetings in all four member states. Due to Covid-related concerns, the Area Meetings were held virtually in 2020, and last year the four separate meetings were combined into one large fall meeting held in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

This year's Area Meetings were well attended. In total, 108 representatives from 46 member communities along with seven lobbyists showed up to learn more about the program and service offerings MRES has planned for the upcoming year.

MRES staff discussed Western Area Power Administration's (WAPA) scheduled rate increase for 2023, and how MRES plans to help members handle renewable energy certificates (RECs) tied to WAPA hydropower. MRES staff also outlined the organization's MRES long-term cost and rate forecast for members, explained updates to the member generation program, provided an overview of planned transmission projects, and reviewed the new MRES Cybersecurity Services program available to members.

Mark your calendars for the 2023 Area Meetings, which will be held next fall in the following member communities:

Oct. 25: Alexandria, Minnesota

Oct. 26: Valley City, North Dakota

Nov. 1: Orange City, Iowa

Nov. 2: Sioux Falls, South Dakota

LEAD Course registration now open

Interested MRES members are encouraged to register for the 2023 LEAD Course, which kicks off April 19-20.

The LEAD (Leadership, Excellence and Development) Course is a high-level development program focused on the critical skills, awareness and perspective that will make all the difference to a leader's success in the municipal utility industry. The course is designed for utility and/or city staff who lead and influence others in their work. Utility employees who currently have, or anticipate having, leadership responsibilities will gain the most from this curriculum.

The course is held across four separate sessions throughout the year. Those registering should fully intend to participate in each session, scheduled for the following dates:

- April 19-20
- Aug. 16-17
- June 21-22
- Oct. 18-19

Lodging is not included in the program fee. MRES has arranged discounted lodging (\$119/night) for each session at the Homewood Suites hotel, right next to the MRES office.

Kent Myers is the speaker for the event. He is the managing principal of Vision Companies and has a decade of experience working with Minnesota municipal utilities on leadership, culture development and strategic visioning. He's also a frequent guest lecturer at Harvard Business School.



Kent Myers, the managing principal of Vision Companies, facilitates all four sessions of the LEAD Course on behalf of MRES. Myers has more than 25 years of experience as a consultant focusing on leadership and culture development.

Reserve your spot for the LEAD Course by contacting Lisa Korthals at 800-678-4042 or info@mrenergy.com. Or, go to mrenergy.com/events and navigate to the dates for the 2023 LEAD Course to register and reserve sleeping rooms. Registrations are due March 10, 2023.

Power Team School Program thriving in its 10th year



MRES is once again offering its Bright Energy Solutions® (BES) Power Team School Program to members and their communities this school year.

Now in its 10th year, the program teaches fifth graders about a number of electricity-related topics, including safety, power supply, renewable energy, careers in the utility field and the value of having a local municipal utility. In addition, take-home kits containing a digital thermometer and LED

and night lights are provided to help the entire family learn how to save energy. The program also features watt-meter testing devices that students can reserve and borrow to see how much electricity each household appliance uses.

So far this school year, 28 MRES member utilities are already participating in the program. While most of these members team up with local schools to offer the program year after year, two members — Hillsboro and Valley City, North Dakota — are new to the program.

The halfway point of the school year is fast approaching, but there is still time to sign up for the program in spring 2023.

MRES covers half of the program cost, and the resulting cost for members is roughly \$22 per student.

For more information or to enroll in the program, contact Member Services Representative Jody Peck at 605-338-4042 or info@mrenergy.com.

MRES intern receives prestigious regional scholar award

Tyler Fogelson, an engineering intern in the generation group at MRES, was recently named as a John W. Estey Outstanding Scholar Award winner. The award is part of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering (IEEE) Power and Energy Society (PES) Scholarship Plus program.

Only IEEE PES scholars are eligible for this award, which is distributed annually to the top PES scholar in each of the six IEEE regions and Canada. Fogelson was the Region 4 winner. The award includes a \$5,000 academic scholarship, 12-month IEEE and IEEE PES student membership, and up to \$1,000 in travel expenses to attend the IEEE PES General Meeting next July in Orlando, Florida.

Candidates for these prestigious awards were selected by industry and academic representatives who reviewed the applicants and selected the top PES scholar from their region based on the following metrics: academic preparation, extra-curricular activities and leadership, technical quality of application, and an overall assessment of the student's potential for a successful power and energy engineering career. The award is made possible by

the support of the S&C Foundation and is named after John W. Estey, who is one of only three CEOs in the S&C Electric Company's 100-year history.

Fogelson is a senior at South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings and will graduate in spring 2023 with an electrical engineering degree.

"I am honored to receive this award, and I know it wouldn't have been possible without the ongoing support I've received from everyone at MRES," says Fogelson, who continues to work part-time as an MRES intern during the school year. "Throughout my experience as an intern, I have enjoyed meeting everyone and want to thank them for treating me like family."



Tyler Fogelson

MRES member benefits, Part 6: Scholarship program



First and foremost, Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) is an energy supplier to its 61 members in Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. However, MRES also provides a wide variety of energy-related services that help support our members and 19 associates.

In this issue, we'll take a closer look at the MRES scholarship program, which was established to assist high school seniors with educational pursuits related to the electric industry. The scholarship program is a key component of the MRES strategic priority to attract, develop and retain future electric utility employees.

This year, up to **12 scholarships** will be granted in two categories for students who enroll in eligible programs no later than fall 2023.

Full-time undergraduate scholarships — \$1,000

Up to five \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors who plan to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited two- or four-year college, university or technical school.

To be eligible, the student must reside in a household receiving electric service from one of the 61 MRES member utilities. Students planning to pursue courses of study closely related to the energy industry — electrical technician (field service technician, wind turbine maintenance, power plant maintenance, etc.), accounting, electrician, engineering, energy or business management, communications, and many more — will be given preference for these scholarships.

These awards may be renewed for up to three additional years or until a bachelor's degree is earned, whichever occurs first. Renewal is contingent upon satisfactory academic performance in a full-time course of study and continuation of the program by MRES.

Powerline/lineworker scholarships — \$2,000

Up to seven scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded to students who enroll in a full-time powerline/lineworker program at an eligible technical college. In past years, this scholarship was worth \$1,000, but in 2022 the MRES board of directors approved doubling the award amount to encourage more candidates to apply.

Eligible technical colleges include the following:

Iowa

- Northwest Iowa Community College, Sheldon

Minnesota

- Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Granite Falls
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Jackson
- Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Wadena

North Dakota

- Bismarck State College, Bismarck

South Dakota

- Mitchell Technical College, Mitchell

Powerline/lineworker scholarships are one-time only and not renewable. Applicants do not need to reside in a household receiving electric service from an MRES member utility.

The application process for this year's scholarships opens Dec. 1, and the deadline to apply is March 15, 2023.

For more information about the MRES scholarship program or to apply online, go to mrenergy.com and click on the link for scholarships.



Events Calendar

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

To be considered for print, information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to the event. Please visit mrenergy.com/events to see a full listing of calendar events for MRES and its members.

Dec. 2
Festival of Lights Parade
Brookings, South Dakota
brookingschamber.org
605-692-8922

Dec. 2-3
Winterfest
Luverne, Minnesota
luvernechamber.com
507-283-4061

Dec. 3
Lighted Parade
Atlantic, Iowa
atlanticiowa.com
712-243-3017

Dec. 9-10
Sharpshooter Bird & Clay Classic
Winner, South Dakota
winnersd.org
800-658-3079

Gentz joins MRES legislative relations team

Benjamin Gentz started in his role as government relations liaison on Oct. 24. He will be taking on legislative and regulatory work as Rob Scott-Hovland plans to retire Dec. 30.

Gentz comes to MRES after working for five years as a research analyst for the Iowa House of Representatives. Gentz has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's in public administration, both from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.



Benjamin Gentz

MRES employees donate to Feeding SD



Energy Market Settlements Analyst Brent Fredin (left) and Rate Analyst II Evan Leebens helped deliver over 1,200 pounds of food to Feeding South Dakota in late October. Fredin and Leebens are co-chairs of the MRES Well-Being Committee, which organized the food drive as one of its monthly wellness activities.

MRES employees donated 1,432 individual food items to Feeding South Dakota in October. The donations, which weighed a total of 1,228 pounds and will provide over 1,000 meals, were the result of the MRES Well-Being Committee's 2022 Food Drive Challenge.

Feeding South Dakota provides ongoing hunger relief to South Dakotans through its distribution centers, food pantries, mobile distributions, child hunger programs and a network with hundreds of agency partners across the state. Every week, Feeding South Dakota helps provide temporary food assistance to approximately 21,000 hungry individuals and families statewide, and its Backpack Program gives food every weekend to over 4,000 kids who otherwise might go hungry.



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Member Profile — Westbrook, Minnesota

Named for the west branch of Highwater Creek that flows nearby, Westbrook Township was founded in 1870 during a meeting of the Cottonwood County board. At the time, 30 legal voters submitted a petition that four smaller, existing townships be organized into one civil township. Once the dust settled and the votes were counted, Westbrook Township was officially created.

The city was platted three decades later in 1900 by the Interstate Land Company. Soon after, the Currie Branch of the Omaha Railroad brought more settlers to Westbrook and the surrounding area who were looking to tap into the promise held by the rich, fertile soil of southwest Minnesota.

Today, the town is home to over 750 people who receive their electric, water, wastewater, gas, broadband and cable TV services from Westbrook Public Utilities (WPU). WPU was established in 1938, and this month marks its

50-year anniversary as an MRES member. WPU Utility Superintendent Dan Joel is the official representative to MRES, while commission member Randall Comnick serves as the alternate.

Westbrook participates in Missouri River's Bright Energy Choices program by purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) on behalf of the town's residents and businesses. RECs are proof that electricity was generated by qualifying clean and renewable facilities — such as hydroelectric generation facilities, as well as wind and solar farms — and fed into the electric grid. These REC purchases offset the portion of energy that comes from fossil fuels and, in effect, allows all WPU customers to enjoy 100% clean, renewable and carbon-free energy.

WESTBROOK CELEBRATES

50
years
WITH MRES