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NEPPA holds Annual Membership Meeting in October

NEPPA's Annual Membership Meeting was held on Oct. 3 in Sterling, Mass. Gary



Babin

Babin, Director of the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department and NEPPA President, welcomed members and past members of the organization, and Patrick Hyland gave his annual Executive Director's Report, and welcomed NEPPA's newest member, the Town of Wallingford (Conn.) Electric Division. David Gessert, chairperson of the utility's governing board, accepted

strategies.

Ursula Schryver, director of customer programs at American Public Power Association (APPA), cited the growing importance of energy efficiency for public power, due to increasing energy costs and the empowerment of customers to control and lower bills.

"Practicing energy conservation will help meet the continued growth in demand and can help the local economy,

Continued on page 6

a membership plaque from Hyland, who also presented an award to recently retired John George of J.K. George Associates, a long-time associate member of NEPPA.



Schryver, APPA

After the adoption of the 2009 association budget and workplan, public power energy efficiency experts made presentations on the implementation of new energy efficiency programs and

NEPPA recognized as "Patriotic Employer" by Army Reserves



Kenneth Forchielli, of Army Reserve Employer Relations looks on as NEPPA Executive Director Pat Hyland signs a statement of support for the National Guard and Reserve. See story on page 7.

NEPPA Board endorses new campaign on RTO accountability

At their Oct. 2 meeting, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to endorse the recommendation of the NEPPA Legislative Committee to undertake a publicity campaign to help demonstrate broad consumer support for the reform of the New England Regional Transmission Organization, known as ISO – New England. During the campaign, NEPPA utilities will be requested to solicit customer signatures on letters, postcards, or petitions to be delivered to New England Congressional Members during the annual NEPPA Legislative Rally in February, 2009. Sample draft letters and petitions will be prepared by the Legislative Committee, and forwarded to all NEPPA members for printing on their own letterheads.

The goal of the campaign is to demonstrate broad-based customer support throughout New England for changes in the operation of the ISO which will alleviate the upward pressure on wholesale electric prices in the region. At a minimum, the committee is seeking Congressional support for legislation which would add

cost accountability to the mission and decision-making procedures of the ISO.

In making this recommendation, the Legislative Committee emphasized to the Board that the campaign will require the active support of all NEPPA members and the full commitment of the Board of Directors to achieve its goal. As stated in the Committee's report to the Board:

"The 111th Congress will take office in January, and we will again have to solicit co-sponsors to the Cost Accountability and Consumer Protection Act in order to have the bill re-introduced, to build support and have the legislation receive serious consideration. While we believe that there are a large number of potential supporters for this legislation, it is essential that we are able to demonstrate this support to Members of Congress, if we expect them to sign on and actively solicit their colleagues."

NEPPA members can expect to receive detailed information about the campaign by early December.

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The Northeast Public Power Association is an organization representing and serving consumer-owned electric utilities in New England.

Executive Director's Report

RTOs: The good, the bad, and the simple truth



by Patrick Hyland

The simple truth is that only market participants with deep pockets can afford to pay staff and consultants to attend numerous, lengthy and very technical meetings every single week.

In September, the United States Government Accountability Office released its long-awaited study on the costs and benefits of Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) in the United States. This study, which had been requested by two New England Senators (Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and Susan Collins of Maine), is the most comprehensive review of RTO costs, benefits and performance yet conducted by the federal government. It examined the operating costs and investments of the six RTOs which are now operating in the country, along with the budget review procedures and stakeholder participation in RTO decision-making. It also looked closely at the oversight provided by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which is ultimately responsible for the regulation of RTO activities.

Unfortunately, the study does not answer one of the most important questions about RTOs: that is, whether the design and operation of unregulated wholesale power markets produce prices that are "just and reasonable" to consumers, as required by federal law. If, as many contend, the use of a single clearing price for hourly energy markets artificially inflates power prices, they will not find anything in this study which supports or refutes this contention. Instead, the study simply reports on the "lack of consensus" between "experts and industry participants" on this important issue, along with many others.

This study, I believe, further underscores the need for the United States Congress to set higher standards of cost accountability for Regional Transmission Organizations. In his comments on the GAO study, FERC Chairman Joseph

Kelliher praised the "extensive opportunities for stakeholder input on RTO costs," and said that the "open, transparent process (used by RTOs) allows consumer input in ways not matched by other public utilities."

These comments reflect a very limited understanding of the real world of decision-making within an RTO. The truth, in fact, is that consumers are not represented in any meaningful way in stakeholder proceedings, because consumers are not market participants. As we have stated in numerous hearings and briefings, only public power systems in New England (excluding Vermont) retain an obligation to deliver electric service to their customers at the lowest possible cost. Other market participants are overwhelmingly private generation, transmission and distribution companies that seek to maximize their profits for shareholders.

In addition to the inadequate representation of consumer interests in RTO proceedings, the sheer complexity of these proceedings, along with the enormous time requirements they impose, make them anything but "friendly" to consumers or their advocates. The simple truth is that only market participants with deep pockets can afford to pay staff and consultants to attend numerous, lengthy and very technical meetings every single week. It stands to reason that these market participants will enjoy a greater advantage in the deliberations, debates and voting that takes place in all of the stakeholder committees.

The GAO study properly recognizes that RTOs have achieved some positive results over the past 10 years. These

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Training and Education Update

Communicating change in the workplace



By Rockie Blunt,
director of training
and education

For many years I considered “communication” the most important word in the English language, but I have recently changed my mind. My vote now for the most important word is “change.” Why? Because change is all around us - in our personal lives, on the job and across society as a whole - and it is happening at an ever-accelerating rate of speed. That is certainly true in the public power industry. Change is essential for progress; without it individuals and organizations become stagnant, then wither away. But it also has the potential, as everyone knows, to be unsettling and intimidating.

Maybe this is where the word “communication” comes back in. When your department or organization is undergoing change, how do you send that message? It is unrealistic to think that you can erase every bit of nervousness under these circumstances, but here are six tips for making people less anxious when new developments take place on the job.

Listen to employees at all levels.

Listening is the “forgotten” communication skill. Whether you are a new member of the staff or a seasoned manager, you would do well to pay attention to what your colleagues are saying—or not saying—in difficult times. Understanding what’s on their minds will help you determine what you should say to them.

Acknowledge anxiety. Remember, change is often perceived as a threat. The smallest alteration can make individuals nervous, and you are doing them a disservice if you try to brush off their fears. Let them know that you realize how they’re

feeling.

Explain the need for change. It’s amazing how often employees are told that changes are going to happen without being told why. Give them some background information on the conditions that have led to the change. This point leads directly to the following one:

Outline the benefits. Once you have explained why the change is necessary, tell them how they will benefit. What’s the up-side for them? What will they get out of the change? Perhaps it’s an external gain (a new title, added responsibilities) or internal satisfaction (professional development, a greater contribution to the department).

Help people understand the impact of the change. Going beyond the benefits, acquaint your employees with the “big picture.” What ramifications will the new conditions have for them, or their relationships with co-workers? How will everyone’s routine be different now, and what will those differences mean to the organization?

Finally, and most importantly, **tell the truth.** You don’t accomplish anything by sugarcoating the situation or intentionally obscuring the nature or importance of the change. All of us can deal with change, even if it means bad news, but we can’t deal with misinformation. Honesty is the best policy—and that piece of advice will never change.

If you have an issue you would like discussed in the Training and Education Update, call Rockie Blunt at NEPPA (508) 482-5906 or e-mail rblunt@neppa.org.

Substation class gets a hands-on learning experience

The Third Taxing District of Norwalk, Conn. recently presented a real-life, hands-on opportunity to NEPPA's second year substation class. The job, under the direction of Utility Specialist Peter Johnson of the District, was to re-gasket a Load Tap Changer Transformer (LTC). This involved draining the oil from the tap changer and drawing down the oil in the transformer so workers could get inside to disconnect the leads to the tap changer.



The students who took part in this project were:

Patrick Carroll
Bruce Dyke
Mansfield, Mass.

Thomas Davis
Reading, Mass.

Gregory DeStasi
Sterling, Mass.

Justin Hergt
North Attleborough, Mass.

Duane Muckle
Jeffrey Rose
Dan Roland
Groton, Ct.

Jack Ravagno
Ipswich, Mass.

Jeffrey Rose
Wallingford, Ct.

Johnson was in charge of this project and his expertise proved invaluable during the week as there were no instructions available on how to disassemble or re-assemble the tap changer. Johnson drew on his 20-years of experience working with substations for Northeast Utilities. He has been at the District for three years.

Peter Lowe of the Town of Wallingford Electric Division and Jeffrey Rose of the City of Groton Department of Utilities both turned out to be the right size and build to crawl inside the transformer.

"Everyone did an excellent job," said NEPPA Trainer Lou Gabriele who oversaw the crew, "and I have to give an extra 'atta-boy' to the two men that worked inside the transformer."

The crew had to create custom wrenches for the job because space to operate a wrench to remove a lock nut on each tap was so limited. They bought standard wrenches, cut them in half and ground them down to a thinner size. They also drilled holes in the handles and tied a string to them so if they accidentally dropped them, they wouldn't fall into the bottom of the transformer and cause costly repairs.

The job started on a Tuesday morning and ended Friday around noon with

the transformer and tap changer both filled with oil and the covers installed.

"I had never seen this job done before, and the way the workers came together to accomplish this task speaks well for all of the people in the utility business," said Gabriele.

"I've never had so many guys say thank you to me," said Johnson. "Some of them have never had the opportunity to be inside a substation. I think it was very valuable to everyone involved."



Membership Meeting

Continued from page 1

she said. "It aligns well with public power's mission. "

Schryver also cited several resources to get more information. (Go to the NEPPA web site, www.neppa.org and click on Links and Resources to view her presentation.)

Following Schryver's presentation, representatives of three New England

public power organizations gave updates on energy efficiency programs in their organizations. They were Kim Boas, of Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company, Dick DesRoches of the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative and John Muro of Energy New England.

left to right, John Muro of Energy New England; Dick DesRoches of CMEEC; and Kim Boas of MMWEC.



David Gessert of the Town of Wallingford (Conn.) Electric Division's governing board, accepts a membership plaque on behalf of his utility.



Recently retired John George of J.K. George Associates, accepts an award commemorating his long-time support of NEPPA as an associate member.

NEPPA honored by US National Guard and Reserve Force

The National Committee for Employer support of the guard and reserve has recognized NEPPA as a "patriotic employer for contributing to national security and protecting liberty and freedom by supporting employee participant in America's National Guard and Reserve Force."

The award was given for the Association's support of MSG Linda Calderiso who was the Region one Operations NCO for the emergency preparedness liaison team, and a NEPPA Safety Trainer. She recently retired from the Reserve. The award was presented to NEPPA Executive Director Pat Hyland at the NEPPA Membership Meeting by

Kenneth Forchielli, military personnel services corporation program support manager for Army Reserve Employer Relations.

Calderiso also presented the prestigious "Above and Beyond Award" to the NEPPA organization for employer support of the guard and reserve. "This is for all the NEPPA utilities," she said, "for their understanding when training had to be rescheduled due to military activation due to national emergencies such as floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters." Former First Sergeant for the National Guard, Bill Guertin and operations manager for the Pascoag (R.I.) Utility District accepted the award on behalf of NEPPA.



(top)
MSG Linda Calderiso presents the "Patriotic Employer Award" to Patrick Hyland at the NEPPA Membership Meeting while Kenneth Forchielli, of Army Reserve Employer Relations looks on.



(Bottom)
MSG Linda Calderiso presents the prestigious "Above and Beyond Award" to the NEPPA organization for employer support of the guard and reserve. Accepting on behalf of NEPPA is Former First Sergeant for the National Guard, Bill Guertin and operations manager for the Pascoag (R.I.) Utility District.

Around New England

Pascoag Utility District holds open house

Pascoag Utility District (PUD) kicked off Public Power Week with an Open House on Saturday, October 4, at the District office. More than 300 people attended and participants brought non-perishable food items in exchange for free ice-cream sundaes. PUD employees were able to fill six boxes with canned goods for their food drive.

There were children's activities including pumpkin painting, face painting, games and bucket truck rides. A science teacher from Ponagansett High School brought a bio-fuel powered truck.

Energy New England provided a booth with energy conservation information and tips. Home Depot, Pascoag Utility's new CFL Recycling partner, had a booth and also ran a children's

workshop where children made different wooden projects.

Other Public Power Week events in Pascoag included an energy conservation business breakfast, a customer appreciation day, an electrical safety and conservation program at a local grammar school, and a renewable energy workshop series on wind and solar power.



Children make wood projects during a workshop put on by Home Depot. Donna Fitch from Energy New England works a booth with energy cost saving information.

Around New England

SELCO celebrates two anniversaries

Shrewsbury (Mass.) Electric Light and Cable Operations (SELCO) celebrated its 100th anniversary of electric service and 25 years of cable service at an event on September 20. The utility provided tours of SELCO's electric and cable facilities, trucks, substation, public access studios; and provided free gifts, conservation tips, kid's activities, food and basically fun for the whole family.

The utility also took this opportunity to dedicate two of its facilities to past and present commissioners.

The SELCO Administrative Offices in the Shrewsbury Town Hall were dedicated to Robert F. Lutz, SELCO Commissioner from 1955 to 1960 and 1975 to present.

The plaque reads "In honor of Bob's public service spanning more than 38 years on the Light Commission. His ever present enthusiasm and heartfelt commitment to the Town of Shrewsbury and SELCO are a hallmark of his leadership."

The SELCO Service Area was dedicated to the late Curtis M. Clark, SELCO Commissioner from 1955 to 1993.

The plaque reads "In honor of a man who guided the Light Department with his intellect, perseverance, foresight, unwavering support and deepest appreciation of the work performed by the Light Department's service and field employees."



*(below)
SELCO General Manager Tom Josie, presents SELCO Commissioner Robert Lutz with a replica of the dedication plaque on the Utility's town offices which were named for him.*



SELCO employees participated in the anniversary event, giving tours and demonstrating equipment.

PURMA Risk Management Report

Beyond Red Flag

PURMA (The Public Utilities Risk Management Association) is a regional association serving the risk management and insurance needs of public power systems throughout New England. As affiliated service providers to the northeast public power community, PURMA and NEPPA collaborate on a variety of informational and educational activities.

The compliance enforcement date for the implementation of the Identity Theft Red Flags procedures has passed. Your organization may have met the deadline or is quickly approaching compliance. Implementing best practices to alert your utility and respond to suspicious activity will be an evolving exercise. Perpetrators of identity theft and related cyber-related crime continually seek to breach the perimeters of the walls built to keep them out. The best constructed network defenses or written procedures may have deficiencies and fail.

Has your utility considered what actions should be taken should the prevention program fail? The best prevention program includes your response plan to incidents of identity theft. That response plan should identify key personnel, trained to contain, control, and correct any incident, to assess the immediate threat to other customers' personal information and to report the breach to appropriate law enforcement. If other customers' information has been compromised, do you have written procedures on how to notify individuals that personal information has or may have been acquired by unauthorized access?

A strong plan includes prevention,

response, and defense. Even with a dynamic program in place to alert, monitor, and respond, the theft of your customer's personal information may cause him or her harm and financial loss. The unauthorized access of just one customer's personal information causes liability and financial risk to the organization.

Traditional commercial general liability policies provide coverage to protect your utility against claims of bodily injury, property damage or personal injury to a third party and are not designed to protect companies against today's e-losses.

In response to today's new risks, some insurance companies have produced uniquely written property and liability policies that cover both the third party loss resulting from an organization's failure and first party loss which include the costs associated with statutory notification of all your customers and public relations.

PURMA is exploring these new insurance programs in light of Red Flag compliance and other increasing e-business of its members. Members, concerned about their cyber and privacy risks and/or interested in learning more about these new types of cyber-insurance, should contact PURMA.



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NEPPA members prepare for the "Red Flag Rule"

NEPPA member utilities, along with banks, credit card companies, and other financial institutions, are preparing new policies and procedures to comply with federal legislation designed to curb identity theft in the United States. The legislation, known as the "Red Flags Rule" within the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 (FACTA), defines "Identity Theft" as "fraud committed using the identifying information of another

person." Under the Rule, "Red Flags" are defined as "patterns, practices or specific activities that indicate the possible existence of identity theft."

Under the Red Flags Rule, every financial institution and "creditor" is required to establish, by November 1, 2008, an Identity Theft Prevention

Program tailored to its size, complexity and the nature of its operation. Under the Rule, municipal utilities are expressly defined as "creditors" subject to the Rule requirements. Accounts maintained by a municipal utility that are covered by the Rule are all individual utility service accounts held by customers of the utility, whether residential, commercial or industrial (see sidebar for policies and procedures).

In early October, NEPPA hosted a webinar on the Red Flags Rule to assist members in their understanding of the new requirements. Members have also been provided with sample policies and draft procedures for guidance in developing their own Identity Theft prevention programs. Copies of these documents and other information on the Rule are available at the NEPPA office. Call Sheila at (508) 482-5906.



"Red Flag" Policies and Procedures

At a minimum, the program must contain reasonable policies and procedures to:

- Identify relevant Red Flags for new and existing "covered accounts" and incorporate those Red Flags into the Program;
- Detect Red Flags that have been incorporated into the Program;
- Respond appropriately to any Red Flags that are detected to prevent and mitigate Identity Theft; and
- Ensure the Program is updated periodically to reflect changes in risks to customers or to the safety and soundness of the creditor from Identity Theft.

The Rule also requires the program to be approved by "a designated employee at the level of senior management." Approval by the utility governing board is optional.

Developing the Talent In Your Organization



By Rick Dacri, Dacri & Associates

Rick Dacri is a management consultant, executive recruiter, and expert in human resources. Rick helps organizations improve individual and organizational performance. He connects with people in a positive and challenging way to offer practical solutions. Dacri & Associates is a NEPPA member and consults to many public power systems. Rick can be reached at 800-892-9828, rick@dacri.com or www.dacri.com.

If one of your key staff suddenly quit, would you have a plan in place to address it or would you have to scramble to find a replacement? Using a sports analogy, when the Patriots' quarterback Tom Brady was injured, Matt Cassel was ready to step in as QB. Cassel is not superstar caliber as Brady; however, he is able to get the job done.

Running a small, public power department doesn't afford you the luxury of having a back-up for every position. But if a lineman, engineer, or general manager unexpectedly leaves tomorrow, the operation still must continue to operate, and that means a plan is needed. Having people ready to jump in, even for the interim period while you find a replacement, is essential for the success and well being of the operation. Versatile, highly skilled staff make for a well run department. You must always be prepared for the unexpected.

Ensuring that you have the right people in the right roles is key. They need to have all the requisite skills, experiences and education to be effective. If they fall short, then a plan must be put in place to fill the gap.

Building a strong team will accelerate the success of your organization. It guarantees that you have the talent in place today and in the future. So how do you do this?

Look at each position (not person) in your organization and ask yourself: what skills and experiences does our organization need for this position today and in the future (1-3 years)? Now ask, does my employee in that position have what we

need? Does anyone else in the organization have it? If there is a gap between what you need and what you have, then a plan is needed to fill this gap.

Studies consistently demonstrate that growing talent internally is more successful than looking to the outside to fill your talent gaps. The failure rate of external hires in senior roles in large organizations is 40%-50%. We can assume that similar results will be found in smaller organizations.

Your staff development plans should be made up from three distinct components: 1) formal training; 2) coaching and feedback; and 3) experience. Experiential learning is how you grow talent. Training programs are effective at building core competencies, but it cannot be an end-all. Direct work experience, coupled with effective coaching and feedback, has been found to be the best way at growing capabilities. In fact, 70% of your time and efforts should be focused on providing your staff work experiences; 20% on coaching and feedback; and 10% on formal training. Curiously enough, from a cost standpoint, the most effective way to develop people (providing different experiences) is also the least expensive.

Put together a development plan for each of your employees. Get them directly involved in the process. Integrate development with your performance management programs. With everyone focused on career development, your operation will run more effectively and you will be better prepared for the unexpected.

Employment

For complete descriptions of the employment opportunities listed below, go to www.neppa.org and click on Employment on the navigation bar. Deadline for listings in the December News Line is **November 14**.

Wakefield Municipal Gas & Light
Department
Chief Engineer/System Engineer

Northeast Public Power Association
Trainers

MMWEC
Maintenance Supervisor

Peabody Municipal Light Plant
First Class Lineworker/Troubleman
Senior Electrical Engineer
Asst. Superintendent of Distribution

Member Notes

Dear Pat,

I am sending this note to thank the Northeast Public Power Association ("NEPPA") for the appreciation award presented to me at your 2008 Annual Membership Meeting on Friday, October 3, 2008. Needless to say, I was very surprised to receive the award. I appreciate NEPPA's thoughtfulness.

I have always valued my association with NEPPA, primarily because I believe in the principals for which NEPPA stands. To me, public power means self sufficiency, neighbors helping neighbors, and value for services rendered. As a member of the business community I have nothing against free enterprise; however, for some essential public services (e.g., water supply,

waste disposal, etc.) it makes sense to cut out the middleman and have the services supplied by the municipality directly to its citizens. I only wish more of the public had access to public power.

I have enjoyed my relationship with NEPPA and it's members. I am grateful that many of my NEPPA clients were also friends. NEPPA and its staff have made my relationship with them pleasant and have made small-scale J.K. George & Associates feel important and valued. Thank you.

Again, thank you Pat, NEPPA's staff, and NEPPA's membership for the experience of working with you.

Very truly yours,
John K. George, Jr., P.E.

RTOs

Continued from page 3

include improved transmission access and more efficient grid management, along with the elimination of "pancaked" transmission charges. In New England, we have also seen an increase in power supply options, including new demand side resources. Notwithstanding these positive accomplishments, however, it remains the fact that the rate of electricity price increases in RTO states has been higher than in non-RTO states, and that huge profits continue to be earned by the largest sellers into unregulated wholesale power markets. Most importantly, current market trends (even after adjusting for fuel costs) do not indicate any downturn

in wholesale prices in New England, which was one of the fundamental arguments in favor of deregulation.

For these reasons, we plan to continue our efforts to secure federal legislation on RTO cost accountability in the new Congress. We will soon be asking all NEPPA members to assist in these efforts by enlisting their own customers in a letter-writing campaign to their Congressmen. As the GAO study and the recent FERC Rule on RTO Markets illustrate, real RTO reform will not take place without a legislative mandate, and public power must again take the lead in this important mission.

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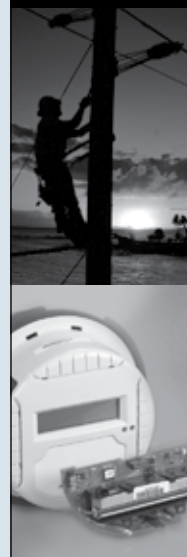


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NEPPA Calendar

November 4 – 6

Customer Service Leadership Program

Session 3
Various locations

December 4

Membership & Marketing Committee

Century Bank
Medford, Mass.

November 6

Regional Power Supply Committee

Chocksett Inn
Sterling, Mass.

November 7

Legislative Committee

NEPPA Office

November 13

Customer Service Committee

NEPPA Office

November 19 – 21

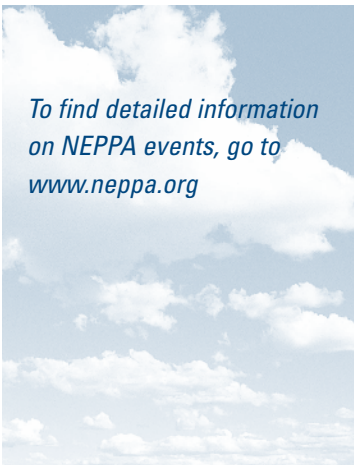
Public Utility Management Program

Durham, N.H.

December 2

Training & Education Committee

NEPPA Office



To find detailed information on NEPPA events, go to www.neppa.org

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