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*...the ongoing national economic crisis may severely limit new legislation with any tax or fiscal impacts.*

## Legislative Committee prepares for new administration and Congress

With the 2008 election results all in, the NEPPA Legislative Committee met in early November to begin making plans for advancing its policy and legislative proposals in the 111th Congress. While the larger Democratic majorities in each House may provide a more receptive audience for some policies favored by consumer-owned electric utilities, the ongoing national economic crisis may severely limit new legislation with any tax or fiscal impacts. In the Executive Branch, President-elect Obama's top priority will be to try and stabilize the U.S. economy and promote job development, although he has repeatedly said that development of renewable energy resources, increased use of biofuels and promotion of plug-in hybrid electric vehicles will be key to creating new jobs.

At the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), there is strong speculation that Chairman Joseph Kelliher, a republican, will be replaced by one of the two democrats on the Commission, Suedeen Kelly from New Mexico or John Wellinghoff from Nevada. Chairman Kelliher has been a strong advocate for deregulated electricity markets, and a change in the chairmanship may provide an opportunity for

more evaluation of market costs and benefits to consumers, as recommended by public power systems in New England and elsewhere. If Kelliher does leave the Commission, it would also open the door to possible appointment of a new Commissioner from a region of the country served by an RTO. Such an appointment, in the view of NEPPA Legislative Committee members, could be beneficial by bringing a more objective view of RTO costs and benefits to the Commission.

Early post-election developments also signaled that some key energy committees may have new leadership in 2009. In the House, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) announced that he would challenge John Dingell (D-MI) for chairmanship of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Waxman is a close ally of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and shares her liberal views on many issues. If elected Chairman, Waxman is likely to

*Continued on page 3*



# Executive Director's Report

## *New England transmission costs: The next big thing*



by Patrick Hyland

While the cost impacts of deregulated power markets have been well reported here in New England for the past few years, this has not been the case with our regional transmission system. It is safe to say, however, that those days are now over, and that transmission costs for New England electric customers are rapidly growing in absolute dollars, and as an ever-higher percentage of retail distribution rates. In New England, as elsewhere in the country, these increases can be attributed to several important factors:

- Major new grid construction in the region, to address longstanding transmission congestion and reliability problems;
- Significant increases in the cost of construction materials, causing ever-higher project costs and projected overruns; and, last but not least;
- Generous financial incentives provided to transmission companies by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), as provided for in the 2005 Energy Policy Act

The last factor is receiving a lot of attention in New England currently, as the New England Conference of Public Utility Commissioners (NECPUC) and other state officials have questioned FERC's judgment in granting generous "adders" to the allowed return on equity (ROE) for new transmission investments in the region. As pointed out in the NECPUC complaint to the FERC, transmission rate incentives should be linked to consumer benefits, and should not, therefore, result in ever-higher returns on equity as project costs grow due to commodity price increases. To date, however, the Republican majority at FERC (Chairman Kelliher and Commissioners Moeller and Spitzer) has granted virtually every ROE request by transmission developers over the objections of Democrats Kelly and Wellinghoff, approving returns that bear little relationship to the financial risks of their investments. As Kelly and Wellinghoff continue to ask during ROE fil-

*Continued on next page*

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NEPPA News Line is published once a month, 12 times a year by the Northeast Public Power Association, Suite 201, 100 Medway Road, Milford, MA 01757.

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Annual subscription rates:  
NEPPA member utilities, \$35 (first 20 subscriptions included in dues), non-members, \$53. Extra subscriptions available to utilities for \$17.50 and associate members for \$35.



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

## *The next big thing*

*Continued from previous page*

ings, "why should transmission owners be paid a handsome premium for doing what they are supposed to be doing anyway?"

As projected in the current ISO New England Regional Transmission Plan, investments in the regional transmission grid will be rapidly increasing over the next five years. If all of the planned projects are actually built, the projected cumulative costs of transmission projects in New England will rise from \$3 billion

in 2008 to more than \$8.5 billion in 2013. And so, with natural gas prices setting electricity prices in our energy markets, new capacity markets and carbon emission allowances to pay for, and now the great transmission construction boom, New England consumers can expect to retain the distinction of paying more for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity than anywhere else in the continental United States.

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## *Legislative Committee*

*Continued from page 1*

pursue a more aggressive environmental agenda on issues like climate change, renewable energy and the U.S transmission grid.

In the Senate, Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) is expected to continue as chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, although there is speculation that he may be a candidate for Secretary of The Department of Energy. If he leaves the Senate to join Obama's cabinet, Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) would be next in line for Committee chairman.

In their consideration of 2009 initiatives, the NEPPA Legislative Committee also discussed the letter campaign on RTO reform that was previously approved by the Board of Directors. The committee plans to work with members of the NEPPA Public Communications Committee to develop the "message" and tactics to be utilized in the campaign, which is tentatively planned for early 2009, in advance of the APPA Legislative Rally in February.

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## ***Customer Service Committee plans 2009 conference***

NEPPA's Customer Service Committee met recently to plan the 2009 Customer Service Conference. This one-day conference will be held on May 14, 2009 at Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston, Mass.

This world class garden will provide a unique background for this event that includes both stunning beauty and rich educational opportunities.

The successful yearly conference addresses the needs of customer service personnel in all areas of public power utilities in New England. Committee members are in the process of booking speakers that will address the economic times

facing utilities, and in particular, front line employees. Energy efficiency, ambassador programs and "green" power are also being investigated as possible topics.

"I think it is important to leverage ourselves so as to do whatever we can to help out customers, whether it be technology or service," said Committee Chair Joe Sollecito of Taunton, Mass. "This conference is designed to help not only customer service personnel but everyone in the utility who has a part in providing services to our customers."

More information on this much anticipated event will be forthcoming.

## *Houlton commissioner and WW II veteran dies*

James F. McPartland, Houlton (Maine) Water Company (HWC) director since 1968, died Nov. 7. He is survived by his wife Lois, six children and 12 grandchildren.

Mr. McPartland was the longest serving Houlton Water Company director, and he spent 31 of his 40 years as vice president or president.

"Even during the last year when Jim was recuperating from surgery, he seldom missed a meeting," said HWC General Manager John Clark. "He was a gentleman's gentleman. No matter whom he came in contact with, he treated them with patience, kindness and respect."

Mr. McPartland was born in 1924. After graduating from Houlton High School, he served in the U.S. Navy in World War II and the Korean Conflict. He was owner of the McPartland Plumbing and Heating, a family business founded in the 1800s.

"Jim treasured the Houlton Water Company as much as his own company," said Clark. "He felt the Houlton Water Company was an integral part of the community and its duty was to provide the three basic utility services as reliably and cost-effectively as possible. He operated under three simple rules when making a decision: Is it good for the customers? Is it good for the town? Is it good for the employees? If he could answer yes to all three questions then it was a go."

"As a board member, one of Jim's many strengths was his ability to cut through the bull, go to the heart of the issue, and make a decision. He had great common sense," added Clark.

Donations may be made to the James F. McPartland Scholarship Fund for Houlton High School graduates. Donations can be sent to the Maine Community foundation, 245 Main Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605

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### *NEPPA Members....*

The NEPPA Human Resources Group will host a

**Save the Date!**

## ***Human Resource Roundtable***

on Friday, January 23, 2009 at the Chocksett Inn in Sterling, Mass.

Participants will discuss a variety of human resource topics and challenges in the workplace, and a representative from the Employers Association of the Northeast will make a presentation on the Family Medical Leave Act.

All HR professionals, managers, supervisors and others with responsibility for human resource issues are invited to attend. Registration information will be forwarded to all NEPPA members in December.

# Training and Education Update

## Thank You!



By Rockie Blunt,  
director of training  
and education

*When I developed the certificate program, I thought I was going to be the one delivering the message about good customer service; little did I know, however, that I would be receiving it.*

The holidays are upon us, when festive times are heightened by the tradition of gift-giving. Although it's not quite the end of the year yet, I have already received a wonderful gift that I would like to tell you about.

As many of you know, I am currently conducting NEPPA's "Customer Service Leadership" certificate program. We have finished three of the six sessions, in fact, and will resume in January. Enrollment in the program has exceeded our expectations, with 54 participants meeting in four locations: at the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA), Reading Municipal Light Department, Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations (SELCO), and the Pascoag Utility District. As you can imagine, a program of this size calls for a considerable amount of planning as well as the cooperation of numerous people.

That's where my holiday present comes in. Personnel in each location have gone out of their way to make sure I have everything I need for each session. Whether it was scheduling rooms (and in some cases making scheduling changes on short notice); or setting up the kind of seating I asked for and providing extension cords, tables, screens and flip charts; or arranging for refreshments; VPPSA, Reading, SELCO and Pascoag have been gracious hosts. To pick one example from many, the

first session that was held in Pascoag happened to be the day before Halloween. When I walked into the room, the first thing I saw was a message that someone - I later found out it was Operations Manager Bill Guertin - had written on the flip chart: *Welcome to Pascoag for NEPPA's Customer Service Training, "The Rock."* And at the end of the session class member Linda LaPorte, who also works at Pascoag, surprised us all with bags filled with Halloween goodies.

Since that is representative of the kind of welcome I have been receiving all fall, let me take a quick moment to recognize the following individuals:

### VPPSA

Scott Corse  
Sharon Hall  
Crystal Currier

### Pascoag

Ted Garille  
Linda LaPorte  
Bill Guertin

### SELCO

John Terrasi  
Kathy Ryba  
Roger Erickson

### Reading

Laurie Cavagnaro  
Anna Ciarlone

When I developed the certificate program, I thought I was going to be the one delivering the message about good customer service; little did I know, however, that I would be receiving it. To these people I say "Thank you again," and to all of you I say "Happy Holidays."



## Reminder

Scheduling for 2009 On-Site Training is beginning. If you have not already done so, please fax your completed form to Sharon McDonald-Davies at 508.482.0932, or e-mail at [smcdonald@neppa.org](mailto:smcdonald@neppa.org)

Please let us know as soon as possible if you have anyone to enroll in the Apprentice Lineworker Program. The first session will begin Feb. 10, 2009.



# Training and Education Update

## *Graduating class tours wind farm*

William Hesson, NEPPA Safety Trainer based in upstate New York, took his fourth year apprentice lineworker students on a field trip to Noble's Wind Farm in Bliss, N.Y. where they had the opportunity to see the latest in electrical technology.

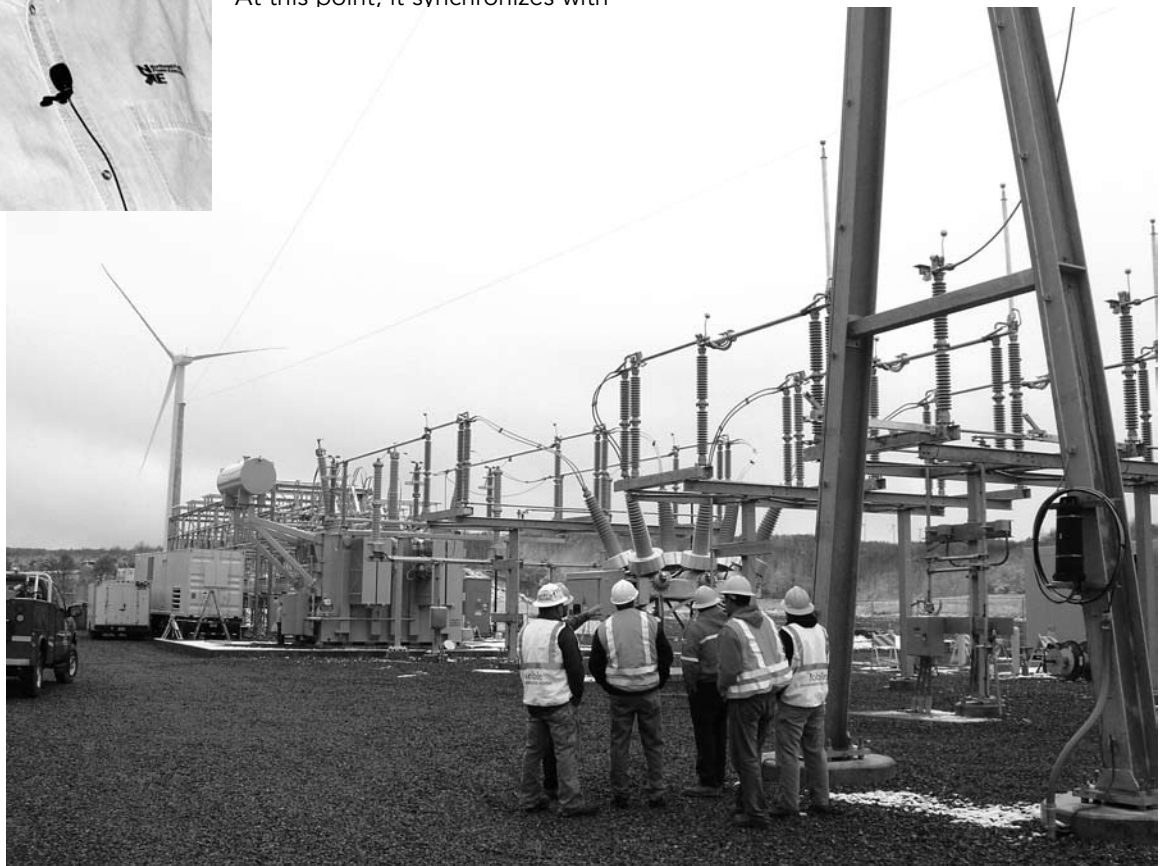
Noble is a leader in wind generation in New York State and the facility has 88 generators, 67 in operation. Each turbine or (windmill) in this group generates three phase 477 volt AC which goes into a step-up Padmount 1500 KVA transformation to 34,500 volts at the base of each structure. Once transformed, the higher voltage goes to a common bus where all 67 turbines are connected. The common bus goes to another transmission station that transforms the voltage again, this time up to 230,000 KV. At this point, it synchronizes with

the distribution utility which in this case is New York State Gas and Electric.

"Each year I take the graduating class to a place of interest regarding their careers," Hesson said. "For the students, it makes their new job more challenging and demanding."

Hesson joined NEPPA in late 2003 after retiring from Niagra Mowhawk Power Corporation (now National Grid) after 33 years which includes 18 as a line worker and 15 as a line supervisor, but he has particularly enjoyed teaching.

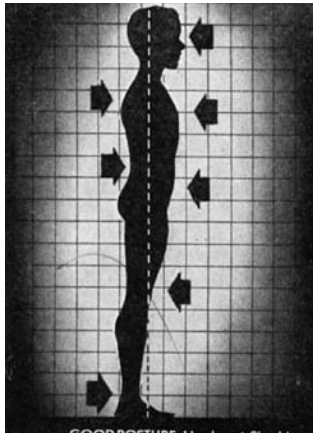
"The job for me has been rewarding," he said. "I am able to still feel useful passing on what I learned over 33 years to students (who I call puppies) just starting out. They leave me and then go back to their own environments to hopefully safely perform their duties."



# Training and Education Update

## *Ergonomics - the science of fitting the job to the worker*

NEPPA's 2009 training programs will include a new topic - Ergonomics. NEPPA Trainer Linda Calderiso will teach the course that will focus on fitting people to their work environments by evaluating workstations, worker postures and positioning, analyzing risk factors, and making necessary adjustments to promote on-the-job health.



The program will initially target lineworkers and eventually will be available to office workers as well.

Several

systems have already signed up for the training which will demonstrate the risk factors involved in employee workstations and how they affect muscular skeletal disorders. The course will discuss environmental factors to be considered when setting up a workstation including light, ventilation, air quality, noise and dust.



For more information on this training class, call Sharon McDonald-Davies at NEPPA (508) 482-5906 or e-mail [smcdonald@neppa.org](mailto:smcdonald@neppa.org).

## *Supervisory Skills: A certificate program for public power professionals*

Supervising other individuals represents the most basic, and often the most challenging, responsibility of management in any organization. To assist its members in this important area of employee training, NEPPA will offer the Supervisory Skills Certificate Program in 2009.

Whether you have recently been promoted to your first managerial position, or have been on the job for a while, this concentrated, comprehensive program moves you quickly and efficiently through three successive stages of building managerial competencies. Offering a blend of management theory and practical tools and techniques, the program is designed to help public power administrators sharpen their existing skills and acquire new ones.

The objective is to help public power professionals keep their departments

functioning effectively while providing leadership and guidance for the individuals they supervise.

NEPPA's Director of Training and Education, Rockie Blunt, will teach the program, which is being offered in Massachusetts in April and in Vermont in November.

*Watch your mail for details  
or visit the web site  
[www.neppa.org](http://www.neppa.org).*



*The program will consist of three one-day sessions (one day a week for three weeks), and will culminate in a NEPPA Supervisory Skills Certificate to be awarded at the completion of the program.*

# Around New England

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## *WEC fills board seat*

Andrea L. Colnes of East Montpelier has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors of Washington Electric Cooperative. Colnes was appointed by WEC's board at their Oct. 29 meeting. The vacancy was caused by the accidental death in early September of long-time director Wendell Cilley of West Topsham.

A WEC member for 18 years, Andrea Colnes is the Policy Leadership Director of the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire, with an office also in Montpelier.

Colnes prior experience spans a variety of environmental and energy-related projects and organizations, including work

on conservation and economic development in the Northern Forest of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. She has served as an employee and consultant to the Vermont Department of Public Service on two occasions, and is the primary author of the first Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan in 1990-91. Colnes is also presently a member of the East Montpelier School Board.

"We are very pleased to have Andrea Colnes fill this vacancy left by Wendell's death," said WEC Board president Barry Bernstein. "We were impressed by her background as well as by her experience in working with boards, organizations and communities to sort out complex issues."

## *WMGLD Manager Peter Dion talks to fifth graders*



Peter Dion, right, general manager of the Wakefield Municipal Gas & Light Department (WMGLD), recently talked to fifth graders at the Galvin Middle School about energy conservation and alternative sources of energy as part of the WMGLD's Public Power Week/ Energy Conservation Month activities. During his presentation, General Manager Dion showed a video

and introduced an essay contest for the students that focuses on the importance of energy conservation. Three winning essays will be selected from among the entries. All participants will receive a certificate for a free compact fluorescent light bulb, which they can redeem at the WMGLD office at the end of the contest.



# Around New England

## *Reading's Halloween celebration benefits food pantries*

As part of "Public Power Month," The Reading Municipal Light Plant hosted its 11th annual Halloween party on Oct. 23 at its central office. Over 700 children and their parents attended the walk-through party where they enjoyed cider and munchkins and rooms of decorations. Pumpkins and hardhats, along with recycled bags full of goodies, were handed out to the little goblins who decorated the pumpkins in the cafeteria. RMLD employees and local high school volunteers dressed as characters who thrilled the trick or treaters. Guests donated canned goods and non-perishables for RMLD to distribute to regional food pantries throughout its service territory.



# PURMA Risk Management Report

## *How long have you been using the same numbers?*

*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.*

Given today's costs, do you know the replacement value of your utility's properties? When did you last undergo a professional evaluation of your buildings, structures, land improvements, machinery and equipment? If your utility participates in the PURMA Property Insurance Program, it is imperative that you know the program is structured to best protect each insured's under its Stop Loss Limit of \$150,000,000. However, it is still important that you pay periodic attention to your replacement values for a number of reasons.

As your Risk Manager, PURMA highly recommends periodically obtaining property appraisals. PURMA is currently sponsoring an opportunity for Property Program Members, through one of our

service partners, American Appraisal Associates, to participate in a group purchase of valuation services. Standard prices start at approximately \$2,500 (for smaller utilities) and up. The group program may offer members the chance to buy these services for up to a 50% discount.

American Appraisal Associates has considerable experience evaluating utilities and maintains a professional valuation and appraisal unit that specializes in insurable value appraisals for real and personal property.

For more information on this Group Property Appraisal opportunity, please contact the PURMA office at 508-624-6700.

### **A professional appraisal is necessary because:**

- It provides the insured with the proper basis to determine the amount of coverage to be carried
- In the event of a loss, an appraisal can serve as a foundation to generate proof of loss documentation.
- Provides a solid basis for period valuation updating
- Assures proper accountability and stewardship of assets



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*Tel: (508) 624-6700*

# People Power

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*My board is made up of progressive thinkers who are not afraid of change. They are very proactive regarding the future but leave the day-to-day operations of the utility to me.*

Wayne Snow

## Meet Wayne Snow

Wayne Snow, manager of the Georgetown Municipal Light Department, came to the utility a few years out of college as a lineworker. The basic requirements for the job at that time were no fear of heights, ability to drive a truck, and willingness to work with a difficult co-worker.

When he took over the reins as manager in 1993, after serving almost a year as acting manager, there was no money put aside and no planning done for the future. Snow, who has a degree in business administration from Plymouth State College, says he's made some mistakes but has also had some successes during his tenure including building up their depreciation fund to over a \$1,000,000.

The utility built a new substation and rebuilt an existing one, changing voltage from 31.6Kv to 13.8 Mv. When an office building became available near their substation, they bought it and moved to the location. They also used bond financing to build a new garage.

The utility's staff has shrunk from 10 full-time and 1 part-time employees to eight employees.

This is largely due to retirements and automation of tasks which has eliminated positions such as full-time meter reader.

Georgetown Light has the distinction of having two out of three of its governing board members working for neighboring public power utilities. Peter Dion is general manager

of the Wakefield Municipal Gas & Light Department and Scott Edwards is assistant general manager of the Littleton Electric Light & Water Departments.

"My board is made up of progressive thinkers who are not afraid of change," said Snow. "They are very proactive regarding the future but leave the day-to-day operation of the utility to me."

Snow said the biggest challenge his utility faces is "power supply, power supply and power supply," and he stressed the need for someone to build a power plant in the near future.

Customer service is also becoming more of a challenge due to tough economic times that, even in the fairly affluent bedroom community of Georgetown, has resulted in its fair share of shut downs and home foreclosures.

On a personal level, he admits to struggling with all the acronyms and industry terms involved in running an electric utility, and also wishes he had taken more of an interest in technology developments regarding computers and electronic

*Continued on page 13*





# ALL GOOD WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

FROM THE NEPPA STAFF

Patrick Hyland

Kristin DiGirolamo

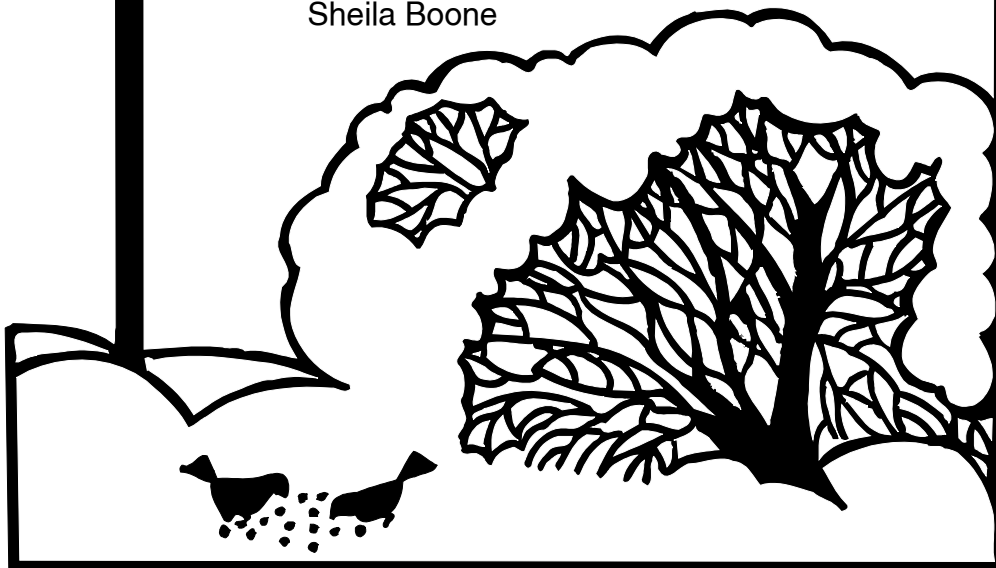
Mary Harrington

Rockie Blunt

David Fabrizius

Sharon McDonald-Davies

Sheila Boone





# Employment

For complete descriptions of the employment opportunities listed below, go to [www.neppa.org](http://www.neppa.org) and click on Employment on the navigation bar. Deadline for listings in the January News Line is **December 15**.

## **MMWEC** **Maintenance Supervisor**

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

## *Northeast Public Power Association* **Trainers**

NEPPA is looking to add to its team of trainers. If you, or anyone you know has safety, lineworker or substation experience and expertise, and would like to be trained to conduct NEPPA courses, please call Rockie Blunt, Director of Training and Education, at 508-482-5906.

## *Snow*

*Continued from page 11*

media. "I'm waiting for one of my children to come and set the clock in my new truck," he admitted laughing.

Snow is coming to the end of his two-year term as president of the Municipal Electric Association of Massachusetts.

"The backbone of this association is Secretary Dan Sack, superintendent of the Concord Municipal Light Plant," he said. He also recognized that electronic

media has made it easier to communicate with legislators and regulators in Massachusetts.

"And MEAM members like Tom Josie of Shrewsbury Light & Cable, really keep the association informed of statewide political issues."

Snow, a native of Georgetown, lives in town with his wife and has two grown children and a granddaughter.

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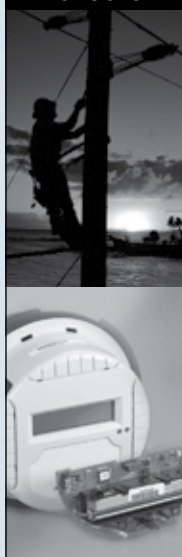
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# NEPPA Calendar

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December 2

**Training & Education Committee**

NEPPA Office

10 am

December 4

**Membership & Marketing Committee**

Century Bank

Medford, Mass.

10 a.m.

December 5

**Executive Committee**

NEPPA Office

10:00 am

December 9

**Engineering Refresher Task Force**

NEPPA Office

10:00 am

## 2009

January 6, 2009

**Customer Service Committee**

NEPPA Office

9:30 am

January 23, 2009

**Human Resource Roundtable**

Chocksett Inn

Sterling, Mass.

10:00 am

April 14, 21, 28, 2009

**Supervisory Skills**

Chocksett Inn

Sterling, Mass.

May 14, 2009

**Customer Service Conference**

Tower Hill Botanical Garden

Boylston, Mass.

June 22, 2009

**Benevolent Fund Golf Outing**

Stow Country Club

Stow, Mass.

June 23, 2009

**Safety & Operations Conference**

Holiday Inn

Boxborough, Mass.

September 20-23, 2009

**Annual Conference**

Ocean Edge Resort

Brewster, Mass.

October 20, 27, November 3, 2009

**Supervisory Skills**

Golden Eagle Resort

Waterbury, Vt.



*To find detailed information  
on NEPPA events, go to  
[www.neppa.org](http://www.neppa.org)*