

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

November 2024

## NDOT announces Grants Assistance Program for municipalities!

By Lash Chaffin,  
Utilities Section Director

Would a municipal wish list include:

- full-time staff state agency devoted to assisting municipalities and counties find transportation grants;
- full-time staff devoted to assisting municipalities and counties apply for transportation grants;
- on-call consultants to assist with grant applications and grant administration;
- some grant availability without local matching funds;
- planning grants to develop projects that might be grant-worthy projects; and
- a website that assists municipalities research potential grants and eligibility?

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) has just rolled out a new program that includes **ALL of the above!!!** <https://dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/nebraska-infrastructure-hub/>

In order to empower local public agencies to successfully compete for federal discretionary grants, NDOT has made available the Nebraska Infrastructure Hub website which is an easy-to-use website with the following components:

**Grant Research and Database** which includes NDOT-developed grant pairing portal to find the best



### Need Grant Help?

- Grant Pairing Portal
- Grants 101
- Letters of Support
- Questions



fits for a municipal transportation project.

**Technical Assistance Availability** through two full time NDOT staff members and two on-call consulting groups to help write grants or assist in grant piece development such as a cost/benefit analysis.

**Partnering and Networking** encouragement by identifying other municipal and county projects that might make a grant application more attractive.

**Ongoing Grant Monitoring**

**and Evaluation** will be available so NDOT can help manage the grant, running it like a regular federal aid project.

The website opens to three user choices:

- Grant Pairing Portal;
- Grants 101; or
- Letters of Support.

Municipalities are encouraged to get on the website and click around and see what is available. Also, please forward this article to anybody in your municipality who might be interested in grant availability.

Contact Jenna Habegger at [jenna.habegger@nebraska.gov](mailto:jenna.habegger@nebraska.gov) or Dina Harris at [Dina.Harris@nebraska.gov](mailto:Dina.Harris@nebraska.gov) for more information.



UTILITIES SECTION

206 S 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 800  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 476-2829  
Fax (402) 476-7052

Lash Chaffin  
Utilities Section Director  
Jackson Sash  
Utilities Field Representative

## SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

### Winter safety: navigating the hidden hazards of ice and snow

*By Jackson Sash, Utilities Field Rep./Training Coordinator*

Winter’s charm is undeniable, but beneath the picturesque landscape lies a host of seasonal dangers. Ice and snow can turn everyday activities like driving or walking into high-risk endeavors. Understanding these hazards and taking proactive measures is key to keeping yourself and others safe during the colder months.

Driving in winter requires heightened caution and preparedness. Black ice, an almost invisible threat, is particularly dangerous and often forms in shaded areas, on bridges, or overnight when temperatures plummet. The best way to handle winter roads is to slow down and drive at a speed appropriate for the conditions. Maintaining a greater following distance between vehicles allows more time to react in emergencies, and avoiding abrupt actions, like sudden braking or sharp turns, can prevent skids. Preparing your vehicle is equally important.

Winter tires improve traction, while functional windshield wipers and defrosters ensure visibility. Keeping an emergency kit in your car—with items like blankets, flashlights, and non-perishable snacks—can be a lifesaver if you become stranded.

Walking during winter comes with its own set of challenges. Ice-covered sidewalks and parking lots can quickly turn a casual stroll into a trip to the emergency room. To reduce the risk of slipping, wearing sturdy footwear with good tread is essential. Walking with short, careful steps and keeping your weight centered over your feet can improve balance on slick surfaces. Paying attention to your surroundings, especially for hidden patches of ice, adds an extra layer of safety. At home, salting or sanding walkways is a simple but effective way to prevent accidents for yourself and visitors.

The risks of winter are not limited to the ground. Icicles and snow accumulating on rooftops pose serious threats when they fall. A large icicle or a heavy chunk



of snow can cause significant injuries or property damage. When walking near buildings, it’s wise to avoid areas where overhangs show signs of hanging ice or snow buildup. If you notice a dangerous accumulation on your own roof, using a roof rake to remove it is the safest option. Climbing on an icy roof is highly discouraged; in severe cases, hiring a professional may be necessary to ensure safety.

The physical strain of winter tasks like shoveling snow or de-icing driveways and walkways can also be hazardous. On an average year, approximately 100 people die and 11,500 people are injured just while shoveling snow. Cold weather increases the risk of fatigue and overexertion, especially

*Continued on page 3*

**JOHNSON**  
SERVICE COMPANY

- Municipal Pipe Cleaning
- CCTV Pipe Inspection
- Foam Root Treatment
- Manhole Rehabilitation
- Trenchless Sewer Liners
- Point Repair Liners
- Pipe Bursting

Phone - (308) 237-6651  
Fax - (308) 234-5390  
PO Box 1065 Kearney, NE 68848  
johnsonservicecompany.com

Engineering a world where everyone thrives.



## Winter safety

*Continued from page 2*  
for individuals not accustomed to heavy labor. Taking breaks, dressing warmly, and staying hydrated are small but significant steps to avoid injuries. Additionally, work alongside a partner. This will ensure that in the case of an emergency medical personnel can be called as fast as possible.

By staying vigilant and prepared, the challenges of winter can be managed effectively. With careful planning, the season’s hazards become manageable, leaving more room to enjoy its beauty. Protect yourself and those around you by taking these steps today, ensuring a safer and more enjoyable winter for all.

## 2024 Joint Fall Conference held Nov. 6-8

The 2024 Joint Fall Conference was held Nov. 6-8. This conference is jointly held by the American Public Works Association (APWA), Nebraska Section American Water Works Association (NSAWWA), the Nebraska Water Environment Association (NWEA), and the Nebraska Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America (NE SWANA). At the Fall Conference, the NWEA and NSAWWA both held an awards banquet to honor exceptional individuals and systems.

The Hatfield Award was handed to Todd Sukup, the Wastewater Superintendent for the City of Sidney. The Hatfield Award is awarded to an operator of a wastewater treatment facility

who demonstrates outstanding performance and professionalism. This award honors Dr. William D. Hatfield, Superintendent of the Decatur, Illinois Sanitary District, President of the Central States Sewage Works Association in 1944-1945, and served as President of the Water Environment Federation in 1958-1959.

The Bedell Award was presented to Lucas Billesbach, Principal and co-owner of Embris Group. The Bedell Award is awarded to an individual who shows extraordinary personal service to a Member Association. Lucas began with NWEA as chair of the Great Plains Committee and continued his service through the

*Continued on page 4*

**HAROLD K SCHOLZ CO.**

**ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS  
SWITCHGEAR ASSEMBLERS**

<b>Switchgear</b>	<b>Generation</b>	<b>Substations</b>
<b>Controls</b>	<b>Automation</b>	<b>Service</b>
<b>Relaying</b>	<b>Metering</b>	<b>Breakers</b>

**7800 Serum Ave. - Ralston, Nebraska 68127**  
**PH: (402)339-7600 FAX: (402)339-1821**  
**E-MAIL: [power@hkscholz.com](mailto:power@hkscholz.com)**  
**[www.hkscholz.com](http://www.hkscholz.com)**

## Service Awards

Remember to recognize your employees’ anniversary milestones. The League provides certificates for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, and 65.

You can request them by emailing [brendah@lonm.org](mailto:brendah@lonm.org).

**Retirements:** Let us help recognize those municipal employees who are retiring after years of service.



## Bridging the Gap Between Idea + Achievement

At HDR, we’re helping our clients push open the doors to what’s possible, every day.



Omaha 402.399.1000  
[hdrinc.com](http://hdrinc.com)

## 2024 Joint Fall Conference held Nov. 6-8

*Continued from page 3*

board positions completing his term as President in 2021. In addition to his role as a delegate, he continues to assist the NWEA on the finance committee, scholarship committee, and conference planning committee. The award is named for Arthur Sidney Bedell, WEF's second president, for his long devotion and service to the New York Sewage and Industrial Wastes Association, now the New York Water Environment Association. Additionally, he was Chief of the Bureau of Sewage and

Waste Disposal of the New York State Department of Health.

The Scott Wilbur Award was presented to 19 facilities under four size-based categories. In the small municipal category, <2 million gallons per day (MGD), there were 6 recognized facilities: Beatrice (Best in Class), Wahoo, Wayne, Denton, Aurora, and Schuyler. In the medium municipal category, 2 MGD – 5 MGD, 4 facilities were recognized: North Platte (Best in Class), Norfolk, Kearney, and Columbus. In the large municipal

category, >5 MGD, 6 facilities were recognized: Lincoln Northeast (Best in Class), Lincoln Theresa Street, Fremont Wastewater Treatment Plant, Grand Island Municipal, Omaha Missouri River, and Omaha Saddle Creek. Finally, in the industrial treatment category, there were 3 recognized facilities: Hornady Manufacturing (Best in Class), Michael Foods, and Tyson Fresh Meats. The Scott Wilbur Award is presented to facilities that show commitment to excellence in

*Continued on page 5*

**TRANSFORMERS**  
**DISTRIBUTION AND SUBSTATION**

**T&R ELECTRIC**  
SUPPLY COMPANY, INCORPORATED  
BOX 180  
COLMAN, SOUTH DAKOTA 57017  
"THE TRANSFORMER PEOPLE" ©

56<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
1961 - 2017

Modern Rewind Facilities  
More than 61 Acres Inventory  
Prompt Delivery - Coast to Coast

CALL TOLL-FREE  
800-843-7994  
FAX 605-534-8361  
E-Mail: [t-r@t-r.com](mailto:t-r@t-r.com)  
Internet: [www.t-r.com](http://www.t-r.com)

EASA  
ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE  
SERVICE ASSOCIATION  
BUY - SELL - RENT

Complete Outdoor  
Substations,  
Circuit Breakers,  
Regulators,  
and Switchgear

## 2024 Joint Fall Conference held Nov. 6-8

*Continued from page 4*  
facility operation and maintenance while maintaining environmental compliance.

The Burke Safety Award was presented to the City of Columbus Wastewater Treatment Facility. The award is presented to a facility with an active and effective safety program and an exceptional safety record. The award is named after George W. Burke, Jr., for his many years of service in both the water pollution control field and the Water Environment Federation as staff manager of technical services. Mr. Burke helped to implement the Federation's annual safety survey and assisted with the production of several safety training aids and promotional packets.

Safety Awards are presented to facilities to recognize their safety initiatives. Awards are given in 5 different categories, depending on the size of the facility. Facilities recognized in the 1-4 operator category were the Aurora WWTP, the Wahoo Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the Lincoln Northeast Water Resource Recovery Facility. Facilities recognized in the 5-9 operator category were the Columbus Wastewater Treatment Facility, the City of Norfolk Water Pollution Control, the City of Chadron, the North Platte Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the Saddle Creek Retention Treatment Basin. Facilities Recognized in the 10+ operator category were the Fremont Wastewater Treatment Plant, the City of Grand Island Wastewater Treatment Facility, The Omaha Missouri River Water Resource Recovery Facility, and the Lincoln Theresa Street Water Resource Recovery Facility. One facility was recognized in the

lagoon category – The Village of Denton Wastewater Treatment Facility. Facilities recognized in the industrial category were Michael Foods Wastewater Treatment Plant, Tyson Fresh Meats – Lexington Wastewater, and Hornady Manufacturing Company.

Other awards presented by the NWEA included Brian Clow of Carollo awarded with a Lifetime Membership Award and Emily Holtzclaw and Chris Koenig awarded the Golden Manhole Award. Derek Gardels, Darren Jack, and Jeremy Walker were inducted into the Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers. Charlie Kraus of the City of Aurora, Randy Johner of the City of Wahoo, Ryan Kinsella of the City of Omaha, and John May of the City of Omaha were given the Wrenchers Waiting to Wreck a Wrench Maintenance Award.

The NSAWWA awards given were the Fuller Award and the Water Industry Service Award. The Fuller Award recognizes members who show sound engineering skills, brilliant diplomatic talent, and the constructive leadership which

characterized the life of George Warren Fuller. George Warren Fuller was a sanitary engineer trained in bacteriology and chemistry. He designed and built the first modern water treatment plant and chlorination system for drinking water. He also served as president of the AWWA in 1923. The Fuller Award was presented to Craig Reinsch of Olsson. The Water Industry Service Award recognizes members of the Nebraska Section of AWWA who have tirelessly served the waterworks industry over their careers. Three individuals were presented with this award: Bruce Dvorak, a professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Randy Woldt, City Administrator and Utility Superintendent of Wisner; and Chris Miller of Miller & Associates.

Please congratulate the 2024 Award winners if you see them out and about. If you know of someone that you think deserves to be considered for an award, make sure you nominate them before next year's deadlines.

### Future "Snowball" Wastewater Conferences

The dates for future "Snowball" Wastewater Conferences have been scheduled and contracts signed with the



Kearney Holiday Inn.

Please note the upcoming Snowball Conference schedule:

- Jan. 22-23, 2025
- Jan. 28-29, 2026
- Jan. 27-28, 2027
- Jan. 26-27, 2028

# Classifieds

**Public Works Superintendent.** The Village of Pender, Nebraska, located in Northeast corner of Nebraska is seeking to fill the position of Superintendent of Utilities. Pender is a progressive community located approximately 40 minutes Southwest of Sioux City, Iowa, approximately 45 minutes east of Norfolk, NE and 90 minutes North of Omaha. The population of Pender is 1,273 and is the County seat for Thurston County, Nebraska. Salary: \$50,000 - \$73,000 annually dependent on qualifications, paid bi-weekly. Benefit packages which include health, dental, vision, HSA (up to \$1,600/yr), life, vacation, 11 holidays, retirement benefits matching up to 3%. The Village of Pender is looking for someone who has a broad range of Utility experience to become the Superintendent of Utilities. The preferred candidate would have at least five years or more previous experience as a superintendent or supervisor relating to the construction, repair, maintenance and operation of the following utility departments: 1. Electric Generation, Transmission and Distribution system; 2. Water Treatment

Plant and Water Distribution; 3. Sewer Treatment Plant and Sewer Line Maintenance; 4. Natural Gas Operations; and 5. Street and Various Other Departments. The applicant should demonstrate experience with overseeing personnel, time management, and workflow of the various Village departments. The applicant must be able to file mandatory reports, learn and understand the budget. In addition to at least five years of previous electrical experience, the candidate should either have or demonstrate the ability to obtain the necessary licenses, certificates or qualifications to operate the Water, Sewer and Natural gas departments. The applicant must live within 15 miles of the municipality. Interested people may obtain an application at the Village Office, 614 Main Street, Pender, Nebraska, 68047. Or for further information contact the Village Clerk at 402-385-3232, or email [clerk@villageofpender.com](mailto:clerk@villageofpender.com). EOE. Position is open until filled.

**Line Technician.** The City of Auburn of Board of Public Works is accepting applications for an Electric Line Technician. Qualifications include successful completion of



an accredited Journeyman Lineman program or consideration for a documented Journeyman Lineman through verifiable experience. Lineman apprentice applications will be accepted. Experience in construction, installation, maintenance and repair of electric transmission and distribution lines. Knowledgeable of and ability to train in electrical distribution and transmission line construction, electrical apparatus such as single-phase transformers, three phase transformer banks, voltage testing, rotation and regulators and line switching clearance procedures and grounding. Compliance with all safety policies and procedures. Valid CDL or ability to obtain an acceptable driving record. Candidates will be subject to

*Continued from page 7*

**MONGAN**  
**PAINTING CO., INC.**

Floor Coatings \* Sandblasting \* Epoxy Coatings  
Water Plants \* Storage Tanks \* Swimming Pools  
Sewage Plants \* Ethanol Plant  
**PO Box 515 - Cherokee, Iowa 51012**  
**Phone (712)225-0626 Fax (712)225-0627**  
**Email: [monganmd@ncn.net](mailto:monganmd@ncn.net)**

**MA Miller & Associates**  
**CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.**

WWW.MILLER-ENGINEERS.COM • 308.234.6456

ENGINEERING • SURVEYING • PLANNING • FUNDING • ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



**MILCO**  
Environmental Services, Inc.,  
WWW.MILCOINC.COM • 308.237.5923

## Classifieds

*Continued from page 6*

a criminal background check. Successfully pass DOT physicals/drug tests as required. Ability to work outdoors in all types of weather conditions. Must reside within 30 miles of Service Center at 1604 O Street, Auburn, NE. The starting pay rate for this position is \$32.24 - \$37.78 per hour depending on experience. Job description is available upon request. Applications are available at auburnbpw.com. Return to: Board of Public Works at 1600 O Street, Auburn, NE 68305. For questions about the position contact Kevin Kuhlmann or Ray Luhring at (402)-274-4981. Position will remain open until filled.

**Utilities Superintendent.** The Village of Stratton is now accepting applications for a full-time Utilities Superintendent due to anticipated retirement of current employee. The Village of Stratton has a population of 310 and is located in southwest Nebraska, 30 minutes west of McCook. We are located along Highway 34 less than 10 miles from Swanson Reservoir. Successful candidate must possess

or be able to obtain a grade IV water operator license through the State of NE. Responsibilities include water and sewer system operations, street maintenance, maintenance of electrical service, and other duties as assigned. A complete list of duties is located at the Village Office. Wage negotiable and based on experience and qualifications. Benefits include: monthly health stipend, clothing reimbursement, up to 3% retirement match, 11.5 paid Holidays, and PTO. Applications or further information can be obtained from the Village Clerk at 308-276-2184 or stratton@gpcom.net or submit resume to PO Box 332 Stratton, NE 69043. Position open until filled. EOE.

**Assistant Utility Superintendent** The Village of Exeter seeks qualified candidates for full time, including on-call, position of Asst Utility Superintendent. Hours are flexible. The ideal candidate must have the following qualifications: Ability to learn computer and equipment skills essential to this position; High school diploma or GED is a must; Strong communication skills and the ability to work well with the



public, other village employees, and other professionals; Willingness to engage in training to keep up-to-date with municipal codes and state statutes; Must have a valid driver's license; Must have or be able to get a class B CDL with air brakes; and Candidates with a Grade IV Water operator license, grade 6 Backflow license and a Grade 1 Wastewater Operator's license is a plus, but we are willing to send the right candidate to training for certification within 1 year of Employment. The key duties of this position include but are not limited to: Managing and maintaining water and sewer systems - Conducting utility readings - Performing locates - Supervising road and street maintenance activities - Maintaining village owned buildings and properties to include parks and Swimming Pool - Maintaining all vehicles, equipment, and tools while also keeping accurate records for reporting purposes. The Asst Utility Superintendent collaborates closely with the Utility supt and operates under the supervision of the Village of Exeter Board of Trustees. Applicants submit a letter of interest and resume to exeterclerk@windstream.net or Village of Exeter, PO Box 96, Exeter, NE 68351. The applications are due by Feb. 3, 2025 by 5 pm. The Village of Exeter is an EOE.

## Writing an article for the Utilities Section Newsletter

Are you interested in writing an article for the *Utilities Section Newsletter*? We are interested in articles on the past, present, and future of your municipal utilities.

Articles can be written on a specific department or an overview of the history of the entire utilities department. Items of interest may

be information on the first well in your community, number of services, service fees, the equipment used, and also the employees that worked in the various utilities departments. Photos would enhance the articles and will be returned unless otherwise instructed.

## 2025 “SNOWBALL” Conference

Sponsored by NWEA/NWOD and the  
League of Nebraska Municipalities-Utilities Section

**Location:** Holiday Inn, 110 2nd Ave., Kearney

**Date:** January 22-23, 2025

**Registration:** 7:30-8:30 a.m. on Jan. 22, 2025

**Participant and Exhibitor Registration** can be found by clicking [here](#).

Topics include: Collection and Treatment Systems, Operation/Maintenance Practices, Lab Applications, Facility Upgrade Projects, Engineering Projects, Infrastructure Improvements, Regulatory Updates, Safety, and much more.

For sleeping room reservations, call 1-308-237-5971 or 855-444-5769 option “0” and tell them you are attending the Snowball Conference to receive the special rate of \$124.95. This room rate will be guaranteed only up to Dec. 25, 2024.



**Power Plant Problem Solvers**

**Leader in RICE NESHAP Compliance & Testing**

**Stationary Diesel & Dual Fuel Engine Mechanics**

**Multi-point Engine Inspection Service**

**Complete Engine Sales, Installation and Removal**

**Power Plant Design, Construction & Automation**

**Large/Heavy Equipment & Machinery Transportation**

**Parts & Service for: Alco, Caterpillar, Colt-Pielstick, Cummins, Cooper-Bessemer, DeLaval, EMD, Enterprise, Nordberg, Waukesha, Fairbanks Morse, Ingersoll-Rand, White Superior, Worthington and others**

**FMI Farabee Mechanical, Inc.**  
Hickman, NE 68372 • (402) 792-2612  
farabee@inebraska.com  
[www.farabeemechanical.com](http://www.farabeemechanical.com)



# 2024-2025 Training calendar

Visit our [website](#) for a complete list of workshops and conferences.

## January

- Jan. 8-10..... [Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference](#) ..... Graduate Hotel, Lincoln
- Jan. 15 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Blair
- Jan. 16 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Nebraska City
- Jan. 21 ..... Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Holiday Inn, Kearney
- Jan. 22-23 ..... Snowball Conference ..... Holiday Inn, Kearney

## February

- Feb. 11-12 ..... Electric Meter Conference ..... Holiday Inn, Kearney
- Feb. 24-25 ..... Midwinter Conference..... Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

## Utilities Section Executive Board

*President*

**Duane Hoffman**  
Public Works Director  
Oxford

*2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*

**Gary Thurlow**  
Utility Superintendent  
Atkinson

*Board Member*

**Matt Owens**  
Water & Sewer Supervisor  
Imperial

*1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

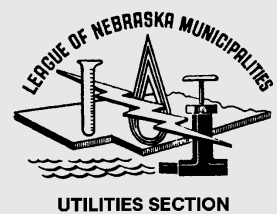
**Pat Heath**  
City Administrator  
Gering

*Board Member*

**Sarah Sawin**  
Director of Utilities  
Kearney

*Board Member*

**Jeramie Van Leer**  
Utility Superintendent  
Ord



*Ex Officio Member*

**Layne Groseth**  
City Administrator and  
Utilities Manager  
North Platte