

Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

October 2023

All About NDEE: Records Management

This article was written by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy. More articles, tools, and resources can be found at dee.ne.gov or email the NDEE public information office at nde.moreinfo@nebraska.gov.

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) generates a vast number of public documents related to regulated facilities. It is important these documents are managed correctly and made readily available for both the department and the public.

NDEE's Records Management Section oversees this vital work. They work with the agency's programs to ensure documents are filed correctly, make those documents accessible for the public, and respond to public records requests.

NDEE was one of the first state agencies in Nebraska to use an electronic content management (ECM) system. The agency's records team has even provided demos for other agencies showcasing the streamlined records management processes.

The ECM also makes NDEE's records available through its [Public Records Portal](#). Facilities that have documents with the agency are assigned a facility ID number that stays with that site throughout ownership changes. Using that ID, anyone can conduct a search and see all public documents related to a facility. The public records portal first launched in May 2011, and there are currently 1.1 million records available through the portal.

Not only are these online records useful to the public, the ECM and public portal also are a process

improvement for the records team. The Records Management Section responds to public records requests, and since the introduction of the Public Records Portal, these requests for documents have steadily decreased – from 1,460 requests in 2012 to 704 in 2022. This saves time for Records Management to work on other projects and shows that members of the public are able to find the documents they are looking for through the portal.

The records team remains busy. In 2022, they stored more than 144,000 records in the ECM system, including newly imaged historical records. Of the records stored, 36,000 were incoming mail items that records processed and routed to agency staff. This work supports the agency's programs so they are able to focus on permitting and inspecting facilities, providing financial aid to Nebraskans, and monitoring the remediation of contaminated sites in the state.

In addition to the Public Records Portal, NDEE also has an [Interactive Map Server](#). Anyone can search for a facility or for facilities with specific types of records. Members of the public also can pull up documents related to a facility they find



on the map through their search.

NDEE's records management system ensures documents are available for agency staff to conduct their work, as well as making these documents available to the public. This transparent process also helps keep the public informed about how NDEE administers programs and makes decisions.

Credit hours reminder

The 2023 Snowball Conference and the 2023 Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference water and wastewater hours are posted on the League of Nebraska Municipalities website at www.lnm.org/utilities/water-and-wastewater-credit-hours.html.

1335 L Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 476-2829
Fax (402) 476-7052



UTILITIES SECTION

Lash Chaffin
Utilities Section Director
Rob Pierce
Utilities Field Representative

SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

October is National Fire Prevention Month

By Rob Pierce, Utilities Field Rep./Training Coordinator

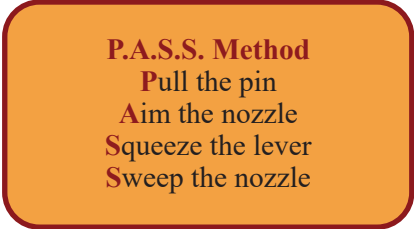
Be sure to review and practice safe evacuation procedures (fire drills) along with inspecting all municipal buildings (facilities) for fire safety concerns, and take any needed precautions to eliminate fire hazards. Make sure electrical connections are not overloaded or loose and are properly grounded. In the early years, many of our villages and cities across the state lost businesses, courthouses, city halls, and schools due to fires. Be sure to inspect the working order of all smoke alarms (batteries), check electrical wiring, breakroom kitchens and flammable storage areas, and check all fire extinguishers. Fire extinguishers should be checked monthly and serviced annually.

There are five general classes

of fire extinguishers which include: **Class A** for ordinary combustibles (paper, wood, cloth); **Class B** for flammable liquids (gasoline, grease, oil); **Class C** for electrical equipment (appliances, tools); **Class D** for combustible metals (most often found in factories); and **Class K** for cooking combustibles (vegetable and animal oils and fats – most often found in commercial kitchens). Employees should be trained to use the **P.A.S.S. Method** to extinguish a fire. A fire extinguisher should be available within 100 feet of employees for each 3,000 square feet of building. Make Fire Prevention



Month a special and meaningful month as you celebrate fire prevention all year long.



Utilities Section Executive Board

President

Al Schoemaker
Director of Public Works
Blair

1st Vice President

Duane Hoffman
Public Works Director
Oxford

2nd Vice President

Pat Heath
City Administrator
Gering

Past President

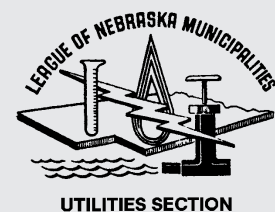
Bill Bischoff
Utility Superintendent
Wauneta

Board Member

Gary Thurlow
Utility Superintendent
Atkinson

Board Member

Sarah Sawin
Asst. Director of Utilities
Kearney



Board Member

Matt Owens
Water & Sewer Supervisor
Imperial

Ex Officio Member

Layne Groseth
City Administrator and
Utilities Manager
North Platte

Nebraska utilities history – Aurora

The Utilities Section Newsletter will continue to feature histories of both utilities and associate members. Any historical data and/or photos of your utilities, a specific facility, or articles already written are welcome, along with permission to print. If you have questions, contact Rob at 402-476-2829 or robp@lonm.org.

By Rob Pierce, Utilities Field Rep./Training Coordinator

Aurora, located in Hamilton County, had a cabin built in 1859 and settlers in the area by 1861. Apparently, a meeting was held near two area cottonwood trees with some men from Chariton, Iowa speculating on a railroad and the possible siting of a town. By 1871, a frame store was built and the Agricultural Association was organized. On April 5, 1871, a post office was established as Spafford’s Grove. A townsite was established and the name Aurora was selected following debate on June 19, 1871. On May 2, 1872, the post office name was changed from Spafford’s Grove to Aurora. A school and a church were organized in 1872. On Dec. 20, 1872, the original townsite was surveyed and platted with the recording on Dec. 21. The *Aurora Republican* newspaper was established in June 1873 and the Aurora House Hotel was built. In October 1873, an election was held and Orville City was determined as the county seat. A vote in 1874

announced Aurora as winning the vote, but apparently two county commissioners rejected the vote and a suit followed. In October 1875, a final vote was held with Aurora winning by 81 votes. On Jan. 1, 1876, Aurora officially was made the county seat and the first building used was moved from Orville City. The Hamilton County Bank was established in 1877 and the first courthouse and a two-story frame building was erected for \$5,000. On July 3, 1877, Aurora was incorporated as a village with an estimated population of 400 by 1879. About 1877, land had been purchased from the Union Pacific Railroad and the Cemetery Association was formed. General Delevan Bates, a Civil War “Medal of Honor” recipient, was a leader in the development of Aurora and the Aurora cemetery. The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad train service arrived in 1879, as the first steam engine rolled into town. An Aurora Transfer Company (dray service) began operation and in October, the telegraph lines were installed.

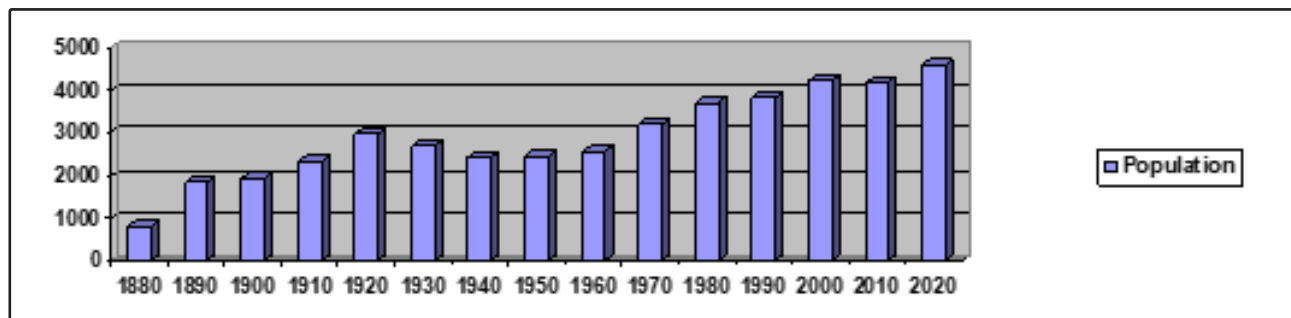
A 40-acre tract of land was pur-



Aurora water tower. 2010 photo.

chased in 1879 for a racetrack to be built and by 1880, the railroad replaced much of the stage line business. The population was 800 and a school and two newspapers (the *Republican* and the *News*) were operating. The Aurora Roller Mill and machine shop was built in 1884 and by 1885, Aurora had wide

Continued on page 4



Nebraska utilities history – Aurora

Continued from page 3

streets, good sidewalks, and trees around the courthouse square. By 1886, a foundry and a jail (\$7,000) were built and the first private telephone line was installed in Aurora. A fire department was organized March 21, 1889, as early members charged a \$2 initiation fee and dues were \$0.10 with fines of \$0.25 for missing meetings or fires without an excuse. The population was estimated to be 1,175 by 1885; a water system was installed (1888-89) for \$34,000, and the population reached

1,862 by 1890.

On Oct. 1, 1890, waterworks bonds at 6 percent interest for 20-years were approved. By October 1892, a brick waterworks building was located on the corner of Grand Avenue and 1st Street consisting of two boilers, a standpipe, and a 100,000-gallon storage well reservoir. Water was pumped by a Deane pump (14 x 8½ x 10-inch) Duplex and a two (deep well) Cook pumps from three wells with seven-inch tubes. Water was pumped directly to 93,000-gallon reservoir

or the 61,000-gallon (10 inch x 110 ft) standpipe. The water system at this time consisted of four-and-one-half miles of four-, six-, eight-, and 10-inch water mains with 35 double hydrants. The water pressure was 40 pounds per square inch (psi) with a fire pressure of 100. The fire department in 1892 consisted of 35 firefighters, two hose reels, 800 feet of two-and-one-half-inch rubber hose, 250 ft two-and-one-half-inch woven hose, and a hook/ladder truck. On Jan. 3, 1894, the

Continued on page 5

TRANSFORMERS
DISTRIBUTION AND SUBSTATION

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

56th
1961 ANNIVERSARY 2017

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

CALL TOLL-FREE
800-843-7994
FAX 605-534-3361
E-Mail: t-r@t-r.com
Internet: www.t-r.com

EASA
ELECTRICAL APPARATUS
SERVICE ASSOCIATION
BUY - SELL - RENT

Complete Outdoor
Substations,
Circuit Breakers,
Regulators,
and Switchgear

Nebraska utilities history – Aurora

Continued from page 4

frame courthouse structure built in 1877 was destroyed by fire and by 1895, a new brick courthouse was erected for approximately \$60,000. By 1895, some of the businesses included eight general stores, two dry goods stores, three drug stores, two clothing stores, two furniture stores, four hardware stores, three grocery stores, three meat markets, four hotels (Barlyton Hotel, City Hotel, Tuttle House, and Aurora House), and a lumberyard. Two businesses were destroyed by fire in 1896 and on Sept. 19, 1898, the fire department was reorganized. By November 1899, the water system had three deep wells, three Cook deep well pumps to the reservoir. A Deane duplex pump with a capacity of 250,000 gallons per 24 hours pumping from the reservoir direct to the standpipe and mains. The distributions system consisted of six miles of four-, six-, eight- and 10-inch water mains and 38 double hydrants with an average daily consumption of 138,000 gallons in the summer and 93,000 gallons in the winter. By November 1899, the city had streetlights lit by oil lamps and electricity provided by the Aurora Electric Light Plant on 13th Street

(southeast corner of the square) which consisted of a 16-horsepower (Hp) engine, a dynamo, a 40-ft chimney, and a boiler.

The Hamilton County Farmers Telephone Association, a farmers cooperative, was incorporated (1901) with calls via switchboard. In 1901, the fire department ordered fire uniforms (pants, coat, and cap) at \$13.50 each, which were received Feb. 22, 1902. A vote was proposed in 1903 to issue bonds for the repainting of the water works plant. The Aurora Electric Light & Power Company was supplying electricity and providing steam heat to the business square. A brickyard was built in 1904 (\$40,000) and production had increased to five million bricks per year. A new park was established as new brick sidewalks were installed in 1906. A library was established in the basement of the courthouse by April 1907, then later moved (1908) to the “Peterson” room in the Opera House. In September 1907, a sewer system was constructed for about \$10,500. In October, a vote was approved to place a telephone in each fire cart house with a line also connected to the water department. The streets were noted as level, but

unpaved and the two fire companies consisted of 25 members, two hand hose carts with 1,400 ft of two-and-one-half-inch rubber lined hose, one hook and ladder truck, and a fire alarm whistle at the water works. Businesses by June 1909 included Burlington Hotel, Aurora Broom Factory, Grosshans Lumber Company, Hickman Lumber Company, Lysinger Elevator, Updike Grain Company, C. Klose & Company brickyard, C.B. & Q. Railroad Depot with coal chute, W.H. Ferguson Elevator, and a brick opera house on the northwest corner of the square.

The population increased from 1,921 in 1900 to 2,630 by 1910. In 1910, the city instituted a two-mill levy and requested \$10,000 from the Carnegie Foundation because a new brick Carnegie Library was to be opened. The Aurora Electric Light & Power Company was providing power until acquired by the Continental Gas & Electric Corp of Cleveland Ohio in 1915. Electric rates were \$0.08-\$0.15 per kilowatt hour (kWh). The municipal water system consisted of wells, a reservoir, a standpipe, four pumps with a capacity of 624,000 gallons per day (gpd), cast and wrought iron mains

Continued on page 6



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.



Nebraska utilities history – Aurora

Continued from page 5
(four- to 10-inch dia.), 39 hydrants, 19 valves, with a daily consumption of 50,000 gallons. Rates were \$1.25 per 1,000 gals. minimum. The fire department had 15 volunteer fire-fighters, a hook/ladder truck, two hose carts with 1,700 ft of double jacket hose. The first fire engine was purchased in 1916. On May 7, 1916, the York Gas & Electric Company filed an application to construct a transmission line from Aurora to Central City and on May 17, filed to construct a transmission line connecting Stromsburg to York and Aurora.

By 1919, the electric service was supplied by the Public Service Company and the population was 2,962 in 1920.

Some of the businesses included

an American State Bank, livery/taxi service, a meat market, a co-operative creamery, a restaurant, a furniture store, a drug store, a bakery, a blacksmith shop, a garage, Olympia Candy Kitchen, a hardware store, a harness shop, a clothing store, Mazda Theatre, First National Bank, a skating rink, and the *Republican Register* newspaper was being printed. Paving projects were discussed with petitions filed for improvements. Street grading, curbing, and paving projects were underway by June. The electric system was operated by Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power Company with a name change in 1922 to the Public Service Company. The water system in 1924 had an operating pressure between 25-47 pounds per square inch (psi) with fire pressure of about 45 psi. Water rates in 1928 were \$0.15-\$0.20 per 1,000 gallons with a minimum of \$1.25 per 1,000 gallons. The first fire department pumper was purchased in 1928 and

Aurora was a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities.

In 1930, the population was 2,715 and by 1932, the city was using natural gas. In June 1930, Iowa Light & Power bills totalled: street-lights \$260.02; current for pumping water \$13.89; city hall lights \$7.48; heating \$2.50; and sounding siren \$1. The Fidelity State Bank closed (1932) and a \$23,854 Public Works Administration (PWA) paving project was completed in 1934. In 1933, Aurora voted to take over the power plant from the Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power Company, which held the franchise contract. The Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power Company power plant in 1936 had a capacity of 210 kW of stream power generation. In November 1939, Elkhorn Construction was installing another 80 miles of line for the REA, previous contract was for constructing 200 miles of lines in the Hamilton County. By November 1939, WPA

Continued on page 7

Water workshops held

The fall water/wastewater workshops were held in Sept. 19 in North Platte, Sept. 20 in McCook, Oct. 17 in Norfolk, Oct. 18 in South Sioux City with workshops also scheduled Dec. 5 in Lincoln and Dec. 6 in Auburn. The agenda topics include sampling requirements and plans, sampling techniques/procedures, evaluations of sample site plans along with an emphasis on lead/copper issues along with a regulatory and industry update.

Be sure to register early so meal accommodations can be made. Operators in attendance will receive five hours toward water grades 1-4 licenses and five hours toward wastewater license renewal.

Work Zone Safety Training Workshops

Work Zone Safety Workshops were held Aug. 17 in Wayne, Sept. 21 in Grand Island, Oct. 18 in South Sioux City, and two more scheduled Nov. 7 in Blair and Jan. 23, 2024 in Kearney, the day before the Snowball Wastewater Conference. These workshops are designed to benefit all departments that set up or work in the streets/roadways (water, wastewater, streets, natural gas, and electric departments).

Megan Patent-Nygren (Nebraska LTAP) covers work zone practices such as the fundamentals of tempo-

rary traffic control, control devices, site evaluations, general safety, flagging, and an update on MUTCD requirements. The last hour will cover an update on regulatory and industry issues. **Operators in attendance receive four hours for water grades 1-4, five hours for grade six and five hours toward wastewater license renewal.** These workshops are sponsored by the League of Nebraska Municipalities Utilities Section and the Nebraska Section of the American Water Works Association.

Nebraska utilities history – Aurora

Continued from page 6

road/highway projects were under construction in the county.

The population decreased to 2,419 by the 1940 census and a cemetery improvement project was using WPA funding and labor. In the spring, the Consumers Public Power District purchased the Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power Company properties in Nebraska. By January 1942, the Consumers Public Power District had purchased Western Public Service Company.

By 1950, the population was 2,455 and the city purchased a used street sweeper in June 1953. In 1954, the school was destroyed by fire and a discussion was being held to build a new gymnasium. Three paving petitions were underway at 8th Street from H to K, 10th Street from Q to J, and 9th Street north from A Street to the Burlington Railroad tracks. In May, paving began on Highway 14 from Aurora to Central City. A water tower was built in the mid 1950s (1953 or 1956) and by 1956, the water system had 350 meters in service along with a fire hydrant rental charge of \$40 per hydrant per year. The electric substation had a capacity of 2,500 kilowatt hours (kWh) with 1,327 electric meters in service. The cost of street lighting was \$269.40 per month. The electrical system was owned by Consumers Public Power District. Approximately 20 blocks of streets and alleys were resurfaced in 1956. The public sewer and disposal plant were maintained with a tax levy and natural gas was furnished by Central Electric & Gas Company. A new municipal well was drilled in 1956 and garbage collection service was provided by the city with fees of \$2.225 per resident and \$3 per

business.

The population was 2,576 in 1960 and natural gas was supplied by Western Power & Gas Company in 1962. A junior high school was built in 1962 and a new municipal well was drilled in 1965. In 1970, the electrical system was owned/operated by the Nebraska Public Power District. By 1977, the electrical system was owned by the city and leased to Nebraska Public Power District. A new water well was drilled in 1973 and on July 4, 1976, a museum building was built. A new well was drilled in 1978 and the Bremer Community Center was built in 1979. The population increased from 2,180 in 1970 to 4,100 in 1980. In 1982, the natural gas system was operated by Cengas then later in 1987, operated by Minnegasco and supplied by Kansas-Nebraska.

In 1990, the population was 3,810 and sewer and water improvements were made in the McBride Addition (engineer was Kirkham Michael). A special assessment street improvement program was underway in 1992 using a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Construction started in 1995-96 on an extended aeration activated sludge plant with a flow of 885,000 gallons per day. The engineer was JEO Engineering with construction by Rutjens Construction and BRB Contractors, Inc. for \$4,439,741.79. The natural gas system in 1994 was operated by Peoples Natural Gas Co. (sub. of UtiliCorp United). The wastewater plant had a one million-gallon oxidation ditch, two 50-foot clarifiers (each held 225,000 gallons) along with four 360,000-gallon aerobic digesters with dewater using a 2.1-meter Ashbrook belt

press. The 14-acre facultative lagoon was used as a backup system. A new municipal well was drilled in 1999 and the water system consisted of four wells (average depth 152 feet) with a combined pumping capacity of 3,819 gallons per minute and an overhead storage capacity of 300,000 gallons. The average daily demand was 454,000 gallons with the historic peak daily demand at 3,750,000 gallons.

By 2000, the population was 4,225, a transfer station/landfill was operating, and the water system consisted of a 300,000-gallon elevated water storage tower, five wells a total pumping capacity of 5,000 gallons per minute (gpm) with an average daily demand of 911,117 gallons. In 2001, a new 6,000 sq ft city hall was built at a cost of about \$732,000, replacing the 100-year-old city hall building. Improvements were made to the airport/airfield in 2001 along with new water and sewer mains installed to I-80 to furnish water for a new Love's Truck Stop in 2003. The water well originally drilled in 1965 was redrilled in 2005. In 2005, the natural gas system was operated by Aquila, which was purchased by Black Hills Corp. in 2008. By 2006, the city maintained 67 acres of parks, which included a swimming pool, a skate park, playground equipment, tennis courts, ballfields, and camping areas. A meter replacement program was started in 2007.

A decision was made to double the capacity of the wastewater treatment facility as it was averaging an influent of 850,000 gpd (2012). The facility added another one-million-gallon oxidation ditch and one 40 ft diameter clarifier. The electrical

Continued on page 8

Nebraska utilities history – Aurora

Continued from page 7
controls along with upgrading the current oxidation ditch and main lift station were scheduled for completion in 2012. By 2013, the \$3.1 million wastewater treatment facility had a capacity of approximately two million gallons per day. In 2014, the Aurora Aquatic Facility was opened and the water system had five active wells with 270 commercial, 15 industrial, and 1,715 residential customers. In 2015, the city maintained approximately 102 lane miles of streets and a new municipal well was drilled (2016). A 480 kilowatt (kW) solar array was installed in 2017 to offset about 84 percent of the wastewater treatment plant's electricity cost. By 2019, the sanitary sewer system had 45 miles of sewer mains (four- to 24-inch), four lift stations, and 7,500 linear feet of eight-inch force mains to a waste treatment facility rated at about 900,000 gpd. The population increased from 4,196 in 2010 to 4,593 in 2020 and the city maintained seven municipal wells, along with 55 miles of water mains (two- to 16-inch). Today, Aurora has a population of 4,593, has been incorporated since 1877, and a city of the second class since 1886. Aurora is a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and the Utilities Section.

References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1965-75, 1977-87, 1990-96, 1998-2022; Nebraska Municipal Review, 1928, 1934, 1946, 1990, 2004; Municipal Journal and Engineering, Vol. 55, January-December, 1924; History of Hamilton County Nebraska, 1936; History of Hamilton County 1867-1967, 1967; Water Resources

of Nebraska, December 1936; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2003, 2004; Hamilton County newspaper, 1930; Nebraska Travelers Magazine, 2003; A State of Readers, Nebraska's Carnegie Libraries, 2005; Train Time in Nebraska: The Post Card Era, 2005; Nebraska Our Towns...Central Southwest, 1991; Aurora Internet Website, 2005, 2016, 2020; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; Aurora Republican newspaper, 1901-1905, 1919-20; NEDED Website, 2005; DHHS Annual Report, 2020; History of Hamilton County, 1890; Johnson's History of Nebraska, 1880; Sargent Leader Newspaper, 1903; Who's Who in Nebraska, 1940; Municipal Journal and Public Works, 1917; NDEQ/ UNL Energy Savings Flyer, 2010; Nebraska Blue Book, 1915, 1928, 1946, 1978; Municipal Journal & Public Works, Political Science Vol. 23, July 3, 1907; Electric Power Development in the United States,

Dept. of Agriculture, January 1916; Department of Labor and Department of Compensation, 1917-18; History of Hamilton & Clay Counties, Nebraska, 1921; BLS Report 1905-06, 1907; Hamilton County Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, July 2009; Sanborn Maps, October 1892, November 1899, June 1909; 15th Annual Report of Nebraska State Railway Commission to the Governor, Issue 15, 1922; Poor's and Moody's Manual of Railroads and Corp. Securities, Public Utility Section, Vol. 1, 1921; Biennial Report of the Auditor of Public Accounts to the Governor of the State of Nebraska, Nov. 30, 1890, 1890; Manual of the American Water Works, volume four, 1897; Browns Directory of American Gas Companies and Gas Engineering Appliances Catalogue, 1922 and The Insurance Year Book 1915-16 Fire and Marine 43rd Annual Issue, 1915.

NWEA training session held

The Nebraska Water Environment Association held a one-day wastewater maintenance workshop in Bellevue at the Papillion Creek Omaha on Sept. 7. This workshop covered electric motor basics, lift station maintenance, record keeping, confined space, automated controls, testing instruments, blower maintenance, and level measurements.

On Oct. 3-4, the NWEA held wastewater certification sessions at the Northeast Community College Lifelong Learning Center in Norfolk. A Wastewater Laboratory

Analysis Workshop also was held Oct. 17 at the Southeast Community College Milford Campus. For information on credit hours/certificates, contact Ryan Hurst at hurst@wahoo.ne.us. For information on the testing, contact Mike McBride of NDEE at mike.mcbride@nebraska.gov.

Check out the League's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/leaguene. Be sure to "Like" us.

Nebraska utilities history – Dodge

The Utilities Section Newsletter will continue to feature histories of both utilities and associate members. Any historical data and/or photos of your utilities, a specific facility, or articles already written are welcome, along with permission to print. If you have questions, contact Rob at 402-476-2829 or robp@lonm.org.

By Rob Pierce, Utilities Field Rep./Training Coordinator

Dodge, located in Dodge County, had a post office established named Dodge (in honor of the county) in 1872, which was located about one mile to the east and operated by Anton Bartosh. The post office was moved in 1879 when the proposed railroad tracks would miss the post office site. On May 10, 1880, the post office was re-established at the new site near the railroad. By 1882, the community was a trading point with a flour mill in operation. The St. Wenceslaus Cemetery was organized in 1884 and a wood-framed church was built (later moved to Dodge in 1889).

The railroad announced an extension project in May 1885 and L.D. Richards sold the land, which would later become the north portion of Dodge, to the Western Town Lot Company for \$1,000 in November. They later sold the land to the Pioneer Townsite Company for either

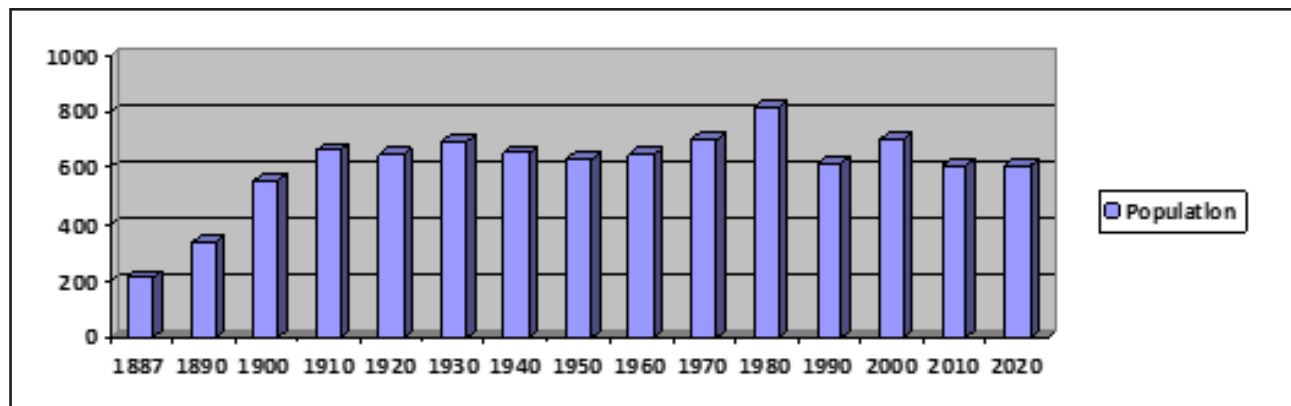
\$3,500 or \$5,000 (depending on the source). By 1886, the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad was under construction in the area. By July 1886, a general store opened before the townsite was platted and by September, the Commercial House Hotel was erected. One source noted that on Aug. 10, 1887, a 28-block area was platted by the Western Town Lot Company (Pioneer Town site Company). On April 19, 1887, with a population of 214, Dodge was incorporated as a village with Charles Woodruff the first chairman and W. Hatton as clerk. A large-frame hall was erected in 1887 by Charles Gohr and used as a dance hall and for community meetings. Later, the building was sold to the Bohemian Theatrical Society, additions were made to the building, enlarging it to a two-story building with the first floor used as an opera house and second floor used for a lodge meeting room. This hall became known as Bohemian Hall. The first school,



Dodge water tower. 2016 photo.

a brick two-story building, was built in 1887-88 and had an addition in 1889. On March 1, 1889, the Farmers State Bank was organized and the Mumeddy brickyard business was in operation.

By 1890, the population was 338 and businesses included a Roller
Continued on page 10



Nebraska utilities history – Dodge

Continued from page 9

Flour Mill, a Farmers State Bank, two churches (Catholic & Congregational), a hardware store, a harness maker, two hotels (City Hotel, Commercial Hotel), a lumber/grain business, a blacksmith, ag implement dealers, livery stables, a millinery, a confectionary, a cigar manufacturer, a meat market, a brick manufacturer, general stores, a wagon maker, a barber, a shoe store, a saloon, a billiard hall/saloon, a dressmaker, undertaker, and a furniture store. The *Dodge Advertiser*

newspaper was being published and Hilligan & Hrabek built a two-story block general merchandise building (1891) as the population increased to about 450. The fire department was organized in 1891 as the Dodge Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 and in March 1892, a fire hall was erected. On Sept. 17, 1895, a disastrous fire destroyed the entire business district and part of the residential area (two-thirds of the village was destroyed) and damages were estimated at \$125,000. The fire was alleged to have been started from sparks of an

engine owned by the railway company. A court awarded 10 percent of the \$125,000 for damages with the \$12,500 check prorated among the plaintiffs. A two-story brick Commercial Hotel building was erected in 1895 and a town hall was erected in January 1896.

The population by 1900 had increased to 554 and in 1905, the village voted on a proposition to bond for water works and electric lights. The proposition carried and bonds for \$8,000 were issued for water

Continued on page 11



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

Nebraska utilities history – Dodge

Continued from page 10
works and bonds for \$2,000 issued for an electric light plant. By September, only one block had been installed as bids were not low enough to go further. On Nov. 24, 1905, the iron for the water works standpipe arrived and was erected along with several blocks of six- and eight-inch pipe laid. The electric light plant had a Dynamo with a capacity for 500 lights and the fire department was reorganized about 1905. By March 30, the standpipe was full of water and the system was turned on in April 1906. By March 30, the electric light plant in the city hall building had been running for a week now. The original system was a 220-volt generator providing direct current (DC). The electric system consisted of 110-volt light bulbs and electricity was available only at night, on weeknights from 6-10 p.m. and on Saturday until midnight. On Mondays from 7 a.m.-Noon, electricity also was available for wash day, as some 220 irons were using the current.

The population was 661 in 1910 and by 1911, the fire department consisted of 10 members and the hose company had 14 members. Two carts were in use along with an alarm bell, located on the corner of Second and Pine Streets at City Hall. In 1912, a three-story brick school was built, replacing the building built in 1887. The electric system, which had been installed for \$5,600, had rates at \$0.12 per kilowatt hour (kWh). The plant was using a 75-horsepower (Hp) gas engine and had a generator rating of 57 kilovolt amps (kVA). The municipal water plant, which cost \$4,400, had rates of \$0.35 per 1,000 gallons (gals.) in 1915. On Dec. 23, 1916,

the mill was destroyed by fire. Some of the businesses by 1917 included two hotels (Commercial Hotel, City Hotel), two banks, two churches, a roller mill, a hardware store, a saloon, a blacksmith, a meat market, a general store, a brick manufacturer, an ag implement dealer, and a cigar manufacturer. The Farmers Telephone Company was operating by 1917 and the population was 648 by 1920. In 1922, an application was made by the Scribner Ice Company to construct a transmission line from Dodge to Clarkson. On April 14, they filed for authorization to construct a transmission line from Snyder to Dodge (granted May 15, 1922). Another application was filed in 1923 by the Scribner Artificial Ice Company to construct a 12,000-volt three-phase transmission line to Dodge, Howells, and Clarkson. The electric rates were \$0.15 per kW by 1924. The municipal water system in 1925 had rates of \$0.40 and the streets were brick paved by 1925-26. In 1925-26, windstorms did damage to the town, the mill was destroyed by fire in 1927, and a tornado did damage around the village. The first ambulance service started in 1929. In the late 1920s, the electric system was changed to 120/240 when they began getting current from Elkhorn Valley Power Company at Scribner.

In 1930, the population increased slightly to 693 and by July 1931, a swimming pool was under construction.

In the mid-1930s, the former engine room at the city hall/power plant was converted into a meeting room. By Jan. 1, 1935, the electric system was served by the Elkhorn Valley Power Company. On Aug. 1, 1939, the Sokol Hall Opera



Dodge Auditorium. 2016 photo.

House was destroyed by fire. The new auditorium and an 18-acre park were dedicated Oct. 18, 1939. The Elkhorn Valley Power Company (Scribner) in 1939-40 was providing retail electric service to Scribner, Uehling, Dodge, and Creston and providing wholesale in Clarkson, Howells, and Snyder.

In 1940, the population was 656 and the Consumers Public Power District bought the Elkhorn Valley Power Company. A township library was operating in 1942 and by 1947, the Rural Fire District was formed.

The population decreased to 633 in 1950 and the Memorial Library was built and dedicated in 1954. The auditorium was maintained by a tax levy and income from rentals. In 1956, garbage was collected by a private collector with fees of \$1 per month for residential (increased to \$1.50 by 1958). The municipal sewer system was maintained by a tax levy and a sewer fee of \$1 per year in 1958. On April 17, 1958, voters approved the construction of a new swimming pool. Construction began in May with the cost of the project financed by bonds. The swimming pool project was dedicated June 21, 1959. That year, several rural districts merged with the Dodge School District.

The population was 649 in 1960

Continued on page 12

Nebraska utilities history – Dodge

Continued from page 11

with curbing and guttering projects in progress and a \$25,000 bond issue for a new swimming pool. A new ambulance was purchased in 1961 along with a rural fire district 1,000-gallon Chevrolet water wagon. In 1962, the cost of street lighting was \$139.82 per month and the cost of current for pumping water was \$60 per month. Garbage was collected by a private collector with charges of \$1.75 per month for residential and \$2 per month for business. A new (52 ft x 70 ft) brick/steel fire station was built for \$18,247.47. The station was dedicated April 26, 1964. On Nov. 11, 1966, the city won first place in the annual Nebraska Community Improvement contest in the under 800 population category.

By 1970, the population increased to 704 and the electric distribution system was operated by Nebraska Public Power District. A gymnasium was built in 1971 and dedicated in 1972. The fire department organized the first EMT unit in No-

vember 1973 and the park doubled in size, with a shelter, playground, and ball field added. A wastewater treatment plant project was under construction in 1977. The town hall building, which was built in January 1896, was used until 1982. The building was used as a power plant until the 1920s and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The population decreased from 815 in 1980 to 693 in 1990 and in 1998, the village operated an activated sludge extended aeration system designed for 0.14 million gallons per day (mgd) which was disinfected by chlorine gas aerobic digester.

By 2000, the population was 700 and the water system was served by two municipal wells with a maximum capacity of 1,387,760 gals. per day. Propane gas service was provided by private companies and the electrical system in 2003 was supplied by NPPD and operated by Cuming County Public Power District. The average daily demand in 2005 was 250,000 gallons with a peak demand of 0.892 mgd. The water system had 50,000 gals. of overhead storage capacity. The sewer system had a rated capacity of 0.140 mgd, an average daily demand of 0.140 mgd, and a peak demand of 0.200 mgd with no sewer connection fee. By 2006, the extended aeration plant had a capacity of 160,000 gpd. The population decreased to 612 by 2010 and solid waste collection service was provided by private companies.

Today, Dodge has a population of 591, has been incorporated since 1887 (136 years), and is a member of the League of Nebraska Municipalities and Utilities Section.

References: *Nebraska Directory*

of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964-75, 1977-82, 1984, 1987, 1990-93, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2000-2020; Municipal Review Magazine, 1925; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; The Ansley Herald newspaper, 1931; Lincoln Journal Star newspaper, 2017; Water Resources of Nebraska, December 1936; Maps Tell A Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005-2008; Dodge Website, 2005-2021; Wikipedia website, 2019; Dodge Nebraska 1886-1986 A Century of Integrity, 1986; The Crete Democrat Newspaper, 1891-92; Nebraska State Gazetteer & Business Directory, 1890-91; History & Biography: History of the Elkhorn Valley, Nebraska, 1892; Electric Power Development in the United States, Dept. of Agriculture, January 1916; History of Dodge and Washington Counties; Dodge Diamond Days 1897-1963, 1963; Nebraska Blue Book, 1942, 1946, 1978; Eleventh Annual Report of the Nebraska State Railway Commissioner, 1918; Annual Report of Nebraska State Railway Commission to the Governor, Issue 15, 1922; Annual Report of Nebraska State Railway Commission to the Governor, 1923; Utilities Section solid waste survey, 2015; Federal Power Consumers Electric Rate Survey, Domestic and Residential Electric Rates in Effect January 1, 1935 in the state of Nebraska, 1935; Department of the Interior Bureau of Mines: Commercial Trend of the Reducer-Gas Power Plant in the US, 1913; Electric Rate Survey: Domestic and Residential Electric Rates in Effect January 1, 1935 by U.S. Federal Power Commission, 1935.

Utilities Section members only

Do you have equipment to sell or a position to fill? Place your ad in the Classifieds section of the *Utilities Section Newsletter* free. This service is a membership benefit.

Contact Brenda Henning at the League office at 402-476-2829, fax to 402-476-7052 or email your ad to brendah@lonm.org.

Nebraska utilities history – Gering

The Utilities Section Newsletter will continue to feature histories of both utilities and associate members. Any historical data and/or photos of your utilities, a specific facility, or articles already written are welcome, along with permission to print. If you have questions, contact Rob at 402-476-2829 or robp@lonm.org.

By Rob Pierce, Utilities Field Rep./Training Coordinator

Gering, located in Scotts Bluff County, had trappers in the area by 1828 (Hiram Scott, a Rocky Mountain Fur Company trapper, died in 1828 at the base of the bluff). A trading post was located in the area by 1840. Rebuilt in 1851, the Robidoux Trading Post was trading furs with the native tribes and by 1852, wagon trains were rolling through the area past the landmark bluff named “Scotts Bluff” in honor of Hiram Scott.

President Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and on May 30, 1854, Nebraska became a Territory. Omaha was proclaimed the territorial capital on Nov. 2, 1954. Thomas Cuming was the acting Nebraska Territorial Governor who created by proclamation the first eight counties in 1855: Saline (Jan. 16); Washington (Feb. 22); Douglas (March 2); Johnson, Dodge, Pawnee, Taylor, and Lancaster (March 6); Cass, Richardson, Nemaha, and Dakota Counties (March 7).

From April 1860 to October 1861,

the Pony Express operated with stations to the east “Fichlin Springs” and Scottsbluff station about two-and-one-half miles northwest of Mitchell Pass near the bend of the North Platte River. In the early 1860s, the first transcontinental telegraph, which followed the Oregon-California Trail through Mitchell Pass (near Scottsbluff Monument), was completed. The Homestead Act of 1862 stirred some interest. Nebraska became a state in March 1867, the Sidney Barracks, a sub post of Fort Sedgewick Colorado Territory, was established in December. The Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869 and cattle herds were being driven to the rails in the 1860s and 1870s. Cheyenne County was organized in 1870 and on Nov. 28, Sidney barracks become an independent post. On June 6, 1871, Cheyenne County was created (separated from Lincoln County). By 1874, the “Gold Rush,” following Custer’s Expedition, peaking caused an influx of travelers about 1877-78.

Some settlers were in the area by 1881, but the larger influx came

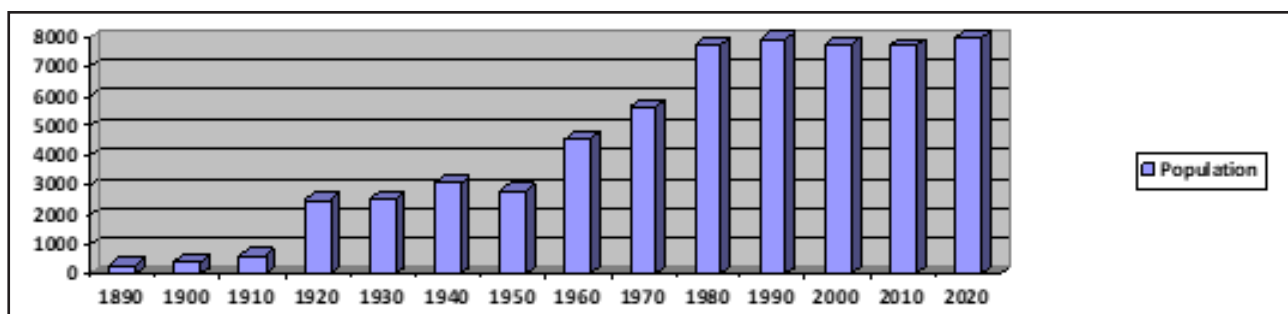


Gering welcome sign. 2013 photo.

between 1885-1888. A townsite was chosen from a Union Pacific Railroad survey with a plat filed about 1886. The settlement that was founded was first known as Vendome. On March 7, 1887, the original map of Gering (16-block area) was said to have been filed in Cheyenne County (one source listed April 27, 1887). The settlement was named Gering after Martin Gehring (Gering) a pioneer merchant, lawyer, and notary who with Oscar Gardner started the first dry goods store.

In 1887, two general stores, a drug store, a hotel, and a newspaper were

Continued on page 14



Nebraska utilities history – Gering

Continued from page 13 established along with the founding of the Farmers Canal Company. In April, a post office was established and Sept. 26-28, the first Cheyenne County Fair was held in Gering. On July 4, 1887, the first Fourth of July celebration was held and that month, the Gering School District was organized. School sessions were first held in a log cabin. An 1888 election resulted in the reduction of Cheyenne County and on Nov. 6, 1888, Banner, Kimball, Scotts Bluff, Duel and Cheyenne Counties were created. In February 1889, Gering became the Scotts Bluff County seat in an election with Mitchell. A number of brick buildings were erected in 1889 along with a three-quarter-mile long log and plank bridge across the Platte River.

By 1890, the population was 300 and Gering became a village (1890 or 1891). By 1890, the

Wyoming and Nebraska Water Supply Company had irrigation ditches in the vicinity. One canal was 60 miles in length, crossing the entire county. Two small canals were built, later followed by a second group which included installation of the Enterprise and Winter Creek Canals. Land was donated for a cemetery and in 1890, the Bank of Gering, the *Gering Courier* newspaper, and the Scotts Bluff County Land and Irrigation Company were in operation. The nearest railway stations in Kimball and Alliance on the Newcastle branch of the B&M Railroad were each 40 miles from Gering. A two-story brick courthouse building was erected in 1891 and a two-story school was built in 1892. On Dec. 6, 1895, the Gering Public Library opened with the first park in 1898.

In 1900, the population was 433, the Burlington

Railroad built into the Valley to Scottsbluff and irrigation was started in the area by 1902. On June 17, 1902, the National Reclamation Act required that water users repay construction costs from which they receive benefits. Irrigation projects known as reclamation projects with the goal to develop arid land includes dam construction. On April 27, 1903, the Platte Valley Telephone Company was incorporated. In 1902, Moses Kinkaid introduced a bill to increase the homestead acreage from 160 to 640 acres in 37 counties. By 1904, the bill was forwarded and signed on April 28, 1904 by President Theodore Roosevelt. The Kinkaid

Act went into effect June 28 involving up to 1,280 acres of arid non-irrigationable land west of the 100th meridian. From 1904-1917, nine million acres were distributed by 14,000 claims, many of which later failed. An expanded Kinkaid Act enabled dryland farming, increasing the acres to 320 who accepted marginal land in (Great Plains) which could not be easily irrigated.

By 1910, the population increased to 627, telephones lines were in use and railroad tracks were laid to Gering. The Gering Light & Power Company was formed in 1912 and supplied electrical current by the C&R

Continued on page 15

Nebraska Breaktime Trivia “Just For Fun”

- Q-1. When did fall officially start in 2023?
- Q-2. How many fire departments are in Nebraska?
- Q-3. How many incorporated villages/cities start with “U”?
- Q-4. Where in Nebraska is this public school located?



Answers on page 19.

HAROLD K SCHOLZ CO.

**ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS
SWITCHGEAR ASSEMBLERS**

Switchgear Controls Relaying	Generation Automation Metering	Substations Service Breakers
---	---	---

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

Nebraska utilities history – Gering

Continued from page 14

Electric Power Plant in Scottsbluff. The streets were renamed in 1913 with letters and numbers and water system bonds of \$19,500 were voted on. By 1914, a (cone top) water storage tank was installed and a pumping system was in service. The Gering Fire Department was formed Aug. 10, 1914. *The C&R Electric Company in 1915 had a power plant in Scottsbluff consisting of 300 horsepower (HP) boiler, 250 HP steam engines, and a generator rating of 250 kilovolt Ampere (kVA).* In 1916, a sugar factory was built and the population was estimated to be over 1,000. In June 1916, water mains were installed along with appropriations for 11,500-14,910 square feet (sq ft) of three- to 12-inch sewer lines. Fifty new ornamental streetlamps were installed. On March 14, 1918, Gering was incorporated as a city of the second class. By 1919, a sugar beet factory was built and in operation. The school added a 12th grade in 1911 and the new school was built in 1917-19. The Scottsbluff Monument was incorporated into the National Park System (1919).

In 1920, the population was 2,508 and in 1922, Gering started its Annual Oregon Trail Days (second week of July). A new three-story brick school was opened in 1923 and Legion Park was established in 1925. The fire department had 26 volunteer firefighters in 1923 and in 1927, purchased a LaFrance fire truck. The Citizens Gas Company started serving customers in Scottsbluff and Gering with artificial gas for residential and industrial use in 1927. Carl Gray Park was started in 1928 and the Gering Valley Hydroelectric District election was

held March 13 to vote on an issue of \$80,000 in bonds. The business district ran from P to M Streets on 10th Street with mostly one-story buildings, some two-story buildings, and the three-story Gering Hotel. A Spanish-style railroad depot was built in 1928 and in 1929, a snow ordinance was passed.

In 1930, the population was 2,531 and the Monument Shadows Golf Course (public) was opened. The gas system was purchased (1931) by North Central Gas Company of Casper, Wyo., when the Wyoming firm extended lines down the valley as far as Lewellen. A municipal electric system was established (1934) and the Gering Light & Power Company began operation Jan. 1, 1935. In 1936, a hydroelectric power plant was operating on the Platte River. A federal substation was installed by 1939 in Gering for controlling and distribution of joint energy from the large western hydroelectric sources.

The population was 3,104 in 1940 and the North Central Gas Company acquired the franchise to distribute gas from the recently discovered gas fields around Sidney and started a \$700,000 project for a gas distribution system to include Sidney, Dalton, and Bridgeport. The electric distribution system was owned by City of Gering and Mercury Vapor street lighting was installed in 1947. The city-maintained Hampton Park (1948) and Gentry Park was deeded to the city. On Nov. 18, 1949, the Gering Rural Fire Protection District was organized.

The census listed the population at 2,842 in 1950 and the Summit Christian College was established in 1951.

In 1952, a four-lane street from

Gering to Scottsbluff was dedicated. The city owned/maintained a cemetery, a swimming pool, and a sewer system. The municipal water system in 1956 had residential/business rates of first 10,000 gallons (gals.) at \$0.10 per 1,000 gals. with excess at \$0.10 per 1,000 gals. and a minimum of \$1 per month. The natural gas system was supplied by North Central Gas Company and the original Junior High School was built in 1957. By 1958, the water plant had 1,325 meters in service owned by the city and a meter deposit of \$5. The electrical system also had 1,325 meters in service owned by city and electricity was supplied by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. City water rates were raised effective Nov. 1, 1959, with the minimum rate from \$1-\$1.50 for the first 10,000 gallons. The city had problems with sand plugging the meters.

By 1960, the population was 4,585, the fire department had 48 volunteer firefighters, and the water plant had 1,350 meters in service with a meter deposit of \$5. A new library opened in 1962 and a contract was awarded to Midwest Farm Service for drilling a new well. Construction started on a new high school in 1964, the Gering Lions Club constructed a shelter in Gardner Park, and the new fire hall was completed. A \$38,000 water improvement and well project was started in 1965 along with approval for a waste stabilization lagoon. The sewer project included interceptor sewers and lift station. On June 7, 1966, an ordinance was passed for a new administrator position and the mayor signed a contract for a \$255,000 sewage plant. Gering became a city of the first class in

Continued on page 16

Nebraska utilities history – Gering

Continued from page 15

the mid 1960s and by 1969, the population was estimated at 6,025.

The population increased from 5,639 in 1970 to 7,760 by 1980. The electrical system was owned/operated by the city and leased to the Nebraska Public Power District. The North Platte Valley Historical Museum was completed in 1974. A junior high school was constructed (1975) and 37 acres were purchased for the cemetery.

A new swimming pool was built in 1977 and the Great Western Sugar Company processing plants closed in Scottsbluff, Gering, Bayard, and Mitchell. In 1978, a library addition was constructed for \$292,000. In 1981, the water system consisted of five municipal wells with a pumping capacity of 5,475 gallons per minute and two storage tanks of 225,000 and one million gallons. The system provided 7.88 million gallons per day. The electrical system in 1982 was owned/operated by the city and supplied by Western Area Power Association (WAPA) and the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool. (NMPP). The gas system in 1982 was operated/supplied by Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company. An aerated lagoon wastewater treatment system was constructed in 1983 with a designed capacity of 1.9 million gallons. The Log Cabin restaurant, which was established in 1890, become the Hiram Scott Steak House in 1968 and then in 1983, became Log Cabin Restaurant again. Construction was completed in 1984 on a new central storage building for the city. The Melbeta School District merged with the Gering School District in 1986.

By 1990, the population was

7,946, the natural gas system was operated/supplied by KN Energy Inc., and the city had 3,343 electric customers in 1993. The city opened a 1.3-mile trail in 1998 leading to Scottsbluff Monument. The city operated a seven-lagoon wastewater treatment system (four cells for residential, three for industrial) in 1998. The aerated flow-through lagoon system in 1999 had a plant capacity of 2-4 million gallons per day (gpd) with a present load of 1.8-3.4 mgd. The north side was designed for 0.331 mgd and the south side was designed for 1.6 mgd.

The population in 2000 was 7,751 and the city maintained a civic center and five parks: Legion Park, McLellan Park, Hampton Park, Carl Gray Park, and the Union Pacific Park (11 parks were noted in 2001).

In 2001, the city had 12 wells with a capacity of 10,700 gpm, an average consumption of 2.4 million gpd and a peak consumption of 9 million gpd. In 2002, the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN) was commissioned to purchase power from the wind farm located west of Kimball. Maintenance and repair work were performed on the water storage tower. The natural gas system was operated by Kinder Morgan. The municipal landfill, located east of Scottsbluff Monument, received a new building and a waste baler machine. In 2003, due to three wells having arsenic and uranium concerns, the city was looking for a new water source (six test holes). Construction started in 2005 on a remodeled wastewater plant to remove or convert the lagoon system. Pumps were replaced in the pump house (three new 100 horsepower blowers) and a new lab building. In 2005, the gas system was oper-

ated by KN Energy and by 2008, by SourceOne (Kinder Morgan). Solid waste rates in 2008 were: residential – \$10.25 per month and commercial – \$38 per dumpster per month. The water system received a CDC Fluoride Recognition and by October, an SRF loan was secured to drill a new wellfield. Seven miles of 24-inch transmission main were to be laid and numerous distribution system improvements to blend the water supply with the existing well field through a one-million-gallon blending tank and high-service pump station. The city purchased 8.1 acres for a new well field and two other well fields were abandoned. New lights were added at the ball field in 2008 and Main Street was blacktopped in 2009.

In 2010, the population was 7,738 and work began on a bypass overpass and a road along the east side of town.

MidNebraska Disposal Company provided solid waste collection services (2011). In 2015, Black Hills Energy purchased the SourceGas service, becoming the natural gas provider. In 2018, a new “Oregon Trail Park” baseball stadium was under construction to be the home of the Western Nebraska Pioneers (member of the Expedition League). The landfill purchased a new shredder to extend the landfill life another two to three years. In October 2018, Gering teamed up with Scottsbluff to jointly identify potential landfill sites to serve their communities for the next 50-100 years.

Today, Gering has a population of 7,978, has been incorporated for about 132 years, and is a member of the League of Nebraska Municipi-

Continued on page 17

Nebraska utilities history – Gering

Continued from page 16
palities and Utilities Section.

References: Nebraska Directory of Municipal Officials, 1956, 1962, 1965-75, 1977-87, 1990-2021; Nebraska Municipal Review Magazine, 1967, 1971, 1990; Utilities section Newsletter, 1959; Gering Internet Web site, 2003, 2004; Gering Nebraska, The Last 100 Years 1887-1987; Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995; Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper, 2005, 2007; Nebraska Place Names, 1925, 1960; Nebraska State Gazetteer & Business Directory, 1890-91; Water

Resources of Nebraska, Dec. 1936; Public Power Magazine, Vol. 51, Number 1, Jan.-Feb. 1993; Maps Tell a Story, 1991; NEDED Website, 2005; City of Gering website, 2019; Wikipedia website, 2018; Nebraska Historic Building Survey, Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Scottsbluff County Nebraska, 1995; History Reminiscence and Biography of Western Nebraska, 1909; History of Western Nebraska and its People, G. L. Shumway, 1921; Engineering & Contracting, Technology and Engineering, Habert Powers Gillette, 1917; Electric

Power Development in the United States, Dept. of Agriculture, Jan. 1916; Gering Citizen Newspaper, 2015; Municipal weekly Journal, July-December Vol. XXXV, Dec. 1913; Municipal Engineering Index, June 1916; Directory of Electric Utilities in the United States, Federal Power Commission, 1941; and the Electric Rate Survey: Domestic and Residential Electric Rates in Effect Jan. 1, 1935 by U.S. Federal Power Commission, 1935 and the Directory of Gas Utilities in the United States by US Federal Power Commission, 1942.

Early Nebraska fire brigades

Nebraska's first fire brigade was started in 1856 in Nebraska City – 165 years ago. Omaha had a hook & ladder company by May 2, 1860 (noted as first of its kind in the territory). Brownville, which lays claims to many of Nebraska's firsts, was noted as having a fire hook & ladder about 1865. Lincoln noted the Phoenix Hook/Ladder Company was organized in 1865. Columbus was noted as having a bucket brigade with the Pioneer Hook & Ladder Company organized in 1873, also lists a Columbus Engine Co. #1 formed in the early 1870s.

Many of the early fire brigades or fire companies were formed about the same time some sort of water system was installed. Early water systems often were initially installed for fire protection. Most of these were private companies with some villages/cities having more than one. Apparently, whichever of the companies that arrived first and started fighting the fire was the

one that got paid. Did that mean the other didn't help and just watched at that point because they were not paid?

Several communities had a well, possibly with cisterns in the early days, but some developed a "modern" water system which consisted of wells, piping, and a storage reservoir on a hill or an elevated tank.

Electric department reminder

Be sure to check the NFPA 70E 2024 Edition, which was published May 13, 2023, for additions that may impact your facilities. Changes/updates also have been made to CSA Z462 (2024) and that edition is scheduled to be published January 2024.

Safety awards reminder

AWWA and NWEA have safety award application to recognize water and wastewater departments/facilities for their safety program for the 2022 calendar year. [Click here](#) for the application form on NWEA's website. For wastewater applications, contact safety chairman Jeremy Walker at jwalker@olsson.com and for water (AWWA) applications, contact Rob at robp@lonm.org.

Recipients will be recognized during the banquet at the Annual Conference (Nov. 1-3) at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney. If you wish to recognize your facility for its safety program and activities, be sure to fill out an application.

SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

Trench and excavation safety

By Rob Pierce, Utilities Field Rep./
Training Coordinator

This article appeared in the August 2022 Utilities Section Newsletter.

It seems every year, more fatalities are noted across the United States due to cave-ins at trenching or excavation sites. The following steps can be used for preventing injuries or unsafe situations when dealing with a trench or excavation. A common definition for a trench is that it is deeper than it is wide and an excavation is wider than it is deep.

The first step is identifying the potential or known hazards dealing with your trenching or excavation operations. Items of concern may include the surrounding environment, weather conditions, other utilities in the area, type of soil and traffic, just to name a few. A competent person needs to make the assessment, be active with the site and reevaluate as needed due to weather, personnel or equipment changes on the site. Under OSHA regulations, for a worker to be considered a competent person, they must meet four basic qualifications: 1) job experience in trenching and excavation operations; 2) an understanding of the various methods available to protect workers – sloping, benching, shoring, trench boxes, etc.; 3) a clear knowledge and understanding regarding the OSHA standards specific to trenching and excavation; and 4) the authority to direct employees as to the specific procedures to ensure their safety as well as to require them to exit the trench immediately if changing conditions appear to indicate that a collapse may occur.

Once potential hazards have been identified, then the proper “Hazard Control Methods” need to be incorporated, which may include equipment such as signs, barricades, cones, flagging and/or other traffic control items (stop/slow paddles, flags or signs for flagging operations), pumps, hoses, trench boxes and/or shoring, ladders of multiple lengths and, of course, the needed personal protective equipment (PPE) such as hard-hats, eyewear, reflective vests, gloves, and footwear.

Most municipalities or companies should have a standard operating procedure (SOP) for employees to review, to discuss at their tailgate briefing, and to follow to ensure safety on the worksite. The best policy is to have a written set of procedures describing both a typical trench site along with any emergency situation worksites involving a trench or excavation. Before working in a trench or excavation operation, there should be proper training on working in or around the site and use of equipment and



PPE should be provided. Some subjects included in the training are how and when trench collapses occur, soil classification and conditions and roles of all employees, including those performing traffic control. Others topics include protective methods, equipment (sloping, trench boxes, etc.) used and how rescue procedures are managed if an event occurs. Training should be documented with the topics covered, a brief program description, names of instructors, those in attendance and the date and time.

Additional information can be found at www.osha.gov under OSHA Standards: 29 CFR 1926.650-652 with Appendices.

Looking back in history

The October 1933 *Nebraska Municipal Review* listed alphabetically the following new League of Nebraska Municipalities members: **Beaver Crossing**, Bladen, Denton, **Dix**, **Dorchester**, **Douglas**, Filley, Hardy, Hubbell, Lebanon, **Milford**, **North**

Bend, **Ohiowa**, **Panama**, **Salem**, **Sterling**, **Swanton**, **Valparaiso**, and **Wymore**. (*Utilities Section members in bold*)

The first asphalt pavement in Omaha was laid on Douglas Street from Fourteenth to Sixteenth Streets in 1882.

Crow Line: A line of positive communication that all can share

By Rob Pierce, Utilities Field Rep./Training Coordinator



Nebraska Municipal Review article on page 22.

Congratulations! Incorporation Anniversary Recognition: 135 years – **Goehner** (1888-village) and **Prague** (1888-village); 140 years – **O’Neill** (either Oct 7, 1882 or October 1883-village); 145 years

– **Brainard** (1878-village); and 165 years – **Beatrice** (1858-village by Nebraska Territory), **West Point** (1858-village by Nebraska Territory).

Utilities Section members and associate members are bolded.

Do you, your department or facility have something to crow about – new hires, promotions, awards, certifications, anniversaries/milestones, accomplishments, grants/funding, or projects?

Let us help you celebrate events and accomplishments!

Please send information to any of the League/Utilities staff at info@lonm.org.

“Just For Fun” Answers

A-1. The first day of fall was Sept. 23 in the northern hemisphere with winter to start Dec. 1. Reference: www.almanac.com

A-2. General Information – Nebraska has 478 departments with 17,218 firefighters providing vital services to the citizens of Nebraska. One source listed 364.

A-3. Six (Uehling, Ulysses, **Unadilla**, **Union**, **Upland**, and Utica)

A-4. Rising City. (Utilities Section members noted in bold.)

Congratulations to the City of Atkinson for recognition by the Nebraska Dept. of Economic Development for attaining requalification as a Leadership Certified Community. More information can be found in the September 2023

October: Monthly celebration acknowledgments

- Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 8-14, 2023)
- National Fire Prevention Month
- Public Power Week (first full week of October)
- National Crime Prevention www.ncpc.org
- National Protect Your Hearing www.cdc.gov
- Homeland Security www.dhs.gov
- www.cisa.gov/cybersecurity-awareness-month

Go to www.calendarr.com/united-states/observances-2023/ for a list of celebrations or events for every day of the year.



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

Classifieds

Apprentice Lineman. City of Benkelman is accepting applications for the position of Apprentice Lineman in the Electric Department. This position's responsibilities include, but aren't limited to: Construction and maintenance of overhead and underground electric distribution systems, operate a high lift bucket truck, digger derrick, and other equipment, assists other city operations, and perform other duties as required, available for 24-hour emergency calls. Requirements include high school graduation, ability to obtain a CDL license issued by the State of Nebraska within one year of hire. Excellent benefits package is included. Employment is contingent upon successful completion of a post-offer physical and drug test. Applications can be picked up at the City of Benkelman Office located at 126 7th Ave E, Benkelman, NE 69021 or by calling 308-423-2540. The City of Benkelman is an EOE.

Journeyman Lineman. Village of Morrill (Population 934) is accepting applications for the position of full-time Electric Journeyman Line Worker with a pay range of \$22-\$30 per hour DOQ. This in-

dividual will perform skilled line work in the operation, construction, maintenance and repair of overhead and underground electric distribution and transmission systems. A Class B CDL with Airbrakes is required. Applications, with resumes, will be accepted until the position is filled. A complete job description for this position and an application is available at www.villageofmorrill.com or at the Village Office located at 118 S Center Avenue, Morrill, NE. This position includes an excellent benefit package including health insurance, retirement, vacation, sick leave, and paid holidays.

Public Works Director. Gretna, is a booming City of the First Class located in Sarpy County and the Omaha Metro. With the expansion of the City's corporate limits and the opening of Gretna Crossing Park, the City is seeking a highly skilled person to oversee all aspects of the Gretna Public Works Department on a day-to-day basis. The Public Works Director is directly responsible for supervision of staff, functionality of all aspects of the department, and performance of senior-level professional work. This person is accountable for various



administrative and managerial duties including evaluating projects to maintain budgetary compliance, ensuring adherence to all City policies, procedures and codes, and coordinating the department's Capital Improvement Program. Candidates should have working knowledge of all municipal public works and utilities activities including streets, storm sewer, traffic control, water and wastewater operations, building and asset management systems, and engineering principles. Specific responsibilities for this full-time, salaried position are identified in the job description. This is an exciting time to join the City of Gretna team to aid in visioning and implementing the Great Life. The Public Works Director position's initial starting salary is \$100,568 DOQ, with excellent benefits. Application and Job Description are available from the Gretna City Clerk, 204 N. McKenna Avenue, PO Box 69, Gretna, NE 68028-0069 or at www.gretnane.org. This position remains open until filled with initial review of applications beginning Oct. 16, 2023.

For Sale. City of Friend has Sensus Series B Electrical meters for sale. \$5 each. Contact John R. Schwab, City Clerk/Treasurer, 235 Maple Street, Friend, NE 68359; phone: 402-947-2711.

A graphic with a white brick background. At the top, the text 'MARK YOUR CALENDAR!' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, overlaid on several overlapping, colorful speech bubbles in shades of blue, green, orange, and pink. Below the graphic, there are two columns of text in a black box with a white background.

Jan. 10-12, 2024 Annual Utilities Conference Embassy Suites, Lincoln	Jan. 24-25, 2024 Annual Snowball Conference Holiday Inn, Kearney
---	---

2023/2024 Training calendar

Visit our website at lonm.org/education-events/ for a complete list of workshops and conferences.

November

Nov. 7Work Zone Safety Training Workshop Library, Blair

December

Dec. 5Water Operator Training Workshop Theresa Street Facility Training Room, Lincoln

Dec. 6Water Operator Training Workshop City Hall, Auburn

January

Jan. 10-12.....Utilities/Public Works Section Annual Conference Embassy Suites, Lincoln

Jan. 23Work Zone Safety Training Workshop Holiday Inn, Kearney

Jan. 24-25.....Snowball Conference Holiday Inn, Kearney

February

Feb. 13-14Electric Meter Conference Holiday Inn, Kearney

Feb. 26-27League Midwinter Conference Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

Nebraska Safety Council Training

Information on training available through the Nebraska Safety Council can be found at www.nesafetycouncil.org/index.php/safety/training-courses.

MONGAN PAINTING CO., INC.

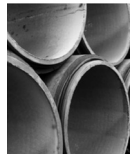
*Floor Coatings * Sandblasting * Epoxy Coatings
Water Plants * Storage Tanks * Swimming Pools
Sewage Plants * Ethanol Plant*

**PO Box 515 - Cherokee, Iowa 51012
Phone (712)225-0626 Fax (712)225-0627
Email: monganmd@ncn.net**

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

Utilities Section Webinars

(Credit hours for water 1-4, 6, and wastewater available where listed)

Email info@lonm.org to request a webinar.

Safety Committees by speakers Rob Pierce and Lash Chaffin, LNM; covers requirements, liabilities, financial benefits, unions, etc.

(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4 and 1 hour wastewater)

Members \$0 (free), non-members \$35

Safety Session Series (If you purchase all five sessions as a bundle, the cost for members is \$140 and for non-members is \$180.)

Implementing an Effective Safety Meeting by speaker Rob Pierce, LNM; covers requirements, topics selection, how and when to present, safety focus, and building a safety culture.

(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4 and 1 hour wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Safety: Lockout/Tagout Programs (Practices and Procedures) by speaker Rob Pierce, LNM.

(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4 and 1 hour wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Safety: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by speaker Rob Pierce, LNM.

(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4 and 1 hour wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Safety: General Roundtable Discussion by speaker Rob Pierce, LNM; covers safety programs, injury/near miss issues, and hot topics.

(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4 and 1 hour wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Safety: Slips, Trips & Falls by Speaker Rob Pierce, LNM.

(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4 and 1 hour wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Water/Wastewater Sessions

Asset Management by speaker Shelly Rekte, DHHS; covers a general overview on asset management and associated recordkeeping options.

(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4 and 1 hour wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Pump Application, Operations & Maintenance by speaker Brad Harris, Layne Christensen.

(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4 and 1 hour wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Well Rehabilitation and Relining by speaker Brad Harris, Layne Christensen.

(Approved for 1.5 hours grades 1-4 and 1.5 hours wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Steps and Guidelines to Drilling a New Water Well by speaker Brad Harris, Layne Christensen.

(Approved for 1.5 hours grades 1-4 and 1.5 hours wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Water Storage Tank: Operation/Maintenance by speaker Jake Dugger, Maguire Iron.

(Approved for 1.5 hours grades 1-4 and 1.5 hours wastewater)

Members \$35, non-members \$45

Utilities Section Webinars

Backflow Sessions (If you purchase all four sessions as a bundle, the cost for members is \$60 and for non-members is \$100.)

Cross Connection Control Programs: Past & Present by speaker Mike Wentink, DHHS.
(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4, 1 hour grade 6 and 1 hour wastewater)
Members \$35, non-members \$45

Cross Connection/Backflow Safety: Confined Space by speaker Rob Pierce, LNM; covers a variety of confined space issues.
(Approved for 1.5 hours grades 1-4, 1.5 hours grade 6 and 1.5 hours wastewater)
Members \$35, non-members \$45

Basic Requirements of a Cross Connection Control Program by speaker Rich Koenig, DHHS; covers requirements and regulations in a summary overview.
(Approved for 1 hour grades 1-4, 1 hour grade 6, and 1 hour wastewater)
Members \$35, non-members \$45

Public Education concerning a Cross Connection Control Program by speaker Rob Pierce, LNM; covers options for educations, communication options, monitoring, feedback, etc.
(Approved for 1.5 hours grades 1-4, 1.5 hours grade 6, and 1.5 hours wastewater)
Members \$35, non-members \$45

Landfill/Transfer Station Session

Hazardous Waste Identification and Random Load Inspections by speaker Rob Pierce, LNM.
Members \$35, non-members \$45