

# Utilities Section Newsletter

League of Nebraska Municipalities

February 2024

## Rob Pierce retires

*By Lash Chaffin,  
Utilities Section Director*

Nebraska utilities and public works departments are losing a strong advocate. League Utilities Field Representative and Training Coordinator Rob Pierce has retired. For 29 years, Rob has enthusiastically worked closely with Nebraska municipal utilities and public works departments. Rob loved Nebraska and working with people dedicated to serving the citizens of their city or village. Rob traveled throughout Nebraska conducting a wide variety of training workshops for operators of municipal water, wastewater, natural gas systems, and other

municipal operations.

Rob also loved hearing stories about the old buildings that were constructed through the visions of local leaders decades ago. He was quick to recognize that the vision and commitment of current leaders are why those buildings still serve a purpose. Many municipalities will remember Rob for the interesting articles he wrote documenting the history of various municipalities which are members of the Utilities Section.

The League is grateful for Rob's commitment to train utility personnel and other municipal officials who rely on the League to have accurate information. Rob traveled countless miles every year



*Rob Pierce*

to provide learning opportunities and recertification credit for utility personnel and others! If you see Rob at your favorite fishing hole, be sure to thank him for his 29 years of commitment to Nebraska municipalities.

## Summer employment of minors for municipalities

*By Lash Chaffin,  
Utilities Section Director*

Many Nebraska municipalities employ persons under the age of 18, particularly during the summer. These municipalities need to be careful to know the laws affecting the use of labor under age 18. Informative sessions at numerous Utilities Section Annual Conferences have highlighted those laws. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Labor walked attendees through the various laws and the ramifications of not following those laws. Minors that are age 14 and 15 are treated differently than minors that are

age 16 or 17. It is important that your municipality understand the rules and regulations involving the employment of minors. Just some of the rules that might affect municipalities are as follows (keep in mind that there might be other restrictions):

**Age 14, 15, 16 and 17 prohibited activities:**

- Manufacturing or storing explosives,
- Driving a motor vehicle and being an outside helper on a motor

- vehicle,
- Coal mining,
- Logging and sawmilling,
- Power-driven wood-working machines,
- Exposure to radioactive substances and to ionizing radiations,
- Power-driven hoisting equipment,
- Power-driven metal-forming, punching, and shearing machines,
- Mining, other than coal mining,
- Meat packing or processing (including power-driven meat slicing machines),
- Power-driven bakery machines,
- Power-driven paper-products machines,

*Continued on page 2*

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**UTILITIES SECTION**

Lash Chaffin  
Utilities Section Director  
Jackson Sash  
Utilities Field Representative

## Summer employment of minors for municipalities

*Continued from page 1*

- Manufacturing brick, tile, and related products,
- Power-driven circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shears,
- Wrecking, demolition, and ship-breaking operations,
- Roofing operations,
- Excavation operations.

**Some age 14 and 15 permitted activities:**

- Office and clerical work, including the operation of office machines,
- Clean-up work, including the use of vacuum cleaners and floor waxers, and maintenance of grounds but not including the use of power-driven mowers or cutters,
- Kitchen work and other work involved in preparing and serving food and beverages, including the operation of machines and devices used in performing such work, including but not limited to dishwashers, toasters, dumbwaiters, popcorn poppers, milk shake blenders, and coffee grinders,
- Work in connection with cars and trucks confined to dispensing

gasoline and oil; courtesy service; car cleaning, washing and polishing, but not work involving the use of pits, racks or lifting apparatus, or involving the inflation of any tire mounted on a rim equipped with a removable retaining ring.

**Some age 14 and 15 prohibited activities:**

- Operation or tending of any hoisting apparatus or of any power-driven machinery other than office machines,
- Operation of motor vehicles or service as helpers on such vehicles,
- Outside window washing that involves working from window sills and all work that requires the use of ladders, scaffolds or their substitutes,
- Setting up, adjusting, cleaning, oiling or repairing power-driven food slicers and grinders, food choppers and cutters, and bakery-type mixers,
- Work in freezers and meat coolers.

**Hours limitations:**

- Youths 18 or older may perform any job, whether hazardous

or not, for unlimited hours, in accordance with minimum wage and overtime requirements.

- Youths 16 and 17 years old may perform any nonhazardous job, for unlimited hours.
- Youths 14 and 15 years old may work outside school hours in various nonmanufacturing, nonmining nonhazardous jobs up to:

- 3 hours on a school day;
- 18 hours in a school week;
- 8 hours on a non-school day;
- 40 hours on a non-school week.

Also, work must be performed between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., except from June 1 through Labor Day, when evening hours are extended to 9 p.m.

**What this means to your municipality:**

**Driving** – All persons under 18 (including those with a proper driver’s license) are prohibited from driving on the job. There are some very limited exceptions, but it is unlikely that they would apply to municipal operations.

**Mowing** – According to the *Continued on page 3*

## Utilities Section Executive Board

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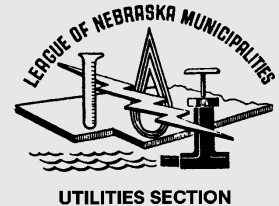
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Utilities Manager  
North Platte

## Summer employment of minors for municipalities

*Continued from page 2*

speakers at conferences from the Department of Labor:

- 14 and 15 year olds are prohibited from operating a power driven mower;
- 16 and 17 year olds can operate the mower but can not transport the mower from job site to job site if such transport involves the operation of a motor vehicle.

**Swimming Pools** – Speakers have stressed that municipalities need to pay attention to the school year to ensure that minors will not work more than the permitted amount of hours.

**Excavation** – This was not discussed at a conference, but according to U.S. Department of Labor Child Labor Bulletin 101, minors are allowed to do some manual backfilling and digging in trenches that do not exceed four feet in depth at any point.

**Vehicle Outside Helper** – There is a general prohibition against minors acting as “outside helpers” for motor vehicle operations. U.S. Department of Labor Child Labor Bulletin 101 defines “outside helper” as “any individual, other than a driver, whose work includes riding on a motor vehicle outside

the cab for the purpose of assisting in transporting or delivering goods.” Department of Labor speakers have indicated that it was permissible to have minors help load motor vehicles.

U.S. Department of Labor Child Labor information can be found at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/data/child-labor>.

Both the U.S. Department of Labor and the Nebraska Department of Labor have helpful information. The U.S. Department of Labor can be reached at 402-221-4682 and the Nebraska Department of Labor can be reached at 402-471-9000.

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## SAFETY/HEALTH CORNER

### Navigating workplace hazards: A holistic approach to burn safety

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

As we navigate the dynamic landscape of our workplaces, it's crucial to keep safety at the forefront of our minds. In this edition, we shed light on three critical aspects of workplace safety: temperature, chemical, and office-related burns.

#### Temperature Burns

The hum of machinery, the heat of industrial processes—our workplaces are a hive of activity. Amidst this, it's vital to recognize the potential risks associated with elevated temperatures. Whether it's a hot surface, a piece of machinery, or unexpected workplace fires, understanding and mitigating these risks are paramount.

Proper personal protective equipment (PPE) usage is our first line of defense. Equipping ourselves with heat-resistant gloves, safety goggles, and appropriate clothing can significantly reduce the risk of temperature-related injuries. Additionally, staying vigilant around hot surfaces and machinery, coupled with adherence

to fire safety protocols, adds an extra layer of protection.

#### Chemical Burns

Chemicals are an integral part of our daily operations, but they come with their own set of hazards. Understanding the properties of the substances we work with and following stringent safety measures is non-negotiable.

Ensuring the proper handling of chemicals involves more than just the correct PPE. Familiarizing ourselves with material safety data sheets (MSDS), using appropriate containers, and establishing clear labeling practices are essential steps. Furthermore, having emergency eyewash and shower stations readily available and working in well-ventilated areas help minimize the risks associated with chemical exposure.

#### Burns in the Office

While office spaces may not have the same machinery or chemicals as industrial settings, burn risks still exist. From hot beverages to electrical equipment, it's essential to be mindful of potential hazards.

Ensure that hot beverages

are placed in secure containers and allow them to cool before consumption. Be cautious when handling electrical equipment and report any malfunctioning devices promptly. Familiarize yourself with the location of fire extinguishers and emergency exits, even in an office setting, to be prepared for unforeseen events.

#### Preventive Measures

Prevention is at the core of workplace safety. Regular training sessions on burn safety, routine inspections of equipment and storage areas, and staying informed about safety protocols are key components of our preventive approach.

Education is empowerment. By ensuring that each team member is well-versed in first aid procedures for burns, we create a culture of safety where everyone plays an active role in their well-being and that of their colleagues.

#### Emergency Response

In the unfortunate event of a burn, immediate action is crucial. Quick and appropriate first aid,

*Continued on page 6*

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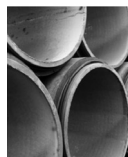
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## Classifieds

**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 individual 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](http://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.

**Electric Distribution Superintendent.** The City of Wayne is accepting applications for the position of Electric Distribution Superintendent. The Electric Distribution Superintendent supervises electrical distribution operations and maintenance work of overhead and underground electrical distribution systems and equipment for the City of Wayne. This position is responsible for accomplishing goals

and objectives of the City by using independent discretion in utilization of personnel, equipment, and supplies within existing financial resources. This position directs and supervises the work of the electric line crew and provides oversight and field supervision of daily work and project management. *Qualifications:* Experience and extensive knowledge of the operations of an electrical distribution and transmission system. Must be able to interpret electrical distribution drawings, and electric building and safety codes. Must be able to work with customers, answer questions, and resolve problems. Five to 10 years of experience in a supervisory, management, or in a line Foreman position is preferred. An equivalent combination of experience and education may be considered. Excellent fringe benefits including Group Health, Accident Insurance, Life Insurance, retirement plan along with vacation and sick leave. Starting pay (\$74,422.40-\$96,657.60) will be based on prior experience and certifications. Application and job description are available at the City of Wayne, 306 Pearl Street, Wayne, NE 68787. Applications, along with cover letter and resume, will be received until position is filled and should be returned to Betty Mc-

Guire, City Clerk, with applicable resume. First review of applications began Jan. 22, 2024. City of Wayne is an EOE. For more information, call 402-375-1733 and ask for Wes Blecke, City Administrator.

**Utility Superintendent.** The City of Bennet is now accepting applications for the position of Utility Superintendent. This position is responsible for directing, supervising, and/or performing all construction and maintenance of streets, sewers, water operations, parks, equipment, garbage site, and all other City facilities. Necessary skills include the ability to supervise others, maintain records, operate excavation equipment, and diagnosis equipment problems. Applicants must possess a strong work ethic and be proficient in multi-tasking, problem solving, crisis management, and customer relations. **REQUIRED:** Basic math skills, water, and wastewater certification, OR demonstrate the willingness and ability to complete the necessary certifications. This is a full-time position with benefits. Wages will be based on documented experience and proven skills. The application form and complete job description are available at the Bennet City Office, 685 Monroe Street. (402)782-3300 or email [cityoffice@cityofbennet.com](mailto:cityoffice@cityofbennet.com). EOE.



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## Navigating workplace hazards

*Continued from page 4*  
such as cooling the affected area or using emergency eyewash for chemical exposure, can make a significant difference. Encourage your colleagues to seek medical attention for any burn beyond superficial injuries and ensure that your emergency response plan is well-known and ready for implementation.

### Conclusion

As we continue to strive for excellence in our work, let's also prioritize the well-being of our team. Safety is not just a set of guidelines; it's a shared responsibility and a reflection of

our commitment to each other's welfare. By staying informed, adhering to safety protocols, and fostering a culture of vigilance, we contribute to a workplace that is not only productive but, most importantly, safe.

Stay safe, stay vigilant, and let's continue working together towards a secure and thriving workplace.

## Credit hours reminder

For those who attended the 2024 Snowball Conference and/or the 2024 Annual Utilities Conference, your water and wastewater hours are posted on the League of Nebraska Municipalities website at [lonm.org/utilities/water-and-wastewater-credit-hours.html](http://lonm.org/utilities/water-and-wastewater-credit-hours.html).

## 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](http://www.nesafetycouncil.org/index.php/safety/training-courses).

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## 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.



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# 2024 Training calendar

Visit our website at [lonm.org/education-events/](http://lonm.org/education-events/)  
for a complete list of workshops and conferences.

**April**

April 2 .....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Community Center, Wymore

**June**

June 12-14.....Municipal Accounting & Finance Conference ..... Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln

**August**

Aug. 13.....Backflow Workshop ..... Beatrice

Aug. 14.....Backflow Workshop ..... Wayne

Aug. 15.....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Seward

Aug. 20.....Backflow Workshop ..... Ogallala

Aug. 21.....Backflow Workshop ..... Grand Island

Aug. 22.....Water Operator Training Workshop ..... Grand Island

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