

Comparing notes at this year's APPA conference

The American Public Power Association (APPA) conference was in Denver this year. There was good attendance and I was able to catch up with many friends I've made over the years at APPA. It's always good to compare notes with people living in other areas and find out how they are dealing with the issues of public power and the regulatory climate.

There are general sessions each day and I'll admit I don't attend these often, but I did make a point of going to the awards session to see Dave Osburn accept the 2014 Public Power Wind Award for OMPA. The Department of Energy, together with APPA, recognizes publicly owned utilities that demonstrate outstanding leadership in advancing wind power in the United States.

I attended a number of breakout sessions and heard some interesting information about technology related to smart grids, including prepaid meters and how popular they are in college towns. It's something Edmond may look at in the future. Some of the values of a smart grid are robustness and cost savings, due to less lost or wasted power, as well as stuff like Conservation Voltage Reduction (CVR).

Another breakout session was titled, "Industry Issues and Challenges Facing Public Power Governing Boards". The speaker was Tim Blodgett from Hometown Connections. I met Tim 15-plus years ago and always take some time at conferences to visit with him. He works with boards all over the U.S., so I was interested in what he had to offer.

Subjects covered here are familiar,

From The Board Chair



Charles Lamb

including infrastructure, new technologies, changes in power supply (coal/natural gas), changing customer expectations, improving economy making more retirements possible, workforce turnover, increasing financial pressure, and the ever-challenging increasing regulation. Most of the subjects are ones OMPA deals with either in monthly board meetings or at the annual retreat, but it was valuable to hear others asking questions and hearing the answers.

With regard to the increasing retirement and work force turnover, I attended another session titled: "Investing In Intellectual Capital: How to Capture, Mentor, and Retain Critical Knowledge and Skill Sets". One of the speakers for this session was Carl Mycoff, whom I have known since he helped OMPA with our GM search a few years ago. This one was really thought-provoking, because I see the challenge at the city level, due to Generation X and their expectations. I see this as a challenge area for OMPA, as we run an organization with lean personnel, so that redundancy and back up is challenging, but critical.

We had a small group of board members attend, including all of our mayors – Leslie Swinerton, Geary; Homer Nicholson, Ponca City; and myself. Robert Johnston, Frederick City Manager, also made the conference. We had some interesting follow-up discussions about the information we heard.

On another note, as part of our proactive efforts with the state, there are novel plans being developed by the Legislative Committee for our annual meeting, so electors should watch for news this year.

City Updates

The logo for "City Updates" features the word "City" in a blue serif font and "Updates" in a larger, blue, stylized font. To the right is a graphic of a power transmission tower with a lightning bolt striking it, set against a circular background with a grid pattern.

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some tough times and we are better off as a city organization because she was here."

Edmond

Public Works Director Awarded Executive Credential

(From the City of Edmond's website) – Edmond Public Works Director, Herb Blomquist, was recently awarded the American Public Works Association (APWA) Public Works Executive (PWE) Credential. The PWE credential is the highest level of APWA's Donald C. Stone Center for Leadership Excellence.

Blomquist is the third public works professional to receive the PWE credential among 47 public works professionals from across North America, who have participated in the APWA Public Works Executive program.

As Edmond's Public Works Director, Blomquist leads, directs and manages a 130-person Public Works Department, and participates on the city's management team in the development of a strategic plan and other policy processes. He is also responsible for planning, training, operations, and administration of the department, including managing a budget in excess of \$10 million and an equipment fleet of more than 450 vehicles for the city of

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