



# Building strong communities through a well-trained workforce

A publication of the Oklahoma Municipal Alliance

August 2020

## Schedule Set for OMA Webinar Series

The first in a series of webinars designed to cover a wide range of topics of importance to municipal utilities will be September 22, 2020. OMPA's Dave Osburn and GRDA's Dan Sullivan will discuss Distributed Generation Concerns and Power Provider Plans for Utility Solar.

During the following several weeks, OMA will present a series of webinars – all beginning at 9 a.m. - covering a wide range of topics all designed to improve municipal operations – particularly municipal utility operations.

All the sessions fit into one of four broad categories:

1. Municipal financial stability and growth
2. Water and Wastewater issues
3. Electric growth and sustainability
4. Emergency planning for utilities

As an added benefit to members, in large part due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related uncertainty it brings, all sessions are free of charge. Registration details are being finalized and will be available soon.

Anyone who wants to attend, must register for

each session of interest. To register a valid email must be provided. After the registration is complete, a confirmation email will be sent for every session registered for.

### The Webinar Series Schedule:

September 22 (Session Category Area: Electric growth and sustainability)

#### **Solar in Oklahoma: DG Concerns and Power Provider Plans for Utility Solar**

Dave Osburn, OMPA, and Dan Sullivan, GRDA

September 29 (Session Category Area: Electric growth and sustainability)

#### **SPP 101: The Changing Face of Power Generation**

Lanny Nichol, Southwest Power Pool

September 30 (Session Category Area: Municipal financial stability and growth)

#### **Smart City Technology for Small and Rural Municipalities**

(see OMA WEBINAR SCHEDULE, page 9)

## 2020 Lineworkers Rodeo & Safety Training Cancelled

Due to the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Lineworkers Rodeo & Safety Training.

In recent conversations with several member utilities, we received reports regarding travel restrictions. We expect these restrictions to continue

as confirmed COVID cases increase in the region. In turn, dramatically impacting our event.

As we say in our weekly safety messages, “we are all in this together — your safety is our #1 priority,” so this decision makes sense to us. As Tom Dougherty said, “there is always next year.”

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## Level 1 Climbing School Scheduled for August 18 – 19

As part of Electrical Operations Training, Level 1 Climbing School will be held August 18-19, 2020 in Cushing, OK. Registration is now open at [www.okmainc.com](http://www.okmainc.com).

Two-day school focusing on essential skills distribution linemen need to understand and master to be successful.

The course combines classroom instruction, field practice, and significant time working with experienced, journeyman lineman. Participants must bring hard hat, climbing hooks, belt, leather gloves, safety glasses, and hand tools. Training will begin at 8:30 a.m. both days and is expected to be completed by no later than 4 p.m. each day.

Tom Dougherty, OMA Director of Training and Safety, will lead the school. He will be joined by veteran lineworkers from GRDA and Cushing Utility Services.

The registration fee for the school is \$199 per person and includes lunches on-site. The deadline to register is August 14, 2020.

The school is hosted by Cushing Utility Services and is sponsored by GRDA and OMPA.

For more school information, contact Dougherty at [tomd@okmainc.com](mailto:tomd@okmainc.com). Registration questions can be directed to Deborah Gonzales at [deborah@okmainc.com](mailto:deborah@okmainc.com).



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## APGA Hosting Virtual Meetings

The American Public Gas Association is hosting virtual member meetings now through October 1st. The meetings are designed as small group conversations to update members on APGA activities and to learn, firsthand, the challenges members are facing. Each meeting will be 90 minutes in length.

The events are free and open to all municipal natural gas professionals, municipal utility board or council members, and vendors and/or partners of natural gas utilities interested in current industry changes and challenges. Attendance at each meeting

will be limited so that APGA staff can get to know each and every attendee.

Members and interested parties are encouraged to attend the stop closest to their region but are welcome to attend any stop that best fits with their schedule or if their first choice is full. Registration and more information can be found at [www.apga.org/membertour](http://www.apga.org/membertour).

The Oklahoma & Arkansas stop is scheduled for October 1, beginning at 9:00AM CT.

## TPWA and Olustee Recognized for Operational Excellence

OMA recently presented awards to Tahlequah Public Works Authority (TPWA) and Town of Olustee.

### TPWA

TPWA earned First Place in the association's annual Electric Operations and Reliability Competition. The utility was recognized in the category for cities over 10,000 population and cited for achieving the highest reported level of service reliability for cities within Oklahoma. The utility was recognized for having an Average System Availability Index of 99.9964 percent in 2019.

The Department was also recognized for having a perfect safety record for 2019. TPWA had no reportable incidents and experienced no lost or reduced duty time over 38,701 work hours.

### Town of Olustee

The Town of Olustee received First Place in the association's annual Electric Operations and Reliability Competition in the "town" category. The utility's System Availability Index of was 99.9977 percent in 2019.

The town was also recognized for its perfect safety record for 2019 with no reportable incidents or lost work time.



The crew at TPWA



OMA General Manager, Tom Rider, with Olustee's Steven Roth

## APPA Report Compiles Safety Data Submitted by Public Power Utilities

From the American Public Power Association

By Paul Ciampoli

The American Public Power Association recently released a report that compiles safety data that was submitted by utilities for APPA's annual "Safety Awards of Excellence" contest.

The report, "Evaluation of Data Submitted to American Public Power Association's 2019 Safety Awards of Excellence," provides both tabular and graphical evaluations of the data submitted to APPA's annual Safety Awards of Excellence for 2019.

The purpose of compiling this data is to offer a benchmark for individual municipal utilities. The intent of the report is to help safety professionals analyze their utility's yearly performance in relation to others in the public power community. Through the data presented in the report, APPA aspires to help safety professionals create a context for review of safety program efficacy at their individual utilities.

(see APPA REPORT, page 8)

## Residential Power Sales Soared, While Commercial Sales Slumped in April: EIA

From the American Public Power Association

By Paul Ciampoli

April residential electricity sales in the United States increased 8% compared with April 2019, while the commercial and industrial sectors saw decreases of 11% and 9%, respectively, the Energy Information Administration reported on June 30.

U.S. residential electricity sales have never been this high in April. Commercial electricity sales in April were the lowest April value since April 2003, and industrial sales were the lowest since April 1987.

Across all sectors, April U.S. electricity sales declined 4% compared with last April, largely as a result of measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, EIA said in its Today in Energy report.

Starting with California on March 19, states began to issue stay-at-home orders in response to the pandemic. By mid-April, most states were under stay-at-home orders. As the orders took effect, businesses, schools, and industrial facilities closed, and office workers transitioned to working from home, EIA noted.

Electricity use in the U.S. is typically lowest in the spring and fall months, when demand for air conditioning and heating are often at their lowest levels, EIA said. "In each of the past 10 years, either April or October was the month with the lowest electricity demand, which reflects both sales from the grid and the electricity produced by net-metered systems, such as rooftop solar panels. Electricity demand generally rises as temperatures either become much colder or much warmer than about 55 degrees to 65 degrees Fahrenheit."

(see RESIDENTIAL POWER SALES, page 7)

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## #80forEighty in 2020

It is Oklahoma's first hydroelectric facility, a member of the National Register of Historic Places, the longest continuous multiple arch dam in the world and, most of all, it is still an important asset in the Grand River Dam Authority's generation portfolio.

Of course, it is Pensacola Dam. Completed in 1940, the dam marks 80 years of service to Oklahoma in 2020 and GRDA is taking the opportunity to recognize that milestone in several ways.

One notable way GRDA is marking the anniversary is through its #80forEighty social media campaign. For the 80 days leading up to October 4, GRDA is posting photos of the dam, hydroelectric facts, history and other subjects related to its construction, service and impact on the region, each day on its Facebook and Instagram channels. Be sure to follow those sites to join in on the ongoing celebration.

Throughout the year, GRDA has also been highlighting the dam's 80 years of renewable power generation in other ways as well.

"Due to COVID-19 we were not able to offer tours of the dam as we have done in past summers," said GRDA Vice President of Corporate Communications Justin Alberty. "However, through our social media campaign, some special advertising and other information we are sharing with the media, we will continue to celebrate this 80-year milestone."

Pensacola Dam was built by Depression-era labor between 1938-40. It stretches for a mile across the Grand River Valley between the communities of Langley and Disney; two towns that did not exist prior to the dam's construction. The dam has been providing electricity to Oklahoma business, industry and public power communities since the mid-1940s.

"The dam is a testament to Oklahoma ingenuity and to Oklahoma public power," said Alberty. "Today, 80 years after its completion, it continues to do what it was designed to do from the very beginning."



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- Utility Analysis and Optimization

Save the Date  
October 13 – 15, 2020  
**Apprentice Basics**  
Fairview, Oklahoma

Registration information coming soon.

## OMPA Linecrew Program Adds Participants

Fourteen OMPA member cities and towns are now part of an agreement with the Authority's linecrew program. Okeene and Lindsay were the latest members to join, while Comanche renewed its agreement at the Board of Directors meeting in July.

The linecrew, officially known as the Field Services Department, was formed in 2015 as a way to assist utilities who were in need of qualified linemen to work on their systems. At the start, five members in the northwest part of the state pooled funds together to help create the first crew, which was housed in member city Fairview.

As interest in the linecrew has grown, so have future plans. In 2019, the Board instructed OMPA staff to look into finding a way to locate another crew in the southern part of the state, and that process is currently ongoing. Southern cities Frederick and Marlow, in addition to Comanche, are currently being served by the crew.

Members can also use the crew on a job-by-job basis, as well as in emergencies. Utilities who are part of the annual funding pool are given preference in an emergency, as well as a cut rate on services at other times.



*Who is this masked man? An OMPA lineman on his way to help . . .*

# TRANSFORMERS

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## Lineworkers in the City of Purcell Go Above and Beyond as Firefighters

*From the American Public Power Association*  
By Paul Ciampoli

Editor's Note: The OMA joins in recognizing the work of our friends in Purcell, and we know all of our lineworkers in our member cities and towns go above and beyond on regular basis.

One of the many things that makes public power utilities unique are the strong bonds that they have forged with their communities.

People who work at public power utilities are always ready to pitch in and help in any way they can when their community needs them. Job descriptions don't matter. It's all about going above and beyond to help out.

An example of this can be found in the City of Purcell, Okla., where three of the Purcell Public Works Authority's linemen also serve as volunteers for the Purcell Fire Department.

On July 22, Brian Morris, a Purcell Journeyman Lineman, changed into his firefighting gear to help put out a fire.

Trey Phillips, Electric Supervisor for the City of Purcell, noted that a tractor bailer burned up a bearing and caused hay in a field to catch fire.

When asked to detail what kinds of fires Purcell typically sees during this time of year, Phillips said that most of the time its grassfires and wildland fires and maybe fires that are controlled but get out of hand.

"We also respond to wrecks if they need us for traffic control or whatever the captain and chief decide. We are trained to respond in the same way as we do our lineman duties," Phillips noted.

The Purcell Fire Department "also helps our department out by responding to electric lines down and also being ground hands during storms," he said.

Purcell Fire Department Chief Greg Cypert "is always out when we are during the storm season assisting us as well as the Emergency Manager Kevin Rhodes."

In Purcell, Phillips said that "it takes all departments working together to keep our city great."



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## Residential Power Sales

*(continued from page 4)*

The residential sector is relatively sensitive to temperature changes, EIA noted. Based on the previous five Aprils, EIA estimates that the U.S. residential sector would have used about 3.1 million megawatt-hours (MWh) per day in April 2020. Actual residential electricity demand in April 2020 was 3.3 million MWh/day, or about 6% higher than the typical April value.

The U.S. commercial and industrial sectors are relatively less temperature sensitive, but they still tend

to use more electricity in the summer and less in the spring and fall.

Based on the average of the previous five Aprils, daily commercial sector electricity demand is usually about 3.4 million MWh/day in April, and industrial electricity demand is about 2.6 million MWh/day.

In April 2020, commercial electricity demand was about 10% lower than the typical April value, and industrial electricity demand was 9% lower, EIA reported.

## EPA Prioritizes Water Recycling Projects in Water Infrastructure Funding

*From WaterReuse*

The U.S. EPA re-committed to prioritizing water reuse and recycling projects in the fourth round of Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding. The [notice of funding availability](#) announces up to \$6 billion to support a total investment of \$12 billion in water infrastructure projects that will create more than 35,000 jobs and identifies water recycling as a priority area for funding.

WaterReuse commends the EPA for its continued commitment to water reuse in the WIFIA program. WIFIA has funded major water recycling projects across the country, including many projects led by WaterReuse members.

To date, EPA has issued 24 WIFIA loans totaling \$5.3 billion in credit assistance to help finance \$11.7 billion for water infrastructure projects while creating 25,000 jobs—including eight WIFIA loans closed and one refinanced from March 2020 through June 2020. These recent loan closings will save ratepayers over \$1 billion compared to typical bond financing while supporting the financial health of vital water systems.

This announcement marks the fourth round of WIFIA funding. This year's notice of funding availability

prioritizes construction-ready projects in three areas: updating aging infrastructure; reducing exposure to lead and addressing emerging contaminants; and water reuse and recycling. The 2020 notice of funding availability builds upon the existing, active pipeline of WIFIA projects, which includes 49 projects in 19 states and D.C. For the first time, the agency will evaluate submitted projects using [additional criteria](#) that were developed to help clarify project and federal budgetary considerations. EPA will accept letters of interest from prospective WIFIA borrowers for 90 days after publication in the Federal Register.

EPA is also, for the first time, providing funds under [SWIFIA](#). This new program, which was authorized by Congress as part of the America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018, offers low-interest loans to state water infrastructure programs (e.g., the State Revolving Funds) that then help finance needed water infrastructure projects in local communities. This round of funding will provide SWIFIA borrowers up to \$1 billion to support \$2 billion in water infrastructure projects. EPA will accept letters of interest from state water infrastructure programs for 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

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## APPA Report

*(continued from page 4)*

Each year, the safety awards are open to any APPA member utility, joint action agency, federal agency, and state association/agency that wishes to participate.

Since participation is voluntary, the rules are set up to encourage consistent involvement. Thus, to be eligible to win an award, participants must submit data for three consecutive years. In the third year, the participant will be considered eligible for an award. Consistent submission helps to minimize selection bias and skewing of yearly data, APPA noted.

Entries are sorted into groups according to the total number of hours worked by all electric utility employees at a particular utility in the designated year. The group categories are the same from year to year. A group-specific analysis is included in the report.

Along with group-by-group and regional analyses of data, the report shows data averaged for all groups combined over the history of the awards.

APPA provides the data presented in the report for use by its members in aggregate form only. The individual names of the utilities that have entered the awards are confidential. Each year, The Association releases only the names of those utilities that have received awards recognition, in addition to their calculated incidence rate and worker hours for the given year.

Since greater numbers of entrants enhance the value of the safety awards for all utilities involved, APPA encourages all members to continue submitting data on a yearly basis, regardless of the number of accidents/injuries that have occurred over the calendar year.

One hundred twenty-five utilities earned APPA's Safety Award of Excellence for safe operating practices in 2019, APPA [reported in April](#). More than 335 utilities entered the annual safety awards, which was the highest number of entrants in the history of the program.

The report is available [here](#).

## OMA Webinar Schedule

*(continued from page 1)*

Sean West, OMPA

**October 1** (Session Category Area: Emergency planning for utilities)

**Emergency Response Planning: Lessons Learned from COVID-19**

Jeremy Rice and Wick Warden PE, Freese & Nichols

**October 7** (Session Category Area: Municipal financial stability and growth)

**Successfully Implementing Smart Meters and Other Technologies**

Jason McPherson, City of Marlow

**October 8** (Session Category Area: Emergency planning for utilities)

**American Infrastructure Act: Risk and Resilience Assessments and Emergency Response Plan Prep and Updates**

Kevin Owens and Karin Tueffler, Guernsey

**October 13** (Session Category Area: Electric growth and sustainability)

**Transformative Growth: The Economics of Electrification**

Gary Smith, Sagewell Inc

**October 14** (Session Category Area: Municipal financial stability and growth)

**Making Deposits for the Future: The Value of a Strong Customer Communications Program**

Casey Moore, City of Edmond

**October 20** (Session Category Area: Electric growth and sustainability)

**Rate Design Considerations for Your Community's Future**

Mark Beauchamp, Utility Financial Solutions

**October 21** (Session Category Area: Municipal financial stability and growth)

**Financial Stability 101: Assessing Your Financial Health**

Dawn Lund, Utility Financial Solutions

**October 28** (Session Category Area: Water and Wastewater issues)

**What's the SHAPE of your water and wastewater systems and what funding opportunities does OWRB provide to help with a variety of project types.**

Joe Freeman, Oklahoma Water Resources Board

**November 3** (Session Category Area: Water and Wastewater issues)

**Water Treatment: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Lessons Learned Along the Way**

Brian Marshall PE and Season Crabtree PE, Guernsey

**November 10** (Session Category Area: Water and Wastewater issues)

**Pump Station Operations: Common Issues and Low/No Cost Operation Adjustments**

Wick Warden PE and Clay Hearndon PE, Freese & Nichols

Look for registration information coming soon. Questions about the webinar series may be directed to Rider at [tom@okmainc.com](mailto:tom@okmainc.com).

## OMA Members Invited to OGA VIRTUAL Annual Conference Free of Charge

All OMA members are invited to the Oklahoma Gas Association VIRTUAL Annual Conference September 1 and 2 free of charge.

The conference will cover a wide range of topics including those of interest to municipal gas utilities. In addition to operational sessions, there are several "soft skills" sessions including:

- Thriving Amidst Chaos: A discussion for Modern Remote Workers

- Best Practices on Managing Ambiguity In Pandemics/Unusual Operating sessions
- Leading People Not Like you

Anyone who wants to attend, must register for each session of interest or all individually. To register a valid email must be provided. [Click here](#) for registration information or visit [www.okgas.org](http://www.okgas.org).

Questions may be directed to Jeff Kaufmann at [jeffk@okmainc.com](mailto:jeffk@okmainc.com).



# COVID-19 COMPARISON

## CORONAVIRUS vs. COLD vs. FLU vs. ALLERGIES

SYMPTOMS	COVID-19*	COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES
Fever	Common (100F or higher)	Rare	High (100-102F, can last 3-4 days)	No
Headache	Sometimes	Rare	Intense	Sometimes
General aches, pains	Sometimes	Slight	Common (often severe)	No
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Slight	Common (often severe)	Sometimes
Extreme exhaustion	Sometimes (progresses slowly)	Never	Common (starts early)	No
Stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Rare	Common	Common	No
Cough	Common	Mild to moderate	Common (can become severe)	Sometimes
Shortness of breath	In more serious infections	Rare	Rare	Common
Runny nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Diarrhea	Sometimes	No	Sometimes**	No

\* Information is still evolving \*\* Sometimes for children



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### What We Can Do Today to Limit the Spread of the COVID-19 Virus:

- Clean and disinfect regularly
- Be diligent of surroundings and to increase hand washing and personal hygiene techniques
- Adopt a "no hand-shake" policy
- Practice "social distancing" by keeping a 6-foot space between individuals when interacting
- Use telephone calls, video conferencing and/or email will replace "face-to-face" meetings
- Restrict workplaces to essential staff and service providers only
- Self-isolate anyone who has been in proximity to anyone suspected or confirmed having the virus for 14 days.
- [American Public Power Association COVID-19 Update Page](#)
- [Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management Gov. Stitt's Website](#)
- [American Gas Association COVID-19 Update Page](#)
- [American Water Works Association COVID-19 Resources Page](#)
- [Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration Home Page](#)
- [US Department of Labor - OSHA COVID-19 Update Page](#)
- [FEMA Coronavirus Rumor Control](#)
- [National Governors Association COVID-19 Update Page](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration COVID-19 Update Page](#)

#### COVID-19 Resources:

- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [Oklahoma State Department of Health](#)



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