

DRIVING CHANGE:

Company looking into alternative-fuel vehicles

TRANSMISSION:

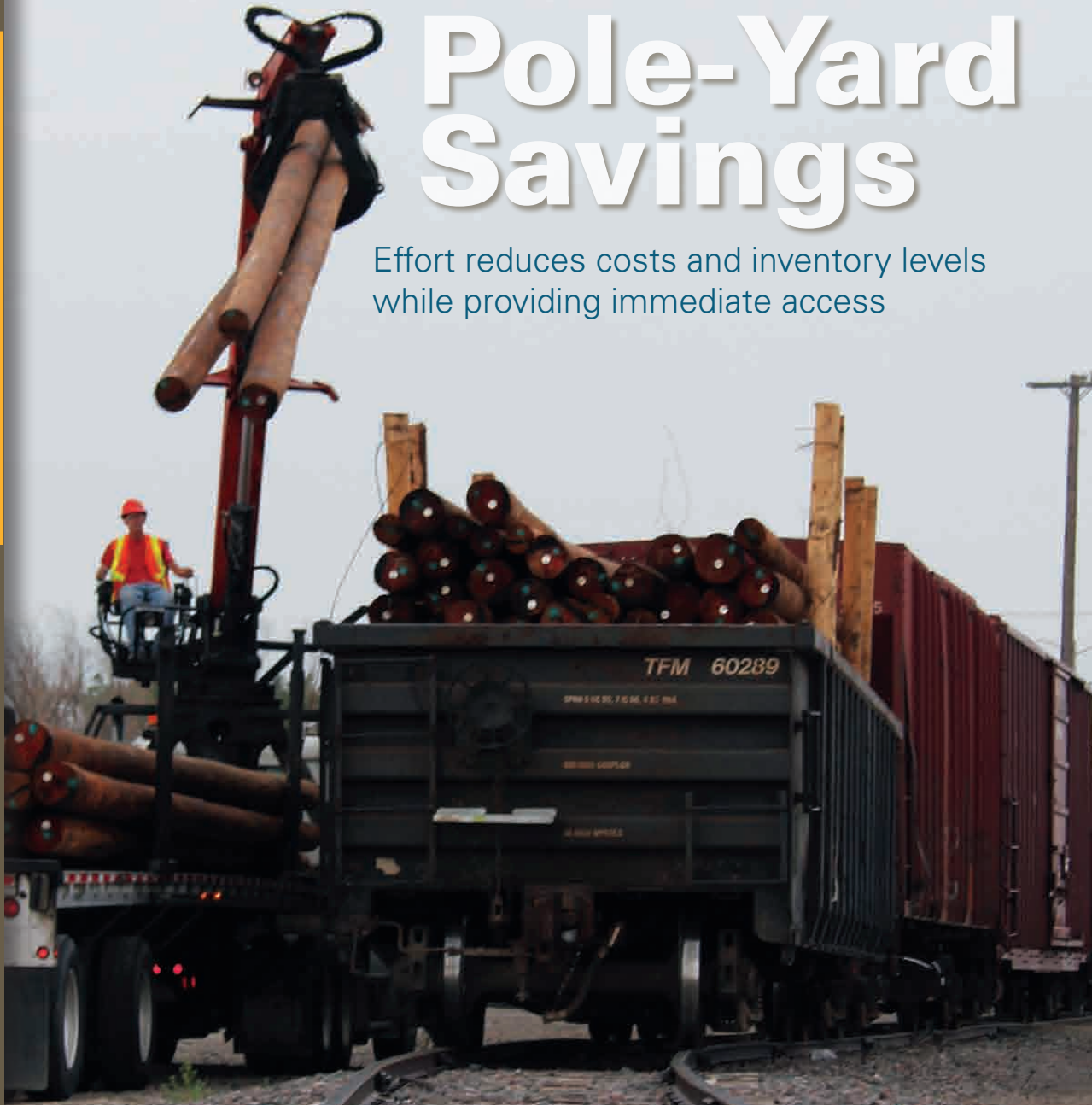
Training center helps prepare for all types of scenarios

RESTORATION:

Wisconsin land effort good for animals and people

Pole-Yard Savings

Effort reduces costs and inventory levels while providing immediate access





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ON THE COVER
Operations at a new pole-distribution yard in Amarillo are providing the company with savings through inventory reductions in its Texas and New Mexico operations. In this photo by Troy Foons, with Public Policy and External Affairs, new poles are off-loaded from a train at the facility. For more information, please see story on page 8.

Customer 'exceptionally pleased' with straightforward service

Dear Xcel Energy:

Thank you! I just want to say that I am exceptionally pleased with Xcel Energy's customer service – so helpful, prompt and straightforward.

Seriously, so much better than my bank, cable, insurance or basically any other company that I have to deal with to pay bills. Thanks again!

–Joy, New Mexico

Customer appreciates account history

Dear Xcel Energy:

Thank you for sending my account history. Your format is wonderful.

And thank you for such quick and excellent service!

–Brenda Austin, American Utility Tax and Audit Corp.

(Editor's Note: This compliment was directed to Barbara Lee with the Customer Contact Center at Skypark in Eau Claire, Wis.)

Thanks for 'thoughtful and understanding' service

Please pass this feedback along. Yours is the best feedback that I have ever received from any utility company – and most customer service in general. By far. Very thoughtful and understanding!

–Jeff Rozic

(Editor's Note: This compliment was directed to Krista Spaeth with the Customer Contact Center at Skypark in Eau Claire, Wis.)

Audible cheer arose when power returned

Dear Xcel Energy:

At 3 a.m., we were sweltering in the heat and humidity, unable to sleep during a recent power outage. Then came the welcome sound of chainsaws down the road.

A few minutes later, the power was on and an audible cheer arose from our upstairs. Thank you for going out in the storm for us to restore out power!

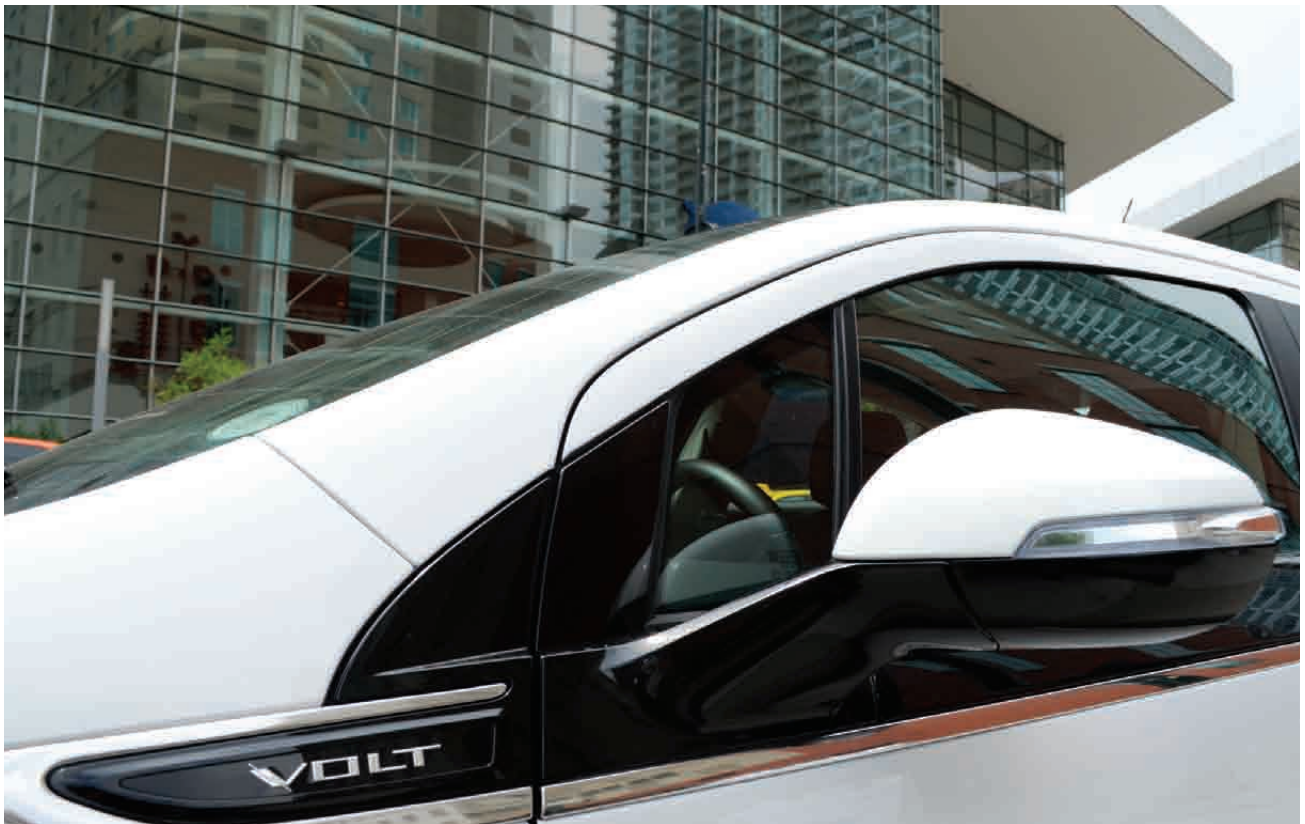
–The Reshanau Lake folk, Anoka County, Minnesota



3D SAFETY AD

Xcel Energy is displaying a three-dimensional safety billboard in downtown Denver. This newest 3D board features the always important "Call 811 Before you Dig" message, complete with a giant 30-foot shovel. The board's message, "Call. Wait. Dig. Live," is direct and hard-hitting to help educate and remind customers that buried natural gas and electric lines can be dangerous, and possibly deadly, if hit. The safety advertising campaign is designed to position Xcel Energy as a trusted resource and a company dedicated to providing safety information to its customers.

Editor's Note: "Photo Op" is a standing feature in Xtra. Each issue, a photo submitted by a reader or produced by a member of Public Policy and External Affairs will be published. Please submit high-resolution digital photos to the editor at the e-mail address listed on the back page of this publication. By submitting images for "Photo Op," employees give Xtra permission to run the photos.



Driving Change

Company's role in 'repowering transportation' supports alternative-fuel vehicles

As more alternative-fuel vehicles are introduced in its service territory, Xcel Energy is preparing on many fronts. The company's efforts focus on three primary objectives – enabling the market, getting the rules right and managing system impacts.

"When we use the term 'enabling the market,' we are talking about supporting our customers who drive electric or natural gas powered vehicles," said Kevin Schwain, manager of Emerging Customer Programs. "But we also support the market when we purchase these vehicles for our own fleet."

The company is selectively adding different makes, models and types of electric vehicles (EVs) to its fleet – as well as compressed natural gas and bio-diesel vehicles – to evaluate performance and benefits, he said.

Today, Xcel Energy has about 20 hybrid-electric passenger vehicles in fleet, which include Ford Escapes, Ford Fusions and Chevy Tahoes, said Mark Hennesy, director of Fleet.

The company also has two Chevy Volts and eight natural gas-powered Honda Civics, as well as three hybrid bucket trucks, he added. One of the bucket trucks is an experimental design incorporating plug-in capability for battery charging.

Additionally, the Xcel Energy Chairman's Fund sponsored a partnership project with Ford and Azure Dynamics involving

Ford's Transit Connect all-electric van. The company helped purchase 11 preproduction vans for project partners, along with two for Xcel Energy.

In Texas, Xcel Energy has incorporated a Chevy Volt into the company fleet as a local pool vehicle. The Volt is Chevrolet's first mass-produced, plug-in EV with a range-extending gasoline engine.

"Members of the Community Service team have driven it to Amarillo city commission meetings and Chamber of Commerce events, and to escort visitors to plant tours," said David Hudson, director of Customer and Community Relations. "The one thing people tend to notice is that the electric motor is virtually silent. We get stares in the parking garage."

"The company is selectively adding different makes, models and kinds of vehicles to the fleet to evaluate both performance and benefits," Hennesy said. "The Volt, in particular, is exciting because about 80 percent of Americans drive less than 40 miles per day, which can be achieved on its all-electric power."

In terms of "getting the rules right," Schwain said this objective is about engaging key stakeholders early in the process to develop policies and regulations in support of a fair regulatory compact – one that works for all customers, communities and businesses, as well as company shareholders.

"We have to balance our desire to support early adopting customers with our need to keep rates low for all customers," Schwain said. "We also want to preserve opportunities to invest and serve our customers as the market develops."

A good example of this activity is the recent passage of Colorado House Bill 012-1258, which Xcel Energy helped craft and pass earlier this year to clarify rules around sale of electricity to power vehicles. These new rules are similar to beneficial rules already established in Minnesota.

As part of its overall effort, Xcel Energy also has created partnerships that will benefit customers as the company gains experience with EV charging and participates in public-policy discussions, he added. For instance, Xcel Energy is participating in many of the working groups organized through the Edison Electric Institute (EEI) to support development of EVs.


In addition, as an active member of Drive Electric Minnesota, the company is collaborating with local and state government, private business and nonprofit entities to encourage EV and plug-in charging infrastructure, he said. And in Colorado, Xcel Energy has organized a stakeholder group to support the success of the state's EV market and also supports Project FEVER (Fostering Electric Vehicle Expansion in the Rockies.)

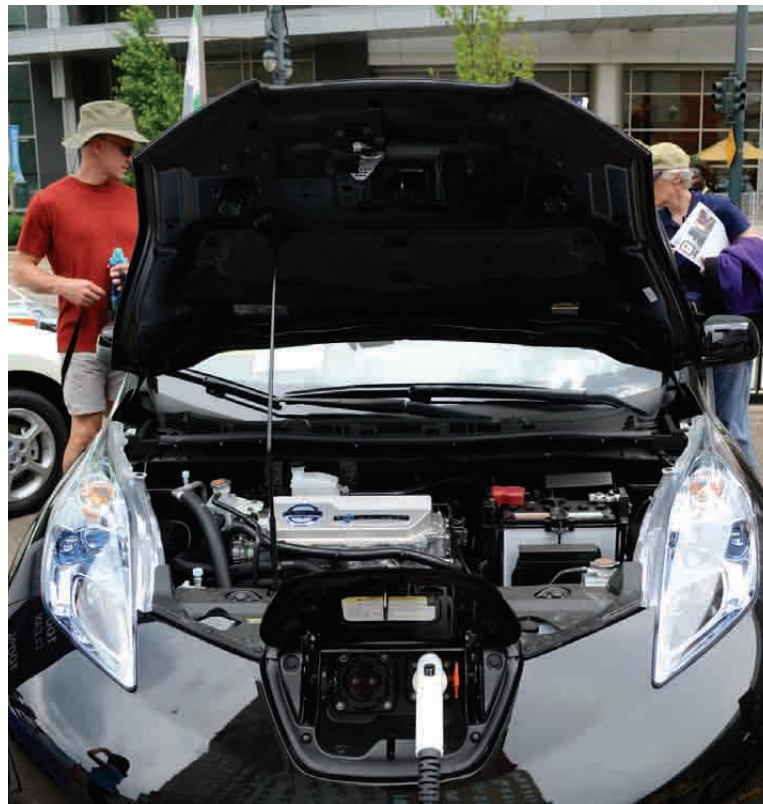
Finally, in terms of "managing system impacts," the company's core business remains providing reliable and safe energy at a reasonable cost, Schwain said, and these new transportation options can present challenges and opportunities.

Along those lines, Distribution Engineering has conducted several studies. The studies showed the distribution transformer as the likeliest area for EV charging impacts, which could cause transformer overloads, leading to outages or shorter transformer life. The results of this effort will better guide the company's future actions, Schwain said, and help mitigate potential system disruptions.

In addition, a three-year pilot effort will study customer acceptance of demand response, charging behaviors and coincidence factor. Xcel Energy will install a smart-switch device adjacent to a customer's charging station to monitor and control vehicle charging. The customer will be given an annual credit of \$100 and access to their associated data related to the vehicle charging.

The company has also worked with Toyota, the University of Colorado and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to deploy and test the performance of 28 plug-in hybrid electric Toyota Prius vehicles. The vehicles were rotated through a total of 144 randomly selected participants over 18 months to study charging behavior and the impact of electric rates on behavior. The results of this effort are now being analyzed.

"Transportation is a large part of our economy and is a cornerstone of our lives – connecting work, home and leisure," Schwain said. "Transformation on this scale will take time and effort on a number of fronts. We play a role in this transformation, but at the end of the day, it is our customers and communities that dictate the pace and direction." 



Transportation news covers many fronts

Other recent alternative-fuel vehicle news at the company includes:

- St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, Xcel Energy and other local officials recently unveiled two new solar-powered EV charging stations in St. Paul's Como Regional Park. They are the first of their kind in Minnesota and have the capacity to charge two vehicles at a time.
- On the natural gas side, Mark Stoering, president and CEO of NSP-Wisconsin, and other Xcel Energy employees recently participated in a natural gas summit and trade show in La Crosse, Wis., to celebrate the opening of Kwik Trip's alternative fuel station in the city's industrial park. Xcel Energy supplies natural gas to all of these fueling stations.
- Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper declared May 17, 2012, Electric Vehicle Day in Colorado, and Xcel Energy supported several public events to help celebrate the occasion. Xcel Energy hosted a booth and had representatives on hand to talk with attendees at events in Denver and Boulder. The Denver event is pictured above.
- Xcel Energy recently participated in the grand opening of GE Fleet's Innovation Center for Alternative Fuel Vehicles in Eden Prairie, Minn. The center features a half-mile driving course, a 6,000 square foot vehicle center that includes a showroom featuring alternative fuel vehicles from more than 20 auto manufacturers and classroom space.



'Virtual Desktops' part of popular energy-efficiency programs for computers

With today's economic concerns and environmental issues, saving money and energy has never been more appealing.

So it's understandable that Xcel Energy energy-efficiency programs continue to experience increased popularity. Two such programs within the growing technology industry have seen considerable growth in recent years, said Jon Packer, portfolio manager in Marketing.

The company's Computer Efficiency rebate programs were first introduced in 2006. The energy- and cost-savings programs are promoted by the Business Solution Center's Demand Side Management (DSM) specialists and account managers throughout the company's service territory.

One early rebate program encouraged businesses to invest in computers that had power-supply efficiency ratings of 80 percent or higher. Unfortunately, there were relatively few options for computers that met those standards at that time.

However, as computer manufacturers began to more consistently meet the 80 percent efficiency level (the minimum qualification for an Energy Star rating), more customers were eligible to participate in the rebate programs, he said. This trend continued moving forward until a big breakthrough in 2009.

"In 2009, Dell computers instituted a major shift and began producing far more efficient computers," Packer said. "They embraced our program and even created a 'green' store that sold only highly efficient computing products.

"In late 2009, Lenovo signed on to participate in our incentive program, as well," he added. "They also produce a large quantity of products that qualify for our computer efficiency programs' incentives."

In 2010, Lenovo became the highest participating manufacturer in the program, slightly edging out Dell for the top spot. And the enrollment by Lenovo and the corporate initiatives by Dell led to explosive growth of the Xcel Energy programs in 2010.

The rapidly growing success of the Computer Efficiency program also caught the attention of company leadership, Packer said, and their interest and support helped expand the program.

That expansion then led to one of the most innovative rebate products offered by the company. The program, which focuses on virtual desktops, replaces a desktop computers' hardware and replaces it with a device that connects directly to remote servers.

The new Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) essentially replaces traditional desktop PCs, he said.

"There are no longer physical computers onsite, and all operating software is hosted on a remote server," Packer explained. "However, users still have a monitor, keyboard and mouse – providing the appearance and 'feel' of a normal PC."

The program offers business customers a \$60 rebate towards the purchase of VDI systems, bringing a payback on the investment to within 15 months, he said. There are two

basic types of virtual desktops that Xcel Energy provides rebates for – Thin Clients and Zero Clients.

“A good way to think of virtual desktops is like cars,” Packer said. “Zero Clients would be the most stripped-down models, which basically include only hook-ups for a monitor, keyboard and a mouse,” Packer explained. “Then you come to Thin Clients, which can have all sorts of options.

“For example, they may have USB ports for flash drives or printers, or ports for speakers,” he added. “Some even have a small hard disk. All of these add-ons cost more and



Jon Packer

use more energy, so it's in a company's best interest to select what options they actually need.”

The virtual desktops offer considerable savings in energy and related costs, he said. Other VDI benefits include increased security, as well as easier software updates and upgrades.

The company's VDI rebate program first rolled out in Minnesota, then added Colorado in mid-2011, and just launched in New Mexico last month.

Xcel Energy continues to push for new innovative and efficient programs to benefit its customers, Packer said. In 2013, the company will launch a rebate for remote PC power management. This technology automatically turns off computers at night, but can turn them on to update them with software patches and upgrades.

“The growth of our efforts has been unbelievable,” Packer said. “And it is rewarding to lead a fantastic team in marketing such great products.

“With the help of product developer Anne Kraft and energy-efficiency engineers Bruce Boerner and Adam White, we should be able to maintain a 25 percent annual growth rate into the foreseeable future,” he added. “And as DSM goals become ever more important to the company, I know we'll continue to offer great energy-saving products to our customers.” ☒

NEWS BRIEFS

Online version of the Corporate Responsibility Report up and running

Xcel Energy's recently published 2011 Corporate Responsibility Report is now at your fingertips. See the 2011 Corporate Responsibility Report online at xcelenergy.com.

“For the first time, we have published our full corporate responsibility report on the website,” said Roy Palmer, senior vice president of Public Policy and External Affairs. “Our latest report contains the usual annual facts and figures of past reports, but the online format is enhanced with video stories.

“The new report features a number of short programs that highlight the work of our employees and tells a more interesting story about Xcel Energy's commitment to serving our customers affordable, safe, clean and reliable energy,” he added. “We encourage employees to distribute the report by sharing the website link with key outside stakeholders.”

An in-house team comprised of a web project manager, and graphic design and video production staff developed the website after successfully creating a smaller website last year of the summary report.

Expectations around non-financial reporting have grown since the company first began publishing its Triple Bottom Line report eight years ago. Today, Xcel Energy's report follows Global Reporting Initiative guidelines, the most widely used framework in the world for this kind of reporting.

“Putting the report online makes it easier for us to meet evolving reporting requirements,” Palmer said. “With the website, we are able to link to existing information that we might publish on the company website or through other publications such as the 10-K.

“It makes for a more robust report that is easier to update and saves on printing,” he said. “Plus, the website can help meet the diverse needs of different audiences for the report.”

A special Corporate Responsibility Report email template is available for employees interested in sharing the website with external contacts. Print copies of a shorter “overview” report also are available for distribution. Contact Pam Butler via Outlook for both the email template and copies of the report overview.

Because of company internet security, not all employees will be able to access the video material, featured on YouTube, on the external website. They can, however, view the videos via home computers.



Transmission Training Center

Simulator provides realistic and real-time experience

Hoping the worst won't happen is not enough. The ability to deal with unexpected events, such as major electric-system outages, is a critical skill for control center personnel.

Outages, however, are something that Xcel Energy works hard to avoid – meaning there are not enough related events to ensure that trainees get the necessary hands-on experience in dealing with those challenging situations.

The next best option – a control room simulator – has proven invaluable in giving trainees realistic and real-time experience in dealing effectively with the unexpected. To that end, a portion of the operator training area at Lookout Center in the Denver area was created to house the Transmission's Operator Training Simulator.

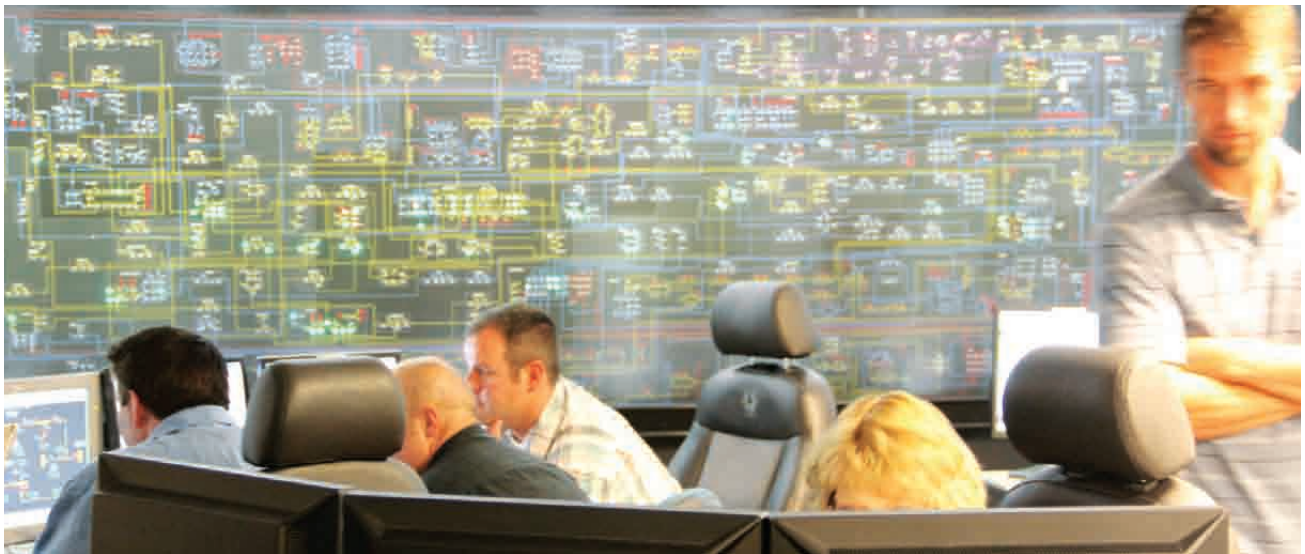
The effort involved creating a virtual control room that would provide trainees and staff with a variety of realistic but simulated

scenarios, such as equipment failures, outages or other problems that operators might have to respond to, said Bob Staton, manager of the Transmission Control Center.

"Our Operator Training Simulator [OTS] is part of the Energy Management System and mirrors the real-time system," he said. "It gives us the ability to create diverse scenarios that operators might confront without having to do it real-time.

"Over the past two years, we've been fine-tuning it so what happens in the simulated environment actually feels like reality," he added. "This is important because some operators could go their whole career without seeing a major outage. With our OTS, however, we have the ability to make sure that all operators have the experience they need to effectively deal with those situations."

The simulator has been created to bridge the gap between training and real circumstances as seamlessly as possible.



Special displays provide trainees with key data such as trending voltages and loads. In addition, multiple phone systems parallel actual lines used for critical communication between various transmission and distribution departments and to company media representatives.

"The idea was to mimic as closely as we could the actual environment that our trainees will be working in, so they have a strong sense of what the control room is actually like in these circumstances," Staton said. "The OTS has the majority of the functionality of the main control floor."

Transmission requires trainees to pass both oral reviews and simulator training before they can work a Control Center shift. Including the simulator in the qualification process has been an effective and important element of preparing new operators.

"We've found that while eight out of 10 operators do well on the oral portion of operator qualification, when we sit them down to the simulator, we can quickly identify weak spots where they haven't had enough training or experience," he explained.

The simulator provides hands-on training with key skills such as proper switching, controlling voltage and generation, isolating elements using three-part communications – even how to do a total system restoration and power-up.

To enhance the simulator's sense of real-time events, programmers use previous or current events such as transmission equipment failures, he said. These events provide valuable opportunities for trainees to manage, resolve and learn from real situations that the company's transmission system has actually experienced.

The simulator also allows for larger-scale drills on how to manage outages and facilitate restoration. The company has held three such drills this year, coordinating with the other key players involved in managing transmission events, such as Distribution,

Commercial Operations, Gas Transmission, Communications, Media Relations, Department of Homeland Security, and state and local authorities. Those drills have been helpful in not only training operators, but also in improving communication and practices required of other departments.

"It's been a great opportunity for everyone to revisit their plans and strategies, based on new understanding of how we operate, under a variety of event scenarios," Staton said.

The previous drills also provided preparation for another more extensive drill on May 31. That drill was a first of its kind – unique at Xcel Energy in that it integrated 10 operators using perspective simulators in Transmission, Distribution and Commercial Operations.

Roughly 40 people took part in the major drill, both from within and outside of the company, and included staff from the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, the local sheriff's department and the Department of Homeland Security.

"We created a major event with this drill – collapsing all of the Denver-metro area and asking operators to rebuild it," Staton said. "The idea involved coordinating all involved parties in the process of rebuilding our electric system from a total Denver-metro blackout, and slowly building back the generation, transmission and distribution systems to restore load.

"We've been pleased with the results we've seen from the OTS system so far," he added. "It helps a lot in testing our internal coordination during a major disturbance since we all need to be in synch while managing a real-time event.

"And the feedback we've received from the operators who have gone through simulator training has been positive. The simulator adds a lot of value to the company in terms of training people in a wide range of scenarios so they're ready to deal with events in the best and most efficient way possible." ❏

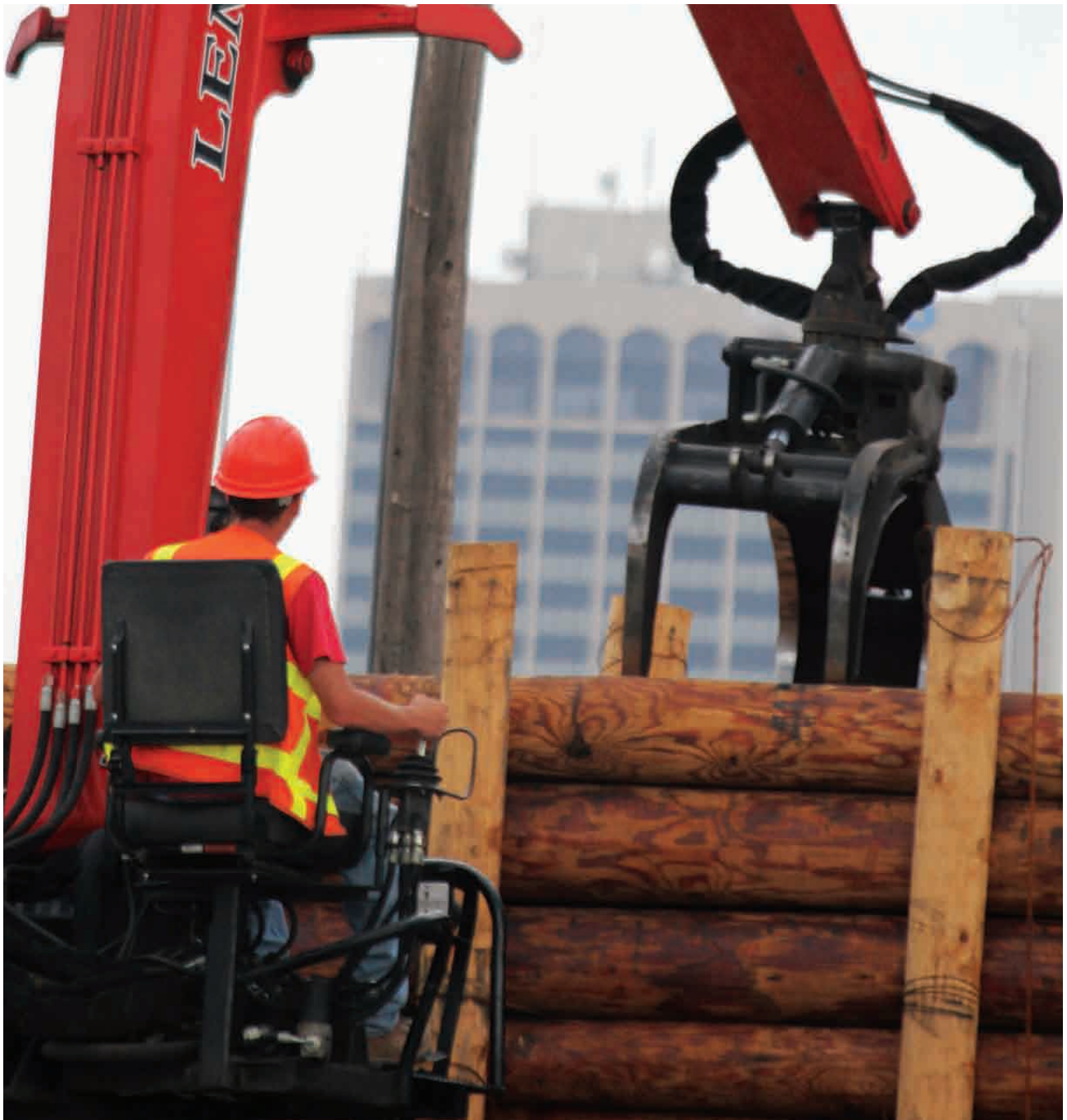
DRILL

A first-of-its-kind drill recently was held at the Colorado simulator. Roughly 40 people took part in the major drill, both from within and outside of the company. The drill simulated a major event – collapsing all of the Denver-metro area and asking operators to rebuild it. Pictured above is the drill under way, and on page eight are (left to right) Jeremy Zehr, Steve Wooster and Gregg Thoennes.

Savings by the Yard

New Amarillo-based
wood-pole distribution
yard results in savings





Reaching a comfort level can be as important in business as in personal life.

Such is the case with a new wood-pole distribution yard in Amarillo, which began operations in January 2012.

"The new yard provides us with the opportunity to reduce Xcel Energy inventory by half a million dollars, while increasing the comfort level for our operations in Texas and New Mexico," said Mark Gauldin, inventory strategist in Material Strategy and Planning. "It has reduced our risk and exposure by allowing the company to have supplier-owned and -managed inventory nearby and ready for use.

"The biggest benefit is having an additional \$1 million worth of supplier inventory now close at hand," he added. "But it has been a good thing all around."

The inventory at the yard is between 2,500 to 3,500 poles on any given day.

About two years ago, a Logistics Supply Team, including employees Dwayne Marchbanks, Bob Palmer, David Duenes and Bob Kunze, formed to consider alternatives to McFarland Cascade's out-of-state, pole-distribution yards, located in Broken Bow, Okla., and LaSalle, Colo.

Those yards required much more time to deliver orders. The locations are eight hours away from the SPS service territory, Gauldin said. In contrast, pole-supply operations in other operating companies are located within their respective service territories.

The Logistics team, along with McFarland Cascade, eventually found a perfect five-acre spot in Amarillo, he said.

It is both alongside a rail line and directly adjacent to the Xcel Energy's Amarillo Tech Center on the east side of town.

The company then set up a new agreement with McFarland Cascade, which leases the land and runs the Amarillo yard.

"We chose the spot and secured the land, and it has worked out to be a great setup for the company," Gauldin said. "McFarland Cascade runs the yard and has a dedicated truck and driver available 24/7 for our needs. They are able to deliver our largest 110-foot transmission pole to our smallest 30-foot distribution pole.

"Because it's next to the Tech Center, in an emergency our trucks can just go next door for poles," he added. "The access is perfect."

In addition, major shipments are now received by rail instead of trucking, saving more money. Each rail car can carry three or four truckloads worth of poles.

With six months of operations now completed, Xcel Energy continues to see benefits with the new yard and agree-

ment, Gauldin said. For instance, for big projects, the new yard can handle the hundreds of poles that may be needed by creating a staging area.

The two companies work in partnership to ensure the proper inventory is on hand in the new wood-pole yard, said Brian Gee, category manager in Supply Chain. Inventory targets initially were set, he said, and those targets are regularly adjusted to ensure the inventory matches Xcel Energy's routine and project-based demand.

"We will be able to significantly reduce our inventory costs in the first year, with even more savings in the years to come," Gee said. "By adding this new yard, we will be better positioned to supply our operations at a moments notice.

"And we have the option to request supplier job-site deliveries," he added, "which will simplify our process and reduce handling requirements.

"A lot of hard work and effort has been put into the setup and refining of the new yard" Gee said. "Everyone involved deserves a lot of credit for this accomplishment." ❧



POLE YARD

A new pole-distribution yard with a \$1 million inventory has been located in Amarillo, just northwest of the Amarillo Technical Center. In addition to immediate access to poles, inventory reductions in Texas and New Mexico will result in savings for the company. The yard has a dedicated 24-7 truck and driver that will be able to deliver 110-foot transmission poles to the smaller 30-foot distribution poles. Operations at the yard are pictured above and on page 11.

NEWS BRIEFS

Sherco restoration effort complex as movement made toward return-to-service target

On Nov. 19 last year, Sherco Unit Three experienced a significant and catastrophic failure during turbine testing as the unit was being returned to service following a major maintenance outage.

No one was injured, but the event caused extensive damage to the turbine, generator, exciter and some associated plant systems, forcing Xcel Energy's largest generating unit off line for an extended period. Since the event, significant progress has been made, said Darin Schottler, project manager for the restoration effort.

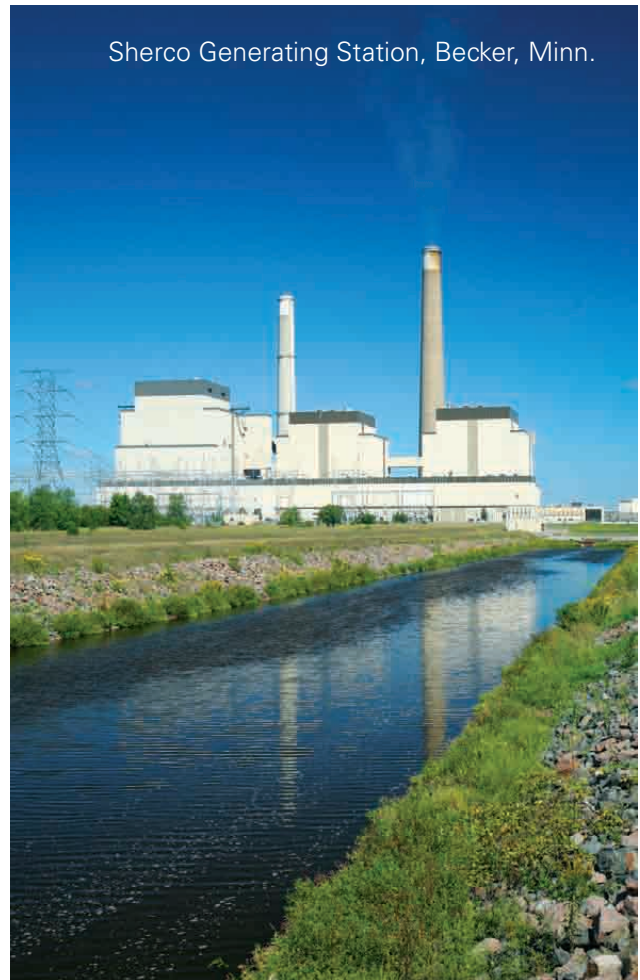
"Our restoration plan targets the unit online in first quarter of 2013 based on our current assessment of conditions," he said.

Several major components have been disassembled and shipped off-site for detailed inspection, cleaning and repair. Many components, such as the generator stator, are being repaired on site.

"While the damage was significant, most components are repairable," he said. "However, the restoration is complex and some degree of uncertainty remains due to several factors."

Among those factors are:

- Major components require engineered repair plans and involve complex repair techniques not routinely performed.
- A significant level of coordination between multiple contractors and vendors performing work on various interrelated systems is required to complete repairs and return components to the site for installation.



Sherco Generating Station, Becker, Minn.

- Extensive reconstruction and reassembly is required prior to startup of the unit.

"Insurance is expected to cover the majority of the cost for repairs, and we will make sure expenditures are prudent and necessary," Schottler said. "When the unit does return to operation, it will undergo an extended period of commissioning and testing."

Eau Claire storm dealt with quickly, prompting thanks

A severe thunderstorm hit Eau Claire, Wis., on May 24 with winds reaching a reported 80 mph and damaging facilities, but company crews reacted quickly to restore service.

Major damage was confined to four areas within Eau Claire. In total, 23 distribution poles were broken, causing outages to approximately 7,500 customers.

Crews from Wisconsin and Minnesota worked day and night to restore power, said Julie Simon, senior director of Operations. By early afternoon, May 26, all customers affected by the storm were restored to service.

"It is truly commendable that so many of our employees sacrificed their holiday weekend to restore power to nearly 10,000 customers," she said.

In addition to the damage to Xcel Energy's electri-

cal system, city officials estimate that the strong winds toppled 600 to 1,000 trees in city cemeteries and parks. Also, trees and branches piled up along curbs on many Eau Claire streets.

Media coverage of the storm was significant and local radio, television and newspapers carried stories for several days regarding Xcel Energy's restoration efforts.

Just days before the storm, the company launched a new Facebook page for Xcel Energy Wisconsin and used it as a means to provide updates throughout the restoration. In addition to a number of positive Facebook comments, this email was sent from an appreciative customer:

"I just want to say thank you to the crews who worked so hard on Ferry Street to restore our power. Words can't ever express my gratitude for the endless hours they put in, but from the bottom of my heart, I say thank you to all who participated."



Returning to Prairie

Restoring Wisconsin lands benefits wildlife, people

From a passively managed site for a proposed nuclear power plant to an area of prairies, savannas and wildlife, the 4,400-acre Tyrone property in Wisconsin has seen a lot of changes since the company acquired it in the 1970s.

The power plant was never built, and during the course of three decades of public use, the Dunn County land became eroded and rutted from off-road vehicles. It also became home to permanent tree stands and trash sites.

A property inventory taken in 2007 and 2008 showed a total of more than 230 unauthorized uses – including 96 deer stands, 43 off-road-vehicle sites, 17 erosion sites and 57 trash sites.

“Passive management clearly was not in the best interest of the company or the environment,” said Matt McFarlane, permitting analyst with Siting and Land Rights.

In 2008, following the detailed field inspection of the property, Matt Miller and a crew from Hydro Operations helped clean up the trash sites and posted signs at access points, reminding visitors that foot travel is welcome but motorized vehicles and littering are not.

However, cleaning up the property was just the beginning. Active land management and restoration were next on the to-do list. McFarlane, who formerly worked for the Wis-

consin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) in wildlife management, water regulation and zoning, joined Xcel Energy in 2009. He was given the opportunity to implement land-management activities and restoration efforts at Tyrone.

“Xcel Energy now is turning this once neglected and abused property into one of Wisconsin’s gems with assistance from conservation partners such as the WDNR, National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) and nonprofit conservation organizations,” McFarlane said. “Annual prescribed burning, prairie restoration, tree planting and grassland bird surveys are just a few of the ongoing land-management practices.”

In the past three years, the effort has converted hundreds of acres of sandy, non-productive agricultural fields into a variety of prairie habitats, including oak savannas, floodplain savannas, dry sand prairies, sand barrens and jack pine barrens.

“The ultimate goal of these prairie restorations is to recreate large tracts of declining grassy habitat that is essential for grassland nesting birds and other wildlife that once thrived in western Wisconsin before human settlement,” McFarlane explained. “Each of these prairie habitats has its own ecological niche and is full of plant and wildlife diversity.”



Xcel Energy's restoration work in 2011 extended to bringing a 66-acre field back to its original state as oak savanna. Historical records described the field as being oak savanna in the 1800s, said McFarlane, who worked closely with the farm tenant to prepare the site for the next phase of the project.

That phase involved planting 1,200 white and bur oak trees as part of Xcel Energy's 2011 Earth Day employee event in April that year. Dozens of Wisconsin employee volunteers turned out for the planting, despite the unseasonably wet and cool weather.

"Oak savanna habitats provide excellent conditions for bobolinks, red-headed woodpeckers, turkeys and other wildlife," McFarlane said.

This past Earth Day, Xcel Energy employees and volunteers from the NWTF and WDNR planted bur oak, white pine and fruiting shrubs in a former field to serve as an educational demonstration site, showing residents how they could create and improve habitat for wild turkeys.

The company also recently completed work for a public canoe landing on the Chippewa River, adjacent to a cleared scenic overlook on the Tyrone property. And later this summer, the company will host the Natural Resources Conservation Service's annual Landowner Day, where speakers will educate farmers on wildlife-related programs.

In addition, this fall, Xcel Energy and the NWTF will honor veterans who have returned with disabilities with a special Disabled Veteran's Deer Hunt event.

"All of these projects and events add up to significant changes for this property," McFarlane said, noting that many Xcel Energy employees and hundreds of volunteers from the company and surrounding communities have had a hand in

the success of these efforts. "We are starting to see positive results and hope to continue to bring ecological balance back to this area for the wildlife and the people who use it."

A once vocal critic in the 1970s when the nuclear power plant was proposed, the Lower Chippewa River Alliance this spring selected Xcel Energy for a prestigious award for environmental leadership, honoring the company for its "exceptional cleanup, restoration and management" of the Tyrone property.

Accepting the award on behalf of Xcel Energy were Mark Stoering, president and CEO of NSP-Wisconsin; Mike Swenson, retired president and CEO of NSP-Wisconsin; Pam Rasmussen, manager of Siting and Land Rights; and McFarlane.

"It is truly amazing to learn the history of this property and to see the significant changes that have taken place during the last few years," Stoering said. "Clearly, strong partnerships and hard work are bringing balance back to this area." X

LAND RESTORATION

In the past three years, a Wisconsin effort has converted hundreds of acres of sandy, non-productive agricultural fields into a variety of prairie habitats, including oak savannas, floodplain savannas, dry sand prairies, sand barrens and jack pine barrens. Pictured above right is a group of employee volunteers who helped out one rainy spring day, while at left are some of the new native grasses now growing on the land.

High Bridge Goes

Company opens land near power plant for new St. Paul dog park



RIBBON CUTTING

Judy Poferl (right), president and CEO of NSP-Minnesota, and Chris Coleman, mayor of St. Paul, helped open the new park, with help from their dogs.

A seven-acre meadow of lush grasses, paths and trees near High Bridge Generating Station in St. Paul, Minn., is now open to the public and their pets.

Xcel Energy is allowing the city to use the land free of charge as a new dog park in the city.

More than 350 people and about 300 of their canine companions turned out for a May 31 dedication of the new High Bridge Dog Park.

Doing the ribbon-cutting honors were Judy Poferl, president and CEO of NSP-Minnesota; St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman; Parks and Recreation Director Mike Hahm; and City Council Member Dave Thune.

The grounds, formerly where some of the old High Bridge coal plant stood, are now an off-the-leash playground and romping paradise for area dogs and their owners. The park is just under the Smith Avenue High Bridge and near downtown St. Paul.

“For more than two years, Energy Supply, Community Relations, Siting and Land Rights, Environmental Services and Legal worked with the city of St. Paul to bring this community asset to



to the Dogs

life," said John Marshall, Community Relations manager.

Hosting the dedication event on behalf of the company were Marshall, along with Brian Behm, High Bridge plant manager, and Ceace Haagensen, with Community Affairs.

The park at 59 Randolph Ave. is fenced, with a double-gated entry, and is located next to the Xcel Energy plant, between Shepard Road and the Mississippi River. It is operated by the city's Parks Department and is open daily from sunrise to sunset.

The new High Bridge Generating Station is a 570-megawatt combined-cycle natural gas-fired plant that came online in 2008. It stands to the southwest of the new dog park.

High Bridge was part of the Minnesota Metro Emissions Reduction Project (MERP). In May 2002, Xcel Energy proposed the project to significantly reduce air emissions from three Twin Cities coal-powered generating plants while increasing the amount of electricity they produce.

Minnesota MERP projects included adding state-of-the-art emissions controls to the coal-fired King Generating Station in Oak Park Heights, Minn., and replacing the coal-fired High Bridge Generating Station in St. Paul with a natural gas-fired combined cycle plant, as well as the similar repowering effort at Riverside in Minneapolis.

Upgrades at the King plant were completed in 2007. Along with state-of-the-art, air-quality-control equipment at King, a new steam turbine was installed, and boiler repairs and modifications performed.

The High Bridge plant began commercial operations in May 2008, and Riverside began commercial operations in May 2009. The \$1 billion MERP package of improvements increased capacity at the three plants by a total of 300 megawatts. And it reduced CO₂ emissions by 40 percent, SO₂ by 96 percent, NO_x by 95 percent, particulates by 90 percent and mercury emissions by 81 percent. ☒



FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

Wilfred E. Beaudet

84, supervisor, died May 30, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1952 to 1990.

Thurmond L. Bedgood

81, unit manager, Electric Meter, Electric Services, Valentia Service Center, Denver, Colo., died April 11, 2012. He worked for PSCo from 1955 to 1994.

Bertha Boggess

72, manager, Customer Service, Colorado, died March 9, 1940. She worked for PSCo from 1972 to 1996.

Robbie L. Carey

73, died June 2, 2012. She worked for SPS from 1976 to 1990.

John M. Carlsten

84, plant operator, died May 16, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1949 to 1988.

Dewey A. Coldiron

89, died May 8, 2012. He worked for SPS from 1957 to 1984.

Thomas E. Dols

67, lead splicer mechanic, Underground Construction, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died May 25, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1970 to 2002.

James B. Garcia

86, inspector, Colorado, died May 6, 2012. He worked for PSCo from 1958 to 1986.

Betty J. Griggs

88, consumer information representative, Sioux Falls, S.D., died Feb. 5, 2012. She worked for NSP from 1961 to 1981.

Lenard V. Harper

86, died June 4, 2012. He worked for SPS from 1948 to 1986.

John C. Hellendrung

87, meter reader, died May 21, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1951 to 1985.

Alonzo S. Horton

86, lead parts man, Colorado, died Feb. 23, 2012. He worked for PSCo from 1959 to 1986.

George T. Ithaca

82, died March 6, 2012. He worked for SPS from 1954 to 1990.

Richard D. Johnson

65, lead fitter, Gas Operations, Boulder Service Center, Boulder, Colo., died May 22, 2012. He worked for PSCo from 1970 to 2006.

Kenneth A. Kappes

78, died Feb. 5, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1969 to 1996.

Betty J. Kuhn

87, died May 11, 2012. She worked for NSP from 1964 to 1988.

Suzanne K. Lear

67, manager, Payables/Receivables, Skypark, Eau Claire, Wis., died Jan. 22, 2012. She worked for Xcel Energy from 1968 to 2003.

Roy McMillon

76, service center maintenance, Lipan Service Center, Denver, Colo., died April 27, 2012. He worked for PSCo from 1963 to 1994.

Robert T. Moreland

61, customer contact center instructor, Talent/Training, Centre Pointe, Roseville, Minn., died May 31, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy since 1977.

Edgar R. Nielsen

82, NED/QA coordinator, Fort St. Vrain Generating Station, Platteville, Colo., died May 2, 2012. He worked for PSCo from 1963 to 1986.

Roger W. Ohmann

79, died April 11, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1956 to 1991.

Kenneth M. Olson

83, station meter tester, died May 24, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1948 to 1989.

Andrew J. Parsons

83, died May 31, 2012. He worked for SPS from 1951 to 1991.

Lane Z. Paulson

68, inspector, Street Lighting, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., died May 23, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1964 to 2010.

Richard G. Peterson

83, died May 28, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1967 to 1992.

David C. Reetz

40, lineman, Electric Operations, Mankato Service Center, Mankato, Minn., died May 25, 2012. He worked for NSP since 2007.

Claude E. Sims

70, maintenance mechanic journeyman, Operations, Tolk Station, Muleshoe, Texas, died April 26, 2012. He worked for SPS from 1977 to 2006.

Newell B. Skeie

82, lead station electrician, died May 5, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1953 to 1987.

William J. Sosalla

90, district troubleman, Wisconsin, died May 12, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1955 to 1981.

Thomas D. St. Martin

73, died May 2, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1960 to 1995.

Lester C. Thompson

85, building services foreman, died April 29, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1960 to 1989.

Azalee J. Trantham

81, died April 27, 2012. She worked for SPS from 1968 to 1996.

Bradley S. Vincent

56, material handler, Maple Grove, Minn., died May 29, 2012. He worked for NSP from 1986 to 2012.

Edward L. Wilson

82, lead fitter serviceman, Pueblo Service Center, Pueblo, Colo., died May 20, 2012. He worked for PSCo from 1949 to 1994.

RETIRING

Dennis R. Adams

maintenance specialist, Maintenance, Fort St. Vrain Generating Station, Platteville, Colo., retires on July 16, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Doyle Baggett

heavy equipment operator, Construction Services, Amarillo, Texas, retired on July 6, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 28 years.

Steve Blegen

(*steve.blegen@hotmail.com*), accounting manager, Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Monticello, Minn., retired on June 4, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Paul Bondhus

(*paul.bondhus@gmail.com*), special meter reader, Chestnut Service Center, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on June 29, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 40 years.

Marcia Brinkhous

(*brinkhous2009@comcast.net*), site management, Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Monticello, Minn., retired on June 29, 2012. She worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

Donald Brossard

(*DHBRO@hotmail.com*), operations, Plant Equipment Operation, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., retires on July 13, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 28 years.

Thomas Carroll

(*tommy-carroll@sbcglobal.net*), electrician working foreman, Substations, Seminole Service Center, Seminole, Texas, retired on May 4, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 44 years.

Tom Carter

product developer, Marketing, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired on June 19, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Betty Coleman

(*BLColeman11@gmail.com*), MP4, Minneapolis, Minn., retired on June 1, 2012. She worked for Xcel Energy for 28 years.

Larry R. Dreiling

(*ej_dreiling@q.com*), lead fitter, Gas Operations, Fort Collins Service Center, Fort Collins, Colo., retires on July 20, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

Mark Fredrickson

gas technician specialist, Winona Service Center, Winona, Minn., retired on July 6, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

A. Dean Gebhardt

working foreman, High Pressure Gas, Champion/Northern Gas Operations, Colorado, retires on Aug. 1, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Melody Hedke

senior associate, Field Operations, Hudson, Wis., retired on July 1, 2012. She worked for Xcel Energy for 39 years.

Kenneth J. Johnson

(*kenary@frontiernet.com*), combination meter reader, Shorewood Service Center, Excelsior, Minn., retired on June 29, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for over 32 years.

Warren Kelley

(*warrenk186@suddenlink.net*), designer, Engineering, Lubbock, Texas, retired on June 29, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 14 years and 11 months.

James F. King Jr.

lead yard equipment operator, Black Dog Plant, Burnsville, Minn., retired on June 29, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 24 years.

Fredrick T. Lederhos

(*Merry.Lee.Lederhos@gmail.com*), technical specialist, Eastern High Pressure Gas, Brighton, Colo., retired on June 29, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 41 years.

Richard Markham

(*rlmarkham@aol.com*), senior plant chemical specialist, Chemistry Department, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on June 15, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 36 years.

Steve Mornis

principal transmission account representative, Transmission, Lookout Center, Golden, Colo., retired on June 29, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 20 years.

Robert Navarette

(*Rbb619@comcast.net*), lead fitter, Gas Construction, Southwest Service Center, Lakewood, Colo., retires on July 31, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Pamela Osmera

(*osmp01@comcast.net*), senior associate, Field Operations, West Design, Distribution, Maple Grove Service Center, Maple Grove, Minn., retired on June 8, 2012. She worked for Xcel Energy for 20 years.

Curtis Roberts

lead meter reader, Clovis, N.M., retired on June 29, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 34 years.

Ramona L. Rodriguez

(*Rodriguez1956@comcast.net*), specialist, PAR North, Centre Point, Roseville, Minn., retired on June 29, 2012. She worked for Xcel Energy for 38 years.

Anthony Schmidt

gas service fitter, Gas Shop, Southwest Service Center, Lakewood, Colo., retired on June 29, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 21 years.

Ellen Stein

(*peaceellen08@gmail.com*), scheduler, Sherco Plant, Becker, Minn., retired on June 1, 2012. She worked for Xcel Energy for 35 years.

Tess Thompson

workforce relations specialist, 1800 Larimer, Denver, Colo., retired on June 30, 2012. She worked for Xcel Energy for 13 years.

Craig Vinson

(*pcbvinson@hotmail.com*), field service representative, Borger Service Center, Spearman, Texas, retires on July 31, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

Richard "Mark" Waider

classified mechanic, Substation Construction, Materials Distribution Center, Denver, Colo., retired on June 1, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 31 years.

Donald A. Wishard

manager, Field Operations, Electric Construction, White Bear Lake, Minn., retired on July 6, 2012. He worked for Xcel Energy for 33 years.

Xtra retiree web portal available on xcelenergy.com

The latest issue of Xtra is posted each month on a webpage on the company's website at: xcelenergy.com/retirees.

Retirees and employees are invited to visit the page to view the latest issue, as well as a number of back issues of Xtra. Links on the page also provide access to various utility shareholder groups.

XTRA

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