



# OKLAHOMA PUBLIC POWER

A publication of the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma

September 2013

## MESO Applauds Governor Fallin's Decision to Suspend GRDA Taskforce

Governor Mary Fallin recently announced that she is suspending a taskforce designed to study operations of the Grand River Dam Authority. Fallin said while she still supports the mission of the taskforce, its work might unintentionally affect GRDA's future bond ratings.

The executive order which created the taskforce was widely interpreted as an examination of whether GRDA could be sold and proceeds of a sale be remitted to the State of Oklahoma.

"On behalf of the thousands of Oklahomans benefiting from public power and GRDA, we appreciate Governor Fallin's action to suspend this taskforce," said Tom Rider, general manager of the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma. "We appreciate the governor's understanding of the impact the task force could have at this time on GRDA's bond ratings. This is critical as GRDA looks to upgrade power generation by mov-

ing from coal-based generation to natural gas generation."

Rider noted, that according an Oklahoma Department of Commerce study, GRDA's economic impact on Oklahoma comes close to \$500 million.

Fallin said her decision regarding the taskforce was made after hearing concerns from GRDA leadership about unintended consequences related to bonds. Following the governor's announcement, the GRDA board voted to approve a new natural gas fired plant. The project will be paid for bonds let through GRDA.

"When I was elected to office, I promised voters that one of my first priorities would be to take a close look at our government agencies and make sure they were functioning as efficiently and effectively as possible," Fallin said. "The GRDA is an important agency that is doing some great work in Northeastern Oklahoma. It's providing affordable power to a

large community that creates jobs and grows our economy."

Following the governor's announcement, GRDA CEO, Dan Sullivan said, "GRDA is pleased with Governor Fallin's decision to suspend the taskforce at this important time. As we work on a plan for future generation and begin a process to issue bonds, we do believe a performance review, conducted simultaneously with that bond process, could have a negative impact on our ratings which could lead to higher costs for our ratepayers.

"We appreciate the leadership of Governor Fallin in having high expectations of Oklahoma agencies. GRDA is in a continuous improvement process and we look forward to working with the Governor in improving operations. As GRDA moves forward with its generation plan, we are confident we can do so in a way that preserves GRDA's role as a low-cost, (see GRDA, page 5)

## Register by Sept. 12 for the 2013 Oklahoma Municipal Lineworkers Rodeo

The 2013 Oklahoma Municipal Lineworkers will be September 26 at the Edmond Electric Training Field, and anyone wanting to compete needs to register by September 12.

The 2013 rodeo has events for both journeyman and apprentices.

For a list of events, more information, or to register, go to [www.meso.org](http://www.meso.org).

Lineworkers rodeos offer public power professionals the opportunity to improve their skills while competing and observing peers.

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## MESO Training Update

The MESO training team is busily delivering training to member cities.

The Job Training and Safety for August and September 2014 are:

- Hand Tool Safety in the Workplace: Use and care of basic tools and OSHA guidelines regarding their use
- Blood borne Pathogen Awareness: The more you know, the better you'll perform in real situations

- First Aid Awareness: Follow the 3 C's (Check, Call and Care) and Building and Storing your First Aid Kit

The August and September Communications and Public Relations training course is:

- What is effective communications? Describe effective communications, discuss the barriers to effective communications, describe the benefits of

effective communications and have tools to help achieve effective communications

Contact Tom Dougherty at [tomd@meso.org](mailto:tomd@meso.org) to learn more about MESO job training and safety programs or contact Jeff Kaufmann at [jeffk@meso.org](mailto:jeffk@meso.org) about MESO communications training programs.

### 2013 MESO Awards Luncheon

Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2013 • 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Tulsa Convention Center, Tulsa, OK

**Come join us as we honor this year's recipients.**

Reservations are required.

Contact Deborah Miner at [deborah@meso.org](mailto:deborah@meso.org).

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*\*Job Training & Safety Participants*

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## Duncan Power Receives Electric Safety Award

Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma (MESO) has recognized Duncan Power for outstanding achievement in the association's annual Electric Operations and Safety Competition for 2012.

Duncan Power was recognized in the category for cities over 10,000 population and for experiencing only one day away from work for 2012. During the calendar year, Duncan Power workers experienced 31 hours of limited duty time out of 31,508 total work-er hours for the year.

Duncan Power's success comes from a commitment, top to bottom, to provide the very best service in the safest manner possible. Duncan Power employees meet the requirements of their work with professionalism and safety due to employer efforts. These efforts include four years of rigorous field experience and testing for each line worker before he achieves journey lineworker status. In addition, employees do safety reviews before each job and attend monthly training and safety sessions in addition to other training provided by the utility.

By having local ownership of the electric system and crews located within one mile of most customers, Duncan Power customers don't wait long for electric



service crews to respond to problems.

MESO General Manager Tom Rider presented the award to Duncan Power employees. Rider stated, "Duncan Power has demonstrated a continuous effort in the past decade to be the highest quality public power system. This is evidenced by such actions as training of employees in system preventive maintenance and having employee development programs to prevent problems from overvoltage and overcurrent."

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## Dean Sherrick — Nearly Four Decades of Public Power Service

*Editor's Note: As part of MESO's monthly newsletter, we will be introducing you to our board members in a Q&A format. In this issue, we meet Dean Sherrick. He currently serves as president-elect of the MESO Board of Directors and distribution superintendent for the City of Edmond.*

Q. How did you get your start in the electric utility industry?

A. It wasn't long after high school that I went looking for a job and found one at Edmond Electric. I started working there roughly 37 years ago. I didn't really know what I was getting myself into, but I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my life here.

Q. Tell us one thing about yourself that most people don't know?

A. In July of 1978, I had to get one of my lineman friends down off a pole after he was electrocuted by 7,200 volts. I received a proclamation from the City of Edmond. While I am very proud of that, it is something I'll never forget.

Q. What is the biggest mistake you ever made and what did you learn from it?

A. I lost my temper with a coworker because I was feeling pressure to meet a deadline. I went back later and apologized for my unprofessional behavior. The lesson learned is that I should always make time to visit and develop a better working relation-

ship with my coworkers.

Q. Is there one thing that you tell every member of your team?

A. Safety Comes First and/or Thank You.

Q. Customers may not always understand the municipal electric utility business, if you teach them one thing, what would that be?

A. We don't pay dividends to stockholders like your investor-owned utilities. Our customers and the community are our shareholders and everything we do is in the best interest of our communities.

Q. Will you tell us a little about your family, kids, or pets?

A. My favorite subject . . . I've been happily married to my wife, Pam, for nearly 35 years. She is and has always been the love of my life. My oldest daughter, Candice, and her husband, Alex, are both doctors at the University of Oklahoma Medical School in Tulsa. They are the proud parents of my 3 grandchildren. My youngest daughter, Deana, is a licensed Cosmetologist and still single, if anyone is looking.



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## GRDA Board Approves Plan for Future Generation Resources

After many months of research and discussions, the Grand River Dam Authority Board of Directors has taken a major step towards addressing the utility's coming generation needs. During its August 14 meeting, the board gave its approval to an electric generation resource plan designed to meet both the growing demand of its large Oklahoma customer base as well as new regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"We do have some very real deadlines ahead of us in regards to EPA regulations and customer demands," said Chief Executive Officer/Director of Investments Dan Sullivan. "I want to commend our board for giving so much time and effort to this issue already and for the decision today that allows GRDA to move towards these important goals."

The plan would allow for an increase in both GRDA's gas and wind generation capacity. Together, that capacity would eventually replace the output from Unit 1 at the GRDA Coal Fired Complex. That unit has been in operation since 1982 and has paired with Unit 2 at the facility to provide the bulk of GRDA's electric generation for three decades.

"Today, approximately 45 percent of GRDA's total generation capacity comes from our coal units," said Sullivan. "However, as this plan is put into place and we are able to add wind and gas generation, coal will go to about 17 percent."

Sullivan said the remaining coal generation will come from Unit 2 following a project to retrofit/upgrade its air quality control equipment. In operation since 1985, the unit is already equipped with the state's only flue-gas desulfurization (scrubber) to remove sulfur emissions following the coal combustion process. The scrubber will remain in service through the upgrade effort and GRDA will convert other existing air quality control equipment to meet the latest EPA standards. The deadline for those standards is



April 2016 though GRDA is planning to have these upgrades completed by December 2015

As its reliance on coal goes down, GRDA will be able to bring greater balance to a generation portfolio that already provides a beneficial and diverse mix of resources. Though hydroelectric output will not change significantly with the new plan, gas generation will go from 25 percent of total capacity to 45 percent. GRDA also plans to increase its wind generation from approximately 3 percent of total capacity today to 13 percent in the future

"This resource mix really gives GRDA the options it needs to maintain reliability and efficiently, and that's in the best interest of our ratepayers," said Sullivan.

Along with that resource mix, GRDA will also work with its customers to develop new demand management programs and incentives, to help slow the need for even more generation resources in the future.

"There may be things we can do to shift those periods of the day when electric usage is the highest," said Sullivan. "By implementing financial incentives for electric demand management, and working with our customers to shift usage patterns where possible, we will see this future resource mix work efficiently and reliably for many years to come."

## GRDA

*(continued from page 1)*

reliable electricity supplier, economic development engine and good steward of the natural resources under its control."

GRDA's mission is to provide low-cost, reliable electric power and related services to customers and to be responsive to the interests and concerns of public power users, the communities affected, and the people of the state of Oklahoma.



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*"Electrical Workflows & Applications"*

## DEED Helps Fund Innovative Projects

The Demonstration of Energy & Efficiency Developments (DEED) Program is the only research and demonstration program funded by and for public power utilities.

Established in 1980 by the American Public Power Association (APPA), DEED is dedicated to improving the operations and services of public power utilities by supporting and demonstrating innovative activities.

The program encourages and promotes energy innovation and efficiency and supports innovative utility programs focused on the needs and research interests of its members. It also provides scholarships to students for utility internships or to conduct energy-related research. And it provides a forum for sharing and discussion of program results, and recognizes achievements by DEED members in energy innovation and efficiency.

As members of APPA and DEED, OMPA and MESO member cities are eligible and encouraged to apply for research grants available through this program. The program has two annual application deadlines - February and August. The next deadline is February 15, 2014.

The next deadline for scholarship opportunities is October 15, 2013. DEED now offers expanded scholarship opportunities for high school, college and graduate school students.

Any issue encountered by members (such as reliability, safety, security, energy efficiency, telecommunications and environmental) is an appropriate topic for a grant.

Past successful projects have included development of a non-toxic, biodegradable, environmentally benign soy-based transformer oil, creation of a cybersecurity manual, and design of a web-based tracker for utility reliability.

DEED has awarded more than \$10 million in grants and scholarships to support research to advance efficient production and delivery of electricity among public power utilities. DEED's membership has grown to 742 members today.

Roger Farrer, energy services manager, was instrumental in 2012 to OMPA being awarded a \$25,000 grant to create a weather data database/workbook. It can be customized by any utility to help customer service representatives when talking to customers about high-bill complaints.

Information includes generating a report for any billing cycle as opposed to calendar-month periods, and compares recent actual and long-term average weather data for the billing period.

A user's manual and PowerPoint presentation has been developed to train customer service personnel on the use of weather data when speaking with customers.

Farrer also serves as an APPA DEED director representing Region 4, which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.

Applications are available at [www.DEED@PublicPower.org](http://www.DEED@PublicPower.org). Any DEED program questions can be directed to Farrer at [rfarrer@ompa.com](mailto:rfarrer@ompa.com) or call 405-359-2523.



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## **SAVE THE DATE** **MESO 2014 Public Power Conference** **Scheduled for April**

Planning continues for the MESO 2014 Public Power Conference. The annual gathering of public power professionals will be April 27 - 29 at the Embassy Suites in Norman, OK.

The theme for the 2014 conference is "HOMETOWN POWER" and will highlight the contributions public power makes to the communities they serve and will offer participants valuable knowledge on a wide variety topics.

Mark your calendars today, and look for more information soon.



### **Public Power Facts**

- Public power is a collection of more than 2,000 community-owned electric utilities, serving more than 46 million people or about 15 percent of the nation's electricity consumers.
- Some of the nation's largest cities – Los Angeles, San Antonio, Seattle and Orlando – operate publicly-owned electric utilities, but many public power communities are small with their utilities serving 3,000 or fewer customers.
- Most public power utilities are owned by cities and towns, but some are owned by counties, public utility districts, and states.

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## White House Report Calls for Grid Modernization to Help with Storm Outages; Points to Dramatic Savings in Chattanooga

By Jeannine Anderson  
Editor, Public Power Daily

The U.S. energy sector, especially the electric grid, "is vulnerable to the increasingly severe weather expected as the climate changes," according to a White House report issued Aug. 12. The paper calls for continued investment in grid modernization and resilience as a way to mitigate the costs of outages.

Severe weather is the single leading cause of power outages in the United States, and data from the Energy Information Administration "show that weather-related outages have increased significantly since 1992," says the report, *The Economic Benefits of Increasing Electric Grid Resilience*

to Weather Outages.

Weather events such as thunderstorms, hurricanes and blizzards account for nearly 60 percent of the outages observed in the last decade and they account for nearly 90 percent of the outages that affected 50,000 or more



customers, said the report, written by the President's Council of Economic Advisers and the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability.

Weather-related outages from 2003 to 2012 cost the U.S. economy between \$18 billion and

\$33 billion each year, says the analysis. During that period, 679 widespread outages occurred due to severe weather, and "the incidence of both major power outages and severe weather is increasing," the report said.

"In a year with record-breaking storms, the cost can be much higher" than the average, the report noted. "For example, weather-related outages cost the economy between \$40 billion and \$75 billion in 2008, the year of Hurricane Ike. These costs are expected to rise as climate change increases the frequency and intensity of hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards and other extreme weather events."

The grid's age -- much of it was  
*(see APPA, page 10)*

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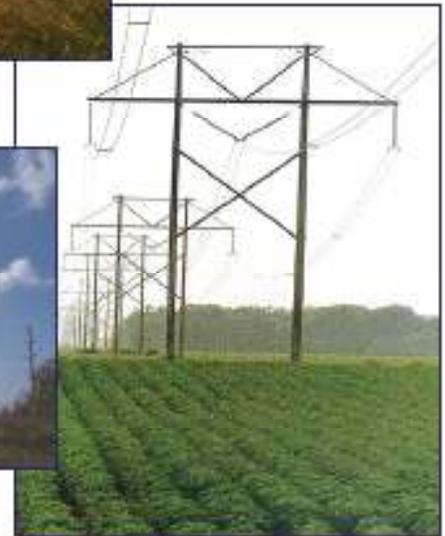
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The products and services offered through Hometown Connections include the full range of smart grid solutions, as well as financial and organizational management tools and consulting.

Hometown Connections serves as a unique catalyst for the exchange of information on what works best for public power utilities of every size. Based on experience with more than 800 public power utilities, the staff of Hometown Connections and its partners provide the support, consulting, facilitation, and information needed to maintain a high level of service quality and system performance. Staff and partners emphasize how business processes, administrative functions, and workforce development can

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MESO (Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma) is a registered affiliate of Hometown Connections.

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## **APPA** *(continued from page 8)*

built over a period of more than a century — "has made Americans more susceptible to outages caused by severe weather," the report said. Grid resilience "is increasingly important as climate change increases the frequency and intensity of severe weather," the report added, and it included a brief description of various ways to accomplish this.

Chattanooga EPB cited as a good example

The report cites EPB, the municipal electric utility in Chattanooga, Tenn., as an example of a utility that has reduced outages by

using automated feeder switches, which open or close in response to a fault and isolate the problem area.

"When a fault occurs, automated feeder switching immediately reroutes power among distribution circuits, isolating only the portion of a circuit where the fault has occurred," the report said. "The result is a significant reduction in the number of customers affected by an outage and the avoidance of costs typically borne by customers when outages occur."

The EPB of Chattanooga "estimated that power outages resulted in an annual cost of \$100

million to the community and installed automated fault isolation and service restoration technology," the report said. "During a July 2012 wind storm, automated switching in the distribution system instantly reduced the number of sustained outages by 50 percent to 40,000 customers. When coupled with information on customer outage provided by meters, the utility was able to avoid 500 truck rolls and reduce total restoration time by 1.5 days, representing almost \$1.5 million in operational savings and significant avoidance of costs to customers."

## Northeast Blackout – Ten Years Later

August 15, 2013 marked the tenth anniversary of the 2003 Northeast blackout which directly affected approximately 55 million Americans

On the occasion, APPA offered the following:

“In the wake of the 2003 Northeast blackout and as not-for-profit electric utilities that are owned and operated by the communities they serve, members of the American Public Power Association (APPA) remain steadfast in their commitment to protecting their critical infrastructure from cyber and physical attack.

“Unlike other industry sectors, the electric utility industry must comply with an extensive list of mandatory reliability standards, including cyber security standards. The electric and nuclear industries are the only critical infrastructures that have such man-

datory standards in place.

“As an industry, we continue to coordinate closely at high levels both amongst members of our industry and with the federal government on cyber and physical security to ensure reliable, safe, and secure electric service at the lowest cost possible to our customers. We will continue to utilize and strengthen those relationships as we respond to evolving threats.

“APPA and our members are placing, and will continue to place, the highest priority on ensuring the security and resiliency of our electric systems. “

Examples of APPA member efforts include:

- Strengthening our mutual aid network by using lessons learned from previous events and closely coordinating with the Department of Energy

(DOE), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and other federal entities so that the effects of future disasters are mitigated as fast as possible

- Helping our electric utilities to comply with the North American Electric Reliability Corporation’s (NERC) mandatory cyber security standards (already under their fifth revision)
- Actively advocating for cyber security legislation that will increase information sharing between the federal government and industry
- Expansion of the Electricity Sub-Sector Coordinating Council (ESSC) to have CEO’s from the electric industry coordinate with senior leadership within the federal government to ensure a secure and resilient electrical grid.

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