

## Inside...

Employment .....	4
Meet Hingham Light's new GM .....	5
Utility Conference & Expo.....	8-9
Meetings.....	16

## Marblehead continues outstanding safety record

When asked who's in charge of safety at Marblehead Municipal Light Department, Distribution Manager Doug Proto replies, "Everybody."



Bob Jolly and Doug Proto of Marblehead Light with a wall full of APPA safety awards.

Since the utility started entering the American Public Power Association's safety awards contest in 1987, Marblehead has had a perfect safety record, every year except 1993 when an employee sprained an ankle.

"That employee is no longer with us," said General Manager Robert Jolly, smiling. He attributes the almost perfect safety record to "a lot of commitment and a little bit of luck."

"No one wants to get hurt. If that were the case we wouldn't call them 'accidents', we'd call them 'intentions'," he said.

The Department's commitment to safety began with former manager Richard Bailey who served from 1971 to 1995. The commitment continued and expanded under Jolly who took over after Bailey retired.

Since 1996, the commissioners have held an annual safety cookout for the staff that includes an afternoon off and hot-

dogs and burgers. "It's about recognition more than anything," said Jolly. "It reinforces the goal not to break the winning cycle."

Jolly pointed out that employee safety is their number one priority. However, from a management point of view, good safety practices save money.

"We know that the cost of a cookout is short money when you think of worker's compensation and health care costs."

"All employees are invited, it's not just for line workers," said Proto. "The department is located in an old building with lots of stairs, and because we're small, everyone wears four hats. With jobs overlapping, safety has to go beyond the line crews."

Recently the department had defibrillators installed and, although the training was only mandatory for the line workers, all Department employees volunteered to participate.

Employees are all responsible for keeping up with equipment and standards. Jolly mentioned that one of the line workers, Kevin Snow, recently did research on his own regarding fire-retardant clothing.

The department's safety record was not accomplished during periods of inactivity. According to Jolly, the department has

*continued on page 7*

# Norwich goes extra mile for its non-English speaking customers.

*Presently, NPU has printed safety material available in Spanish, Creole and Mandarin Chinese.*

Monoksid Kabon: Creole for carbon monoxide, one of the new languages used by Norwich (Conn.) Public Utilities to communicate with their customers.

Located between two very successful casinos, the City of Norwich has seen a significant rise in the number of newcomers to the city with limited literacy in English. Both casinos operate on a 24/7 schedule requiring a combined total of 20,000 workers. These workers come from a variety of countries and cultures. Many are from Southeast Asia representing a wide variety of both spoken and written languages. The question was how to provide services to this growing population. Safety issues were a large concern, along with how to provide basic customer services, gain access to utility meters, and discuss overdue bills.

Working with other city agencies. NPU contracted with CyraCom International to provide both document and verbal translations. CyraCom provides translators in 150 different languages. The Customer Service

Center uses a dual-handset phone, which allows for two people to communicate continuously without passing a phone back and forth. Employees in the field carry cards that identify over 70 of the more commonly used languages. Once the customer points to the proper language, the employee can call directly to CyraCom, identify the language by number and quickly have an interpreter online. This is especially useful when there are safety issues and when a field service technician may need access to the home.

"I am especially impressed with the quick turn-around for written documents," said Lindsay Williams, manager of external affairs, "Along with safety information we are looking to get appropriate translations for our customers regarding our services and procedures. This is, after all, what a public utility should be about, going that extra mile to serve all their customers."

## Board of Directors

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NEPPA News Line is published once a month, 12 times a year by the Northeast Public Power Association, Suite 201, 100 Medway Road, Milford, MA 01757.

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Annual subscription rates:  
NEPPA member utilities, \$35 (first 20 subscriptions included in dues), non-members, \$53. Extra subscriptions available to utilities for \$17.50 and associate members for \$35.



The Northeast Public Power Association is an organization representing and serving consumer-owned electric utilities in New England.

# Customer service professionals honored at NEPPA Conference

Three customer service professionals were honored on March 26 at NEPPA's annual Customer Service Conference, held at the Yankee Candle Company in South Deerfield, Mass. The conference was attended by over 60 public power officials from around New England, and featured presentations by Paula Lyons,

a well-known consumer investigative reporter in the Boston area, and Derek Hubbard, wholesale sales and service manager for Yankee Candle. The award recipients were Anne

Olivari of Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant, Debra Healy of Wellesley Municipal Light Plant, and Diane McGrath of the Taunton Municipal Light Plant, all in Massachusetts.

Each honoree was presented with the Carol Tracey Award for Customer Service Excellence, a new award established by the NEPPA Board of Directors in 2003 in memory of Carol Tracey, a long-time NEPPA staff member who succumbed to cancer in 2003. In presenting the awards, Executive Director Pat Hyland cited Carol's outstanding service to NEPPA members during her career, and commended each recipient for their contributions to improving customer service in their own utilities, as reflected by their nominations for the new award. Carol Tracey's mother also attended the conference and was presented a copy of the award in commemoration of the occasion. The award recipients and their accomplishments are summarized below.

As the office administrator of a small municipal light department, **Anne Olivari** wears many hats. It is in the credit area, however, where she personifies the type of customer service that public power is known for. In a small community, assisting customers with credit problems demands the skills of a diplomat and the understanding of a doctor. Knowing many of these individuals on a social basis only complicates the task. Anne has the gift of making people comfortable while developing payment plans that balance the needs of the customer with those of the company. Most customers leave feeling much better about themselves and their situation. In her attention to personal problems, and her courtesy in dealing with customers under difficult circumstances, Anne Olivari represents the best of public power in her community.

**Debra J. Healy** is the office manager of the Wellesley Municipal Light Plant, a position that carries with it the responsibility for overseeing all customer service functions including the preparation and mailing of 10,000 electric bills, 10,000 sewer bills, and 10,000 water bills every month. In the six years that she has directed these activities, Debra has helped develop and implement a number of important changes in Wellesley's customer service activities, including employee cross training, automated meter reading and bill mailing, on-line and direct debit payments, and a new billing system that utilizes customer-friendly bills. Debra has demonstrated her qualities of leadership by her willingness to tackle any problem, no matter how difficult.

**Diane McGrath** has worked at the Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant for over 17 years. During her tenure, she has worked in all areas of customer service,

*Award recipients Anne Olivari, Debra Healy and Diane McGrath*

# Employment

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*Employment advertising in News Line is \$30 with a maximum of 50 words or is free to NEPPA members. Deadline for the next issue is April 23.*

## Superintendent

### City of Plattsburgh, NY

The City of Plattsburgh, NY is seeking a superintendent to manage the maintenance, repair and construction of the Municipal Lighting Department. Requires a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering plus five year's experience in electrical utility construction with two years of supervisory and management responsibilities. Experience will be considered on a year-for-year basis in lieu of educational requirements.

Applicants must have extensive knowledge of electrical principles and theories, safety regulations and the National Electrical Safety Code. Advanced knowledge is also required of system operations, maintenance and design of transmission and distribution substations and lines.

The annual salary range is \$60,754 - \$83,651 DOQ/E. Individuals interested in the position may contact John S. Brown, Manager, Plattsburgh Municipal Lighting Department, 6 Miller Street,

STE-I, Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901 for complete job description, detailed job requirements and application forms. Applications shall be accepted until position is filled.

## Marblehead Municipal Light Department Lineworker

The Marblehead Municipal Light Department is now accepting applications for the position of Lineworker. Applicants should possess a background in the operation of power generation and distribution systems equivalent to a trade school education and have experience in all phases of line work. Must currently hold and will maintain a Massachusetts Commercial Driver's License. Wages commensurate with experience and qualifications. A physical examination and pre-employment drug testing are required. Please direct all inquiries to: Mr. Douglas P. Proto, Distribution Manager, Marblehead Municipal Light Department, P. O. Box 369, Marblehead, Ma. 01945. (781) 631-0240. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

# Member Update

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## Thomas & Betts Corporation

The Thomas & Betts Corporation of 8155 T&B Boulevard, 2A-11, Memphis, Tenn., has joined NEPPA as an associate member. The contact person is Barry Minatra and he can be reached at (901) 252-5355 or fax at (901) 252-1331. Thomas & Betts is a Fortune 500 company based in Memphis, Tenn. and is engaged in the manufacture and supply of products to electric power utilities in generation, transmission and distribution areas of application across New England, the U.S., Canada and the world.

## POWER Engineers

POWER Engineers has joined NEPPA as an associate member. Their address is 106 Lafayette Street, Yarmouth, Maine 04096. The main contact is William Crowell and he can be reached at (207) 846-4949 or faxed at (207) 846-7744. POWER Engineers is a consulting engineering firm specializing in electrical utility, energy, facilities, and communications.

# Hingham has new general manager

After a yearlong vacancy, the Hingham (Mass.) Municipal Lighting Plant has named John G. Tzimorangas to fill the position of general manager.

The former director of station operations for Nstar was responsible for all substations on Nstar's entire system. After 17 years, he decided it was time for a change for two reasons.

As manager of a small light plant, he becomes involved in every phase of the operation. He likes not being pigeonholed into just one area. "It rounds me out," he said.

Photos of his second reason are hanging on the wall of his new office: His wife and twin five-year-old boys,

Christopher and George.

"Working for a large company can sometimes involve long days that often run into weekends," he said. "This position allows me to spend more quality time with my family."

Tzimorangas (pronounced without the T) has a degree in electrical engineering with a minor in power systems from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. A native of Brookline, Mass. and long time resi-

dent of South Sandwich, he was able to earn an MBA from Western New England College by attending classes at Otis Air Force Base in Hyannisport.

What he likes best about what he's doing now is the challenge of learning new areas of the industry every day and being accountable for everything involved in the running of the utility. "It's a good electric system with a staff of good, solid people," he said.

He is in the process of developing a five-year plan that will address the utility's two biggest challenges, growth and power costs. The utility's median rates are below those in neighboring towns served by investor-owned utilities and Tzimorangas's goal is to maintain the rates through power cost negotiations without sacrificing the reliability that Hingham customers have come to expect.

The utility is faced with a 30 percent load growth prediction, due to an influx of commercial customers. A campus style retirement community with 1750 units plus restaurants and shops is being built, and an old shipyard is being converted to townhouses and a half a million square feet of commercial retail space.

and has exemplified every personal characteristic that is associated with outstanding service to her utility's customers. Her friendly and helpful demeanor has always been recognized by customers who have been assured that she was there to assist them and resolve their problem. In the demanding world of liens processing, working with customers, lawyers and city officials, she has been a true professional, working to satisfy all of the parties in

these proceedings, while maintaining a friendly and helpful attitude at all times. In her role as company receptionist, she has also taken several initiatives to improve the service aspect of her position, while providing helpful assistance to other employees working in the customer service area. Her dedication and commitment to professional standards have been a hallmark of her service to the Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant.

*Tzimorangas*

## Customer Service Awards

*continued from page 3*

# NEPPA members recognized for accomplishments

Several managers of NEPPA member utilities were recently recognized by professional associations for outstanding accomplishments during the past year. They were publicly honored during ceremonies held on April 1st at various locations. In Vermont, the New England Society of Obnoxious Baseball Fans recognized John Morley III, manager of the Village of Orleans, as they presented him the Yan Kesuk Award during their annual



*Award recipients gather for group photo on April 1 at a local golf course. From left, John Clark, John Morley, Joe Dudek and David Sweetland.*

banquet. He was cited for his continuing support of New York baseball teams in the face of grave personal danger to himself and his family. He received the traditional gift of a Yankees tee shirt, which was, unfortunately, ripped from his body by unidentified members of his utility association as he returned home later in the evening.

In Connecticut, Jewett City's Director of Utilities Joseph Dudek was honored by the State Wastewater Association for his capital financing plan for the city's new treatment facility. Through his diligent efforts, Dudek has secured over \$25 mil-

lion in grants and loans for the plant, which is only expected to cost \$17 million. He plans to use the funds left over for professional development programs for himself and his staff. He received the Association's prestigious OPM Award (Other People's Money), along with a check for \$25,000 at ceremonies held at Foxwoods Casino.

Finally, in New Hampshire, the Chamber of Commerce presented John Clark, general manager of the Houlton (Maine) Water Company, with its highest award, even though he is from far away. He was recognized for his contributions to the state's economy for "transporting, housing and feeding large numbers of adults and children in New Hampshire for extended periods of time, while attending association meetings." He was also cited for "entertaining other public officials on his rental premises against their will." He received a bronze bust of the Old Man of the Mountains, which was, unfortunately dropped on its head during the ceremony.

While he was not an award recipient this year, the general manager of the North Attleborough Electric Department, David Sweetland, did receive honorable mention for the new MASSIG Award. He was nominated for his paperless record-keeping system which simplifies research on utility expenses and income by outside parties. Since it was implemented by North Attleborough in 2002, the system has been adopted by many other public entities.

NEPPA extends its congratulations to each of these individuals for their accomplishments and honors.

## Marblehead

*Continued from page 1*

*No one wants to get hurt. If that were the case we wouldn't call them 'accidents,' we'd call them 'intentions.'*

Bob Jolly, Manager

been on an aggressive building program involving two new substations and placement of all downtown wires underground. Staff has accomplished all this with some mutual aid from crews at neighboring Middleton Municipal Electric Department.

Independent contractor Jack Lenton conducted the Department's safety program until 2002. When he retired, the Department contracted with NEPPA for safety services. According to Jolly, the transition has been very good.

"Henny (NEPPA Safety Consultant Bob Henriksen) doesn't shove rules down their throats. He comes at them from the perspective that safety rules are advantages to insure the worker's own safety."

The Department also provides an active school safety program, which paid off recently when some grade school

children called the utility when they saw a kite caught in an overhead line. It was rewarding to hear how much they absorbed about safety in that program, said Proto.



*Marblehead line crew at work*

## ***APPA honors utilities for safety practices***

Seventy-one electric power utilities have earned American Public Power Association's 2003 Electric Utility Safety Award for safe operating practices. APPA Chairman Glenn Gannon presented the awards at APPA's E & O Conference held recently in San Antonio, Tex. The award honors utility employees and management for creating a safe operating environment.

More than 200 utilities entered the annual contest. Entrants were placed in categories according to their size and judged for the most incident-free records during 2003. The incidence rate, used to judge contest entries, is based on the number of work-related reportable injuries or illnesses and the number of worker-hours during 2003, as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The safety contest has been held annually for the last 44 years.

Winners from New England are:

**Group A** – Utilities with less than 15,000 worker-hours of exposure

First Place: Boylston (Mass.) Municipal Light Department

**Group B** – Utilities with 15,000 to 29,999 worker-hours of exposure

First Place: Enosburg Falls (Vt.) Electric Light Department; Paxton ( Mass.) Municipal Light Department; Ashburnham (Mass.) Municipal Light Plant

**Group C** – Utilities with 30,000 to 59,999 worker-hours of exposure

First Place: Marblehead (Mass.) Municipal Light Department

**Group D** – Utilities with 60,000 to 109,999 worker-hours of exposure

First Place: Wellesley (Mass.) Municipal Light Plant

# Utility Conference & Expo

NEPPA's 2004 Utility Conference and Expo will be New England's premier meeting for electric utility vendors, service providers, and public power officials. The conference will feature a one-day trade show with adjoining indoor and outdoor exhibit areas, hands-on demonstrations of the newest utility tools and equipment, and a reception and dinner for all exhibitors and conference participants.

The conference will begin on Tuesday morning, June 8, with a keynote speaker and the Expo will begin immediately following. On Wednesday morning, June 9, a special "Safety Summit" will be hosted by the NEPPA safety and training staff to review utility safety issues, OSHA regulations, safety manuals, national electric safety codes, enforcement actions, and accident investigations.

In addition to conference participants, public power officials from all NEPPA member utilities are invited to attend the Safety Summit at no cost.

## Vendor Demonstrations

Throughout the Tuesday Expo, exhibitors will conduct demonstrations of their products and services both inside and outside the exhibit hall. A schedule of these demonstrations will be made available to all registered attendees in advance of the Expo.

## Gift Raffles

All exhibitors have been invited to donate gifts which will be raffled during the Tuesday evening reception. Raffle winners will be selected by exhibitors from pre-printed name cards that will be given to each conference attendee who registers in advance. Attendees are encour-

aged to visit all vendor exhibits during the Expo, and become eligible for all vendor raffles. On Wednesday, following the Safety Summit, a \$500 cash raffle will be held. The winner will be selected from all full conference participants who are in attendance at that time.

## To Register

Go to [www.neppa.org](http://www.neppa.org) or contact Lori O'Donoghue at 508-482-5906, x 11, or [lodonoghue@neppa.org](mailto:lodonoghue@neppa.org)

Additional information will be forwarded upon receipt.

## To Reserve a Hotel Room

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn Boxborough for participants. Room rates are \$109 per single or double room, not including taxes. Reservations may be made by telephone at 978-263-8701. Please mention the NEPPA conference when calling.

**Reservation cut-off date is May 17, 2004.**

June 8 & 9, 2004  
Holiday Inn Boxborough  
Woods  
Boxborough, Massachusetts



# Schedule of Events

## Tuesday, June 8

**8 am Registration Opens**

(8 – 10 AM: Exhibitor set-up)

**9 am General Session**  
**Changing the Culture of**  
**Workplace Safety**  
*Lee Marchessault*, President  
 Workplace Safety Solutions, Inc.

**10 am - 5 pm Expo and Demonstrations**

**Noon Lunch**

**5 pm Vendor's Reception/Exhibit Hall**  
 Vendor Gift Raffles

**6 pm Dinner**  
 Guest Speaker: *Ken Walter*,  
 New England Patriots

## Wednesday, June 9

**8 am Breakfast for Conference Participants**

**9 am Safety Summit**  
 NEPPA Training Staff

- Bob Gautreau, Training Director
- Dave Fabrizius, Safety Director
- Bob Henriksen, Safety Trainer
- Linda Calderiso, Safety Trainer
- Lou Gabriele, Safety Trainer
- John Jankowski, Safety Trainer
- Bill Hesson, Safety Trainer

**11:30 am \$500 NEPPA Cash Raffle**  
 (Full conference participants only)

**Noon Conference adjourns**

### Conference Fees

	Members	Non-Members
Full Conference (June 8 –9, all meals)	\$175 per person	\$250 per person
Expo only (June 8, including meals)	\$100 per person	\$150 per person
Expo only (June 8, no meals)	\$50 per person	\$75 per person

*In addition to all meals on both days, full conference participants will be eligible to participate in a raffle on Wednesday for a \$500 cash prize, to be drawn at the conclusion of the Safety Summit. Participants must be present during the Wednesday raffle to win.*

## Public Utility Management Program fall program is planned

The fall session of NEPPA's Public Utility Management Program has been planned for October 4 -6 at the New England Center in Durham N.H. The fees for the fall program will be \$850 per student, which includes two nights lodging and all meals plus class materials.

The program includes the following topics and speakers. Each of the instructors has previously taught classes in the management program, and have been very highly rated by past students.



October 4-6  
New England Center  
Durham, N.H.

### **Critical Issues in Personnel Management**

*Rick Dacri, President, Dacri & Associates*

The most critical and difficult skills of personnel management will be reviewed in this session. An experienced human resource consultant will share his knowledge of federal personnel regulations, the compliance responsibilities of managers and supervisors, and the essential elements of a sound personnel management program.

### **Cutting Edge Technology for Public Power Managers**

*Bob Gautreau, NEPPA Training Director*

New technologies in the electric utility industry have fundamentally changed the way that electricity gets produced, delivered and sold to customers. In this session, a variety of new technologies affecting power generation, transmission, distribution, customer service and management will be reviewed, along with their implications for public power systems.

### **The Art of Leadership**

*Dan Pelley, President, Dan Pelley Educational Services*

Leadership skills are sometimes hard to define, but they can be identified and studied from a variety of different perspectives. In this session, specific leadership traits will be examined, along with different leadership styles. Several theories of leadership will also be reviewed, and leaders from a variety of professions and institutions will be analyzed to determine their common attributes.

### **Making Presentations to Public Boards and Decision-Makers**

*Rockie Blunt, President, Blunt Consulting Group*

One of the most essential skills for public managers in any industry is making effective presentations. It is also one of the most difficult. In this session, a professional trainer and consultant will provide practical advice and specific techniques on how to overcome presentation anxiety and improve presentation skills.

*To register or if you have any questions about the program, please contact Sheila Boone or Pat Hyland at the NEPPA office (508-482-5906) or go to [www.neppa.org](http://www.neppa.org).*

# TMLP updates web site to meet customer needs

*Not only can our customers find out about TMLP staff, service and programs, they can also report an unlit street light, calculate how much energy their new washer or dryer will use to determine how much those appliances will cost to operate, and how to get to our Weir Street business office.*

Cynthia Angus

Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant (TMLP) recently launched its updated website, making it more convenient for customers to access information about the local electric utility and the communities in its service territory. TMLP customers can also email TMLP managers as well as download service applications and requests on the interactive website.

Accessed by logging on to [www.tmlp.com](http://www.tmlp.com), this user-friendly website provides a variety of options for information about TMLP, staff, Commissioners, rates and services for residential and commercial electric and/or TMLP Online customers, community activities and links, customer communications, TMLP programs, appliance use and costs, street lights, and ways to prepare for weather-related emergencies.

According to TMLP Public Communications Manager Cynthia Angus, the site is designed to answer questions, provide instructions for such things as how to read your meter or set up internet service, and obtain information via easy-to-use links to Taunton-area transporta-

tion providers, schools, public safety, and community activities. Customers will also find that TMLP staff are more accessible through the interactive website via an email link to all staff and departments.

"Not only can our customers find out about TMLP staff, service and programs, they can also report an unlit street light, calculate how much energy their new washer or dryer will use to determine how much those appliances will cost to operate, and how to get to our Weir Street business office," Cynthia Angus said. "They can also link directly to Amtrak, Heart of Taunton, WJAR, and other sites that relate to the service area."

TMLP customers can also let TMLP know how they feel about the new site.

"This is the first of a three-phase project that will continue to evolve," she added. "Phase two will be even more interactive, while the third phase will be ongoing as the site is continually updated and enhanced. We anticipate that we will launch the second phase in the not-too-distant future."

## ***TMLP to build new substation***

Taunton Municipal Light Plant held a groundbreaking ceremony for its new The 115 x 13.8 kV electrical distribution substation in Raynham on March 25. Two 30 MVA transformers and switchgear will be installed within an enclosed area to provide electricity to the residential commercial and industrial customers.

Since 1993, TMLP has grown 50 percent in capacity demand and 37 percent in energy sales. A substation in this area will enhance its distribution system and provide a close, reliable electrical infrastructure to support and sustain continued growth.

The substation is scheduled to be completed by mid-summer, 2004.

# Committee Meetings

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April 15

Public Communications

10 am

NEPPA office

# Upcoming Events

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April 7

General Foreman's Roundtable

Radisson Hotel

Marlborough, Mass.

April 22-23

PURMA & PUMIC Annual Membership Meetings

Newport Marriott

Newport, RI

May 6-7 Spring Session

Supervisory Skills

Location TBA

June 8 – 9

Utility Conference And Expo

Boxborough Holiday Inn

Boxborough, Mass.

July 12

Benevolent Fund Charity Golf Tournament

Sterling Country Club

Sterling, Mass.

August 1-4

Congressional Staff Tour

Vermont

August 15 – 18

Annual Conference

Wyndham Hotel

Burlington, Vt.

September 11

NEPPA Annual Rodeo

Burlington, Vt.

October 4-6 Fall Session

Public Utility Management Program

New England Center

Durham, N.H.

October

Administrative Conference

Date & location to be announce

*Mark your  
Calendars!*

NEPPA

Annual Conference

August 15 -18

Burlington, Vt.

