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## Customer service professionals recognized at NEPPA conference

The Carol Tracey Customer Service Awards were presented to five customer service professionals at the 2006 Customer Service Conference held recently at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass.

(see page 2). This award is presented annually to public power employees who have demonstrated a commitment to delivering outstanding service to their customers. It is in memory of Carol Tracey, a long-time staff

services to Light Plant customers as well as the community at large. Judy not only performs all these tasks in a professional and efficient manner, but she puts her heart and soul into everything that she does, giving freely of her own time on many occasions. She exemplifies the idea of public service and does everything in her power to assure that Light Plant customers and the entire community receive the very highest standards of customer service.

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Customer Service award winners are (front) Don Morano, Carole Lyford, (rear) Concetta Chapman, Judy Meserve and Mary Illingsworth

member of the NEPPA association who died in 2003.

Recipients are as follows:

**Judy Meserve**  
**Peabody Municipal Light Plant**

Judy is the community relations and energy services director of the Peabody Municipal Light Plant. In this position, she is responsible for interacting with the general public and community leaders at all levels. Her accomplishments include a wide range of programs, communications, informational seminars and other

**NEPPA**  
 Presents the

**2006**

**EXPO & OPERATIONS  
 CONFERENCE**

June 6 & 7, 2006  
 Holiday Inn  
 Boxborough Woods  
 Boxborough, MA

*See pages 7-10 for details*



# Executive Director's Report

## Customer Service Lessons from the Hall of Fame

by Patrick Hyland



Text Caption...

The 2006 NEPPA Customer Service Conference was held in late March at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts. Once again, this annual event attracted a large number of public power professionals from throughout New England who came to meet their peers, share experiences, and - hopefully - pick up some ideas from individuals who are also in the customer service business, although in a very different industry.

The morning discussion was led by Jonathan Golding, a nationally-recognized organizational consultant and trainer who has worked with many large companies seeking to improve their customer service programs and strengthen their business procedures. Jonathan inspired the group to consider their communications and listening skills, while focusing on what he calls the "inverse pyramid," a way of looking at customer service which is different from the traditional management structure. He got

the entire audience talking with each other on a variety of topics, to illustrate how customer service is so closely related to the simple act of human conversation.

It was following the skill training session however, when we really got to see how customer service values and training can transform an organization. Following our luncheon and presentation of the Carol Tracey Awards, we were visited by the Chief Executive Officer and President of the Basketball Hall of Fame, John Doleva, who was joined by his Chief Human Resources Assistant Paul Lambert. Together, John and Paul described the Hall's *Guest First!* Program, which was developed in the past several years in conjunction with the opening of the "new" Basketball Hall of Fame. The program was developed to establish whole new standards of friendly, helpful service to every guest who enters the doors

*Continued on next page*

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

# NEPPA Lineworker School moves to Rhode Island

## *Appreciation presented to Taunton for hosting program*

After 14 years of hosting the NEPPA Apprentice Lineworker Program on its facilities, the Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant was formally thanked for its support and contributions to NEPPA at its March Board meeting. A plaque of appreciation was presented to Joe Blain, Taunton general manager, and his Board of Commissioners by Pat Hyland, NEPPA executive director, who thanked Taunton's Board and management for providing a home to NEPPA's oldest and most valuable training program.

Beginning in 2006, the program will be held at a new training facility constructed at the Pascoag Utility District in Pascoag, Rhode Island. The new facility

will also host NEPPA's other technical training classes for its members, including the metering and substation programs.

In presenting the award, Hyland thanked the Taunton officials for their longstanding support and assistance to NEPPA in many different areas.

"We are fortunate indeed to have such a loyal and supporting member as Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant," he said, "and for giving to us so generously their assistance and facilities for our meetings, roundtables and training programs. On behalf of the entire association, we want to say a sincere thank you for your support and hospitality over so many years."

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## **Executive Director's Report**

*Continued from  
previous page*

of the Hall. It starts with a management vision of what the guest experience should be, and then translates that into *Behavior in Action* expectations for every member of the Hall staff, whether full-time, part-time, seasonal or student interns. Some of the management vision statements state the program goals simply and directly:

- Make guests feel like guests in your house;
- Make the visit fun;
- Develop and show an appreciation for the game and its history;
- Bring energy to your job every day.

Within a short period of time, it became clear to all of us that the staff at the Hall of Fame had truly "bought in" to these expectations. They have come to view their roles not merely as employees but as hosts, delivering service with a smile and making sure that anyone who enters their building leaves with a good feeling about their experience. Their philosophy is best summed up by a quotation from their employee training program.

"Customer Service isn't a program or even a set of skills. It's an attitude, an obsession, a way of life, an on-going continuous improvement process. "

Very good advice to all of us in the business of serving customers.

# Around New England

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## *Groton provides efficient energy calculator*

Groton (Mass.) Electric Light Department has added an energy calculator to its website that Groton customers can use as a tool to determine the approximate energy consumption and cost for most home appliances. It includes a time- of-year multiplier and a size off-household multiplier, which, according to Office Administrator Kevin Kelly makes it much more accurate than other estimates of consumption.

The American Public Power Association has put a link to the calculator on their website and the utility has had several hits from around the country as well as from their own customers. Hits on this page of the website totaled 158 unique users for the month of March.

To view this feature go to <http://www.grotonelectric.org/calculate.php>.

*Tell us what's happening in your utility.*

*Send emails to [mharrington@neppa.org](mailto:mharrington@neppa.org). Photos need to be 300 dpi or higher for print publication.*

## *Chicopee lights comes to the aid of DPU*

Confusion over rubbish and recycling pickups, especially on holidays, is expected to be reduced soon with the announcement that residents will receive compact flyers with the year-long pickup schedule in their Chicopee Electric Light bills. The city's environmental programs coordinator announced that the city will now save about \$8,000 with this new program. Previously, the Department of

Public Works has spent thousands of dollars producing and printing a rubbish and recycling calendar. Starting with March billings, residents will receive a "yellow one-page simplified trash, recycling and yard waste collection schedule in their electric bills," said the official.

"We are very grateful to Chicopee Electric Light," he said.

## *BELD to offer kitchen challenge contest and TV show*

Braintree Electric Light Department (BELD) is looking for the Braintree kitchen most in need of an energy efficiency makeover.

The utility is encouraging Braintree residents to enter "BELD's Energy-Efficient Kitchen Challenge" for a chance to win a General Electric ENERGY STAR® labeled refrigerator (valued at up to \$1,000) from George Washington Toma TV & Appliance and \$1,000 in kitchen decorations, energy efficient lighting and installation.

BELD customers can enter the contest by writing an essay of 100 words or less explaining why their Braintree kitchen and

refrigerator are most in need of a makeover, along with a photo of the fridge and pictures of the overall kitchen.

The winner will be announced in early April and the makeover will be scheduled for one full day. The day's activities will be taped for a half-hour program to air on Braintree Community Access and Media, BELD Broadband channel 16. BELD Energy Advisor Ruth Slater will host the show. In addition to kitchen energy conservation, Slater will discuss the ENERGY STAR® appliance rating system.

# Website offers revised interactive customer program directory

NEPPA has recently updated and revised its interactive utility services listing located on [www.neppa.org](http://www.neppa.org). Conceived by the Public Communications Committee several years ago, this service lists the variety of programs participating NEPPA member utilities offer to their customers.

"The key to any business is timely, useful information," said Committee Chairman John Odell. "This database, which can be accessed through NEPPA's web site, allows NEPPA members to view customer service programs that are being offered by public power utilities across New England."

The site is now more user friendly, features enhanced graphics and contains more information. Information is easier to access because it is listed by category of service, by utility and by state. A search engine will quickly lead the viewer to specific information. Some of the categories listed are payment options, special rates, residential and commercial programs, and various community programs as well as a section on policies and procedures used

in the daily operations of the utility.

For example, if someone is interested in learning about direct billing, this service will allow you to quickly see who already has a successful direct billing program as well as provide a link to that utility's program contact person.

"Why re-invent the wheel when one of our public power colleagues has already done it?" said Odell.

NEPPA member utilities who wish to add their utility service information to the site can call NEPPA (508) 482-5906 or email [mharrington@neppa.org](mailto:mharrington@neppa.org) to get a user name and password. The format for uploading information has also been updated and is now much easier to use.

This is one of the steps NEPPA is taking to provide more information to our member utilities electronically. The Public Communications Committee welcomes comments and suggestions on how we can expand and improve on this important information source.

*Why re-invent the wheel when one of our public power colleagues has already done it?*

John Odell

## ***Benevolent Fund Golf Tournament***

**Format: Florida-style scramble**

**Fee: \$80 per person**

(includes greens fees, carts, prizes, continental breakfast and lunch)

Proceeds from this annual tournament are donated to the New England Public Power Benevolent Fund, established to aid public power employees or their families who are facing financial difficulties due to disabling accidents, extended illness, or tragic loss of life.

Details are being mailed and more information can be found at [www.neppa.org](http://www.neppa.org). Sponsorship opportunities are available.



*Tuesday, July 11, 2006  
9:00 a.m. shotgun start  
Heritage Country Club  
Charlton, Mass.*

# Safety & Training Update

## *Vermont officials briefed on safety and environmental regulations*

A one-day workshop on utility workplace safety and environmental regulations was held on March 16th and attended by NEPPA members from 9 Vermont public power systems. The workshop, hosted by NEPPA, was designed to provide an overview of the occupational safety and health regulations and environmental regulations that public utilities are subject to in Vermont. The workshop was held at Johnson State College and covered a wide variety of topics presented by different state officials.

Van-George Belanger, Compliance Chief of the Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration (VOSHA), reviewed all of the state standards relating to the electric utility industry, and the obligations of municipal officials with respect to compliance activities and employee training. David Morse, from the state Department of Labor, discussed the principal types of workplace injuries in the electric industry, and provided information on the Department's WorkSAFE Program, which offers assistance to employers in implementing solutions to

their compliance responsibilities. Judy Mirro and John Daley of the Department of Environmental Conservation, covered regulations on waste management, the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, Right to Know, Spill Response and Toxic Substances. (Presentations can be found on the NEPPA website).

Officials from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns also attended the workshop and provided information on training programs offered through their Group Insurance Program. Training is offered free of charge for any Vermont municipality that is a member of the insurance program.

The workshop was planned following discussions between NEPPA training staff and Vermont public power members early in 2006. Due to the wide range of regulations governing municipal utilities and electric cooperatives in the state, NEPPA was requested to provide more extensive training and informational programs covering these topics. Additional workshops on specific Vermont regulatory issues will be planned in the future.



## **Wakefield lineworker completes NEPPA UTD program**

*Edward Gaudreau, left, a 1st Class Lineworker for the Wakefield Municipal Gas & Light Department (WMGLD), recently completed NEPPA's Utility Technician Development program. The four-year program included comprehensive training in electrical theory, basic engineering with written exams and hands-on training, and practical work, including pole installation, conductor installation, transformers, and the maintenance of underground and overhead wires. Congratulating Ed is WMGLD Electric Superintendent Dan Flynn.*



**NEPPA**  
*Presents the*  
**2006**  
**EXPO & OPERATIONS**  
**CONFERENCE**

June 6 & 7, 2006  
Holiday Inn Boxborough Woods  
Boxborough, MA

# Expo and Conference Information

*Questions?  
Contact Lori  
O'Donoghue at  
508-482-5906 x11, or  
lodonoghue@neppa.org*

## ***Expo and Conference Information***

Northeast Public Power Association's 2006 Expo and Operations Conference 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 6, with Jimmy James, a nationally known safety and training consultant for electric utilities. The exhibit hall will open immediately following.

A reception will follow the Trade Show at 5 PM with dinner served at 6 PM. Following dinner, we are pleased to present as our guest speaker Joe Kurmaskie, the "Metal Cowboy," who has traveled the world on his bicycle. Joe will entertain us with stories and pictures of his cross-country bike tour in 2005, traveling 4,000 miles across America with his two young sons.

On Wednesday morning, June 7, a Safety Forum for lineworkers will be presented by the NEPPA training staff. Vendors as well as utility personnel are invited to participate.

## ***Sponsorship Opportunities***

We welcome sponsors for meals and other events during the conference. Please see enclosed information on sponsorship opportunities. To discuss, please call Lori O'Donoghue at 508-482-5906 x11.

## ***To Reserve a Hotel Room***

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn Boxborough for participants. Room rates are \$117 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.

**The room reservation cut-off date is May 5, 2006.**



# Schedule of Events

## *Tuesday, June 6*

- 8 am**            **Registration**
- 8 - 10 am**       **Exhibitor Set-up**  
(or on Monday pm)
- 9 am**            **General Session**  
Keynote Speaker  
Jimmy James
- 10 am - 4 pm**   **Expo and Vendor  
Demonstrations**
- Noon**            **Lunch**
- 4 pm**            **Vendor Prize Raffles**  
Exhibit Hall
- 5 pm**            **Reception**  
Exhibit Hall
- 6 pm**            **Dinner**  
**Guest Speaker**  
**Joe Kurmaskie**  
Author, *Metal Cowboy*  
**In Search of America:  
Crossing the USA on a  
bicycle**

## *Wednesday, June 7*

- 8 am**            **Breakfast**  
Conference Participants
- 9 - 11 am**       **Safety Forum**  
NEPPA Training Staff  
  
Current safety issues  
will be addressed.
- 11:30 am**       **Cash Raffle**
- Noon**            **Conference adjourns**

## *Vendor Demonstrations*

During the expo, selected exhibitors will perform demonstrations of equipment and tools.

## *Vendor Gift Raffles*

All exhibitors have been invited to donate gifts which will be raffled at the conclusion of the expo. 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 encouraged to visit all vendor exhibits during the Expo, and become eligible for all vendor raffles. On Wednesday, following the Safety Forum, a \$500 cash raffle will be held. The winner will be selected from all full conference participants who must be present to win.



# NEPPA 2006 Expo and Operations Conference Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## CONFERENCE FEES:

	<b>Members</b>	<b>Non-Members</b>
Full Conference (June 6-7, all meals)	\$150 per person	\$225 per person
Expo Only (June 6, including meals)	\$100 per person	\$150 per person
Expo Only (June 6, no meals)	\$50 per person	\$75 per person
Safety Forum Only (June 7 only)	\$25 per person	\$50 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 Forum. Participants must be present during the Wednesday raffle to win.

## METHOD OF PAYMENT

Please invoice (members only)

Check enclosed

Please charge my  Mastercard

Visa  American Express

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (required)

Mail credit card receipt to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Send registration form to: Lori O'Donoghue, Northeast Public Power Association,  
100 Medway Road, Milford, MA, 01757 or fax to 508-482-0932

## **Customer Service Awards**

*Continued from page 1*

### **Carole Lyford**

#### *New Hampshire Electric Cooperative*

Carole has been employed by the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative for over 31 years. Throughout her career, she has provided exceptional service to members in all areas of utility operations. She is the first person that members see when they come into the office. She greets members, takes payments, resolves issues or finds the appropriate staff person to assist. She is, for most members, the face of the organization and takes great pride in being able to resolve member issues and answer questions in a friendly and most professional manner. Her joy in meeting and greeting members is obvious to all who drop by the building, and many members ask for her when she is not at the front desk. She represents public power's friendly, helpful customer service to everyone that she meets.

### **Concetta Chapman**

#### *Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant*

Connie Chapman is the Customer Service Supervisor for the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant. In this role, she supervises all customer service clerks, oversees monthly billing of 10,000 accounts, does budget plans, bills large commercial and industrial customers, and works directly with 50 key accounts. She has also taken it upon herself to work with the local Fire Department to create a critical care customer list, spearheaded Hingham Light's first Open House during public power week, and worked with the school system to initiate an electrical safety poster contest for elementary school students. Connie goes out of her way to help each and every customer who calls or visits the Light Plant, and always does so with a kind and courteous demeanor that customers appreciate. She is an exceptional customer service professional in all aspects of her responsibilities.

### **Mary Illingsworth**

#### *Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company*

Mary is responsible for providing services to 17 municipal light departments and their customers seeking information on energy conservation services and programs. Mary organizes a multi-faceted informational and educational conservation program for municipal light departments, including answering daily calls for assistance, explaining appliance and conservation incentives, and working closely with energy auditors to schedule individual audits. With the rise of electric prices in the past year, Mary responded to nearly 700 customer inquiries requesting conservation services in the last five months of 2005. She serves her municipal customers as well as their retail customers with efficiency, expertise and understanding.

### **Don Morano**

#### *Danvers Electric Division*

Don Morano is the distribution supervisor of the Danvers Electric Division and has been with the Division for over 30 years. His knowledge and experience have played a significant role in the utility's program of rebuilding the entire distribution system. He has also worked diligently with customers to ensure a smooth transition for each of the major upgrades that have been accomplished. He consistently goes above and beyond the call of duty to ensure quality, accuracy and a personal touch. He has also, throughout his 30 years of service, been a loyal employee to his Division, and does not rest until the job is done and the customer is happy. He represents public power's highest professional and ethical standards, and is a truly indispensable employee.

NEPPA congratulates all the recipients on their well-deserved awards.

# 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 21.*

## *Kennebunk Light and Power District*

### **Controller/Senior Accountant**

Kennebunk Light & Power District has an outstanding opportunity for a Controller/Senior Accountant. Reporting to the General Manager, this position is responsible for providing the financial and accounting oversight of the District. You would be responsible for ensuring that all financial statements and information comply with generally accepted accounting principles; maintaining proper accounting, financial controls and financial reports; and ensuring full compliance with all regulatory agencies.

The right individual should possess a BS in accounting or finance with 5-10 years of progressive experience in accounting and finance. You should be experienced with all aspects of accounting, budgeting and planning and internal controls. The ideal candidate is an experienced business manager with excellent analytical, problem solving skills; knows how to and enjoys running the numbers, but knows how to run out back into the shop and get the facts; and is willing to pitch in to help out in our small operation. You must have a customer service orientation, as you will be regularly interfacing with the public, government agencies, related business and financial institutions, and fellow employees. For the right individual, we offer a flexible work week, competitive compensation/benefit package, and an opportunity to contribute in all aspects of the business. If you would like to hear more about this opportunity, please send your resume and salary history, in confidence, to:

Rick Dacri, Dacri & Associates, LLC  
114 Lafayette Center, Kennebunk, ME  
04043, 207-985-8401 rick@dacri.com

## *Holden Municipal Light Department*

### **Superintendent**

HMLD is seeking qualified individual for the position of Light Department Superintendent. Qualified candidates should have experience in electric utility line construction, operations and maintenance, budget, electric distribution/transmission systems. Responsibilities include supervising line crews in construction and maintenance of overhead and underground electrical systems; substation maintenance, meter reading and repairs/testing of related equipment. Send resumes to Holden Town/Light Manager, 1204 Main Street, Holden, MA 01520 or call (508) 829-0225 for additional information. AA/EOE

## *Stowe Electric Department*

### **First or Second Class Lineworker**

The Town of Stowe Electric Department has a position opening for a Lineworker. Will consider First or Second Class applicants. Seeking a self-motivated individual with certified journeyman training, capable of working in a small department team environment. The successful candidate will work under the daily direction of a crew leader and will be expected to perform all phases of distribution work including general line construction, substation/distribution maintenance, and work on energized conductors and equipment up to 12,470 volts. Must be available for on-call rotation nights and weekends.

Stowe Electric Department offers a competitive benefits package and is an EOE. Please send resumes attn: Ellen Burt, General Manager, Stowe Electric Department, PO Box 190, Stowe, VT 05672

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## Member Notes

### **Power Systems Integrity, Inc.**

Power Systems Integrity, Inc. of 100 Otis St., 6A, Northborough, Mass. has joined NEPPA as an associate member. They are manufacturers of Smart Sensors and other IED for electric power distribution applications. The main contact is Harold Marsden and he can be reached at (508) 393-1655 or faxed at (508) 393-1887.

# Upcoming Events

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April 3 – 5

Public Utility Management Program  
Spring Session, Durham, N.H.

April 20 - 21

PURMA/PUMIC Annual Meeting  
Woodstock, Vt.

June 6 – 7

Expo & Operations Conference  
Holiday Inn, Boxborough, Mass.

July 11

Benevolent Fund Golf Tournament  
Heritage Country Club  
Charlton, Mass.

August 20 – 23

Annual Conference  
Radisson Hotel, Plymouth, Mass.

September 15

Reality of Rate Increases Roundtable  
Kennebunk Inn  
Kennebunk, Maine

October 2 – 4

Public Utility Management Program  
Fall Session, Durham, N.H.

December 8

Annual Membership Meeting  
site TBD



*For a complete listing  
of public power events  
regionally and nationally,  
visit our calendar at [www.  
neppa.org](http://www.neppa.org)*