



KMU DISPATCH

NOVEMBER 19, 2019

FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

New Reporting Requirements for Employers of CDL Drivers

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has issued new requirements that affect any municipality with employees that hold Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL).

The FMCSA has developed an information clearinghouse to better ensure that drivers cannot conceal drug and alcohol violations by moving on to the next job, perhaps in a different state. Violation records maintained in the clearinghouse will “follow” the driver. Employers, or prospective employers, will be required to “query” the clearinghouse.

This requirement applies to all drivers who hold a CDL *and* use it for your job or may be required to use it on the job. In short, it applies to anyone in your CDL drug and alcohol testing program.

Effective **January 6, 2020**, you are required to be registered and participating in the FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. **There are no exemptions for municipalities** because you are required to comply under 40 CFR 382 and Part 40 of the Drug and Alcohol Testing Rules.

How this affects you is as follows:

1. You **MUST**, before hire, query the clearinghouse **and** send a manual letter to the previous employers for the past three years, asking for drug and alcohol violations. This must continue until January 6, 2023. (After January 6, 2023, you are only required to query the database; the letter will be no longer needed.)

[see CDL CLEARINGHOUSE on page 2](#)

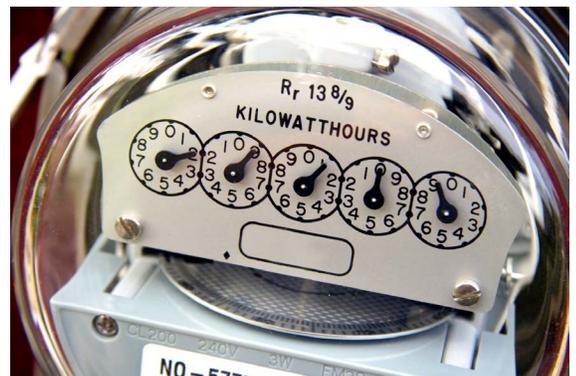
LEGISLATIVE COORDINATING COUNCIL

LCC Makes Choice for Phase II of Electric Rate Study

A Los Angeles based consultant has been selected to conduct the second phase of the rate study of Kansas electric utilities. The Legislative Coordinating Council (LCC) chose AECOM Technical Services Inc. at their meeting on November 4 to study the items spelled out in Substitute for Senate Bill 69 that was passed in the 2019 Kansas Legislature.

AECOM submitted a \$250,000 bid to do the second half of the electric rate study. The first half of the study is already underway and being conducted by London Economics, Inc. based in Boston, Massachusetts. The first half is due to the Kansas Legislature in early January and the second half next summer.

[see RATE STUDY on page 2](#)



CDL CLEARINGHOUSE (continued)

2. As an employer, you are required to enter data regarding drug and alcohol violations into the clearinghouse. This includes, but is not limited to, violation, and Substance Abuse Professional program completion.
3. Once every 365 days, you are required to query the database to ensure no drug or alcohol violations have occurred. This becomes more of an issue if an employee works two CDL required jobs, but can also (theoretically) occur if a DWI occurs out-of-state and the driver fails to notify MN DVS or you.
4. **There is a fee involved per query and it is not optional.** Currently, the fee is set at \$1.25/query. You are allowed to run a limited query, but if a violation occurs, you are required to get a full detailed query. You will not be charged a second time if the detailed query is required. (The system is now set up to run batch queries, so employers with a large number of DOT covered employees may find that helpful.)
5. **Drivers are required to register to give consent for**

the queries. If consent is refused, the driver must be removed from safety sensitive duties. There is a paper consent form on the FMCSA website for the limited query if you choose to use it. If a full detailed query is required, a second consent must be given.

6. Data must be entered by the employer reporting a failed drug and alcohol test, reporting for duty with alcohol in system, etc., regardless if the CDL holder has given consent or registered for the system. If the driver has registered, they will receive an email or electronic communication; if they have not, the clearinghouse will send a letter to their mailing address as listed on their CDL.
7. The system is now open for registration. Many have found the registration process problematic. We suggest you familiarize yourself with it early.

For more information or to register in the clearinghouse, go to: <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/>, and there are FAQs listed on the site.

RATE STUDY (continued)

With AECOM's \$250,000 bid, the total cost of the electric rate study will come to around \$559,000. Those costs will be assessed to the state's electric utilities according to percentages calculated by the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC). In a November 13 docket filing, the KCC calculated that the cost to the state's three largest municipal utilities will be 7.12 percent for Kansas City BPU, 0.76 percent for Garden City, and 0.41 percent for Gardner.

A long list of questions to be addressed in Phase II of the study were spelled out in Sub SB 69. Those issues include the cost of electric vehicle charging stations, the extent to which transmission investments have impacted retail rates, and whether electric rates have harmed economic development efforts in the state. Of particular note to municipal utilities is the question "how [do] rate increases or the associated rising costs of Kansas investor-owned electric public utilities impact the retail electric rates of Kansas electric cooperatives and municipal utilities."



KANSAS MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Annual PPO Workshop Recap

Power plant operators from Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri ventured to Russell last week for the annual KMU Power Plant Operator Workshop. The 3-day workshop consisted of a mix of operations, maintenance, and supervisor classroom instruction and plant tours. In addition to the classroom and hands on training, many attendees commented that the ability to network with other operators was a very worthwhile portion of the event.

The workshop kicked off with a tour of the Purefield Ingredients Ethanol Plant and the North Energy Center. During the tour, workshop attendees were able to learn about the daily operations of an ethanol plant and its relationship with the power plant next door.

The first full day of the workshop consisted of classroom sessions in the morning, followed by class and hands-on sessions at power plants in Russell, Stockton and Hoisington. The workshop enabled the over 90 attendees to expand their knowledge of generation management and operations best practices. Several participants noted that they had a hard time choosing which sessions to attend as they all covered topics that were beneficial for them. Many attendees also shared that the workshop speakers were top notch, and the workshop is better each year they attend.

Noteworthy sessions included topics on engine operation and maintenance, a turbine failure case study, electrical fundamentals,

[see PPO WORKSHOP on page 4](#)



Please join us in extending a heartfelt thank you to the following host cities, as well as workshop speakers and sponsor organizations:

- Chemtreat
- City of Russell*
- City of Stockton*
- City of Hoisington*
- City of Winfield*
- Exline, Inc.*
- Farabee Mechanical*
- Flint Hills Technical College*
- Foley Power Solutions*
- Kansas Municipal Energy Agency*
- Kansas Power Pool*
- Mid-States Energy Works, Inc.*
- Novatech*
- Power Plant Compliance*
- Power Plant Services*
- Sys-Kool*
- Wheeler World Inc.

*KMU member or associate member

PPO WORKSHOP (continued)

SCADA operations, RICE-NESHAP recordkeeping, how to train new operators, and many more. The workshop was capped off on Thursday with an inspiring session by Lieutenant Colonel Dave Young of the Kansas Air National Guard. Lt. Col. Young provided insights into how errors occur. The presentation included riveting information on a number of catastrophes including Chernobyl and the Columbia Shuttle disaster.



KMU and the Power Plant Committee would like to thank the host members of Russell, Stockton and Hoisington, as well as the workshop's sponsors and speakers, for their generous support in making this year's workshop a success. It is only through the continued support of time, energy, and resources that KMU can put forth the training events requested by our membership. KMU membership is YOU.

The next PPO Workshop will be offered November 17-19, 2020 in Pratt. Please mark your calendars now and keep an eye on future editions of the weekly Dispatch. If you would like additional information about this workshop, or job training opportunities for generation personnel, please contact Brian Meek: bmeek@kmunet.org.

KANSAS CITY BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

BPU Enhances Customer Service with the Help of a Chatbot

The Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is making its customer service easier and more convenient with the addition of a chatbot to their website. Now visitors to www.bpu.com can get immediate answers to common questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, customers who are in a hurry can use the chatbot to quickly find the information they are looking for instead of scrolling through the website. Over the next several months, as more customers utilize the chatbot, BPU



U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Bureau of Reclamation Announces Fiscal Year 2020 Grant Funding

The Bureau of Reclamation announced that it is making grant funding available under the WaterSMART Drought Response Program to develop and update drought contingency plans that will build long-term resiliency to drought.

Eligible applicants for funding include states, tribes, irrigation districts, water districts, or other organizations with water or power delivery authority located in the 17 Western United States (including Kansas) and Hawaii.

This funding opportunity will provide up to \$200,000 per agreement to develop new drought plans or update existing plans. In general, recipients must match the funding with at least 50% funding from a non-federal source. In exceptional circumstances, a reduction or waiver of the non-federal cost-share may be considered. Work must be completed within two years of the funding award.

Applications for fiscal year 2020 funding are due Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2020. Learn more at www.grants.gov by searching for funding opportunity number BOR-DO-20-F003.

For more information about the WaterSMART program, visit Reclamation's website at www.usbr.gov/watersmart and the Drought Response Program at www.usbr.gov/drought.

hopes to continually enhance the functionality to be more intuitive and helpful.

The benefits of the new BPU chatbot include:

- Quick answers to common questions
- 24/7 convenience
- Website navigation help
- Enhanced resolution response
- Fast self-service experience

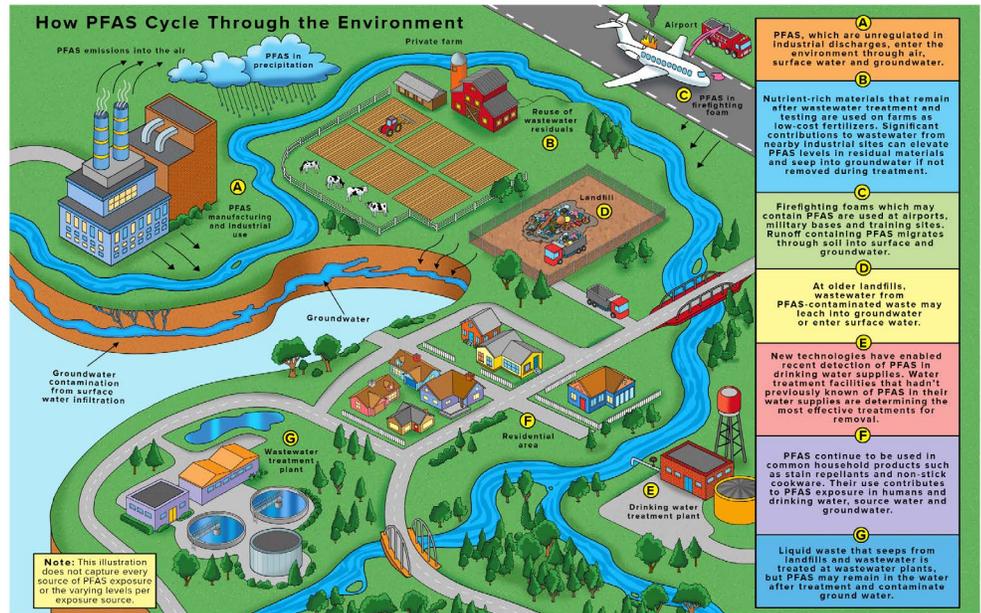


AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION

PFAS in Brief: New AWWA Booklet Helps Unpack Issues

With PFAS capturing headlines, prompting new state regulations and even inspiring a major motion picture, the American Water Works Association has created a simple document to help water professionals explain the issue to public officials, media and concerned citizens.

The 16-page [AWWA Briefing on PFAS](#) includes information about sources of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, removal and treatment options, cost estimates, and an overview of state regulatory actions and AWWA’s advocacy efforts before the U.S. Congress. The brief is available for download on AWWA’s online [PFAS Resource Page](#).



 American Water Works Association

“PFAS are increasingly a topic of public concern, particularly when they are discovered in community drinking water supplies,” said David LaFrance, AWWA CEO. “AWWA provides this report – and many other resources related to PFAS – to help our communities understand and confront this latest challenge to water quality.”

Listed in the brief are AWWA’s guiding principles on PFAS regulation: commitment to public health protection, fidelity to scientific process, protection of source water and investment in research. Other resources available on AWWA’s [PFAS Resource Page](#) include fact sheets, treatment and removal cost estimates and a colorful infographic of how PFAS cycle through the environment.

AMERICAN PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION

APPA Lineworkers Rodeo Coming Soon to Kansas City

The American Public Power Association’s (APPA) Lineworkers Rodeo and Engineering & Operations Conference are both quickly approaching. Set in Kansas City, the Rodeo will be held April 17-18 and the Engineering & Operations Conference will be held April 19-22. Mark your calendars now to attend.

The APPA Lineworkers Rodeo is the foremost showcase of public power lineworker skill and knowledge, where the best journeyman and apprentice lineworkers compete for

professional recognition. This is the first time that the event will be held in Kansas.

The APPA’s Engineering and Operations Conference is an annual meeting of utility professionals in the areas of communications and control, environmental, generation and fuels, safety, transmission and distribution, system planning and supply management. More information about the conference is available at <https://www.publicpower.org/event/engineering-operations-conference>.



AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION

AWWA Survey: Compensation Increases Continue in Water and Wastewater Utilities

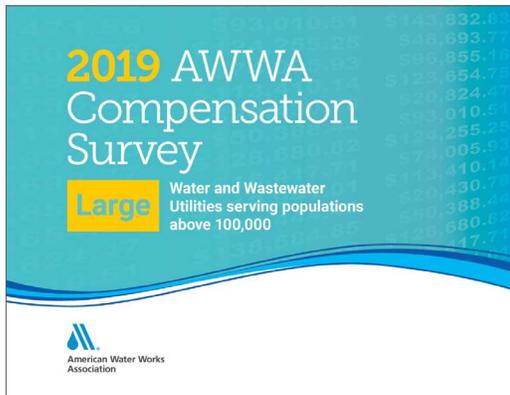
Average salaries for water and wastewater utilities increased for a second consecutive year from 2018 to 2019, according to the 2019 Water and Wastewater Utility Compensation Survey recently released by the American Water Works Association (AWWA).

Based on a comparison from 2018 to 2019, large utilities' (population served above 100,000) salaries across all job roles increased 1.7%, medium-sized utilities' (population served 10,000-99,999) salaries increased 0.8%, and small utilities' (population served less than 10,000) salaries increased 1.9%. Actual 2019 increases were higher than anticipated in mid-2018.

Between 2017 and 2018, according to the 2018 AWWA survey, salaries increased 5.1% for large utilities, 2.8% for medium utilities and 1.7% for small utilities.

Water utilities require a broad spectrum of skills in an ever-changing industry, said David Rager, AWWA Immediate Past-President and principal of Rager Management Consulting. "Engineering design, construction management, scientific research, operations management, information technology – these are just a few examples of the skills needed," he said. "An individual can find a lifetime of learning while working within a water or wastewater utility."

The 2019 survey results are based on input from 676 organizations through March 1 of this year, representing more than 30,100 employees. Detailed survey results addressing salaries, salary ranges and compensation practices are available for purchase in separate versions for large, medium and small utilities on AWWA's website.



According to 2019 survey results, compiled by Newport Group, average salaries differed among large, medium and small utilities depending on organization complexities and job responsibilities. Larger utilities, on average, paid 18% more than medium or small systems across all job categories in the survey.

Other 2019 survey results include:

- Merit increases: compared to 2018, 50.3% of organizations plan on similar increases for 2019; 12% plan on higher increases; 4.8% plan on lower increases; 8.5% plan on no increases.
- Projected 2020 salary increases: projections average 3.13 for staff overall; this includes 3.09% for executives, 3.01% for managers and 3.04% for supervisors.
- Staffing levels: of the survey respondents, 61.6% remained consistent levels, 41.2% increased levels, 15.1% hired additional contract/seasonal or temporary labor; 2.2% implemented reduction-in-force; 4.8% modified work schedules and/or expectations; 8.8% outsourced work previously done internally.
- Cost control: top strategies in 2019 include healthcare plan changes, training and continuing education; 28.5% of respondents are addressing healthcare plans with changes impacting co-payments, deductibles, eligibility and employee premium cost-sharing.
- Performance evaluation: 20.4% of respondents are addressing changes to the performance evaluation process.
- Training: utilities are shifting the focus to cross-training to address aging workforce issues, staff reductions and budgetary constraints.

"Water utilities are a critical part of public health," Rager said. "The health of residents and commercial success of businesses in a community are dependent upon the successful operation of the water and wastewater utility. Regardless of an individual's interests, there are opportunities for them in water and wastewater utilities in all parts of the world."



EVENT CALENDAR

November 20, 2019

Rates & Financial Planning Workshop

Cimarron, Kansas

November 26, 2019

Water Rate Checkup Tool Workshop

Garden City, Kansas

December 2, 2019

Rates & Financial Planning Workshop

Junction City, Kansas

December 2, 2019

KanCap Elected Officials Training

Junction City, Kansas

December 16, 2019

Groundwater Wells - O&M

Medicine Lodge, Kansas

December 17, 2019

Distribution System Rules

El Dorado, Kansas

January 14, 2020

Asset Management (AM KAN Work!)

El Dorado, Kansas

January 15, 2020

Rates & Financial Planning Workshop

El Dorado, Kansas

January 21, 2020

KanCap Elected Officials Training

El Dorado, Kansas

January 22-23, 2020

T&D Switching Workshop

McPherson, Kansas

January 22, 2020

Water Rate Checkup Tool Workshop

McPherson, Kansas

January 27, 2020

Distribution System Rules

Chanute, Kansas

January 28, 2020

Surface Water Treatment

Emporia, Kansas

February 11, 2020

Asset Management (AM KAN Work!)

Hays, Kansas

February 12, 2020

Rates & Financial Planning Workshop

Hays, Kansas

AMERICAN PUBLIC
POWER ASSOCIATION

THE ACADEMY

2019 | Webinars

Register now for Webinars

Learn from your office! Individual webinars are \$109 (or sign up for a series at a discounted rate). Register today at www.PublicPower.org under Education & Events. Non-members can enter coupon code **KMU** to receive the member rate.

Understanding Construction Claims (Nov. 4-18)

- Two webinars focused on understanding, managing and defending against utility project construction claims.

Wireless Pole Attachments (Nov. 5-Dec. 3)

- Three webinars covering the latest legal and regulatory developments and key issues at the federal, state, and local levels.

Disaster Planning Series (Nov. 13-Dec. 11)

- Three webinars focused on the challenges utilities face when working to secure and retain federal grant funding.



CAREER CENTER

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER

City of Olathe

WATER PLANT OPERATOR I

City of Ottawa

ASSISTANT PLANT SUPERINTENDENT

Leavenworth Waterworks

WATER TREATMENT OPERATOR

Leavenworth Waterworks

ELECTRIC UTILITY LINEMAN

City of Lindsborg

To post a classified ad to our Career Center page, please email text to

kmu@kmunet.org.

CAREER CENTER

Communications:

Do you have important news or photos from a city event? Send materials to dnisly@kmunet.org.