WH Solar continues to shine and evolve

Previously, Wright-Hennepin’s (WH) subsidiary company WH Solar had only delved into community solar gardens such as the two located in Rockford at the cooperative’s headquarters.

But in staying true to the cooperative spirit of fostering your community, WH will soon be providing 67 percent of the City of Rockford’s electric energy needs with solar energy from panels housed on otherwise unusable land in the area.

While WH has been busy getting its Medina-located solar community fully subscribed, its accord with the City of Rockford for a first-ever “Bantam” solar pilot project admittedly took a “bit of imagination,” in trying to sync-up the city’s and WHs renewable goals, according to WH President and CEO Mark Vogt.

“WH is delighted to be a part of another groundbreaking renewable energy project,” Vogt said. “Assuming this pilot project is successful, we plan to roll out similar offerings in the coming months.”

Providing 67 percent of the city’s electric energy needs with solar energy is the focal point of the agreement, which will result in long-term cost savings over the regular projected rate for the city and the cooperative over the 25-year term of the contract.

Rockford Mayor Renee Hafften lauded the city’s “progressive and forward thinking” in regards to new and specialized projects, and said, “Keeping this project local to our city and visible to our community was important.”

WH Solar will host a community solar informational meeting for those interested in receiving part of their electricity from solar. This is scheduled at the Maple Grove Community Center in Maple Grove on August 27 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. A third meeting is scheduled for 8 a.m. in Annandale on September 24. Follow WH on Facebook and Twitter to find out more about these meetings, or RSVP at http://goo.gl/JRPBM9.

WH Solar continues to shine and evolve

A mock-up of solar panels near Rockford’s west water tower shows what part of the first-ever Bantam solar project might look like.

WH seeks new director for District 6

Wright-Hennepin (WH) members in District 6 (see map) can now submit nominations to vie for a seat on the cooperative’s board of directors in the Maple Grove area.

WH is looking for candidates from District 6 to fill the vacancy left from Tom Mach’s recent retirement from the board (see story on page 2).

WH Bylaws state that members shall be eligible to be nominated or elected or to remain a Director provided that:

a) They are a natural person and are purchasing and taking delivery of electric energy at their legal residence from the Cooperative or from an organization furnishing electric power to the Cooperative,

b) They have the capacity to enter legally binding contracts;

c) They have not been convicted of a felony.

d) They are not employed by, materially, affiliated with or have a material financial interest in any individual or entity which is:

1. Directly and substantially competing with the Cooperative, or any subsidiaries; or

2. Selling goods and services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative or its subsidiaries; or

Continued on page 4
CEO’s Memo
MARK VOGT
WH President & CEO

Companies across the nation are experiencing a seismic demographic change being caused by baby boomer retirements. Since third quarter 2014, for instance, Wright-Hennepin (WH) has said farewell to about 10 percent of its employee population due to retirements or other openings related to succession. Your board of directors and senior management team anticipated the eventuality of this early on and developed a succession plan to steer the cooperative through the loss of talent and leadership experience that can occur with rapid retirements. The board’s early planning provided valuable time to think through how to effect an orderly transition and how to structure WH for the needs of the future.

This summer the Board took its first formal step to prepare for my retirement by naming two Chief Operating Officers (COO); one to provide full-time leadership for the electric cooperative, the other to provide full-time leadership to WH Holding Company, the legal structure that holds WH’s seven diversified businesses. Until now, I have managed both companies. But the rapid changes taking place in the electric utility industry, coupled with the significant growth of WH Holding Company compelled the naming of separate, full-time management for both of the businesses going forward.

I am pleased to announce that Timothy J. Sullivan, presently of Inver Grove Heights, Minn., was named COO of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association. Tim comes to WH from Touchstone Energy, the brand organization for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). He worked there 15 years, most recently as its senior director of strategy and business development. In that role, he worked with electric co-ops across the nation on implementing best practices to improve operational performance.

Prior to working for Touchstone Energy, Tim worked as director of public relations for an oil refinery from 1998 to 2000. He served as Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson’s chief spokesman and director of strategic planning for the administration from the University of Oregon, Eugene, Ore., where she double majored in marketing and finance. In 2010, she earned a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn.

Succession challenges are hitting electric utilities particularly hard. Your board locked in its future leadership now, knowing through their succession planning process that 50 percent of the nation’s electric cooperative CEOs are expected to leave their posts in the next two years as baby boomers retire, according to NRECA. There has already been a large exodus of electric cooperative executives in Minnesota in the last six months due to the retirement of boomers. The naming of two COOs now assures WH Electric and WH Holding will have secured top leadership talent for the future before great competition for that talent begins across the industry.

Mach says ‘it’s time’ after 25 years on WH’s board

A quarter of a century is a long time to dedicate one’s time and energy, and after 25 years of serving on Wright-Hennepin’s (WH) Board of Directors and chairing the WH Holding Company, Tom Mach is headed for greener – albeit drier – pastures.

The thought of retirement has been on Mach’s mind for a number of years. His children no longer reside in the land of 10,000 lakes. He and his wife, Sue, recently bought a second home in a retirement community in a different state, and the thought of leaving Minnesota winters in their rearview mirror was just too tempting to pass up.

“It was getting hard to come back, especially in the winter,” Mach said. “That told me it was time.”

Mach acknowledged that he’ll miss most of his friends and colleagues. “They take pride providing the best service, lowest rates and innovative solutions. I feel confident the members are in good hands.”

Sonja graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Oregon, Eugene, Ore., where she double majored in marketing and finance. In 2010, she earned a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn.

Prior to working for WH, Sonja was employed by United Power Association, Elk River, where she served as market research coordinator. She has also worked for Bankers Systems (now Wolters Kluwer Financial Systems) and EK Williams and Co. (now the Dwyer Group).

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WH prepares for Mach’s 25 years of service on WH’s Board of Directors.

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leadership succession

Your board’s succession strategy also recognizes that the electric industry is transforming at an unprecedented pace due to technology and communications changes, new competition, advancements in the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, and significantly shifting needs of energy consumers. I’ve known Tom Sullivan for 15 years and consider him to be uniquely qualified to manage these emerging opportunities and challenges for WH.

The board’s succession strategy acknowledges, too, that WH Holding has now reached the size and scale where it requires separate, full-time leadership guiding and growing that operation. As an indicator of WH Holding’s growth in recent years, the company is larger on a revenue basis than almost 40 percent of the electric cooperative utilities operating in Minnesota today. On a customer basis, WH Holding is larger than about 90 percent of the electric cooperative utilities in Minnesota. Sonja has done impressive work in growing revenues for WH Holding, the contributions of which go back to WH Electric and serve as rate relief for the members.

I have committed to your board to stay on as President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the time it takes to ensure a stable and orderly transition. My goal is to make sure the members continue seeing competitive electric rates and the very best in reliability, products and services while avoiding the disruption that can occur during leadership transitions.

I am thrilled that WH has been able to recruit this level of talent for the senior leadership positions needed for WH’s future. Combined with the strong experience of the management staff, and the most ‘can do’ employee group of all electric co-ops in the country, I believe the future is bright for Wright-Hennepin, its members and employees.

Open seat on the Board of Directors

Succession is also taking place at the Board of Directors level. We were saddened by the announcement that 25-year Maple Grove director Tom Mach would retire from the board in July. Tom retired from his full-time professional career a few years back, enabling him and wife Sue to travel more and to recently purchase a home in another state.

According to the WH’s bylaws, your Board of Directors must fill the vacancy, which means they will appoint a director from the Maple Grove area to serve until the next election in March. The details on how you can be a candidate to fill the vacancy on the Board of Directors are on page one of this newsletter and on our website (www.whe.org). It is the board’s intent to hold interviews with interested candidates and have the new director appointed in time to attend the October board meeting.

Throughout his professional career, Tom served as Chief Financial Officer and held other executive level positions at regional and national companies. He gained recognition at WH as a financially savvy director, helping to guide the formation of WH Holding Company. He served as that company’s board chair since its formation in 2006. The financial success of the company has allowed contributions of several million dollars annually to WH Electric, a source that the future is bright for Wright-Hennepin, enabled your cooperative two years ago to be the first electric utility in Minnesota to build a community solar project. The success of that project encouraged WH to start its own solar sales and installation company – WH Solar – in 2014.

For these reasons and more, we will obviously miss Tom Mach. We wish Tom and Sue great happiness in their next chapter of life, and thank him for his dedicated service to WH’s members.

Mark Vogt

New WH Holding Chair sees challenges as ‘the spice of life’

Tim Young is the new face of Board leadership for WH Holding Company. He was elected by the WH board of directors as Board Chair for WH Holding when Tom Mach, the previous chair, retired after the July board meeting.

Young will apply his 37 years of legal and business experience to a company that holds the subsidiary businesses of Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (WH), a structure that firmly sets the cooperative apart from peer organizations.

An attorney for Young & Brown, LLP since 1978, a former member of the Annandale School Board and a participant in multiple forms of small government, Young’s “graduate degree in how boards work,” provides invaluable experience to navigate the waters of competitive businesses – an area where most utilities inherently remain in the shallow end. But not WH. It owns WH Security, WH International Response, WH Solar, WH Services, WH Generation, WH Holding Investments and HeatMyFloors.com. If you want to compare it to an electric cooperative, WH Holding has grown so much that it is about as large by revenue as 40 percent of the electric cooperative utilities in Minnesota.

By customers, it is larger than almost 90 percent of the electric cooperative utilities in Minnesota.

In order to keep WH Holding evolving, Young sees WH Holding’s role as similar to Lockheed Martin’s famous “Skunk Works” program – an innovative research and development wing of the company – that developed groundbreaking aircraft, such as the U-2 and SR71 Blackbird.

“I see WH Holding as a source of innovation that’s unafraid of competitive challenges,” Young said, “so that we can be a fast-moving, quick decision-making, nimble organization.”

Young may now chair WH Holding Company, but said the important thing is “not so much the person as the mission perceived by the group,” and that his job is to figure out how to accomplish objectives quickly, smoothly and effectively.

“I’m a grinder” Young smiled. “I go to work every day and try to do the best job I can do that day. That’s my approach; perspiration is better than inspiration.”

I measure achievement by the level of sustained effort you put into something.”

It comes as no surprise that the new chair appreciates the opportunity to sit in the driver’s seat. He praised Mach, whom he referred to as a financially savvy chair who made an important mark on the company.

“The Holding Company will be on the cutting edge of whatever changes there are,” said Young. “I think that’s the excitement of this position – changing circumstances and the opportunity to challenge ourselves to be better than we were before. That’s the spice of life, I think.”

Tom Mach, former WH Electric Board Member, former Chair, WH Holding Company
WH seeks new director

continued from cover

3. Possessing a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative or its subsidiaries.
   e) They are not in any way employed by the Cooperative or any of its subsidiaries nor have they been employed by the Cooperative or its subsidiaries within three (3) years of the director’s nomination.
   f) They are not a close relative of any existing Director or existing employee of the Cooperative or its subsidiaries. For the purpose of this section only “close relative” shall mean a person who is either a spouse, child, grandchild, step-child, parent, grandparent, step-parent, brother or sister, by blood or in-law, of the principal.

WH Board of Directors will screen all candidates and then appoint a director who will serve until the next director election during March 2016.

Members in District 6 who would like to be considered for the position need to file a director nominee application form. Members’ district numbers are printed on the label of this newsletter located on the front cover. To apply, print out, complete and sign the form found on WH’s website at http://goo.gl/7ThfyN, or call (763) 477-3027 to request a form. Mail the form along with a resume to: Wright-Hennepin, Attn: Dale Jans, Secretary/Treasurer, P.O. Box 330, Rockford, MN 55373. Application deadline is September 4.

WH reapportions districts

With the recent reappointment of Wright-Hennepin (WH) Board Member Tom Mach and ensuing District 6 election, WH has reapportioned the nine districts in the service territory to provide equal representation. Each district now has a little less than 5,000 members.

According to the bylaws, “At least once every ten years the Board of Directors shall conduct a survey to determine whether the number of members in a district has changed.” This survey and subsequent reapportioning was set to take place in 2016, but WH’s board of directors has decided to do so a year early due to the opening in District 6. The new districts are effective immediately and are shown below.

No up-front costs through EZ Water Heating program

Do you own an old water heater and are unsure how much longer it will last? Rather than waiting for it to fail, you can plan ahead with the EZ Water Heating program from Wright-Hennepin (WH).

The EZ Water Heating program is the perfect opportunity to replace an outdated water heater because there are no up-front costs. So not only do you avoid costly purchasing fees, but installation is free and the water heater comes with a lifetime warranty on the tank. In return, WH will manage when your water heater heats – heating water at night from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. – and then storing it for when you need it.

Benefits of electric water heating:

- Electric water heaters are clean, efficient, quiet and dependable.
- Water heaters used for this program have 90-91 percent energy factor, meaning they are very efficient.
- Electric water heaters do not have pilot lights, so there’s no worry about having to relight the flame.
- Electric water heaters use less parts, and can last years beyond the lifespan of a gas water heater.

For more information or to see if you are eligible, call us at (763) 477-3000 or visit http://goo.gl/efgEfE.

Get an electric water heater for $0 down by joining WH’s EZ Water Heating program and replace your old water heater today!

June Board Meeting Highlights:

The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors was conducted June 12, 2015. A quorum of directors was present. During the meeting:

- The Board approved annual renewal for letters of credit, lines of credit and automatic transfer authorization.
- The Board approved a short-term contract for a portion of WH’s wholesale power needs.
- The Board approved resolutions authorizing the hiring of Chief Operating Officers for WH Electric and WH Holding Company, to prepare for orderly succession of senior management.
- Director Thomas Mach, district 6 (Maple Grove), notified board and management that his last board meeting would be July 17, 2015, due to a change of address.

Approved sending letters to inactive members to offer, on a first come first serve basis, an option to receive capital credits at discount.
- Viewed a video on wireless electricity technology.
- Selected a director to represent the cooperative at a Wright County function.
- Reviewed and filed the monthly CEO, financial, legal and other operating reports.
- Directors reported on industry meetings they attended on behalf of the cooperative.

Guests included:

- Federated Insurance presented its annual review of WH’s insurance coverages. Board approved renewal of insurance with Federated.
- CoBank representative Cliff Bolstad and banking interns observed a portion of the meeting.

Continue on Page 7
Howard Lake student attends Washington Youth Tour

As one of more than 1,600 students participating in the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., Luke Swenson of Howard Lake, Minn., had the chance to interact with legislators in the cooperative scene and visit national monuments during the eight-day tour to which Wright-Hennepin Electric Cooperative Association (WH) sponsors one student each year.

The tour took place June 12-19, and took Swenson and the group to multiple historical sites and monuments, including Smithsonian museums, the U.S. Capital and White House, Arlington National Cemetery. He also visited Ford Theatre - where Abraham Lincoln was shot - and the Petersen House where President Lincoln was tended to. The Tour also featured a myriad of memorials, including: the Air Force, Pentagon, World War II, Women in Military Service for America, and Martin Luther King Jr.

“The tour) was important for me for the primary reason of seeing things come full circle. I enjoy politics, and have participated at the state level with the high school page program, so I was really excited to see things on the national level,” Swenson said. “I can’t point to one thing and say it was my favorite, because everything was so amazing. I really like meeting new people, and I now have friendships that will last a lifetime from this trip. And on capital day we met Senator (Amy) Klobuchar, Al Franken, Rick Nolan and Tim Walz, and were able to talk with lawmakers and ask them questions about their job, cooperatives, and what they were doing to help them along.”

Swenson said the experience was “one of the best weeks of my life,” and highly recommended that other students take advantage of the tour.

“Even if you’re not with someone you know, you’ll enjoy it regardless,” said Swenson. “After the trip, I do look at cooperatives a little differently. I have a greater understanding that they’re more than just people climbing up poles to keep your lights on. They’re fostering the community through their job and local participation.”

High school juniors interested in applying for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour can fill out an application and learn more at http://goo.gl/J6JxSg.

Keep your kids safe this school year with these tips

Another school year is on the horizon, and now is a great time for parents to talk to their kids about safety precautions before the first day of school. Here are some tips to help keep your kids safe and secure for the year:

Walking Safety:
• Never walk while texting or talking on the phone
• Never cross the street while using an electronic device
• Do not walk with headphones on
• Be aware of your surroundings
• Always walk on the sidewalk if one is available; if your child must walk on the street, have them walk facing oncoming traffic
• Look left, right, then left again before crossing the street
• Walk with a group or friend
• Plan and practice a safe walking route with your child

Bus Safety:
• Stay in your seat, and do not put your head, arms or hands out the window
• Keep aisles clear
• Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting up from your seat
• Always cross in front of the bus and look both ways

After-School Safety:
• Post an emergency phone list in your home where your child can find it
• Keep a fully-stocked first aid kit and make sure your child knows where it is
• Make sure at least one approved smoke alarm is installed and operating on each floor of your home

Talk to your child about what to do if they are approached by a stranger

Protect Your Home and Family

with a home security system.

August special:

Three free months of monitoring with a new security system purchase. Offer expires 9/11/15. Contact us today to learn more.

www.wh-security.com
(763) 477-3664
The popularity of electric vehicles (EV) is growing, but the lack of chargers has been a criticism that might be keeping others from shifting to the driver seat from the fence.

However, since technology has improved and the amount of EVs on the road increased, chargers have started popping up all over. In fact, Wright-Hennepin (WH) recently installed its first-ever publicly accessible charger at its Rockford-based headquarters at 6800 Electric Drive, off of Highway 55.

Another criticism of EVs has been the amount of fossil fuels used to produce the energy that powers them, but all of the energy for WH's fast charger comes from solar power. This makes for an environmentally friendly driving experience, and reassures EV owners that their green efforts aren't negated.

Residents in the metro see a lot more chargers than people who live in rural Minnesota, but WH's goal is to improve this gap in the local area. But, again, thanks to technology, EV drivers everywhere can easily find a charger on the internet or through different smartphone apps.

WH’s charger located in Rockford works through an app called Greenlots, and allows users to search for chargers to help quell worries of running out of power, also known as range anxiety.

The biggest benefit to driving an EV is that they require few or no trips to the gas station. A typical EV costs about three cents per mile to run, and they do not require motor oil that needs to be changed. EVs are also quiet to drive and provide detailed information on battery range, driving efficiency and operating conditions.

WH also has plans in the works for a second publicly accessible charger to be installed in the service territory later this year.

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Save time, money and the environment with online payments

Tired of purchasing stamps and having to mail your electric bill? Or are you trying to reduce the amount of mail in your mailbox and go green? Wright-Hennepin (WH) has a couple of bill payment options that make settling up your bill as easy as possible, and best of all, they're free of charge.

**EZ Pay**
EZ Pay automatically drafts the amount due on your bill from your bank account. You can choose to have payments come from an account or a specific credit or debit card, and you can even select the date that the payment is made. No longer do you need to worry about late fees or calling in last minute to pay your bill.

**E-billing**
Through e-billing, you also have the option to go completely paperless, reducing the amount of clutter in your mailbox. If you would still like to have control over when your payments are made, WH's e-billing program sends you an email when your bill is ready to be viewed. You can also pay online through a secure website with a credit or debit card, or you may also use an e-check.

To order bulbs, visit http://goo.gl/Qdh94V or call a representative at (763) 477-3000

**Offering LED bulbs that let the savings pay for their cost**

- **$0 down**
- **Bulb type: 60 watt equivalent (800 lumens)**
- **Pay for your bulbs over 36 months from the savings on your electric bill, or pay up front if you prefer**
- **Choose the quantity of bulbs to meet your needs (minimum of 6)**

LEDs are very energy efficient and have a long lifespan!

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**Board Report**

**Continued from Page 4**

- Minnesota Rural Electric Association’s Government Affairs Specialist Jim Horan provided a legislative update and addressed employees during the annual legislative rally.
- Board held an executive session with attorneys to receive an update on pending legal matters.

**July Board Meeting Highlights:**

The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors was conducted July 17, 2015. A quorum of directors was present. During the meeting:

- As prescribed by the Cooperative’s Bylaws, Board approved filling the vacancy for the district 6 board seat previously held by Thomas Mach, Maple Grove. Management was directed to provide official notice to the membership.
- The WH Holding Board elected director Timothy Young, Annandale, as Chair, succeeding Thomas Mach.
- As prescribed by the Bylaws, the Board must evaluate the member population and geographic boundaries of Board districts at least once every ten years. Board accepted the recommendation for new district boundaries by its Policy, Planning and Communications committee, which provides for a more balanced number of members in each board district.
- President and CEO Vogt introduced new Chief Operating Officers for WH Electric and WH Holding Company.
- Board conducted its annual review of policies and approved recommended changes.
- WH Electric received a 90 on its second quarter American Customer Service Index (ACSI) score. WH’s score continues to be among the strongest of all electric utilities in the United States as well and across all business sectors in the nation.
- Due to conflicting industry meetings, approved rescheduling the August board meeting to August 14, 2015.
- Approved retiring a bucket truck and two flatbed trailers.
- Reviewed and filed the monthly CEO, financial, legal and other operating reports.
- Directors reported on industry meetings they attended on behalf of the cooperative.
- Participated in required annual harassment prevention training.

**Guests included:**

- Board directors from Connexus Energy and East Central Energy made a presentation regarding industry challenges.
- A panel of commercial members, (Smiths Medical, Minnesota Medical and Prudential Insurance), was invited to share insights with the board and management regarding their evolving energy needs.
- In executive session, attorneys gave an update on pending legal matters.
**BENJAMIN WOOD** of Otsego wins a credit for 263 kWh, June's output from WH's solar panels.

**KORINNE KRAMER** of Howard Lake wins a credit for 295 kWh, July's output from WH's solar panels.

**WILEY AND SHELLY DAVIS** of Plymouth wins a credit for 256 kWh, June's output from WH's tenKsolar panel array.

**MICHAEL GALLAGHER** of South Haven wins a credit for 288 kWh, July's output from WH's tenKsolar panel array.

**DUWAYNE GOERKE** of Maple Lake wins a credit for 343 kWh, June's output from WH's wind generator.

**MEL BERG** of Howard Lake wins a credit for 475 kWh, July's output from WH's wind generator.

**Average monthly energy output over 12 months:**
- Wind generator: 772 kWh
- Solar panels: 223 kWh
- tenKsolar system: 201 kWh

To enter the monthly contest to win the output from WH’s wind generator or solar panels, go to http://goo.gl/QjyTM.

**ENERGY TIP:**
Use fans to cool your home instead of your air conditioner.

For more tips, visit http://goo.gl/Q3fXEv

**Featured electric heating product:**
**Electric Plenum Heater:**
Now you have the power to control your energy bills by switching between electric and your existing gas, propane or oil furnace. Plenum heaters can be added to your home’s duct work and allow you to switch fuel sources, depending on current prices. Plenum heaters qualify for Wright-Hennepin’s low-cost Off-Peak rate. Call (763) 477-3000 to learn more about our Off-Peak rate.

Plenum heaters offer you:
- Low operating costs
- 100% efficiency
- Clean operation
- Safe performance
- Unsurpassed comfort
- No odors, fumes or carbon monoxide

**Fuel prices have you on a crazy ride?**

While gas prices have fluctuated greatly over the past few years, the cost of electricity has remained very stable.

Whether you have a cold room, or are looking for an efficient way to heat your whole home, Wright-Hennepin offers electric solutions to help save money on your home’s heating bill. And, with the stable price of electricity, you won’t have to worry about big swings in pricing – you can save those crazy rides for your next trip to the amusement park.

**Off-Peak can help keep your costs level!**

Call a representative today:
(763) 477-3000