



Building strong communities through a well-trained workforce

A publication of the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma

March 2022

New Membership Dues Structure approved by MESO Board

On February 25, the MESO Board of Directors approved a new membership dues structure. The new dues — the first change in nine years — go into effect July 1, 2022.

“I appreciate the board’s recognition of the value our organization has provided to Public Power for 50 years and the exciting opportunities for the future,” said Tom Rider, MESO General Manager.

The primary goal of the new structure is to create equity among members. As a result of a move to a structured dues formula, some members will see a decrease in their annual dues while others will see an

increase. Detailed information including new dues will be sent to members no later than March 17.

The new dues structure is based on Kilowatt (KWh) usage for the previous calendar year, so members' dues will be adjusted annually. Members who have a gain in KWh usage will be asked to pay more in dues while members who experience a loss in KWh usage will be less.

Member dues help pay for general operations — including programs and our work with external organizations.

For more information about the new MESO dues structure, please email Rider, tom@meso.org.

2022 Public Power Conference

Register today for the 2022 MESO Public Power Conference

Both Attendee and Sponsorship registrations are now open for the 2022 MEO Public Power Conference scheduled for April 24-26 in Norman, Oklahoma at meso.org.

General Sessions speakers include Dr. Chuck Jackson, Colin Hansen, and Kevin Sesock.

Jackson, a highly respected and dynamic motivational speaker, brings his unique and entertaining style to every session he presents. Hansen is the Chairman, American Public Power Association Executive Director, Kansas Power Pool, and one of the nation’s leading experts on locally owned and controlled municipal electric utilities. And Sesock, OMAG’s Chief Information Officer, will discuss “how you hold the key to cybersecurity in the palm of your hand.”

The 2021 Public Power Conference breakout sessions provide something for people in all areas of municipal operations including Customer Service, Human Resources, Electric Utility Operations and Linework, and Power Generation.

Breakout sessions include:

- Changing/Developing Workplace Culture
- The Ins and Outs of Severe Weather Management
- Lessons Learned from an Emergency: the Leader’s Perspective
- Basic Lockout/Tagout and Switching
- New Technologies & Funding Opportunities
- Communications: Awareness Beyond Your Own Department

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Register Today

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- Rooftop Solar – Is It Right For You?
- How to be a Public Power Ambassador
- Reducing Stress & Burnout

Attendee registration is available at meso.org.

Become a Sponsor

For potential sponsors: The annual Public Power Conference brings together leaders of municipal electric systems across the State of Oklahoma and neighboring states. By participating in the 2022 conference, you will have the opportunity to connect with key decision-makers. This is a great marketing opportunity for any company that wants to partner with and serve municipalities.

Public Power Conference participants represent municipally owned electric systems in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas. This annual event draws city managers, supervisors, lineworkers, and customer service professionals, so regardless of who you are looking to partner with, they may be at this conference.

For all sponsorship details, click here: [2022 Public Power Conference Sponsor Packet](#).

Registration questions may be directed to MESO Director of Administration and Finance, Deborah Gonzales, at deborah@meso.org or at 405-528-7564 ext. 1.

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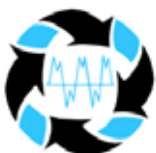
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Griffin and Henley join MESO Board of Directors

Edmond's Brett Griffin and Sandy Henley from Pawhuska recently joined the MESO Board of Directors after a unanimous vote at the February 25 Board Meeting.

"Our organization is governed by our members," said Tom Rider, MESO General Manager. "Their commitment to quality programs and services guides our day-to-day operations"

Griffin replaces Edmond's Dean Sherrick who retired after a long and distinguished career in Public Power. He also assumes Sherrick's role on the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Municipal Utility Services Authority.

A native of Edmond, Griffin began his career as a lineworker with Edmond Electric in 1993 after recognizing an apprenticeship program that could guide him to a successful career. Steadily moving up through the ranks, today he serves as Distribution Superintendent. He brings hands-on, operational experience and leadership to the MESO Board. He has served on MESO Public Power and Lineworkers Rodeo Committee. Griffin lends his voice to the Public Power conversation as a regular speaker at MESO events.

Henley replaces Trey Phillips, City of Purcell's Electric Supervisor, who resigned his seat late last year.

Henley brings more than 15 years of utility administrative and customer service experience to the MESO board. She currently serves as Pawhuska's City Clerk/Utility Office Manager. She tirelessly serves

the Public Power Community by sitting on various OMPA and MESO Committees. She is a member of OMPA Programs and Services and CUP Review Committees. She also has been on the MESO Lineworkers Rodeo Committee and Public Power Conference Committee and volunteers at the Rodeo.

"I thank Dean and Trey for their exceptional service to MESO, and I look forward to great things Brett and Sandy," Rider said.

MESO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Jerry Cook, GRDA

Jennifer Smith, OMPA

[From the American Public Power Association](#)

51 Percent of Auto Owners Would Consider Hybrid/Electric Vehicles: Report

Forty-one percent of owners of gas-powered vehicles said they are very or somewhat likely to consider an all-electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle the next time they purchase a car, according to a report by the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (SECC).

The SECC's Electric Vehicles: Driving the Customer Experience report also found that current electric vehicle owners are overwhelmingly satisfied with their cars and are very interested in smart home devices and energy efficiency.

The majority, 51 percent, of electric vehicle owners are overwhelmingly what the report called "tech-savvy proteges." That group's ownership of smart appliances is double that of the general population, 34 percent compared with 14 percent, and they are four times more likely to own a home energy management system, at 16 percent compared with 4 percent. And, at 88 percent and 75 percent, respectively, electric vehicle owners are also much more likely to own their

(see 51% PERCENT OF AUTO OWNERS, page10)

Job Training & Safety

Register today for MESO Climbing School

Cushing Utility Services will host the MESO Level 1 Climbing School May 10-11, 2022, and registration is open at meso.org.

MESO's Tom Dougherty, Director of Job Training and Safety, and veteran lineworkers from Cushing Utility Services and GRDA will lead the two-day training.

Participants must bring a hard hat, climbing hooks, belt, leather gloves, safety glasses, and hand tools.

The training begins at 8:30 a.m. on both days. Participants are encouraged to arrive early. Lunch will be provided on-site.

The cost for the two-day session is \$199 per person. Detailed training information is available on the website, and the link to register is [2022 MESO Level 1 Climbing School Registration](https://meso.org).

For information or questions about the training session, contact Dougherty at tomd@meso.org. Registration questions may be directed to Deborah Gonzales, MESO Director of Administration and Finance at deborah@meso.org.

GRDA and OMPA are sponsors of the 2022 MESO Level 1 Climbing School.

It's time to update Mutual Aid Agreements

Mutual aid is just what it sounds like — utilities helping each other in times of need.

MESO has sent all members the 2022 Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma Inc. Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA). Members are asked to adopt the new agreement before April 1.

The updated MAA reflects the return of the Association's name to MESO (Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma), and an updated dispute resolution section of the agreement. These changes were approved by the MESO Board of Directors.

"As always — having a current Mutual Aid Agreement in place is essential in the event your utility suffers a federally-declared disaster," said Tom Rider, MESO General Manager. "Without a current Agreement in place, a utility may not be eligible for FEMA or state reimbursement."

Current agreements will be honored through April 1, 2022. Following that date, a completed 2022 Agreement must be on file with MESO.

Questions may be directed to Deborah Gonzales, MESO Director of Administration and Finance, at deborah@meso.org.

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Utility Sales Agents of North Texas
Utility Sales Agents of Oklahoma
Utility Technology Services
Wesco Distribution

See "Associates" @ meso.org

From GRDA

GRDA hosts AMI Meetings

Advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) was the main agenda item at a February 2 meeting of the GRDA AMI Task Force. The topic will also be at the center of an upcoming GRDA Wholesale Customer Group meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 22.

Approximately 25 people attended the February meeting, held at the MidAmerica Expo Center (Pryor), to hear an AMI overview presentation from Hometown Connections, Inc. (HCI). A national non-profit utility services organization, HCI works with community-owned (public power utilities) to provide services such as AMI and other technologies.

GRDA held the meeting in response to customer requests for more information on AMI and how that technology might look for municipal customer communities.

“Technology is important because it is continuing to change the way we do business. Our customers are seeking more and more information and access to information about their energy usage,” said Tahlequah Public Works Authority General Manager Mike Doublehead, who also serves as chairman of the

GRDA municipal customer group. “As we talk about conserving energy the customer needs an access and an avenue as a way to monitor that.

While AMI could provide that technology, participants had the opportunity to hear more about the specifics of the HCI system and how the organization can help a public power utility make the transition.

“What we’ve done at Hometown is we’ve put this wrapper around [the AMI system] that ensures it’s going to function,” said Hometown Connections Chief Information Officer Brannndon Kelley. “Today’s meeting gave us the opportunity to reiterate that message, share real-world examples of how we’ve created that value, answer any questions and calm any concerns that there may be.”

At its January meeting, the GRDA Board of Directors approved management to proceed with the negotiation of an agreement with HCI for the deployment of advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) in GRDA municipal customer communities.

(see GRDA HOSTS, page 10)

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MESO Professional Development

The deadline to register for the 2022-23 MESO Electric Supervisor Development Course is March 18

The MESO Electric Supervisor Development (ESD) Course provides Journeyman Lineworkers with the skills necessary to lead high-performing teams while enhancing critical on-the-job skills. The program kicks off with its first classroom training session on March 24, 2022, and the final session will be in November 2023.

The course combines 16 Development (PD) topics (1/2 day per topic for a total of eight classroom days) focusing on Leadership, Teambuilding, Customer Service, and Communications. It also includes and three Electric Utility (EU) Classroom sessions over two classroom days.

To successfully complete the program, participants will be required to complete additional EU work including serving as a judge at the MESO Lineworkers Rodeo; coaching at MESO JT&S Specialty events such as Climbing School - Level 1 or Lineman Basics School; and, serving as a reviewer at an Apprentice Program at Apprentice Skills Assessment for two days.

All ESD Course details including topics covered, dates, etc. are online at [2022-23 MESO Electric Supervisor Development Course Information](#).

The cost of the program is \$999 per attendee per year and \$899 for each additional attendee per year. Class size is limited. Registration is available for Journeyman Lineworkers at www.meso.org or by clicking here: [2022-23 MESO Electric Supervisor Development Course Registration](#).

GRDA & OMPA have slots in the course as part of their respective MESO membership agreements. After participants have registered online, MESO will work with GRDA & OMPA to determine eligibility for financial support for individuals in the course.

Questions about the Electric Supervisor Development Training Program can be directed to Jeff Kaufmann, MESO Director of Communications and Professional Development, at jeffk@meso.org. Registration questions may be directed to Deborah Gonzales, MESO Director of Administration and Finance, at deborah@meso.org.

From the American Public Power Association

Federal Agencies Announce Nearly \$5 Billion In Funds Available

The U.S. Departments of Transportation and Energy on Feb. 10 announced the availability of nearly \$5 billion under the new National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) formula program established by President Biden's infrastructure law to build out a national electric vehicle charging network.

The program will provide the funds over five years to help states create a network of EV charging stations along designated alternative fuel corridors, particularly along the Interstate Highway System.

The total amount available to states in Fiscal Year 2022 under the NEVI formula program is \$615 million. States must submit an EV infrastructure deployment plan before they can access these funds.

To access the funds, each state is required to submit an EV infrastructure deployment plan to the new Joint Office of Energy and Transportation that describes how the state intends to use its share of NEVI formula program funds consistent with Federal Highway Administration guidance.

These plans are expected to build on [Alternative Fuel Corridors](#) that nearly every state has designated

over the past six years of this program. These corridors will be the spine of the new national EV charging network.

The Joint Office will play a key role in the implementation of the NEVI formula program by providing direct technical assistance and support to help states develop their plans before they are reviewed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration, which administers the funding.

A second, competitive grant program designed to further increase EV charging access in locations throughout the country, including in rural and underserved communities, will be announced later this year.

The new Joint Office of Energy and Transportation also launched a new website at DriveElectric.gov. There, officials can find additional technical assistance, data and tools for states.

As part of the Feb. 10 announcement, the Federal Highway Administration released the NEVI formula

(see FEDERAL AGENCIES ANNOUNCE, page 10)

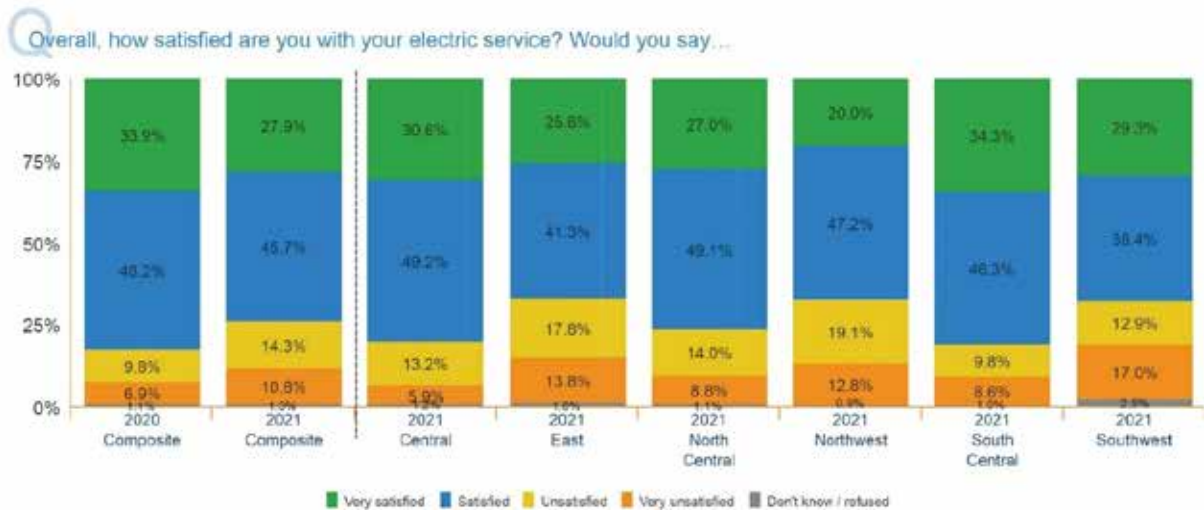
From OMPA

OMPA completes Annual Survey

The OMPA Board of Directors heard a presentation at its February meeting from GreatBlue Research, which was the firm that conducted the Authority’s annual survey of customers in all member cities and towns.

The primary goals of the survey are to assess satisfaction levels of residential customers living in the member communities, highlight attitudes and awareness regarding various utility efforts and gauge potential interest in emerging technologies. The results of these surveys have helped lead the way toward OMPA programs in the past.

The methodology of the research has begun to deviate from surveys in the past, due to customer habits and an emerging difficulty to meet survey quotas through just telephone. Whereas past surveys were conducted with just telephone, these were done with a mix of telephone and digital, which impacted the demographics of the respondents and may have impacted the results.



Key study findings

- 73.6 of 2021 OMPA survey respondents reported being either “very satisfied” (27.9) or “satisfied” (45.7) with their electric service
- Reliability was rated by 40.1 percent of respondents as the characteristic that should be the utility’s primary focus
- 57.5 percent of respondents reported being “very likely” (21.3) or “somewhat likely” (36.2) to sign up for a variable electric rate
- 65.8 percent of respondents reported satisfaction with their utility’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- 58 percent of respondents described their electric utility as “municipally owned” and 65.3 percent reported their electric power being provided by the city rather than a non-local company as “very valuable (38.9) or “somewhat valuable” (26.4)
- 49.3 percent of respondents indicated “mass notification via text message” as their preferred method of notification for outages and other emergency management notifications
- “Emails” were preferred by 20 percent of respondents as the most effective way to receive information on products and services

Note: If you would like a copy of the survey, please contact Member Services Director Jennifer Rogers at jrogers@ompa.com

Join us in congratulating Skiatook's Tyler Dodgin and Bryan Turner who earned Journeyman Lineman Certificates.



Tyler Dodgin



Bryan Turner



Our friends in Stillwater recently completed annual Pole Top Rescue Training. Keep up the good work.



The Municipal Utility Board, Pryor, used this image on their Facebook page to help customers understand the effect of winter weather.

2022 Public Power Conference

April 24-26, 2022
Norman, Oklahoma

Register today at meso.org

From the American Public Power Association

Community Solar Will Grow By 4.5 GW Over The Next Five Years: Wood Mackenzie

The U.S. market for community solar power will add 4.5 gigawatts (GW) over the next five years, a 9% increase over previous projections, according to a new report from Wood Mackenzie.

The report, [US community solar market outlook: H2 2021](#), done in collaboration with the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA), attributed the growth to expanded programs and new initiatives.

"Forecasts for New Jersey, New York, Illinois, and Colorado have all been increased thanks to updated and expanded programs and significant climate and clean energy commitments from state governments," Rachel Goldstein, an analyst with Wood Mackenzie's solar research team, said in a statement.

"Community solar needs state-level policies in order to thrive," Goldstein said, noting that several states have passed or proposed legislation for community solar programs.

New Mexico and Delaware both passed legislation in 2021 for new or improved community solar programs, and Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio have all proposed bills for community solar programs that are working their way through the state legislatures, according to the report.

Those initiatives prompted Wood Mackenzie to increase its projections for community solar by 9 percent above the estimates in its first report on community solar programs, published in [July 2021](#).

"We're just scratching the surface of how much community solar is needed to meet customer demand and state and federal energy goals," Jeff Cramer, president and chief executive officer of CCSA, said in a statement.

Nevertheless, the growth of community solar installations faces challenges, particularly with respect to connecting solar projects to the grid. "Today, Maine and Massachusetts are experiencing the complexities that come with interconnection studies and upgrade cost allocation decisions," Goldstein said. "Those processes lead to delays and cause project attrition due to cost uncertainties." She noted that Minnesota and Maryland's forecasts decreased due to continued siting challenges in both states.

"As community solar penetrates more markets, it will have to contend with interconnection challenges due to grid congestion and outdated infrastructure," Goldstein said. "These grid challenges could be replicated in other states, with some developers believing that the situations in Maine and Massachusetts are harbingers of the interconnection challenges they may see in other markets," she added.

The report collected data on customer acquisition costs and found they vary widely, anywhere from \$500 to \$20,000 per customer. In general, the report found that residential customers with more standardized contracts have more consistent acquisition costs, while unique contracts for larger commercial customers result in a range of acquisition costs.

And while residential subscribers still make up the vast majority of community solar subscriptions and are simpler to acquire thanks to standard contracts, the report's authors also noted that anchor tenants, such as large commercial entities and municipalities, account for a significant amount of installed community solar capacity.

GRDA hosts

(continued from page 5)

The March 22 GRDA Wholesale Customer Group meeting will be held at the TulsaTech Conference Center in Owasso. Following that meeting, the GRDA-AMI Hometown Connections Partnership Program proposal will be provided to the GRDA Board of

Directors for consideration at the April 2022 GRDA Board Meeting.

The board plans to consider GRDA membership in HCI, a final negotiated agreement and AMI cost recovery rider at a future meeting.

51% Percent of Auto Owners

(continued from page 3)

own home and to live in a single-family dwelling.

“These findings speak volumes about the ease of installing charging equipment at home and the necessity for programs that expand ownership among renters and multi-family dwellers,” the authors said in the report.

The report also found that environmental benefits, concern for future generations, and social responsibility were stronger motivators among electric vehicle owners than among the general population.

The report drew on data gathered from a survey of 1,000 residential energy consumers in the United States during mid-November 2021 and augmented with an additional 750 respondents who currently own an electric vehicles.

The report also looked at the sources consumers use to research electric vehicles. Most consumers, 36 percent use the Internet to gather information about

electric vehicles, followed by vehicle manufacturers, 23 percent; friend and /family, 17 percent; dealers and automobile magazines, 14 percent; and websites, 13 percent.

However, the report also found that as few as 4 percent of consumers are likely to contact their electricity providers when conducting electric vehicle research. That might not hinder the purchase of an electric vehicle, but it could “result in costly surprises or delays if electrical upgrades are necessary to support the type of home charging the customer wants or needs,” the report said.

Nonetheless, the survey results showed that 97 percent of consumers felt that their electricity provider would be a reliable source of information on electric vehicles. “The research demonstrates that electricity providers have a key role to play in educating consumers about electric vehicles,” the authors said.

Federal Agencies Announce

(continued from page 6)

program funding to states that will be available following approval of state plans for Fiscal Year 2022 in addition to the [Program Guidance](#) and a [Request for Nominations](#) for states to expand their existing Alternative Fuel Corridors.

Here is [state-by-state NEVI funding for Fiscal Years 2022-2026](#).

Trade Groups, Joint Office Commit To Work Together

In related news, the Joint Office, the American Public Power Association (APPA), the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the Edison Electric Institute sent a letter demonstrating their commitment to work together to support EV charging plan development efforts.

“The Joint Office and the electric power industry are working together to connect electric utilities with their peers at state departments of transportation, state energy offices, and other organizations to support state EV charging plan development efforts,” the letter said.

The letter noted that each organization has designated individuals to be the electric power industry liaisons to the Joint Office to help ensure utility engagement and facilitate the appropriate connections. For APPA, the designated contact is Patricia Taylor, Senior Manager, Regulatory Policy and Business Programs (ptaylor@publicpower.org).

“Collectively, we will work to identify points of contact at individual utilities, as appropriate, with which the states and the Joint Office can interface as soon as possible,” the letter said.



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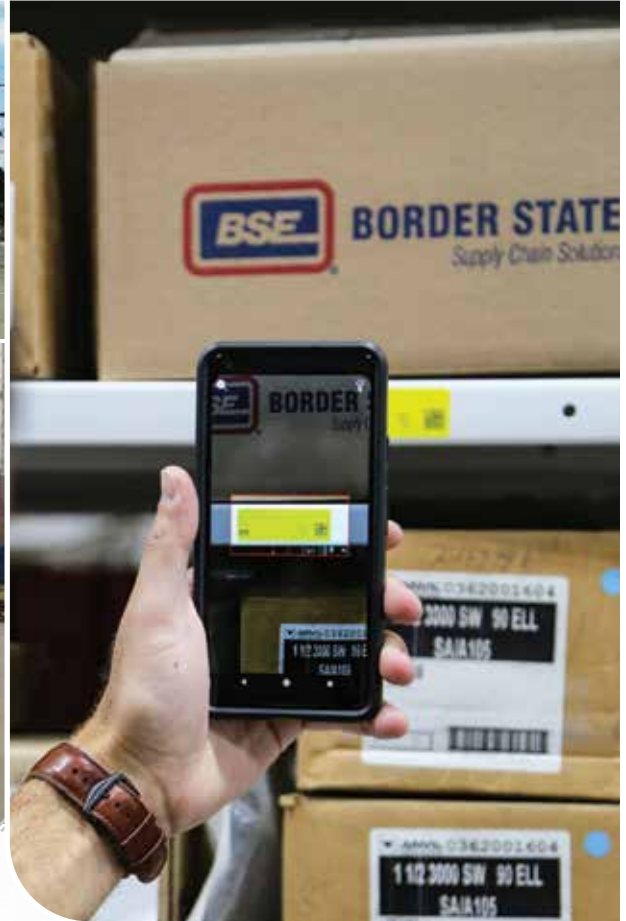
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