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SHELD, HMLD Utilize MMWEC Pooled Loan Program for Department Improvements

South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD) and Holden Municipal Light Department (HMLD) are both taking advantage of MMWEC's Pooled Loan Program to finance improvement projects for the departments and their customers.

Through the Pooled Loan Program, MMWEC uses its history of accessing the public bond market and of negotiating and implementing cost-effective bank lending agreements to provide Members with lower all-in financing costs. The program benefits from economies of scale in the financing process, as well as MMWEC's name recognition with bank lenders and investors.

SHELD is utilizing the Pool Loan Program to fund its fiber and Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) expansion project, which will provide fiber internet town-wide. The fiber project is being built on a five-year construction plan. Currently in year two, 50 percent of the town's fiber has been constructed, with more than 1,000 activated customers. The AMI backhaul fiber has been installed and new meter integration began this year, with a targeted completion date of fall 2023.

Approved in 2018, the \$16 million project was originally financed via internal funding, but in 2020, SHELD approved the use of the Pooled Loan Program to help finance the project. MMWEC's Pooled Loan Program will provide \$12 million, and

the remaining balance will be borrowed from SHELD's reserve fund.

"MMWEC pooled financing allows SHELD the flexibility to fully finance the project and maintain the construction pace we desire," SHELD General Manager Sean Fitzgerald said. "The program provides an ideal mechanism in which MLP (municipal light plant) projects can be separately financed with a structured payment plan."

In April 2021, HMLD approved the use of MMWEC's Pooled Loan Program to upgrade the department's electric substation. The project includes a complete replacement of all structures, equipment, and cables, as well as two new transformers and a new switch gear assembly with a control room, increasing capacity from four breakers to six. The project is scheduled to begin construction in fall 2021 and expected to be completed by July 2022. The \$6.3 million project is fully funded by the Pooled Loan Program. The loan is scheduled to close in mid June.

"We pride ourselves on providing safe, clean, reliable power, and substations are key to doing so," said HMLD General Manager Jane Parenteau. "Our long standing relationship with MMWEC and our current financial structure in regards to power supply and power purchasing makes partnering with MMWEC for this project an easy decision." ∞

Mass MLP Solar Rebate Program Generates 777 RECs for MMWEC Members

Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) has retired the first set of renewable energy credits (RECs) that were generated from the Massachusetts MLP Solar Rebate Program. The program generated 777 RECs in 2020 for MMWEC's Member light departments.

MMWEC assisted the Municipal Electric Association of Massachusetts (MEAM) and the DOER in creating the MLP Solar Rebate Program, which launched in May 2019. The program allows customers of participating municipal light plants (MLPs) an incentive toward the cost of solar installations. The MLP Solar Rebate Program offers a rebate of up to \$1.20 per watt capped at 50% of the total project costs for projects that are 25 kilowatts (kW) or less. The DOER and the MLP each contribute an equal amount toward the rebate. The MLP Solar Rebate Program was a follow up to the Massachusetts SREC-II solar program, which ended in November 2018. MMWEC participants include the municipal utilities located in Ashburnham, Boylston, Chicopee, Groton, Holden, Ipswich, Mansfield, Marblehead, Paxton, Princeton, Shrewsbury, South Hadley, Sterling, Templeton, Wakefield and West Boylston.

At the end of 2020, the MLP Solar Rebate Program resulted in 66 solar installations in MMWEC Member territories. Projects ranged from 2.5 kW DC to 25 kW DC with a total generation of

777 megawatt-hours, creating 777 RECs. RECs serve as proofs of purchase of renewable energy attributes. Each megawatt-hour of renewable energy produced is allocated one REC. MMWEC serves as the solar aggregator for its Members and facilitates the minting and retiring of RECs on behalf of its Members. Several additional projects have been approved through the program and are scheduled to be installed within the next year.

The 777 RECs generated from the MLP Solar Rebate Program are substantial in terms of renewable energy generation. The RECs equate to offsetting more than 511,000 pounds of carbon dioxide or planting 1,000 trees and growing them for 10 years. It's also the equivalent of offsetting more than 563,000 vehicle miles or taking 49 vehicles off the road.

Stephen Smith, manager of energy commodities at MMWEC, said he is pleased with the MLP Solar Rebate Program's results.

"The MLP Solar Rebate Program has been tremendously successful with 91% of the funds having been committed, allowing for more than 1,400 kW of solar to be built, supporting Massachusetts and the MLPs' commitment to net-zero carbon generation in electricity by 2050," Smith said.

The MLP Solar Rebate Program will accept applications for customers of participating MMWEC Member utilities until June 30, 2021. Once approved, customers have 12 months to complete their solar installations and receive the incentives. ∞

Four MMWEC Members Honored by APPA, SEPA

Four MMWEC Members have earned recognition by the American Public Power Association. Holyoke Gas & Electric (HG&E), Mansfield Municipal Electric Department (MMED), and Wakefield Municipal Gas & Light Department (WMGLD) each earned the Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) status, and Boylston Municipal Light Department (BMLD) was honored with the APPA Safety Award of Excellence. HG&E was also recognized by the Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA) in its inaugural Utility Transformation Challenge.

The APPA RP3 Program recognizes public power utilities which have succeeded across four operational categories: reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement. The program has comprehensive application and evaluation processes. Utilities apply for the status in the fall. The APPA 18-member panel reviews the applications in the winter and scores them. Applications that receive an 80% score or higher are awarded the RP3 designation in the spring. The designation lasts for three years.

HG&E is familiar with the RP3 Program, having been awarded the RP3 status six times overall. General Manager James Lavelle says he is particularly proud of HG&E's quick average outage restoration time, low safety incidents, and its Cadet Engineering Scholarship, which gives engineering college students the opportunity to intern at the light department. He added that over the next three years, HG&E will be implementing a number of improvements to its electric system, including measures that will address load reduction and field transformer replacements.

Lavelle said the RP3 designation and re-application process helps HG&E continually improve practices.

"RP3 is a form of validation that we are at the top of the game in doing what we strive to do every day for our customers: offering competitive rates, innovative and sustainable energy solutions, reliable service, and excellent customer care," Lavelle said. "The act of maintaining this designation means that HG&E is continuously enhancing its processes and procedures to maintain a high standard of service."

MMED is a three-time recipient of the RP3 designation. General Manager Joseph Sollecito said the department is invested in its safety measures and has implemented a Workplace Safety Solutions group. Twice a year, the outside entity visits MMED to give safety presentations and conduct field inspections. The department is also known for its ability to isolate outages and restore power quickly. Sollecito said MMED is also committed to workforce development and ensuring that the department's employees have the proper training, tools, and skills needed to keep the department running successfully.

"We couldn't be prouder to be honored with this designation which is a culmination of a lot of work from many people who really care about powering our community," Sollecito said. "Mansfield Electric is committed to continuing to look for ways to improve our operations and provide exceptional service to our customers in the future."

WMGLD has achieved the RP3 designation three times total. General Manager Peter Dion said the status is a welcome



Smart Electric Power Alliance

reinforcement for the department during an unprecedented time.

"Wakefield Municipal Gas and Light Department is grateful to be recognized by the APPA as one of the nation's most Reliable Public Power Providers," Dion said. "It is a testament to the hard working team here at the WMGLD to earn such recognition, especially in a year impacted so significantly by the COVID-19 virus."

The light departments plan to reapply for the RP3 designation when their statuses expire in

three years.

HG&E was also one of 10 utilities recognized by SEPA for its carbon-reduction efforts during SEPA's inaugural Utility Transformation Challenge. SEPA conducted and analyzed multiple surveys from 135 different utilities representing more than 83 million customers. The data was analyzed in four different categories to evaluate utility transformation to modern and carbon-free energy: clean energy resources, corporate leadership, modern grid enablement, and aligned actions and engagement. The results were used as a basis for SEPA's 2021 Utility Transformation Profile and the top 10 utilities earned spots on the 2021 Utility Transformation Leaderboard.

"As a public power utility, HG&E is committed to providing innovative and sustainable energy solutions to the community we serve through investments in a diverse power supply portfolio, energy storage, efficiency and conservation programs, as well as development of emerging clean energy technologies," Lavelle said. "The state of Massachusetts has established a road map to net-zero by 2050 and HG&E is well positioned to meeting this target."

The APPA Safety Award of Excellence recognizes public power utilities with the lowest safety incidents. BMLD had zero safety incidents in 2020, earning the department first place in its category. The department is very familiar with the safety award, having won it an impressive 19 times overall.

BMLD General Manager Mark Barakian said the department embraced new safety practices in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The department remained fully staffed while complying with Center for Disease Control protocols. Employees were provided with personal protective equipment and the office and vehicles were cleaned and sanitized daily. BMLD also required line workers to drive separate vehicles when performing maintenance and repair work to minimize possible exposure. BMLD prioritizes trainings and while on-site trainings at the department have been temporarily postponed, employees were able to attend Northeast Public Power Association-led safety meetings held in Holden Municipal Light Department's garage which allowed for attendees to be socially distanced.

Barakian said he is proud of his department for earning the Safety Award of Excellence and looks forward to resuming on-site safety trainings once it is safe to do so.

"The award shows that the employees take safety seriously," Barakian said. "The most important part is having all our employees go home at the end of the day to their families." ∞

Leading by Example: IELD purchases 6th Fleet EV

To further its commitment to green energy and decreasing its carbon footprint, Ipswich Electric Light Department (IELD) recently helped the town of Ipswich purchase a 2021 Tesla Model Y electric vehicle (EV) for Police Chief Paul Nikas, making it the sixth EV purchased for the town's municipal fleet in the past three years.

IELD's pattern of purchasing electric vehicles started in 2018 when the light department was in need of a new forklift. IELD Manager Jonathan Blair researched potential replacement vehicles and decided on a Hyster electric forklift. Blair said though the purchase price was slightly more expensive than a gasoline-powered forklift, the Hyster eliminated the need to have propane tanks, store gasoline on-site, and offered more operational values such as always being able to charge and run the vehicle on-site, even indoors.

"The electric replacement is more responsive, more capable, and can operate indefinitely inside the warehouse with no harmful emissions," Blair said.

After the success of the Hyster, IELD purchased three 2019 Chevrolet Bolt EVs to replace retired gas vehicles for the light department, the town of Ipswich's conservation agent, and the town's building and health department. All three Bolts were purchased from Quirk Chevrolet in Braintree, which offers a significant dealership incentive on EVs for customers of select MMWEC Members. As IELD manager, Blair drives a 2021 Toyota RAV4 Prime plug-in hybrid EV for work duties, which was purchased for the town's fleet earlier this year.

Blair said an EV was a smart choice for Chief Nikas' vehicle in particular due to the significant amount of idling that occurs during police shifts. Replacing a retired gas vehicle with an EV eliminates the emissions generated while driving and idling the police car.

The Tesla was purchased with the aid of a \$10,000 grant

from IELD and a grant of more than \$4,000 from the Green Communities grant program. In 2020, the town of Ipswich officially became a "Green Community" under the Green Community Division of the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Resources that offers financial and technical support to municipalities that pledge to reduce municipal energy use by 20 percent over five years.

Discussions are still being held about how to reach the 20 percent energy reduction goal. Blair said the town is considering retrofitting the HVAC system of the middle school and high school building, which is the largest in town and the biggest consumer of energy. A plan was also proposed to replace the town's fire station with a combined public safety building that is all-electric and powered by geothermal and air source heat pumps.

IELD has also installed EV charging stations at three parking lots in town: on Elm Street, Hammatt Street, and at the Town Hall. The Hammatt Street station was installed as part of the MassEVIP public access charging (PAC) program, which covered 100 percent of equipment and installation costs. Blair said the town is seeing increasing usage at the public charging stations.

Blair said he hopes the EVs in the town's fleet serve as an example to encourage IELD customers to drive electric.

"Showing our customers that there are safe, effective EV options at an affordable price helps us to fight climate change and work towards the climate goals of Commonwealth," Blair said. "It's a bullseye for our mission statement." ∞



Five of IELD's six electric vehicles.

Connected Homes, HELPS Add JuiceBox EV Chargers to Program Offerings

MWEC's HELPS (Home Energy Loss Prevention Services) Program is expanding its electric vehicle (EV) incentives.

HELPs has partnered with Enel X, an EV charging station manufacturing company, and will now be including its JuiceBox EV chargers in the Connected Homes and Scheduled Charging programs.

The Connected Homes program leverages the technology of smart devices into cost savings for its customers. Connected Homes currently has 13 participating municipal light plants including the municipal utilities in Belmont, Groton, Holden, Holyoke, Ipswich, Mansfield, Marblehead, Princeton, Shrewsbury, South Hadley, Sterling, Wakefield, and West Boylston. Customers of participating MLPs who own JuiceBox chargers will soon be able to enroll them into Connected Homes.

By enrolling the chargers into the Connected Homes program, customers agree to allow Connected Homes to make brief, limited adjustments to the charging rate of the chargers during periods of peak electric demand. Customers will be notified of adjustments via email and given the option to opt out. If they

participate, they can earn a \$10 monthly incentive paid out quarterly. The program also offers a \$10 monthly incentive for customers with ChargePoint EV chargers.

MMWEC Members that participate in the Scheduled Charging program offer customers a free or discounted EV charger in exchange for customers enrolling the charger in the Scheduled Charging program. Scheduled charging is a set schedule to determine when a charger can be used at full power. Through the WiFi connection enabled in the charger, participating MLPs can reduce the charging rate to a Level 1 rate during periods of peak energy which occur between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. on non-holiday weekdays. Scheduled Charging participants include the MLPs in Chicopee, Groton, Hull, Marblehead, Princeton, Shrewsbury, Sterling, Wakefield, and West Boylston. Customers who choose to enroll in the Scheduled Charging program will receive a coupon code for a free or discounted JuiceBox EV charger.

Customers who live in MLPs that participate in both the Connected Homes and Scheduled Charging programs cannot enroll in both programs simultaneously. If a customer is already

MMWEC Expands EV Dealership Incentive Offerings

MMWEC has partnered with Central Chevrolet in West Springfield to expand the dealership incentives available on electric vehicles (EVs) for MMWEC Members in the Scheduled Charging and Connected Homes programs.

Customers of select MMWEC Members are able to save \$13,500 off the MSRP of a 2021 Chevrolet Bolt electric vehicle. The dealership incentive can be combined with a \$2,500 MOR-EV (Massachusetts Offers Rebates for Electric Vehicles) rebate for a total savings of up to \$16,000. Scheduled Charging MLP participants include Chicopee, Groton, Hull, Marblehead, Princeton, Shrewsbury, Sterling, Wakefield, and West Boylston. Connected Homes MLP participants include Belmont, Groton, Holden, Holyoke, Ipswich, Mansfield, Marblehead, Princeton, South Hadley, Shrewsbury, Sterling, Wakefield, and West Boylston.

MMWEC's Scheduled Charging Program offers customers of select MLPs a free or discounted Level 2 EV or plug-in hybrid (PHEV) charger for customers who enroll the chargers into the program. Scheduled charging is a set schedule to determine when a charger can be used at full power. Through the WiFi connection enabled in the charger, participating MLPs can set the charger to charge at a reduced rate during periods of peak energy usage, which helps MLPs better manage their electric loads.

Customers of select MLPs that already own EV and PHEV chargers can enroll their chargers in the Connected Homes



Program. Connected Homes offers a \$10 monthly incentive in exchange for making brief adjustments to the chargers during times of peak electric demand. Customers of MLPs that participate in both the Scheduled Charging and Connected Homes programs cannot be enrolled in both programs simultaneously. However, those that are already participating in the Scheduled Charging Program can enroll their chargers into Connected Homes after three years of participating in the Scheduled Charging Program.

The dealership incentive is a helpful tool to aid the state in reaching its carbon-reduction goals. In December, the Commonwealth released the Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap Report which pledges that Massachusetts will achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. By 2035, 100 percent of new light-duty vehicles sold in the state must be zero-emission vehicles.

"Central Chevrolet is committed to an all-electric transportation future," said Central Chevrolet Sales Manager Ed O'Grady. "We are proud to help our home state reach its ambitious goals of zero emissions."

MMWEC also has a partnership with Quirk Chevrolet in Braintree which offers a \$15,500 dealership incentive off 2021 Chevrolet models, for a total savings of up to \$18,000 when combined with the \$2,500 MOR-EV rebate. Both dealership incentives are limited time offers subject to availability. For the most up-to-date information, visit <https://munihelps.org>. ∞

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enrolled in the Scheduled Charging program, they have the option of enrolling their EV chargers into Connected Homes after a three-year period in Scheduled Charging.

"JuiceBox smart EV chargers are among the most used EV home charging systems in the US, and we are very happy to welcome them to Connected Homes," said Joseph Coles, energy efficiency program manager at MMWEC. "Connected Homes and its participating municipal utilities considers this integration of JuiceBox chargers an important step in helping the Commonwealth meet its 2030 roadmap goals for EV adoption. To further help the state meets its goals, Connected Homes will continue to work to include additional devices and manufacturers in the program."

Customers can begin enrolling their JuiceBox chargers into Connected Homes by the end of June. JuiceBox chargers will also become available for Scheduled Charging program customers by the end of June. ∞

High School Students Visit Berkshire Wind



Eight high school students and one teacher from the Buxton School in Williamstown, MA toured the Berkshire Wind Power Project on a very foggy day this spring. Students toured turbine 8 and learned more about the project and wind energy technology from MMWEC staff members Jason Viadero, Alex Vega, and Brian Quinn. MMWEC offers tours of the project to students, educators and interested parties upon request. ∞



MMWEC

A non-profit, public corporation and political subdivision of the Commonwealth
 Joint Action and economies of scale for Massachusetts municipal utilities
 327 Moody Street, Ludlow, MA 01056
 (413) 308-1392 email mmwec@mmwec.org

Internet: www.mmwec.org