Power Factor Newsletter Q12026

GARDNER INVESTS IN FUTURE WITH NEW UTILITIES FACILITY

The City of Gardner is making a significant investment in its future with the construction of a new utilities building that will bring all divisions of the Utilities Department under one roof.

This project, which has been in development since 2017, is now well underway and is expected to be completed by March 2026.

The purpose of the new facility is to consolidate administration and maintenance crews into one location, improving communication, planning, and daily operations. By housing all divisions together, the city aims to streamline workflows and enhance service delivery for its growing community.

Designed with functionality and efficiency in mind, the building will feature garage bays for line maintenance and electric distribution crews, office space, storage areas, and crew show-up rooms. Large equipment bays will allow vehicles to pull in and out without backing up, and additional office and equipment space will accommodate future growth. Currently, line maintenance equipment is stored outdoors and across multiple locations, creating challenges during winter weather events. This new facility will eliminate those inefficiencies and provide a safer, more organized environment.

The project is being delivered through a design-build contract, with Phase 1 design costs of $180,500 and Phase 2 construction costs of $4,739,345, bringing the total project cost to $4,919,845. The site layout also includes room for an additional garage bay, ensuring flexibility for future needs.

According to Jeff LeMire, Gardner's Utilities Manager and person in charge of the project, the most challenging aspect has been balancing everyone's needs list within the budget. However, seeing the building come together after years of planning is incredibly rewarding. This new facility represents a major milestone for Gardner's Utilities Department and the community it serves—providing improved efficiency, safety, and capacity for years to come.

2025 KMEA/KMGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE RECAP

The 2025 KMEA/KMGA Annual Conference, held November 13–14 in Wichita, brought together members cities, industry experts, and partners for two days of learning and networking.

Dan Meers

The conference kicked off Thursday morning with breakfast and exhibitor interaction, followed by board meetings for KMGA and KMEA. Attendees enjoyed a presentation from Dan Meers, KC Wolf, who delivered an inspiring message on leadership and perseverance.
Afternoon breakout sessions covered critical topics for municipal utilities, including:

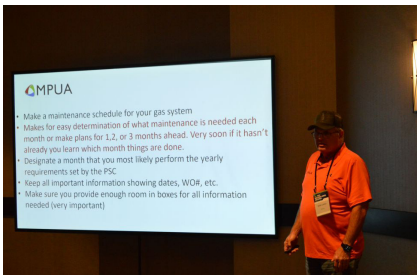
- SPP Changes and Their Impact – Tom Saitta and Neal Daney, KMEA
- Natural Gas Market Update – Don Krattenmaker, WoodRiver
- Insurance Market Overview – Tom McGuire, Arthur J. Gallagher
- Artificial Intelligence: The Good, the Bad, the Wow and the How – Thomas Shaw and Jake Williams, SPP
- Regulatory Inspections Using Simple Record Keeping – Keith Carter, MPUA
- Kansas Economic Development Tools and Programs – Craig VanWey, Kansas Dept. of Commerce


Tom Saitta, KMEA

Don Krattenmaker, WoodRiver Energy

Tom McGuire, Arthur J. Gallagher

Thomas Shaw and Jake Williams, SPP



Keith Carter, MPUA

Craig VanWey, Kansas Dept. of Commerce

The evening featured a member appreciation reception followed by a recognition banquet and award ceremony. Each year, KMGA presents two awards: the Ron Huxman Distinguished Service Award and the Mike Gilliland Honor Award. This year, Cole Herder, City Administrator for the City of Humboldt, received the Ron Huxman Distinguished Service Award, and Thomas Bevan, Public Works Director for the City of Kechi, was honored with the Mike Gilliland Honor Award.
KMEA also presents three annual awards: the Gilbert E. Hanson Jr. Outstanding Service Award, the Max Embree Distinguished Service Award, and the Dedicated Commitment to Service Award. The 2025 Max Embree Distinguished Service Award was presented to Sara Caylor, City Council Member for the City of Ottawa. Jeff Ahring, City Superintendent for the City of Lincoln Center, received this year's Dedicated Commitment to Service Award. Dustin Bedore, Director of Electric Utilities for the City of Goodland, was honored as the 2025 recipient of the Gilbert Hanson Jr. Outstanding Service Award.
The evening concluded with entertainment by comedian Josh Sneed.

KMGA AWARDS

COLE HERDER RECEIVES THE RON HUXMAN "DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD"

(L-R) GUS COLLINS, KMGA PRESIDENT, COLE HERDER, CITY OF HUMBOLDT AND PAUL MAHLBERG, KMEA/KMGA GENERAL MANAGER

THOMAS BEVAN RECEIVES THE MIKE GILLILAND "HONOR AWARD"

(L-R) PAUL MAHLBERG, KMEA/KMGA GENERAL MANAGER, THOMAS BEVAN, CITY OF KECHI, AND GUS COLLINS, KMGA PRESIDENT

KMEA AWARDS

SARA CAYLOR RECEIVES THE MAX EMBREE "DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD"

(L-R) MIKE MUIRHEAD, KMEA PRESIDENT, SARA CAYLOR, CITY OF OTTAWA, AND PAUL MAHLBERG, KMEA/KMGA GENERAL MANAGER

JEFF AHRING RECEIVES THE DEDICATED COMMITMENT TO SERVICE AWARD

(L-R) MIKE MUIRHEAD, KMEA PRESIDENT, JEFF AHRING, CITY OF LINCOLN CENTER AND PAUL MAHLBERG, KMEA/KMGA GENERAL MANAGER

DUSTIN BEDORE RECEIVES THE GILBERT E. HANSON JR. "OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD"

(L-R) MIKE MUIRHEAD, KMEA PRESIDENT, DUSTIN BEDORE, CITY OF GOODLAND AND PAUL MAHLBERG, KMEA/KMGA GENERAL MANAGER

Friday began with a legislative update from Brad Mears (KMU) and Kimberly Svaty (Gencur Svaty), followed by sessions on cutting-edge topics. Joseph Witkowski from The Energy Authority presented on Accelerating AI in Public Power, and Rafael Torres from NextEra discussed Energy Storage in the SPP Marketplace. The conference concluded with an engaging keynote from Joel Goldberg, closing remarks, and a tour of the Foley Rebuild Facility in Park City.

BRAD MEARS AND KIMBERLY SVATY

JOSEPH WITKOWSKI

RAFAEL TORRES

JOEL GOLDBERG

This year's conference was a success thanks to the participation of our members, speakers, and sponsors. We look forward to continuing these conversations and building on the ideas shared as we work together to strengthen municipal utilities across Kansas.

GARDEN CITY POWERS UP WITH NEW SOLAR ARRAY AT BUFFALO DUNES GOLF COURSE

Garden City is taking a major step toward renewable energy with the installation of a 96-kilowatt solar array at Buffalo Dunes Golf Course, located at 5685 US 83, Garden City, KS. This project reflects the city's commitment to sustainability and cost savings for its operations.

The solar array, built by King Solar, began construction on September 15, 2025, and started to deliver power on November 4, 2025. The system is projected to offset approximately $16,000 in energy costs annually, reducing the golf course's reliance on traditional power sources.

The project was financed through Garden City's power supply agreements, ensuring that the investment aligns with the city's long-term energy strategy without burdening taxpayers.

By integrating renewable energy into its infrastructure, Garden City is not only lowering costs but also contributing to a cleaner, more sustainable future for the community.

General Manager's Report

KMEA GREENLIGHTS NEW MID-STATES FACILITY

KMEA is moving forward with plans for a new, expanded Mid-States facility in South Salina after the KMEA Board of Directors unanimously approved the project's financing during the Board meeting on November 13. This new, state-of-the-art facility is a direct response to a 2023 strategic planning assessment that identified critical needs for growth, enhanced safety protocols, and a centralized location for member meetings and services across Kansas.

KMEA acquired Mid-States Energy Works in July 2020 to expand its service offerings to the members across the state. The new facility addresses the limitations of the existing location in North Salina, which is maxed out on office space and storage.

The proposed facility will be significantly larger than the current one, offering much-needed space for expansion. The total building space will nearly double, from 12,291 square feet to 22,700 square feet, and the laydown yard will expand from 11,480 to 25,000 square feet.

Key features and space comparisons:

- Office Space: Increasing from 2,178 sq. ft. to 8,500 sq. ft. (p. 11).
- Shop Space: Two new shops are included in the project – a new line shop of 4,850 sq. ft. will be added, and the existing fabrication shop will double to the same size.
- Warehouse: The 4,500 sq. ft. warehouse space will be optimized for efficiency.
- Future Growth: The facility will only occupy 5 of the 15 acres, leaving 10 acres for future expansion.
- The new facility is designed to meet modern operational demands, including separation of fabrication shop and office areas for noise and dust control, and state-of-the-art meeting space to meet the needs of a number of committee gatherings in the central part of the State.
- The total project cost is estimated at $8.25 million, which includes land acquisition, development costs and construction of which will be contracted to Hutton Corporation.
- The timeline for the new facility development includes an expected groundbreaking in February 2026 with completion targeted for the following February in 2027.
- I would like to thank a number of folks that have been instrumental in the development and progress to date:
- Architect One who has led the design of the project;
- Renaissance Consulting (Civil), MKEC (structural) and PKMR (MEP) on the respective engineering work;
- Stevenson Construction who has served as owner's representative during the development and who will continue to serve in this role during construction;
- Hutton Corporation who was selected to serve as General Contractor; and
- Gilmore & Bell, Columbia Capital and Piper Jaffray who have been instrumental in the financing efforts for the project.

Lastly, thank you to the membership for their support of this milestone project! I believe this project will serve the membership for many years to come.

Electric Operations

RESILIENCY AT KMEA OVERLAND PARK OFFICE

KMEA's office building in Overland Park, Kansas, is installing a backup generator to enhance our ability to serve our cities continuously during electrical outages in the Kansas City area. This project is expected to be completed by January 31, 2026. KMEA is installing a 50 kW Caterpillar diesel generator with an automatic transfer switch, which will be tested periodically to ensure reliability.

In addition, because so much of the electric and gas industry relies on the internet to conduct business, KMEA has implemented internet redundancy using two separate providers. If one service goes down, the system will automatically switch to the other provider within seconds.

Our agency established a Real-Time Operations Desk in 2016 within our Overland Park office building. At that time, we recognized the need for resilience and continued to make improvements to increase system reliability. In 2016, KMEA added a larger UPS for the server rack, a dedicated UPS for the Operations Desk, redundant computers for the desk, and mobile phones to back up the phone system. These measures have served us well, with a few minor issues along the way that we continue to learn from.

Since 2016, our need for reliable and continuous communication with other parties has grown significantly. Continuous communication with our cities and the Southwest Power Pool is critical for our cities to act quickly, ensuring a reliable and economical energy supply. Additionally, our Overland Park office houses servers that provide our members with real-time data. Installing a reliable backup generator addresses many of these concerns.

MID-STATES UPDATE

KMEA MID-STATES EXPANDS SERVICE OFFERINGS TO BETTER SUPPORT MEMBERS

KMEA Mid-States is proud to announce an expanded suite of services designed to meet the evolving needs of our members and ensure the reliability of their electrical infrastructure. Our team now provides comprehensive solutions for transformer maintenance and diagnostics, helping utilities maintain peak performance and prevent costly downtime.

The new offerings include Load Tap Changer (LTC) maintenance, oil leak repairs, and support for padmount, pole mount, and substation transformers. We also provide voltage regulator services, Dissolved Gas Analysis (DGA) for early detection of transformer issues, and transformer testing and internal inspections to ensure optimal operation.

In addition, our experts deliver diagnostics on transformer control systems and offer broader access to transformer parts, giving members the resources they need to keep their systems running smoothly.

With these expanded capabilities, KMEA Mid-States continues its commitment to delivering reliable, cost-effective solutions that empower our members to serve their communities with confidence.

KMGA Report

WINTER STORMS- TO NAME OR NOT TO NAME

Most did not realize that winter storms are named until the dreaded February 2021 Storm Uri brought record snow and cold to 26 states. Naming winter storms in the U.S. has been used sporadically since the 1700s. Names were given to identify the days of the year the storm impacted or noteworthy structures that the storm had damaged and/or destroyed. Many times the storms were named after the fact.

In the 2010s winter storm naming became controversial. The Weather Channel (TWC) created its own list of names for winter storms similar to that of hurricanes. In the 2013-14 season, TWC decided to name a storm if it was forecast to impact over 10 million people or 390,000 sq miles. They collaborated with a Latin class at Bozeman Montana High School and released a new set of 26 names each year. TWC said the naming scheme would raise awareness, make communications and information sharing easier, which in turn would make it easier for people to understand forecasts, lead to better planning, preparedness and result in less impact overall.

Accuweather disagreed with TWC saying they had concluded it "was not good science" and would "mislead the public" and noted that "winter storms were very different from hurricanes.

The National Weather Service (NWS) did not acknowledge TWC's winter storm names. NWS asked its forecast offices to refrain from using the TWC names and requested their employees avoid referring to storms by name. NWS spokesperson stated, "The National Weather Service does not name winter storms because a winter storm's impact can vary from one location to another, and storms can weaken and redevelop, making it difficult to define where one ends and another begins.

Here are some past winter storm names:

- The Great Snow of 1717
- The Schoolhouse Blizzard (1888)
- Armistice Day Blizard (1940)
- Columbus Day Storm (1962)
- Halloween Blizzard (1991)
- April Fool's Day Blizzard (1997)
- Snowtober (2011)
- Winter Storm Uri (2021)
- Winter Storm Elliott (2022)
- Winter Storm Finn (2024)

Save Energy and Money this Winter

Reduce your energy usage and save money on your energy bills by following these tips:

Seal it up. Check for leaks around windows, doors, and other openings to the outside. Seal these leaks with caulk and keep the warmth in.

Cover it up. Cover bare floors with carpet.

Furnace Checkup. Have your furnace and heating system inspected annually to check for leaks or other problems.

Insulate. Wrap old water heaters with proper insulating jackets, and set the temperature to 120°F (or lower). Insulate your plumbing.

Use mother nature. When it's cold outside but also sunny, open the blinds during the day to let the sun help heat your home.

Wash cold. Whenever possible, use the cold water setting on your washing machine.

Check and replace HVAC filters. New filters usually only cost a few dollars. Dirty filters cost more to use, overwork the equipment, and result in lower indoor air quality. The filters should be replaced regularly.

Reverse your ceiling fans. The fan blades should be spinning in a clockwise direction on a low speed to force the warm air near the ceiling down into the living space.

Control the temperature. Set the temperature to 68°F or lower in the winter. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature.

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