



# OKLAHOMA PUBLIC POWER

A publication of the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma

January 2015

## APPA's President and CEO To Be Featured Speaker at 2015 Public Power Conference

Sue Kelly, President and CEO of the American Public Power Association (APPA), will be the featured speaker for the 2015 Public Power Conference scheduled for April.

“Sue is the leading voice for public power in our country,” said Tom Rider, MESO’s General Manager. “We are honored to be able to have her speak at our statewide conference and look forward to hearing her perspective.”

For the 2015 conference, a new, fourth training track — Power Generation — has been added. The remaining three tracks are Superintendent, Lineworker, and Customer Service.

The 2015 Public Power Conference – presented by MESO, GRDA and OMPA — will be April 26 to 28 in Norman, OK. Registration materials will be available soon.

APPA, based in Washington, D.C., is the service organization for the nation's more than 2,000 community-owned electric utilities. Collectively, these utilities serve more than 47 million Americans.



## MESO Enhances Field Skills Training To Improve Apprenticeship Program in 2015

The MESO Apprenticeship Program — a four year, utility-directed program — is expected to see improvement with the introduction of enhanced field skills training opportunities in 2015 to better serve members.

“We offer great field training programs for linemen at every skill level and we will still do that,” said Tom Dougherty, MESO’s Director of Job Training and Safety. “The training schedule will be more geared towards helping those in the Apprenticeship Program, but any lineman, at any skill or experience level will be able to benefit from it.”

The MESO Apprenticeship Program is designed to

give lineworkers the skills and experience to achieve the rank of Journeyman Lineman. Participants in the program learn from both written curriculum and field in addition to specialized training events. Each year training of the Apprenticeship Program is designed to provide new training while reinforcing previously-learned material.

Key Points of the MESO Apprenticeship Program:

- More than 150 areas are covered by the program including pole climbing, electrical theory, safe work procedures, transformer connections, trouble shooting, and more.

(see FIELD SKILLS, page 4)

### In This Issue

Karen Riffel Joins MESO Board – Page 2	The Key to Affordable Energy – Page 3	MESO To Update Mutual Aid Program – Page 6	Sperry-Piltz Index™ Now Available to MESO Members– Page 8
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## Karen Riffel Joins MESO Board of Directors



Karen Riffel, City Administrator for Mooreland, OK, has been named to the MESO Board of Directors.

“Karen has a tremendous

background in municipal government and public power,” said Tom Rider, MESO’s General Manager. “We are looking forward to her knowledge and are appreciative of her willingness to serve on our board.”

Riffel has more than 27 years of experience in municipal government, previously serving as City Manager for Waynoka, and City Clerk/Treasurer in both Taloga and Anadarko. She was City Administrator six years in Seiling before accepting the Mooreland position in 2013.

Credentialed as a Master Municipal Clerk by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), Karen has been recognized for many honors

by the Oklahoma Municipal Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officials Association, the Oklahoma Municipal League and the American Water Works Association.

Riffel replaces Paul McAlexander on the Board.

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*\*Job Training & Safety Participants*

# The Key to Affordable Energy

by Congressman Markwayne Mullin

America’s global competitiveness depends on affordable energy. If our nation intends to grow jobs in areas like manufacturing and production, then we’ll need energy costs that allow us to make goods at competitive prices. With an abundance of natural resources and technological breakthroughs, our nation is on the edge of becoming a leader in energy production. This could mean energy independence and lower energy costs for the United States.

So what’s keeping us from achieving this?

The answer is our nation’s regulatory system—a complex mess of burdensome federal rules and regulations. To further the problem, the Obama Administration is attempting to push through an unprecedented proposal called the “Clean Power Plan,” which would expand the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

What this proposal would do is set new mandatory CO2 “goals” for each state. In other words, the federal government would dictate to the state and local levels what amount of CO2 their power plants may produce.

In response to this, the House Energy and Commerce Committee recently released a report that details the many implementation and legal issues that could result from this proposal. The conclusion is that EPA is once again intruding upon the legal authority of state and local regulators, creating more red-tape and barriers for the energy sector to cross. With our nation’s businesses, manufacturers, and producers already struggling because of overreaching laws like Obamacare, this is the last thing we need.

The fact is local and state regulators have better capabilities to regulate power plants.

When federal agencies like the EPA step into the picture, states lose their ability to self-regulate as the Constitution intended. Oklahoma already has organizations like the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for regulatory purposes. *(see AFFORDABLE ENERGY, page 10)*



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## Field Skills

(continued from page 1)

- Each work area has a written study guide and a written quiz, with a final test at the end of each year/level.
- Participants also must complete a set number of “on the job” field training hours under the direction/guidance of an approved Journeyman Lineman.
- Participants are expected to complete the study guide and written test, prior to successfully completing a field skills test under the direction of a Journeyman Lineman.
- Utilities which participate in the MESO Apprentice Program must provide a “proctor” to administer the study guides and written test. MESO will grade the year-end final written test.
- Participants must keep a log of “on the job” field training hours and field testing. They need to maintain documentation of all written quizzes.
- Once participants have successfully completed a year/level, MESO will reward them with a certificate of completion for that year/level.

“The more training a lineman can get, the better the lineman will be,” Dougherty added. “We know that a combination of veteran and new linemen training together greatly helps all those participating.”

This program has been approved for utility certification by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training.



Those completing this program, can then certify with the Department of Labor.

MESO Apprentice Program’s receives guidance from the MESO’s Job Training and Oversight Committee. Committee members are Dougherty; Dean Sherrick, Edmond; Rodney Green, Anadarko, Dave Wetherell, Edmond; and, Micah Keeling, Stroud.

For more information about the MESO Apprentice Program or any Job Training and Safety Training, contact Dougherty at [tomd@meso.org](mailto:tomd@meso.org).

### 2015 Apprentice 1-2 Day Training Schedule

#### Level 1 Climbing School (2-day class)

Jan. 14 & 15, 2015, Sallisaw

#### AC/DC Fundamentals (1-day class)

March 18, 2015, MESO Offices, OKC

#### Transformer Class (1-day class)

May 13 2015, GRDA Facility, Pryor

#### Overhead Electric Basics (1-day class)

July 15, 2015, MESO Training Field, Edmond

#### Line Design Build (4-day class)

Sept. 14-18, 2015, Location TBD

#### Underground Basics (1-day class)

Nov. 15, 2015, MESO Training Field, Edmond

*Schedule subject to change*

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## GRDA's 2015 ... Looking Ahead to New Construction, Celebrating Historic Milestones

As it looks ahead to 2015, the Grand River Dam Authority is planning for a year full of activity, new development and historic moments.

Early in the year, on January 23, GRDA plans to hold the official groundbreaking for Unit 3, its new combined cycle gas generation plant. To be built adjacent to the existing Grand River Energy Center (GREC, formerly Coal Fired Complex), the new Unit 3 will be the first unit of its kind in the United States, with the potential to be the nation's most efficient gas generation plant when it begins operations in 2017.

In mid-December, at its regular monthly meeting, the GRDA Board of Directors voted to ratify the \$296.8 million engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract that will guide most of the work on the new generation facility. In terms of efficiency and the benefits it will provide to GRDA customers, GRDA Chairman Tom Kimball called the new facility a "game changer" for GRDA.

At the height of construction activity, in 2015 and 2016, GRDA expects as many as 500 contracted

employees to be on-site, working on both Unit 3 and the upgrade of emissions control equipment on the existing Unit 2. All that activity and work should prove to be very beneficial to the area economy, even before the unit produces its first megawatts.

The large project and the expected influx of temporary construction jobs are similar to another historic GRDA undertaking from many years ago. The construction of Pensacola Dam (1938-1940) was one of Oklahoma's largest construction projects in the first half of the 20th century. Using Great Depression-era labor, GRDA built Oklahoma's first hydroelectric project, while also creating magnificent Grand Lake in the state's northeast corner. Together, the dam and the lake have helped support a thriving recreation and tourism industry ever since.

It is fitting that, in the same year when GRDA will celebrate the 75th anniversary of its first major construction project, it will also break ground on another facility that is expected to benefit Oklahoma for decades to come.



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## MESO To Update Mutual Aid Program

MESO expects to complete updates to its Mutual Aid Program and send new agreements to all members for signature by the end of January 2015.

“The MESO Mutual Aid Program is being revised to better prepare our members for disaster response requests.” Tom Rider, General Manager said. “While work started more than a year ago on updating and revising the MESO program, we chose to wait until the APPA’s Mutual Aid Working Group could present their recommendations.”

Established following 2012’s Superstorm Sandy in the northeast part of the country, APPA’s working group released the American Public Power Association (APPA) Mutual Aid Playbook in October last year. The playbook offers guidelines to systems of all sizes in preparing for and responding to disasters

and needs for assistance.

“While the APPA model provides a very good foundation, the MESO program will be more specific, and, in turn, provide better benefit to our members,” Rider said.

One of the differences between APPA’s model and MESO’s current plan has to do with the Mutual Aid Agreement members are asked to sign. APPA’s model is very broad while MESO’s contains more specifics on assistance requests and reimbursement.

Drake Rice, Director of Member Services, Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority, is heading up MESO’s working group. Joining him on the group are Gary Cupp, Grand River Dam Authority, Dean Sherrick and Wes Bennett, Edmond Electric, Tom Dougherty, MESO Director of Safety and Training, and Rider.

Signing and returning the agreement is required if a

municipal electric utility wants assistance should it experience a disaster or require outside help with system maintenance.

Questions about the MESO Mutual Aid Program may be directed to Rider at [tom@meso.org](mailto:tom@meso.org).

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### What is mutual aid?

Mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements are agreements between agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions that provide a mechanism to quickly obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services. The primary objective is to facilitate rapid, short-term deployment of emergency support prior to, during, and after an incident.

*From FEMA*

### **SAVE THE DATE**

## **2015 MESO Public Power Conference**

**April 26 – 28, 2015 • Norman, Oklahoma**

*Look for more details coming soon.*

### **UPCOMING 2015 MESO & APPA EVENTS**

January 14 – 15, 2015  
**MESO Level 1 Climbing School**  
Sallisaw, OK

March 9 – 12, 2015  
**APPA Legislative Rally**  
Washington, D.C.

March 18, 2015  
**AC/DC Fundamentals**  
MESO Offices, OKC

April 26 – 28, 2015  
**MESO Public Power Conference**  
Norman, OK

May 13, 2015  
**Transformer Class**  
GRDA Facility, Pryor

May 16, 2015  
**APPA Lineworkers Rodeo**  
Sacramento, CA  
May 17-20, 2015  
**APPA Engineering and & Operations Technical Conference**  
Sacramento, CA

June 5-10, 2015  
**APPA National Conference**  
Minneapolis, MN

Sep 23-24, 2015  
**Oklahoma Municipal League Conference**  
Tulsa, OK

October 1, 2015  
**MESO Lineworkers Rodeo**  
Location TBD

## OMPA Looks to 2015

As the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority (OMPA) enters 2015, it does so with an eye on the future, while not forgetting to look back.

The coming year promises to be one of celebration, with OMPA set to hit a significant milestone for a program, finish off long-awaited projects and begin new ventures that will move the organization on a course of success for years to come.

A few items to look for in the coming year:

### 20th Anniversary of CUP

The beginning of the year marks two decades of the Competitive Utility Program (CUP), which was created in January 1995 as a way for OMPA member cities to customer service and increase excellence in cost competitiveness. Edmond became the first city to become certified in CUP in April 1996, followed closely by Ponca City in December of that year. Today, 19 member cities are certified in the CUP program which results in a formal recognition reward. Many of them display the honor proudly on street signs as visitors enter their city limits.



### Completion of the CDLEC

The Charles D. Lamb Energy Center (CDLEC), the 103-megawatt natural gas plant in north Kay County and the first power plant to be developed, owned and operated solely by OMPA, is scheduled to be finished by April.

The CDLEC – named after OMPA’s current Board Chairman and Edmond Mayor Charles Lamb – will be used primarily for peaking power. Construction activities to date have been on schedule and under budget.

The energy center will occupy approximately 65 acres of a 160-acre plot owned by OMPA. The site was chosen mostly because of an existing Southern Star Gas natural gas pipeline and a recently built 345,000-volt transmission line.

### Establishment of Linecrew

To assist member cities in the northwest part of the state, OMPA plans to have a two-man electric maintenance crew in place by summer. The crew will be based out of Fairview. Its primary obligations will be to the cities of Laverne, Goltry, Pond Creek, Waynoka and Fairview, who have agreed to fund the effort. However, the crew also will be available to all member cities on a contract basis.

This is the first time OMPA has decided to hire a full-time linecrew, and comes after a request from cities who needed help maintaining their electric systems.

### The Legislative Push

As a way to educate members of the state legislature – especially recently elected ones – about OMPA and the vital role public power plays in member cities, OMPA is coordinating luncheons between legislators

(see OMPA, page 9)

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## DOE Says Smart Grid Projects Have Helped Utilities Reduce the Impact of Outages After Storms

By Jeannine Anderson, APPA

Smart grid technologies used at the Electric Power Board — the municipal utility in Chattanooga, Tennessee — and at two other East Coast utilities have helped the utilities recover faster from outages caused by storms, according to a report by the Department of Energy.

Storms are the biggest cause of power outages in the United States, and "improved capabilities for outage detection and response benefit both utilities and customers," DOE noted.

Results from the three smart grid projects, which were sponsored by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, "show improvements in outage management following major storms from the application of distribution automation technologies and systems," DOE said in the November report, Smart Grid Investments Improve Grid Reliability, Resilience, and Storm Responses.

Smart grid outage management systems "accelerated service restoration and limited the number of affected customers during major recent storms," the report found. "Utilities required fewer truck rolls during restoration and used



repair crews more efficiently," reducing outage time and reducing the cost of restoring power. In addition, business and residential customers also experienced fewer financial losses, the report said.

The Energy Department's Smart Grid Investment Grants (SGIG) program has awarded grants to 99 U.S. utilities. Of those, 32 are public power utilities. DOE's November report focused on smart grid projects by the EPB in Chattanooga, and by two investor-owned utilities: Florida Power and Light, and

Philadelphia-based PECO.

Smart grid technologies "are helping utilities to speed outage restoration following major storm events, reduce the total number of affected customers, and improve overall service reliability to reduce customer losses from power disruptions," DOE said.

The utilities used two smart grid approaches, DOE said:

1) distribution automation, including automated feeder switching (AFS) and fault location, isolation, and service restoration (FLISR), and

2) integrating advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) capabilities with outage management systems.

The utilities "typically focused on upgrading the feeders and substations that were most vulnerable to outages or had customers whose outage costs are highest," DOE noted. "This practice generally involves starting

(see DOE, page 9)

## Sperry-Piltz Index™ Now Available to MESO Members

The widely recognized ice storm predictor, the Sperry–Piltz Index™ (SPIA Index™) at [www.spia-index.com](http://www.spia-index.com), is now available to MESO members.

The index was introduced in 2007 by Sidney Sperry of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives, who developed the index together with Steven Piltz, Meteorologist-In-Charge at the National Weather Service office in Tulsa, OK.

"The Sperry–Piltz Index™ can prove to be an invaluable tool for any MESO member to better predict the severity of an

Oklahoma ice storm," said Tom Rider, MESO's General Manager. "We encourage all members to use the index and thank Sid and his team for making it available to us."

The SPIA Index™ is a scale for rating ice storm intensity, based on the expected footprint of an ice storm, the expected ice accumulation as a result of a storm, and the expected damage a storm inflicts on structures, especially exposed overhead utility systems such as power lines.

The index is licensed by both

the National Weather Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

To learn more about the SPIA Index™, contact Sperry at [Sid.Sperry@spidiweather.com](mailto:Sid.Sperry@spidiweather.com).



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## DOE

*(continued from page 8)*

out with relatively small-scale deployments and emphasizes testing and evaluation before making commitments to larger-scale investments."

EPB, the municipal utility in Chattanooga, has 172,000 customers, 117 substations, 3,582 circuit miles of distribution lines, and a summer peak demand of about 1,300 megawatts. Its SGIG project has a budget of about \$228 million, including about \$112 million of DOE funding under the Recovery Act. The project involved system-wide deployment of smart meters to 170,000 customers, installation of more than 1,400 automated feeder switches, and deployment of communications and information management systems for AMI and distributed automation operations. Smart switching communications use the utility's fiber optic network and are centrally controlled by the utility's upgraded Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems.

The project includes AFS and FLISR operations for all of EPB's 46-kV and 12-kV circuits, but not the utility's underground

circuits, the DOE report explained. "Automation of the 46-kV circuits affects the entire service territory and the automated 12-kV circuits affect about 90% of customers. Because all of the utility's other, lower voltage circuits (4-kV), are fed by the 46-kV systems, all customers have access to distribution automation (DA)-related benefits."

The SCADA upgrade "involved the utility's fiber optic network and supports an expanded number of control points and equipment installations to provide improved data and situational awareness for distribution system operators," the report said. "These technologies and systems have been tested by several severe weather events."

In February 2014, for example, a severe snow storm affected 53 feeders and almost 33,000 customers. And in April 2011 Chattanooga was struck by a series of nine tornadoes that affected the entire service territory.

During the storm that hit last February, "EPB kept all of its smart switches active and did not deactivate FLISR capabilities," DOE said. "EPB reports that without the fault isolating capabilities of the smart switches,

about 70,000 customers would have experienced sustained outages." The city-owned utility estimated that it was able to restore power about 36 hours earlier than would have been possible without smart grid deployments, the report said. EPB estimates that it saved about \$1.4 million in overtime costs for field crews, thanks to the smart grid technologies.

The July 2012 derecho that caused widespread damage in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic also struck Chattanooga, affecting about half of EPB's customers, DOE pointed out. "Because of EPB investments in smart switches and smart meters, the outage duration for all affected customers decreased by about half. This resulted in about 36 million fewer customer minutes of interruption (CMI) than would have occurred without the new technologies."

The Chattanooga utility's response to the 2012 derecho "was up to 17 hours faster due to the automated feeder switches, which restored power to 40,000 customers instantly and allowed crews to focus on a more limited  
*(see DOE, page 10)*

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## OMPA Looks to 2015

*(continued from page 7)*

and representatives from member cities in their regions, including city councils and city staff.

Such events were held in two member cities in late 2014, and were attended by city council members and staff from the cities of Perry, Orlando, Okeene and Kingfisher. In addition to these meetings, OMPA will continue to work closely with the legislature at the State Capitol during the upcoming legislative session.

The push to educate state lawmakers on the needs and structure of OMPA began in 2014 when the Annual Electors' Meeting was held in the chamber of the House of Representatives at the Oklahoma State Capitol.

### TransCo Agreement

OMPA is entering into a co-development agreement with the South Central Municipal-Cooperative Network, LLC, also known as TransCo, as a way to hedge transmission costs.

The move, which was approved by the OMPA board in June of 2014, will allow OMPA to jointly own, operate and maintain both new and existing regulated transmission assets with non-jurisdictional electric cooperatives, municipally-owned electric systems and joint-action agencies.

Under the agreement, OMPA will be able to propose new projects to be built, and can pick and choose which projects it wants to be a part of.

## Affordable Energy

(continued from page 3)

Federal regulators often complicate matters and cause unnecessary burdens for industries. The result in this case is higher energy costs.

One of many success stories in Oklahoma is the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA). With the use of both hydroelectric and coal-fired power, they're able to produce reliable energy at affordable costs. The GRDA's Coal Fire Complex continually ranks as one of the top electric generating plants in the country. If the EPA is allowed to move forward with their recent proposal, we'll quickly see such facilities lose their ability to perform at these high levels.

In the end, this means higher costs of energy for consumers across-the-board.

As a representative of the great State of Oklahoma, I'm working to push against these drastic overreaches by the federal government. During the 114th Congress, I will be serving on the House Energy and Commerce Committee which has oversight of the EPA. I look forward to ensuring that Oklahoma's voice is heard as the Committee works to roll back the rules and regulations that aim at our energy providers.

I continue to believe that the key to affordable energy will ultimately depend on the federal government working with state and local officials, not against them.

## DOE

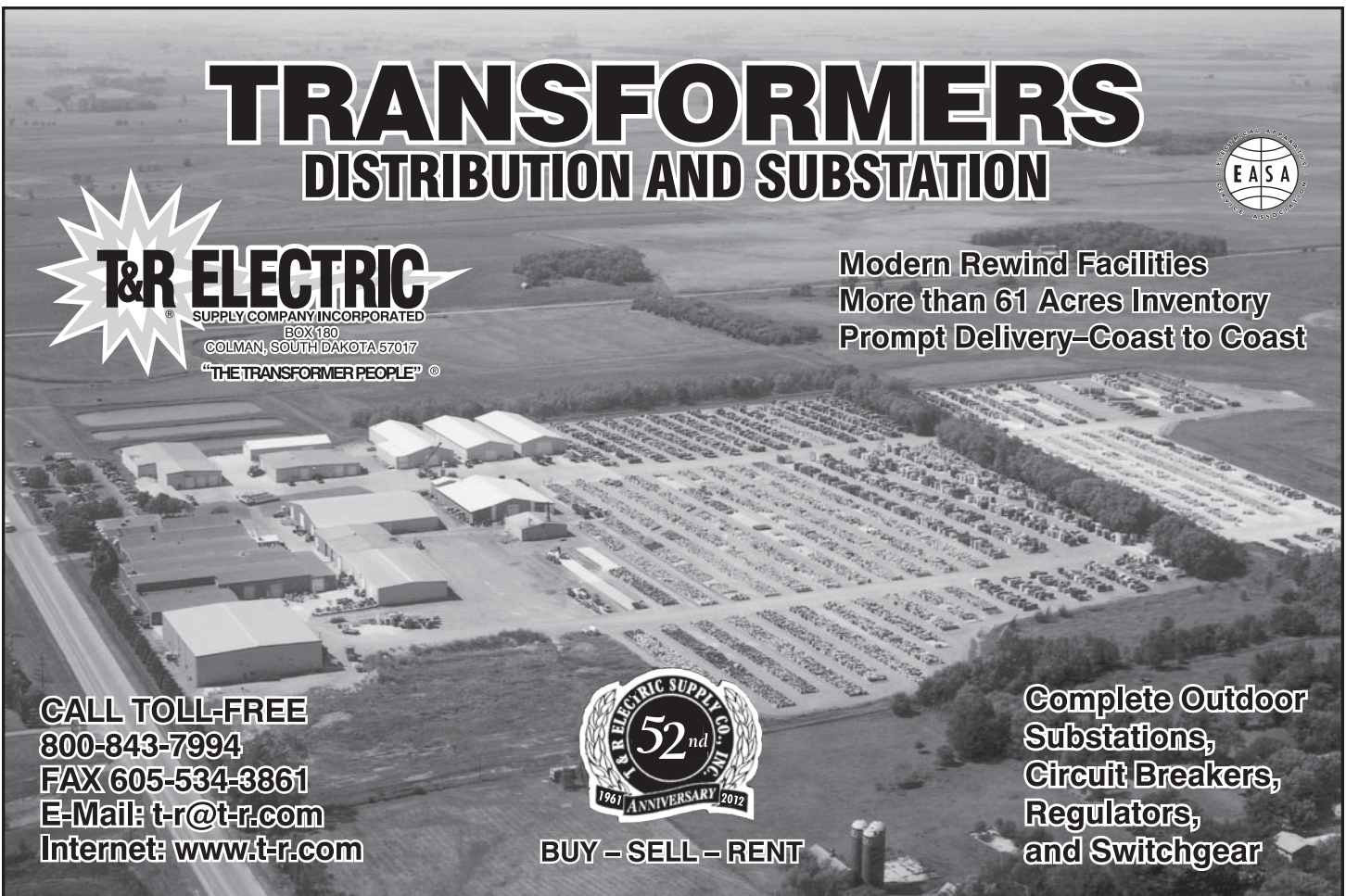
(continued from page 9)

number of issues," DOE said. "Smart meter data also helped operators to verify outages, enabling EPB field crews to locate and fix downed lines faster and more efficiently."

All three utilities cited in the report — EPB, FPL and PECO — "are in the process of learning how to better apply AFS and FLISR and how to use AMI to support


service restoration and improve storm responses," DOE said. "Many of the devices being used for these purposes are new or are being applied in novel ways."


"There is no one way to achieve the goals of faster service restoration, better reliability, or building a more resilient grid," DOE added. Utilities "are applying different technologies in ways that make sense for their specific system configuration."



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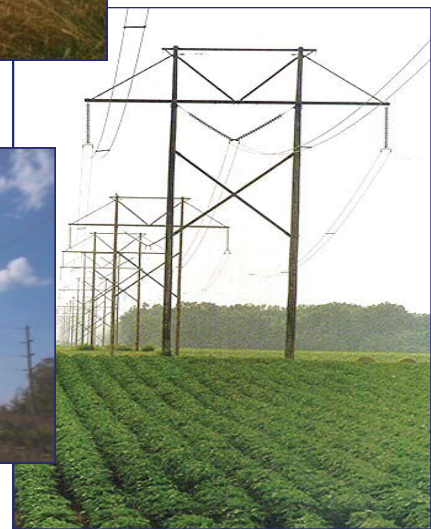
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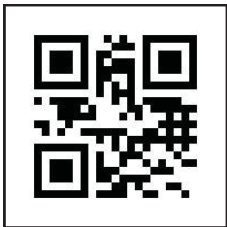
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