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MISSION STATEMENT

AMEA's mission is to provide for our Member communities a reliable and economical source of electric power, enabling them to preserve and enhance the benefits of municipal utility ownership for their citizens and the electric customers they serve. We strive to offer services that our Members need and can adapt to provide the best value for their communities and customers.

AMEA Members partner on PCB Management Program

When Richard Ash, Electric Superintendent, Dothan Utilities, read an article in *The Fairhope Courier* recently about the City of Fairhope taking action to comply with state environmental laws regarding the handling of PCB oils, he decided that his utility could lend a helping hand to the sister AMEA Member utility in developing a PCB Management Program. After all, his utility has maintained such a plan for 30 years.

"Instead of Fairhope 'reinventing the wheel,' I thought why not help them develop a PCB Management Program using our plan as a model, and at the same time, save them the cost of hiring a consultant to do the same thing?" said Ash.

The issue of handling Polychlorinated Biphenyls, better known as PCBs, came to light during a City of Fairhope Strategic Planning Steering Committee. At a recent Fairhope City Council Meeting, Scott Sligh, Electric Superintendent, Fairhope Public Utilities, told the council that the electric department should be documenting the handling and disposal of PCB oils and filing an annual report with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

Sligh reported that software is needed to track oil and a system is needed to dispose of it properly. The total cost of a program would be less than \$100,000 to implement and less than \$5,000 annually to maintain. Sligh recommended that the city hire a consultant to develop a program for handling the materials, as well as purchase a software package to



Jimmy Cluster, Fairhope Public Utilities, along with Mark Kight and Chris Phillips, Dothan Utilities, view the storage of transformers as part of Dothan's PCB Management Program. (Photo courtesy of Scott Sligh)

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manage the program. The council voted unanimously for the electric department to initiate the program as described by Sligh.

"We hated to see Fairhope or any AMEA Member spend a tremendous amount of money by hiring a consultant to develop a program," said Ash. "By partnering with Fairhope, we were able to save them that expense."

"We were delighted to work with Dothan Utilities on developing our PCB Management Program," said Sligh. "In May, Jimmy Cluster, Jeremy Morgan and I spent several hours with Richard and his folks. They walked us through their entire PCB Management Program."

"Dothan Utilities keeps a database of all the transformers on their system. They were kind enough to share a template with us to assist us in setting up a similar database. They walked us through the process from receiving new transformers, numbering and labeling them, logging them into the database, and the forms their crews use to install or remove transformers. The location information is particularly useful as they can tell you at any one time where physically a transformer is located. We then toured the areas of their yard where they bring oil-filled equipment in from the field. We also observed how they separate and store them, based on what will wind up happening to the transformer, for example, whether it will be sold, repaired, etc. We also viewed their testing area and their PCB storage room."

Sligh said the information Dothan Utilities shared with them will be invaluable in their future planning and it could be invaluable to other AMEA Members.

"We appreciate an AMEA Member utility reaching out and assisting us with this program. These types of partnerships can help all of us in the future," said Sligh.

Smart grid standards announced

Saying a smart grid "is an urgent national priority," Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke unveiled the first set of standards that are needed for the interoperability and security of the smart grid. Chu also announced that DOE is increasing the maximum amounts of grants available under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act for smart grid programs.

The federal government would like industry consensus on smart grid standards, but "in the end, if there is not unanimity, if there is not even strong consensus, we... will make the decisions to get us moving forward as quickly as possible," Locke said, according to Dow Jones. "The smart grid is an urgent national priority that requires all levels of government as well as industry to cooperate," Chu said.

Based on feedback from the public and stakeholders, the maximum award available under the Smart Grid Investment Grant Program will be increased from \$20 million to \$200 million and awards for the Smart Grid Demonstration Projects from \$40 million to \$100 million, Chu said. In making awards, DOE said it would ensure that funding is provided to a diversity of applications, including small projects as well as end-to-end larger projects.

The initial batch of 16 interoperability standards recognized by the National Institute of Standards and Technology will help ensure that software and hardware components from different vendors will work together seamlessly, while

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securing the grid against disruptions, DOE and Commerce said. Public comments on the initial standards will be accepted for 30 days after their upcoming publication in the Federal Register.

DOE also will provide \$10 million in American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds to the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology to support development of interoperability standards, Chu and Locke said recently at a meeting on smart grid plans with executives from utilities, manufacturers, and telecommunications and information technology firms.

DOE anticipates issuing the FOA (funding opportunity announcement) for grants for the Smart Grid Investment Grant Program on June 17. The first round of smart grid funding applications (both for demo projects and investment grants) are due July 29. Second and third rounds are specified for December 2, 2009 and March 31, 2010, but with the limits of the potential awards increased considerably there are doubts that there will be enough money for second and third rounds, according to APPA.

APPA will hold a webinar on June 24 explaining the smart grid FOA.

Source: APPA

AMEA Operations Corner

Communications project near completion

All VPN routers and terminal servers are installed at Member City SCADA locations. The final phase of the project is the installation of new delivery point meters by

Alabama Power Company (APCo). APCo is still waiting for the new meters to arrive from the equipment manufacturer.

AMEA moves forward with merging data collection database

With the help of consultant company Lonestar Controls, AMEA has moved forward with merging the data collection database and the historical SCADA database.

Lonestar Controls has set up the process to import SCADA data into the new data collection database. Currently, Laila Hasan, AMEA Database/Systems Analyst II, is developing user reports, which will enable AMEA staff to access the data.

NOAA issues Atlantic hurricane season outlook, encourages preparedness

NOAA forecasters say a near-normal Atlantic hurricane season is most likely this year. However, as with any season, the need to prepare for the possibility of a storm striking near you is essential.

"Today, more than 35 million Americans live in regions most threatened by Atlantic hurricanes," Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said.



"Timely and accurate warnings of severe weather help save lives and property. Public awareness and public preparedness are the best defenses against a hurricane." In its initial outlook for the 2009 Atlantic hurricane season,

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which runs from June through November, NOAA's National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center calls for a 50 percent probability of a near-normal season, a 25 percent probability of an above-normal season and a 25 percent probability of a below-normal season. Global weather patterns are imposing a greater uncertainty in the 2009 hurricane season outlook than in recent years. Forecasters say there is a 70 percent chance of having nine to 14 named storms, of which four to seven could become hurricanes, including one to three major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5).

"This outlook is a guide to the overall expected seasonal activity. However, the outlook is not just about the numbers, it's also about taking action," said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. "Prepare for each and every season regardless of the seasonal outlook. Even a near- or below-normal season can produce landfalling hurricanes, and it only takes one landfalling storm to make it a bad season."

Shaping this seasonal outlook is the possibility of competing climate factors. Supporting more activity this season are conditions associated with the ongoing high-activity era that began in 1995, which include enhanced rainfall over West Africa, warmer Atlantic waters and reduced wind shear. But activity could be reduced if El Nino develops in the equatorial Eastern Pacific this summer or if ocean temperatures in the eastern tropical Atlantic remain cooler than normal.

NOAA's seasonal hurricane outlook does not project where and when any of these storms may hit. Landfall is dictated by weather patterns in place at the time the storm

approaches. For each storm, NOAA's National Hurricane Center forecasts how these weather patterns affect the storm track, intensity and landfall potential.

"NOAA strives to produce the best possible forecasts to help emergency officials and residents better prepare for an approaching storm," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "I'm pleased to have the Administration's support for an additional \$13 million in next year's budget request to continue the trend of improving hurricane track and intensity forecasts."

Tropical systems acquire a name – the first for 2009 will be Ana – upon reaching tropical storm strength with sustained winds of at least 39 mph. Tropical storms become hurricanes when winds reach 74 mph, and become major hurricanes when winds increase to 111 mph. An average season has 11 named storms, including six hurricanes with two becoming major hurricanes.



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