

## PRESS RELEASE

August 27, 2019

Muscatine Power and Water  
3205 Cedar Street  
P.O. Box 899  
Muscatine, IA 52761

Contact: Erika Cox  
Email: [ecox@mpw.org](mailto:ecox@mpw.org)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **MP&W RECEIVES 2019 APPA SMART ENERGY PROVIDER DESIGNATION; FINAL FIBER WORK KICKSTARTED**

The Muscatine Board of Water, Electric and Communications Trustees learned at Tuesday's meeting the Utility has earned a Smart Energy Provider (SEP) designation from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for demonstrating commitment to and proficiency in energy efficiency, distributed generation and environmental initiatives that support a goal of providing low-cost, quality, safe and reliable electric services.

MP&W will be recognized for achieving SEP designation during the 2019 APPA Customer Connections Conference. The designation, which lasts for 2 years, recognizes public power utilities for demonstrating leading practices in 4 key disciplines: smart energy program structure, energy efficiency and distributed energy programs, environmental and sustainability initiatives and the customer experience. This is the first year the Association has offered the SEP designation. MP&W joins more than 60 public power utilities nationwide receiving the inaugural SEP designation.



*Pictured (L to R): Paul Burback, Energy Services Advisor;  
Erika Cox, Director, Customer & Technology Experience;  
Gage Huston, General Manager*

“We are honored to receive the Smart Energy Provider designation,” said Gage Huston, General Manager. “The designation reinforces MP&W’s commitment to our customers in providing efficient and reliable energy services while being mindful of the impact to our environment.”

To address Fiber to the Home (FTTH) project progress and timeline, the Trustees approved a revised project summary form, contract change order and second contract amendment to the agreement for the design and construction. Negotiations for the amended terms and additional project resources were led by MP&W's new FTTH Project Sponsor, Erika Cox, Director of Customer and Technology Experience in collaboration with Atlantic Engineering Group (AEG).

Huston walked through the drivers for the change in the project cost estimate. This included increases for the new headend equipment and additional outside plant construction, but also some reductions in the cost of fiber cabling and project management costs by handling with primarily in-house staff. The largest driver for the current budget adjustment is related to updating the construction units based on the current estimated scope to complete the project. Huston explained, "Our project team has really dug into the details of the outside plant construction over the past few months and it was determined that a significant adjustment was required to the estimated construction units for the entire project. Rather than wait until we overran the original estimates, we are bringing the revised cost estimate to the Board now for approval." Huston added, "Even with these contract changes, we believe the project will still come in around \$1.5 million below what it would have with the next lowest bidder for the outside construction."

AEG, in anticipation of the revised terms, has begun securing additional underground drop crew resources for the project, the first of which arrived in Muscatine on August 14. The increase in crews and work around the community is to address the extended delays throughout the project and most recently with last year's harsh winter and this spring's wet and flooded conditions.

Other construction difficulties related to upgrading infrastructure to MPW's design are being addressed with different project resources. Ms. Cox reminded the Board that integrating the new fiber system while keeping our existing system in service is a complex process. As the project continues, customers may experience occasional service interruptions as the crews continue working their way through the system. Customers are encouraged to notify MP&W's customer service department with any service concerns or questions.

"Our customer service representatives are uniquely in-tune with customer concerns as many of them are subscribers themselves," said Cox. "Although we would prefer not to have any interruptions, I am confident each customer concern is addressed with professionalism and understanding from our talented staff. I would also like to extend my appreciation to our customers. Although we have had some bumps in the road, the fiber to the home project is a worth-while investment in our community and will position Muscatine to be competitive in the business and industry environment, and meet the needs of residents, for years to come."

Project completion is anticipated for August 2020 with a total anticipated cost of \$19.1 million for this significant upgrade in infrastructure and services. Many communities have some fiber infrastructure in their system, but when this project is complete, Muscatine residents will have 100% fiber to their household/business and have true Gigabit internet capability. That puts Muscatine on par with significantly more populated metropolitan cities and its residents with world-class services!

In other action, the Board:

- Approved the revised Project Summary Form for replacement of a main air handling unit for the A/O Center Project. The revised project cost is \$350,000 which represents an increase of \$163,000 from the previous amount.
- Approved the recommendation to request the Mayor and City Council designate October 6-12, 2019 as Public Power Week.
- Entered into closed session to discuss collective bargaining strategy for upcoming negotiations with International Brotherhood Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 55.10.

###

### **ABOUT MUSCATINE POWER AND WATER**

*Muscatine Power and Water (MP&W) is a customer-driven, not-for-profit municipal utility, established by the community for the purpose of serving the community responsively, competitively, and responsibly. MP&W provides reliable electricity, high quality water, and state-of-the-art communications services, including Internet, TV, and phone services, to businesses and homes throughout the Muscatine community at rates below state and national averages with outstanding customer service. MP&W is locally controlled and operated for the benefit and betterment of the community.*