

PRESS RELEASE

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

Contact: Erika Cox
Phone: 563-262-3305
FAX: 563-262-3315

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Power Breakfast, Pink Hardhats, and Fiber Progress

At the monthly Muscatine Board of Water, Electric and Communications Trustees meeting, General Manager Gage Huston alerted the Trustees of an upcoming informational and networking event, the Power Breakfast. The annual, invitation-only event, scheduled for Tuesday, October 8th, will begin with breakfast and a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the newly renovated Customer Lobby. The Power Breakfast is an opportunity for MP&W's senior leadership team to provide updates to the community about projects and initiatives impacting nearly every resident.

"We've had a lot of positive feedback from past Power Breakfast events," said Huston. "We hope attendees find value learning about the many ongoing projects and how MP&W is continually working to enhance our community." The Power Breakfast will be recorded and made available via Public Access Channel 9 and within the Local On-Demand folders on MachLink Fiber TV.

Huston also informed the Trustees how utility employees will be honoring and supporting breast cancer patients, survivors, families and caregivers during breast cancer awareness month in October. The grassroots effort began four years ago when Lineworkers attended a conference where the pink hardhats were being sold. Since then, the awareness effort has expanded to many MP&W field crews.

"So many in our community have been impacted by breast cancer," said Huston. "It makes me proud to see the crews wearing the pink hardhats in support."



MP&W Electric Lineworkers wear pink hardhats in support of breast cancer awareness.

In departmental reports, Staff reported to the Board that they are seeing an increase in AEG resources as a result of previous negotiations and contract adjustments. Underground drop crews and underground mainline construction crews have increased in numbers in recent weeks. Completion of underground drops to customers' homes/businesses has been the project bottleneck and a considerable amount of attention has been focused on increasing available resources and increasing daily production. September results thus far show that weekly drop production increased from 11.4 per day to 16.4 per day, and most recently to 20.2 per day. Multiple factors impact daily drop production from the number of crews on location to complete the work, previous experience, equipment, weather, terrain, and lot size.

Customers will notice these crews working in their yards up to the house, but the crews will not require work in the house. Huston advised the Board, "We always have locates completed to mark existing utilities, and homeowners will want to mark their personal underground facilities as well. Our hope is that no underground facilities are impacted, but sometimes, a cut may happen or service may be impacted. If it does, we ask customers to please make sure to call into MP&W, and our team will ensure it's taken care of as quickly as possible."

"This is a necessary part of the fiber conversion process, so we ask for the public's patience as the MP&W and AEG teams increase production to achieve the August 2020 timeline. We keep hearing our project is "first in the nation" in that we are reusing as much existing infrastructure as possible and not just overbuilding our current system...while keeping an old system and a new system both operational. Not stranding that existing infrastructure is a significant cost savings, but complicates the build a bit," concluded Huston.

Installation resources have also been building. Monthly customer conversions in 2019 have ranged from a low of 155 to a high of 250 and averaged 210 per month. With additional installer resources, monthly customer conversions should increase to about 400 per month. All in all, momentum continues to build for the Fiber to the Home project.

In other Board action:

- Awarded the contract for the 69kV Duct Bank – HNI Parking Lot Contract as part of the Mississippi Drive Corridor Underground Phase 1 Project to Triple B Construction, of Wilton, IA, for a total of \$220,042.
- The Board went into closed session to discuss the performance of Huston, who has been in the General Manager position for six months.

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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, video and phone services, to homes and businesses 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.