

# UPDATE

JANUARY - MARCH 2011

## New Compliance Division Created

The Department of Energy has approved a reorganization for Southwestern establishing a new Division of Reliability Compliance & Transmission Policy. The new Division was created to provide greater resource focus on Southwestern's compliance activities as new industry standards from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) continue to expand the agency's responsibilities in the regulatory environment. The organizational change became effective January 16, 2011.

Certain functions from within Southwestern's Division of Scheduling & Operations and Division of Customer Service have been transferred to the new Division to more effectively facilitate the agency's compliance activities. "Southwestern's compliance program initially involved only operations, since that is where most compliance requirements were focused," explains Jim McDonald, Southwestern's Assistant Administrator of the Office of Corporate Operations. "However, as the program grew beyond operational issues, and began also to involve other Divisions, we decided it would be most effective to coordinate all program functions from a separate Division. This would allow the Division of Scheduling & Operations to focus on the numerous operational requirements of NERC compliance."

Tracey Stewart, a former Public Utility Specialist in the Division of Customer Service who has been selected as Director of the new Division, concurs. "Southwestern's internal compliance program continues to grow, and there are many more reliability standards and regulatory requirements being developed that we must follow," she says. "A separate



Division will be better situated to manage the entire program and communicate changing needs with staff throughout the agency. While the staff throughout Southwestern can focus on the day-to-day practices and processes that result in reliable operation and compliance, we can focus more on ensuring that these processes meet the level of reliability compliance required by NERC and that staff are made aware of important program changes as they occur."

Stewart adds that including transmission policy under the jurisdiction of the new Division reflects the overlapping nature of transmission with electric reliability. "Both fall under the purview of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)," she notes. "Several NERC program activities are closely related to other regulatory processes that follow FERC procedures, such as tariff filing."

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# Cooperation Sets Plan in Concrete

A simple transmission line relocation is anything but simple. So when the state of Missouri planned a highway expansion near Truman Lake, it took the cooperation of Southwestern, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and even Mother Nature to make the relocation happen successfully.

The road project will turn U.S. 65 into a four-lane divided highway, including the portion north of Warsaw, Missouri, where



**SINGLE-POLE CONCRETE TRANSMISSION STRUCTURES WERE THE IDEAL SOLUTION FOR THIS LINE RELOCATION UNDERTAKEN TO ACCOMMODATE THE FUTURE WIDENING OF U.S. HIGHWAY 65 NEAR TRUMAN LAKE IN CENTRAL MISSOURI.**

Southwestern's transmission Line No. 3025 runs north from Truman Dam for several miles. When it was determined that the new southbound lanes would lie within the transmission right-of-way (ROW), a solution was required that mitigated the encroachment, retained ROW clearances, and maintained the integrity of a dike owned by the Corps alongside that stretch of highway.

According to Harry Mardirosian, a Civil Engineer in Southwestern's Division of Engineering & Planning, the parties explored several options together before determining that the most practical solution was to shift the transmission line approximately 40-50 feet westward toward the dike. Although six structures would have to be relocated, Mardirosian notes that the undertaking also provided an opportunity for Southwestern to make that section of line stronger and more reliable by erecting single-pole concrete structures rather than simply moving the existing steel H-frames.

The concrete structures were a key element in crafting a win-win solution for this specific project, says Mardirosian. Not only does concrete require far less maintenance compared to other types of structures, he says, but the fairly vertical alignment of the phases meant they would be farther away from the edges of the ROW. "There is a lot of recreational traffic through there, including boats and RVs," says Mardirosian. "We wanted to decrease the width of the line to keep it as far away from the roadway as we could."

Another benefit of the smaller footprint is that only a single hole in the middle of the ROW would be required for each concrete structure, and thus drilling would not happen as close to the dike as it would have for the much wider H-frames. This approach allayed the Corps' concerns that disturbing the ground too close to the dike could potentially increase the risk of leakage during periods of high flood pools in Truman Lake.

Mardirosian also notes that concrete is an ideal solution for wet areas such as the relocation site, which tends to hold water. "With concrete, you bore a hole in the ground, and you don't have to have

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 7**

# Stewart Picked for Compliance Director

Tracey Stewart, a Public Utility Specialist in the Division of Customer Service, was selected as Southwestern's first Director of the Division of Reliability Compliance & Transmission Policy on February 27, 2011. Stewart, who began her Federal service as a student intern at Southwestern, has spent much of her career focused on the areas of regulatory compliance and transmission tariff administration.

Stewart joined Southwestern as a part-time assistant to the Administrative Officer at the Gore Maintenance Office in 1992, while working toward an Associate Degree at Connors State College in Warner, Oklahoma. After completing a Bachelor's Degree in Business at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, she took advantage of a cross-training program to move to Southwestern's Tulsa office in 1996. She performed double-duty in payroll administration and personnel for a year before being selected as a Public Utility Technician in what was then the Division of Rates & Repayment. There, she spearheaded Southwestern's contractual relationship with the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and took a primary role in tariff negotiations as SPP became a Regional Transmission Organization in 2004.

Stewart sees her new duties as a natural progression. The Division of Reliability Compliance & Transmission Policy was created in January 2011 to provide oversight and management of Southwestern's reliability compliance program, a purpose

that provides a natural avenue for her areas of expertise. "I came up through the ranks here at Southwestern, a regular homegrown kid," says Stewart, who was assigned to the Division of Customer Service in 2007.

"Throughout my career, I've always kept an eye on industry changes, new regulations, anything that would impact the way Southwestern does business. When the Energy Policy Act of 2005 was passed, that made standards from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) mandatory, and I was devoted to SPP and NERC full-time after that."

As reliability standards and regulatory requirements become increasingly important and continue to impact day-to-day operations throughout Southwestern, Stewart is confident about the agency's ability to maintain reliable operation and compliance. "This is a growing area within the industry, but my tendency has always been to take on new challenges," she says. "I look forward to the opportunity to make a difference, along with Southwestern staff in every Division of the agency who are involved, directly or indirectly, in supporting our compliance program." 💧



## COMPLIANCE, FROM PAGE 1

While the new Division will provide high level decision-making, guidance, and an overall coordination of all of Southwestern's reliability compliance efforts, Stewart acknowledges that the mission of compliance indeed remains an agency-wide responsibility. "The day-to-day work that results in Southwestern operating reliably and maintaining compliance is actually

done by people in other Divisions," she says. "For example, the biggest percentage of requirements and standards continues to be operational, and Operations staff, including dispatch and training, is very involved in the process. Staff in those areas, as well as throughout Southwestern, are critical to the success of our overall program." 💧

# Beck Retires, Schedules Load Relief

Ron Beck, Southwestern's Director of Scheduling & Operations for the last three years, was joined by coworkers, friends, and fellow retirees for a send-off celebration at the Springfield Operations Center in Springfield, Missouri, on January 6, 2011. Accompanied by his wife, son, daughter, and grandchildren at the gathering, Beck received a Career Appreciation Award signed by Southwestern Administrator John Worthington recognizing his dedication and commitment to public power during his nearly 28-year Federal career.



**RON BECK, RETIRING AS DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF SCHEDULING & OPERATIONS, RECEIVES A DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY CAREER APPRECIATION AWARD FROM JIM McDONALD, SOUTHWESTERN'S ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE OFFICE OF CORPORATE OPERATIONS, AT A RETIREMENT CELEBRATION AT THE SPRINGFIELD OPERATIONS CENTER.**

Beck began his career in power system operations at the Nebraska Public Power District in his home state. He went into Federal service in 1983 and served 21 years in dispatch, managerial, and support positions at various sites within Western Area Power Administration, including the former Montrose Operations Office in Montrose, Colorado, the Desert Southwest Region Office in Phoenix, Arizona, the Upper Great Plains Region Office in Watertown, South Dakota, and the Rocky

Mountain Region Office in Loveland, Colorado. Beck came to Southwestern as a Power Systems Dispatcher in June 2005 and moved into the position of Systems Operations Supervisor a year later. He was selected as Division Director in March 2008.

Beck notes that his time at Southwestern has been one of both challenge and accomplishment. "The events of the past several years, such as droughts, floods, and other significant weather events, organizational and process changes, and the advent of North American Electric Reliability Corporation reliability standards – these were all a challenge for me and for our entire organization," he says. "We responded successfully to each hurdle, and through it all I really enjoyed the working relationships I developed with Southwestern's customers, as well as Southwestern's highly professional management and employees who were always supportive and a pleasure to work with."

Although he is now off the clock, Beck says he remains as busy as ever. "My wife and I have become involved as volunteers with the Humane Society of Southwest Missouri. And like many retirees, I also have numerous projects that I want to complete here at home," he says. "I've only been retired for a short time, so I'm always open to new ventures in other areas that may spark my interest."

Beck adds that he is pleased that his career path, which took him through so many states and duty stations, ended up in Springfield, Missouri. "I am truly grateful to have been able to work my last five-and-a-half years at Southwestern," he says. "Transferring to Southwestern was a very fulfilling career move for me. And I've developed some close friendships that will last a lifetime." 💧

# Mike Wech Named Operations Director

Mike Wech, Supervisor of System Operations in Southwestern's Division of Scheduling & Operations, was selected as that Division's new Director on January 30, 2011. Wech succeeds Ron Beck, who retired in January after nearly six years with the agency.

A native of Nebraska, Wech's career in power management began at Nebraska Public Power District, where he worked for 10 years, first as a high-voltage electrician, and then as a Dispatcher. He served as a Power Systems Dispatcher for six years with Western Area Power Administration, working at the operations center in Watertown, South Dakota, before coming to Southwestern in the same capacity in April 2003. In late 2004, he was selected as a Power Operations Specialist - System Operations Trainer, tasked with the development of Southwestern's Power Operations Training Center and getting the agency formally approved as a North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) Continuing Education Provider. During much of that time, Wech was also involved in the areas of regional and NERC regulatory compliance before being promoted in September 2007 to the new position of NERC Compliance Officer and Manager for Operations Training. In this

capacity, Wech developed Southwestern's first agency-wide reliability compliance program, and helped lay the groundwork for the development of the agency's Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) standards program. He was selected to head up System Operations in October 2008.

For Wech, his track record of overlapping and collateral duties simply reflects the reality of a new era in electric reliability. "One of the most significant changes I have witnessed is how the development of regulatory compliance has permeated the entire electric utility industry," he says. "One of Southwestern's greatest challenges currently and in the future will be our ability, and that of the overall industry, to continue to adapt and adhere to an ever-increasing set of mandatory reliability standards while facing difficult economic conditions and striving to provide low cost energy to our customers." 💧



## SPARKS OF INTEREST

**APRIL 12-14, 2011 – 54TH ANNUAL MEETING OF SOUTHWESTERN POWER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION (SPRA)** will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel at Warren Place in Tulsa, Oklahoma. For registration and meeting information, contact Barbara DelGrosso, SPRA's Director of Operations, at 918-622-7800, or e-mail [bdg18@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bdg18@sbcglobal.net).

**COLONEL THOMAS W. KULA HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE U.S. SENATE FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF BRIGADIER GENERAL.** Colonel Kula took command of the Southwestern Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Dallas, Texas, in July 2010.

**SHERMAN JONES, HYDROPOWER PROGRAM/BUSINESS LINE MANAGER AT THE SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION CORPS, IS RETIRING ON APRIL 1, 2011.** Jones' 38-year Federal career includes four years in the Navy prior to joining the Tulsa District Corps in 1977, where he served in the Hydropower Program in various capacities before moving to Dallas in 2008. A strong proponent of hydropower, Jones' close work with Southwestern has been much appreciated.



COLONEL (P) KULA



SHERMAN JONES

# Western Exposure Benefits Training

A recent training event for Southwestern's transmission line crews not only provided an opportunity to brush up on safety and preparedness, but also emphasized the important cooperative relationship between Power Marketing Administrations.



**AARON BROWN, A LINEMAN HELPER (3RD CLASS) WITH THE JONESBORO CREW, MONITORS "RUGGED RON" AS THE DUMMY GETS LOWERED TO THE GROUND DURING EXERCISES PROVIDED BY TRAINERS FROM WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION LAST NOVEMBER.**

The Division of Maintenance welcomed Ed Hunt and Will Schnyer, both Foreman III Linemen from the Cheyenne, Wyoming, field office of Western Area Power Administration (Western) as the pair provided live line training late last year. The exercise focused on the use of hot sticks to conduct maintenance work on live, or "hot," power lines, and new rescue techniques for getting injured linemen safely down to ground level. The Springfield and Jonesboro

crews participated at the Springfield Maintenance Office during the week of November 30, 2010, while the Gore crew took part at the Gore Maintenance Office during the week of December 6, 2010.

Although hot-sticking is not routinely done at Southwestern, training is still necessary, says Jonesboro Craft Superintendent Kenny Broadaway. "Our crews don't normally change out insulators, cross arms, and poles on live lines, but in an emergency it may be necessary to work a line while it remains energized in order to restore service to customers quickly," he explains.

While hot sticks themselves haven't changed much over time, rescue equipment has. Hunt and Schnyer demonstrated a device that safely lowers an injured or even unconscious person to the ground without stress or risk of injury to the rescuer.

"It's an automatic device that relies on gravity," notes Broadaway. "It employs a pulley system and a brake, and the rescuer doesn't have to hold the weight of the injured person." In short, the rescuer attaches the device onto the transmission structure, fits the victim into a harness, and then cuts the victim loose from the structure. The system is designed to drop at a certain rate of speed, and the person descends to the ground gradually.

"It's a lot safer than having a guy doing a manual descent," reports Lineman Ernie Millsap, "and you can attach it onto any kind of elevated place, like a cross arm, a platform, or a tower. It's real smooth." Each of Southwestern's linemen practiced coming to the aid of "Rugged Ron," the rescue dummy, and got a chance to use the automatic descender.

Another new tool introduced to Southwestern's crews is a lightning detection device that can sense lightning as much as 60 miles away from a work site. Powered by a battery or a vehicle

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## CONCRETE, FROM PAGE 2

foundation and anchor bolts or base plates, like wooden or steel structures do," he says, explaining how this minimizes vulnerability to water damage. "The concrete is directly imbedded. It's one piece."

With all parties signing off on the plan in the spring of 2010, only the timing had to be coordinated, since line outages are typically scheduled following the summer season when peak demands fall. At the Truman location, however, the work would need to be completed before autumn precipitation made the ground too muddy to support the types of heavy machinery necessary for hauling and erecting the concrete structures, which can weigh up to 50,000 lbs. Mardirosian commends Southwestern's Division of Acquisition & Facilities Services for facilitating the contracting process so that the poles and hardware, which require many months of lead time, were ready to go by the time the general contractor was selected.



**THE SPRINGFIELD LINE CREW MOVES CONDUCTOR FROM A STEEL H-FRAME STRUCTURE ON SOUTHWESTERN'S LINE 3025 NEAR TRUMAN LAKE AS PART OF A RELOCATION THAT INVOLVED THE COOPERATION OF THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, THE CORPS, AND SOUTHWESTERN.**



**A SUNSET SKY PROVIDES A COLORFUL BACKDROP FOR SOUTHWESTERN'S LINEMEN AS THEY TIE INTO THE THREE-POLE DEAD-END STRUCTURE AT THE NORTH END OF THE LINE RELOCATION.**

Lastly, Mother Nature herself cooperated by keeping the rains away during the month of November 2010. The ground remained dry as the contractors erected the new poles and concrete dead-end structures. Southwestern's line crew from the Springfield Maintenance Office played an important role as well, transitioning the phases onto the new structures. The work was completed on November 24, 2010.

All parties were pleased with the final result, says Mardirosian, who reports that for him it was personally a very satisfying experience. "Everybody came together and found a solution that worked for everyone," he says, adding that the timing worked out perfectly so that the relocation was completed well in advance of the highway expansion. "I wanted to make sure that Southwestern was way out ahead so that no one would have to wait on us." 💧

# Power Plant Technology Partnership

## Arkansas Lakes Power Plants Partner with University of Arkansas Community College at Hope to Foster Careers in Power Plant Technology

BY BRIAN WESTFALL  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The present Federal workforce as a whole is maturing, with many employees in the baby boom generation approaching retirement. Recruitment is the vital ingredient for sustaining corporate knowledge, and tenured employees must train and mentor the next generation for careers in public service. This process ensures that our new workforce has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully carry the Federal Hydropower program forward into the future.

Technology. The Power Plant Technology Program is compatible with the Corps' program since it focuses on electrical power generation.

Dusty Wilson, Power Plant Project Manager for the Corps' Vicksburg District, says, "We are pleased that UACCH has established the Power Plant Technology Program. We feel it will be a key element in training future employees to operate and maintain our hydropower facilities."

Kurt Caldwell from Murfreesboro, Arkansas, is the first UACCH student to participate in the Power Plant Technology Program. During his high school years, Kurt worked for the Corps as a student aid at Narrows Dam/Lake Greeson. After several years pursuing a different career, Kurt decided to enroll in the UACCH Power Plant Technology Program.

"During the past few years, the team members within the Corps of Engineers have influenced me with their 'can do' attitudes and their maintenance and safety standards. The Corps really prides itself on teamwork, and being a part of this heritage is really life-changing. I am so proud to be a part of this skilled workforce and world class organization," says Caldwell.

Chris Thomason, Chancellor of UACCH, is equally excited to join in partnership with the Corps. "UACCH is extremely proud of our partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This partnership is direct evidence of the high quality of our Power Plant Technology Program design and our commitment to effective student learning. The Corps represents the highest standard of efficient and effective operation in their mission. UACCH will benefit just from



**KURT CALDWELL (CENTER), UACCH STUDENT, IS WELCOMED TO THE POWER PLANT TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM BY CHRIS THOMASON, UACCH CHANCELLOR; BRENDA MEEKS, OUACHITA PROJECT MANAGER, CORPS; RANDY SANDERS, UACCH DEAN OF TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROFESSIONS; AND DUSTY WILSON, POWER PLANT PROJECT MANAGER, CORPS.**

An outstanding example of "building the bench" is the newly formed partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope, Arkansas (UACCH). This partnership allows a student in UACCH's Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) to pursue an Associate of Applied Science in Power Plant

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## PARTNERSHIP, FROM PAGE 8

the association with such an impressive organization. More importantly, our students and their employees will have a tremendous career opportunity through this collaboration. The Corps has high expectations of their employees, while providing them with the highest level of support. I am confident that our Power Plant Technology Program and this partnership will benefit the Corps on both counts," says Thomason.

Shana Thomason, Workforce Management Support Specialist at the Corps' Ouachita Project Management Office, agrees. "The Student Career Employment Program is a great opportunity not only for the student, but for the Corps as well. The student receives hands-on experience, tuition assistance, and

learns a trade where the skills are unique to a specific field. We at the Corps are able to then recruit these students who will be the future of our workforce. It's a win-win situation for both," she says. 💧

- Brian Westfall is a Natural Resources Specialist at the Corps' Ouachita Project Management Office.

*Editor's Note: As of March 1, 2011, the SCEP internship program, which provided students an opportunity to gain work experience with a chance for permanent Federal employment, is being transitioned into the Pathways Program, a new hiring initiative sponsored by the Federal Office of Personnel Management that was enacted last December under Executive Order 13562.*

## TRAINING, FROM PAGE 6

charger, the portable unit monitors for electromagnetic field emissions of lightning activity within a storm cell and converts that data to digital signals which it analyzes for distance and motion. It is also capable of identifying the presence of squall lines. "You just set it, turn it on, and it'll sound an alarm. The readout tells you how far away a lightning storm is, and how fast it's moving," says Millsap. "It's like a little weatherman in a box."

Power Marketing Administrations benefit from joint training, cooperation, and the sharing of best practices. Millsap notes that because of Western's large geographical area, its crews have significant experience with all kinds of transmission work, and the agency is a great partner to have when it comes to sharing information or, as he recalls, when you need a helping hand. "Western sent some crews when we were restoring our lines after the ice storm in 2009, and they really worked hard and helped us out a lot," he says. "You couldn't ask for better guys or the outstanding work they do. They really know their stuff." 💧



(ABOVE) TODD JULIAN, A LINEMAN STUDENT WITH THE JONESBORO CREW, TAKES HIS TURN HARNESSING THE TRAINING DUMMY TO AN AUTOMATIC DESCENDER.



(LEFT) THIS PORTABLE LIGHTNING DETECTOR SOUNDS AN ALARM AND PROVIDES CRITICAL INFORMATION WHEN A LIGHTNING STRIKE OCCURS WITHIN 60 MILES.

## NEW EMPLOYEES

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**BonnieJean Bavido**  
STUDENT INTERN  
DIVISION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

**Eric Cornell**  
STUDENT INTERN  
SPRINGFIELD MAINTENANCE UNIT

**Alex Hodge**  
STUDENT INTERN  
DIVISION OF RESOURCES & RATES

**Cody Jennings**  
STUDENT INTERN  
JONESBORO MAINTENANCE UNIT

**Nathan Singleton**  
SECURITY OFFICER  
OFFICE OF CORPORATE FACILITIES

**Clint Wiedel**  
STUDENT INTERN  
SPRINGFIELD MAINTENANCE UNIT

## RETIREMENTS

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**Ron Beck**  
DIRECTOR  
DIVISION OF SCHEDULING & OPERATIONS

**Bob McAllister**  
POWER SYSTEMS DISPATCHER  
DIVISION OF SCHEDULING & OPERATIONS

**John Ribar**  
POWER OPERATIONS SPECIALIST - TRAINER  
DIVISION OF SCHEDULING & OPERATIONS

**Gary Swartzlander**  
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR  
OFFICE OF CORPORATE SERVICES

**Danny Wright**  
LINEMAN  
JONESBORO MAINTENANCE UNIT

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