



Upcoming Events

April 6
Consumer Confidence Report Workshop, Mason City
Register/more information: [Here](#)

April 7
Consumer Confidence Report Workshop, Alta
Register/more information: [Here](#)

April 8
Consumer Confidence Report Workshop, Atlantic
Register/more information: [Here](#)

April 12
Consumer Confidence Report Workshop, Independence
Registration is closed

April 13
Consumer Confidence Report Workshop, Coralville
Registration is closed

April 15
Consumer Confidence Report Workshop, Ankeny (IAMU)
Register/more information: [Here](#)

April 19 — 20
Advanced Locating Workshop
Register/more information: [Here](#)

May 3 — 4, 2011
Gas Fusion Workshop
Register/more information: [Here](#)

May 18 — 20, 2011
Electric Overhead Workshop

May 25 — 26, 2011
Water Distribution & Leak Detection Workshops



◆ Access back issues of the IAMU *Informer* and the *Informer* Story Index on the IAMU web site's [Informer](#) page. It may be necessary to download the latest version of Adobe Reader (Adobe Reader X) to view the IAMU *Informer*. Download it [here](#).

Branstad signs order to rescind RICE rule



◆ After listening to concerns expressed by municipal electric utilities regarding the application of the federal Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine (RICE) rules, Governor Branstad held a press conference this morning to announce that he would sign **Executive Order No. 72** to rescind the state enacted RICE rule.



Governor Branstad (speaking) is joined by (left to right): Rep. Dawn Pettingill, Senate Republican Leader Paul McKinley, Traer Municipal Utilities General Manager Pat Stief and Greg Fritz, CEO of the Northern Iowa Municipal Electric Cooperative Association as he made the announcement.

This action does not change the federal rule, but was intended to send a message to EPA that the Governor believes the rule hurts the interest of the people of Iowa and EPA should rescind or significantly amend the rule. It is believed since the current administrative rules process was created in 1977, only one other administrative rule has ever been rescinded.

The Governor was joined by IAMU Board Member **Pat Stief**, Traer Municipal Utilities General Manager and Vice President of Resale Power Group of Iowa and **Greg Fritz**, CEO of Northern Iowa Municipal Electric Cooperative Association, who presented testimony regarding the burdensome nature of the RICE rules. Governor Branstad noted that both Stief and Fritz had raised concerns over the EPA rules during the Republican Legislators' rules and regulations tour. Representative **Dawn Pettengill** and Senate Republican Leader **Paul McKinley** also spoke at the press conference in favor of Executive Order No. 72.

The RICE rules impact 67 of Iowa's 136 municipal electric utilities serving a total of 106,000 customers with an average of 1,560 customers per meter per utility. These municipal utilities collectively operate 287 diesel electric generators. The application of the rules would have required that each of these engines be retrofitted, replaced or removed, resulting in huge cost increases to the citizen owners of these utilities in the form of rate increases and lost capacity, effectively taking away the ability of a small community to afford these essential functions with little to no environmental benefit.

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Pat Stief, Traer Municipal Utilities (top photo, right) and Greg Fritz, Northern Iowa Municipal Electric Cooperative Association, both spoke at the Governor's conference.

IAMU extends its thanks and appreciation to all who have had a role in helping to bring attention and action to this important issue for municipal utilities.

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APPA survey shows more services for customers

◆ **The American Public Power Association’s (APPA) 2010 Survey on Customer Service Policies indicates that publicly owned electric utilities are increasingly offering services to help their customers.** The survey found greater numbers of utilities are

APPA accepting alternative forms of payment, providing services through the Internet, and offering more low-income assistance programs. Approximately 250 APPA member utilities responded to the survey.

Acceptance of alternative forms of payment is increasing, the survey found: 65% of respondents accept credit card payments for residential customers (up from 48% in 2006); 85% of respondents accept automated bank drafts (up from 79%); and 59% of respondents accept debit cards (up from 40%).

The survey indicates that utilities are using the Internet more today to provide customer services and sixty-four percent of respondents either provide or administer funding to help low-income customers pay their bills, up from 52% in 2006.

To obtain a full copy of the report, contact LeAnne Nienhuis, APPA, at 202/467-2973 or lnienhaus@publicpower.org.

RICE/Branstad Executive Order, continued from Page 1



Cost estimates for retrofitting all 287 diesel generators for compliance over a 10-year period as required by the rule would have been \$36 million, with additional costs if diesel generators had to be replaced or taken out of service.

Stief mentioned that he had presented testimony at the EPA reconsideration hearing in North Carolina, but that it was unclear whether or when the rules might be changed. He explained the impact of the rules on the citizens of Traer. Compliance with the rules requires a choice between upgrading the engines at a cost of \$95,920 per year for 10 years or taking the engines out of service and losing the capacity would result in annual costs of \$487,000 per year. To customers this results in a cost of \$7.14 per month for retrofit and \$36 per month to purchase additional capacity – all of this for engines that have run an average of 20 hours per year for all purposes.

Fritz stated that NIMECA members own 37 diesel generator units, which have run an average of 11 hours per year for each of the last 5 years. The cost of compliance with the RICE rule is estimated at \$5 million, with the average monthly increase between \$4 and \$9 per meter per month. The impact on individual members varies greatly. For New Hampton, the member with the largest amount of diesel generation in our group, the cost increase is estimated to be between \$7 and \$27 per meter per month. Graettinger, the smallest member, could see rate increases of \$3.70 to \$10 per meter per month.



IAMU has filed comments in the EPA’s reconsideration of that portion of the rule that relates to the allowed hours of non-emergency operation for a diesel engine. The Governor announced that he would be sending a copy of Executive Order No. 72 to the EPA to encourage them to reconsider changes to the entire rule and to take into account the economic impact on Iowa’s municipal utilities. The timeline for EPA to act on its reconsideration is unknown, with guesses ranging from weeks to months.

On a related RICE note, both the House and Senate will be considering resolutions asking EPA to rescind or amend the rules.

Groups, governor stress 811 in Safe Digging Month

◆ **On Thursday, April 7, Gov. Terry Branstad will issue a proclamation observing April 2011 as Safe Digging Month in Iowa.** The proclamation is a reminder for Iowa homeowners and professional excavators to call 811 before starting any digging project.



According to the Common Ground Alliance, an organization dedicated to public safety through damage prevention, one underground utility line (electric, gas, communications, water or sewer) is damaged by digging every three minutes nationwide. And failure to call 811 before digging has resulted in over 200,000 annual damages across the country including outages, blackouts, repair costs, fines and penalties, including the potential for serious injury.



“We strongly encourage all individuals and companies in Iowa to comply with state law by calling 811 before beginning any digging projects,” said Ben Booth, Public Relations/Communications Manager at Iowa One Call. “By having underground lines marked, casual diggers and professionals alike can significantly reduce the risk of striking utilities, thus avoiding accidents and inconvenient outages.”

IAMU urges its member utilities to assist in promoting the importance of 811 to their customers. The free call to 811 connects home and business owners to Iowa One Call, which notifies the appropriate utility companies of the intent to dig. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, necessitates a call to 811.

Common Ground Iowa (CGI) is a regional partner of the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) and partners with Iowa One Call to promote damage prevention and public awareness.

Visit www.iowaonecall.com, www.commongroundiowa.com, or www.call811.com for more information about 811 and the call-before-you-dig process or to find educational events and materials.