

Public power utilities earn recognition for reliable, safe service

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One hundred ten of the nation's more than 2,000 public power utilities earned the Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) designation from the American Public Power Association for providing reliable and safe electric service, the Association reported on May 8.

David Lynch, assistant director of utility operations at Michigan's Marquette Board of Light and Power and chair of the Association's RP3 review panel, presented the designations on May 8 during the Association's annual Engineering & Operations Technical Conference held in San Antonio, Texas.

The RP3 designation, which lasts for three years, recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in four key disciplines: reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement. Criteria include sound business practices and a utility-wide commitment to safe and reliable delivery of electricity.

This year, 110 utilities earned the designation and, in total, 235 of the more than 2,000 public power utilities nation-wide that hold the RP3 designation.

"Utilities that have earned an RP3 designation demonstrate public power's emphasis on achieving leading practices and providing a high level of service to communities," said Lynch. "We are proud to welcome all utilities earning this recognition for the first time and to those renewing their designations."

This is the twelfth year that RP3 recognition has been offered.

Willmar Municipal Utilities - Minnesota



Willmar Municipal Utilities employees Janell Johnson and Todd Graves (center) accepted the RP₃ Diamond Designation Award on behalf of the utility on May 8, 2017. They are pictured with David Lynch, Assistant Director of Utility Operations at Marquette Board of Light and Power, Michigan and chair of the American Public Power Association's RP₃ Review Panel (left) and Mike Hyland, Senior Vice President of Engineering Services at the American Public Power Association (right).

APPA RP3 Designation

In 2004, the American Public Power Association (APPA) started the RP3 Awards program (Reliable Public Power Provider). The APPA recognizes utilities that demonstrate high proficiency in four areas: reliability, safety, work force development and system improvement. This award consists of 3 levels of recognized achievement:

Gold: 80% - <90% of the possible points

Platinum: 90 - <98% of the possible points

Diamond: 98 - 100% of the possible points

RP3 Disciplines

Criteria within each of the four RP3 disciplines are based upon sound business practices and recognized industry leading practices.

Reliability - Key elements of the Reliability section include collecting and analyzing reliability data, having a mutual aid agreement, devising and using a system-wide disaster management plan (emergency response plan), and implementing any needed cyber and physical security.

Safety - Utilities must create a culture of safety. This commitment to safety must begin with top management and include safety in all aspects of operations from generation to line work, and all utility services in between. In the RP3 program, each utility must prove that it uses an accepted safety manual and follows safe work practices across the utility.

Workforce Development - Training employees, whether through traditional avenues such as workshops and college courses or through in-house programs, demonstrates that a utility values its work force. Utility staff knowledge increases through membership in state, regional, and nationally focused committees, and through attendance in conferences and training.

System Improvement - Utilities maintain the integrity of their system and promote long term planning by embarking on improvement programs. Important items in this section include participation in R&D programs, procedures to maintain distribution system and financial health and implementation of system planning and betterment projects.

WMU Succeeds as a Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3)

In 2014, General Manager John Harren, Director of Operations at the time, assigned the challenge to see if WMU could even get close to qualifying for the bottom level of the award. Over a 3 year period, WMU processes and policies, in all areas of the operation, were evaluated, updated or implemented. In 2016 the first application was submitted, including 413 pages of documentation from WMU.

In January, 2017 WMU was notified that it had made the RP3 Diamond Level, scoring 98% on the application, with the stipulation we could not go public until the actual presentations on May 8, 2017 in San Antonio, Texas. This an exciting award and a huge honor for WMU Commissioners and staff for their dedicated service to achieve this notable award at its highest level. This prestigious award needs to be renewed every 3 years to assure utilities continue to strive for to improve utility best practices.

On May 8, 2017, WMU was recognized and awarded the RP3 Diamond designation at the APPA Engineering and Operations Conference in San Antonio, Texas. Todd Graves, Line Department Superintendent, and Janell Johnson, Compliance Officer/HR were in attendance to accept this award on behalf of WMU. This year, 110 utilities earned the designation and, in total, 235 of the more than 2000 public power utilities nation-wide that hold the RP3 designation. Currently only 10 utilities hold a RP3 designation level in Minnesota.

Diamond Level: Owatonna Public Utilities, Shakopee Public Utilities, Rochester Public Utilities and Willmar Municipal Utilities

Platinum Level: Marshall Municipal Utilities, Moorhead Public Service, and Alexandria Light and Power

Gold Level: City of St. Peter, Elk River Municipal Utilities and Detroit Lakes Public Utilities

Congratulations to the Commission and Employees for this huge achievement!

What does it mean when we say you can count on us?

It means we are amongst the best in the nation when it comes to:

- Reliability,
- Safety,
- Work Force Development, and
- System Improvement.

As a result, we have received a *Reliable Public Power Provider*—or RP3—designation from the American Public Power Association.

We are proud to serve this community and proud to say you can count on us. For more information, visit PublicPower.org/RP3.



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