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Jan./Feb. 2012 • Delivering New Energy to the Old North State

HOMETOWN CONNECTION

Celebrating the Value of Public Power

Two public power legends share their views on the past, present and future.

Jennie Stultz

Ron Elks

Hometown Connection is now a bimonthly publication.
As we begin the new year, we’re taking time to think about the things that make public power communities great places to live and work. We spoke with former Gastonia Mayor Jennie Stultz and retiring Greenville Utilities Commission CEO Ron Elks about their long careers in public power.

We asked the two North Carolina natives about growing up in public power communities and how their perceptions of city-owned power have changed over the years.

Elks: “My elementary school sat on a rise overlooking the old Greenville Operations Center. I’d spend my recess period watching the big trucks going about their business, and providing the citizens of Greenville with utility services including reliable power became my life’s work.

“When I speak to groups, I start out by asking people to tell me the first, second and third things they did when they got out of bed. Most of those things involved utility services including electricity, and those people likely never gave a thought about the service we provide.”

Stultz: “Public power kept me warm growing up, but it was something I always took for granted until after Hurricane Hugo hit. I remember sitting on my front steps and seeing those trucks from Huntsville, Ala., come rolling in. Gastonia’s power was back up before Charlotte’s, and public power made that happen.

“I was at a US Conference of Mayors meeting last year, and the mayor of Chattanooga approached me to thank Gastonia for sending our crews to help Chattanooga’s crews reconnect after the devastating tornadoes nearly destroyed their system. The professionalism our crews exhibit during power restoration benefits from our Emergency Assistance Program and the genuine, cooperative relationships we have with each other.”

Next, we asked what the value of public power is to communities.

Stultz: “The first thing that comes to mind when you think about the benefits of public power is obviously the service we are able to provide; our local crews are out there every day and can get the service up and running in no time. We own our own system and can provide the best for our communities.”

Elks: “GUC’s tagline is ‘Your Local Advantage.’ We truly are neighbors serving neighbors. We live and work in Greenville, so we deeply understand our customers’ needs and desires. Everybody here undergoes the same customer service training, and everyone understands how crucial reliability is to the success of our city and in our customers’ eyes.”

We asked Stultz and Elks about how the services ElectriCities provides its members – including safety and training, economic development, communications, government relations and more – help make North Carolina’s public power communities stronger.

Stultz: “When it comes to economic development and recruitment, ElectriCities has always been there with us. The customer service and quality of power we provide helps us recruit, sustain and nurture relationships with our key accounts.

“ElectriCities is the hub of the wheel that connects us all. It provides the important services to make us all successful. Being a part of the organization gives us the opportunity to work together and maximize the economies of scale to help us all achieve our goals.”

Elks: “I have enjoyed my career immensely and am going to miss seeing my team of high-quality, dedicated professionals on a daily basis. But after 32 years on-call, I’m ready to decompress for a while. I’ve got an eight-month-old grandson, and I plan on teaching him to fish and hunt.”

“Gastonia’s 130th anniversary. ElectriCities’ staff participated in every step of the way, providing guidance along with a new city logo and seal that was so successful 14 other municipalities in Gaston County retrofitted their communications materials to match it.”

Stultz: “I’m going to continue as a national consultant for Keep America Beautiful and as executive director of the Gaston County Education Foundation. Through my own consulting business, I will continue to do board development and volunteer management for local governments and non-profits.”

“Clearly, it’s just not about power anymore.”
Happy New Year!

We hope you’ve received the 2012 NC Public Power calendar and that you’ll enjoy a year of “Authentic Carolina Cuisine and Culture.”

We believe the way to folks’ hearts is through their stomachs, and the calendar is a showcase of beloved hometown restaurants in public power communities across the state. The calendar is going to economic development professionals across the nation, and the QR codes provide a link to Web pages promoting the community featured, along with information on available properties.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook for more information about the restaurants and communities featured. While you’re there, join in the conversation about your favorites and what makes your area of the state’s barbecue the best. Bon appetit, y’all!

Wake Forest Town Hall earns LEED Platinum Certification

The Wake Forest Town Hall is one of only a few municipal facilities in the United States to achieve LEED Platinum status. By reaching the Platinum level, the Town is not only helping conserve resources and create a healthier environment for employees and visitors, but it is also saving substantially on costs through green building maintenance practices.

The LEED features in the 44,000-square-foot facility include an energy-efficient lighting system, a reflective roof, low-flow water fixtures, ultra low-flush toilets, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, recycled and rapidly renewable construction materials, and use of low VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds). Bike racks and dedicated parking spaces for carpooling and fuel-efficient/low-emitting vehicles encourage alternative transportation and daily lighting with day lighting with daylighting significantly reduce the building’s lighting load.

Collectively, town hall’s array of energy efficient systems and strategies is expected to result in a nearly 25 percent reduction in overall annual energy costs. In addition, 70 percent of the anticipated energy usage will be offset with green power, including wind and solar farms located throughout the country.

Take a video tour of the building at wakeforestnc.gov/newtownhall.

We have the keys to keeping your key accounts happy

In today’s competitive business environment, electric customers are looking to their utilities for innovative ways to control costs. Good news: As a member of ElectricCities, you have experts at your service to maximize the value you offer your customers.

Mike Mozingo and Steve Allen are key accounts managers in NCMPA. They are here to help you provide service to your commercial and industrial customers, who provide jobs and contribute to the quality of life in your community. Your commercial and industrial customers are busy running the day-to-day operations and might not be aware of ways they can be more efficient and reduce electric costs. Mike and Steve are available to visit facilities and perform industrial energy audits, looking for power quality and reliability issues. They examine all components that require energy, including lighting systems, HVAC, electric motors and compressed air systems to see how well they are performing. They also help customers understand how their rate is designed. This knowledge enables the customer to make smarter production and scheduling decisions.

After a thorough audit, they prepare reports explaining everything they’ve encountered and offering solutions and savings opportunities the customer may not have thought of. These range from simple changes to larger projects that will pay for themselves over time. For such projects, they can be in outside engineering experts through the Energy Solutions Partners program to facilitate the process. They can also provide customers with information on grants and rebates available for energy efficiency improvements.

To schedule a visit to one of your key accounts customers in NCMPA, call Mike Mozingo (704-201-2288) or Steve Allen (704-201-2259).

Allan Willsson, senior field engineer for NCMPA, will be featured in an upcoming edition. You can reach him at 919-768-6255.

Nominate your city for the All-America City Award

The National Civic League invites you to apply for your city’s oldest and most prestigious community recognition award, now in its 62nd year. The All-America City Award recognizes exemplary grassroots community problem solving and is awarded to communities of all sizes that collaboratively tackle challenges and achieve results.

Applying is simple. Apply as a neighborhood, village, town, city, county or region. All-America City finalists and winners receive national attention, a boost for recruitment of industry, jobs and investments. The All-America City status has helped winners attract new and retain businesses that means a job and a stronger tax base. Winners have also seen an increase in tourism and grants.

The All-America City Award has transformed participants and their communities. From the application to the competition, this program promotes hope and energizes people with a can-do spirit. All-America Cities are national models, inspiring others who face similar critical challenges.

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NC Public Power’s YouTube channel is your one-stop resource for educational videos made just for you and your customers! From energy-efficiency tips to help your customers save money through educational clips that help members of your community understand the value of public power, we have content you need on demand.

Visit temptracker365.com or electricities.com for a link to our channel and become a subscriber.