

# CUSTOMER **Circuit**

OCTOBER 2015

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

## Responding in real time

Eleven wood structures on Desert Southwest's Gila-to-Sonora 69-kilovolt line were damaged or destroyed, Sept. 8, following a severe wind and rain storm outside Yuma, Arizona. Crews replaced the structures and re-energized the line by Sept. 12. Due to redundant transmission paths, no citizens or businesses lost power due to this damage and repair. (Photo by *Dave Katich*)

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# Real-time analysis to improve grid awareness, reliability

by Lisa Meiman

**E**lectricity follows the path of least resistance – and every other available path.

Energy does not acknowledge utility boundaries or capacity agreements. Voltage support and the vital 60-Hertz frequency are of no concern to mere electrons. An outage is not an inconvenience but a detour.

The responsibility for achieving balance, voltage and reliability falls to dozens of power dispatch centers across the country, including four at Western. Now, their job of monitoring and wrangling electricity through the grid is changing to better understand and mitigate the system's predictable unpredictability.

"Reliability is second only to safety at Western," said Administrator and CEO **Mark Gabriel**. "Ensuring the safe, secure and reliable operations of the grid at reasonable cost continues to be a main priority."

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation is revising transmission operator reliability standards to require real-time contingency analysis every 30 minutes. Specifically, transmission operators will need to analyze current system conditions every

half hour, identify every possible contingency and create mitigation plans.

The goal is to create a more reliable grid by improving situational awareness and contingency planning for transmission providers and reliability coordinators so they are prepared for a worst-case scenario in real-time conditions.

"Contingency analysis isn't new," said Upper Great Plains Transmission System Planning Manager **Gayle Nansel**. "We run current-day, day-ahead, peak and seasonal contingency analysis and provide 24/7 on-call support. Doing it in real time is another story. To do that we will need more people."

The real-time picture will allow flexibility and optimal use of the transmission system. "We are required to operate to the most constrained limits that don't always reflect the real-time flow environment," said Rocky Mountain, Desert Southwest and Colorado River Storage Project Management Center Vice President of Operations **Darren Buck**. "Going real time will allow Western to fully use our transmission system and ultimately reduce the curtailment, outage and financial burden issues we see today in the day-ahead study process."

Finally, Western dispatchers are predicting improved communication and coordination by having contingency analysis co-located with the people who have to respond to contingencies at a moment's notice. "The

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operational engineers and Dispatch interact closely with this new model. Dispatchers depend on planning,” said UGP Transmission Operations and Switching Manager **Mick Kirwan**. “If something happens, like a disturbance or event, instead of Dispatch calling engineers for support, the two groups will be in the same room. The engineers will already be running studies of worst-case scenarios. It’s really going to be better for reliability and grid operations.”

Depending on when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approves the standard, the new requirement will become enforceable in 12-18 months, likely sometime in 2016. “The revision isn’t required yet,” said Kirwan, “but we need to get ahead of it.” Western’s two-year budget cycle means new positions requested this year will be available in Fiscal Year 2017.

### **Different circumstances, different response**

As usual, NERC leaves execution of the revision mostly up to the utilities, recognizing that transmission operators differ in size, scope and complexity. Western has the same attitude. As all regions are different in terms of size and responsibilities, Western is considering different solutions commensurate with each region’s needs.

For the most part, the solution is a new

24/7 real-time desk located in dispatch centers and staffed with new operational engineers.

“Engineers do the job now,” said Nansel. “Engineers are more familiar with the modeling and planning tool that we plan to use, but there will still be a large learning curve to do things in real time.”

The engineers will need to maintain operational awareness, create supporting operation guides, understand the system, run analysis and, most importantly, know how to mitigate all kinds of contingencies. Then, the results need to be coordinated with the dispatchers in the control room and potentially with neighbors and the reliability coordinator.

UGP Power Operations and the combined DSW, RM and CRSP MC Power Operations groups plan to go this route, hiring five to six new staff in UGP and the combined center to operate the new desk.

“UGP is the transmission operator for the vast majority of its territory. We conduct these responsibilities for our customers,” said Nansel. Five to six people would be able to run a new desk 24/7 comfortably and account for vacation and sick time as well as training requirements.

The joint RM/DSW/CRSP MC footprint is just as massive and complex as UGP’s single footprint, totaling about 8,000 miles, even though customers and neighboring utilities

will have their own real-time contingency analysis solutions, unlike in UGP. Arizona Public Service is the closest in comparison with the combined footprint in terms of load, generation and miles of transmission, except Western’s joint footprint is three times larger, has more balancing authority touch points and nearly double the qualified paths to monitor.

Sierra Nevada is smallest, but its complexity in the California market still qualify it for real-time monitoring. SN’s Power Operations group plans to assign the monitoring to the existing Transmission and System Operations desk in Dispatch. A new desk will run five days a week during the daytime hours. During nights and weekends, existing Dispatch staff will support the real-time contingency analysis. “We will be hiring two additional dispatchers, but we are still just talking about it,” said SN Supervisory Power System Dispatcher **Carl Dobbs**. A new operations engineer and supervisory control and data acquisition specialist will also help meet the requirements.

The regions’ plans are still in the works, and Western is still discussing the new requirements with customers. “Generally, the operations divisions of the large entities are in agreement that real-time, flow-based monitoring is necessary,” said Buck. □

*Note: Meiman was a public affairs specialist. She no longer works at Western.*



Photos by David Hahn

## Tracy Substation gets bath

Photo by David Hahn

Sierra Nevada maintenance crew members hose down Tracy Substation east of Sacramento, California, during the annual wash the week of Sept. 21. The wash removes contaminants from nearby farms, wind, light rain, dust and animals deposited on the equipment over the year. Contaminants on energized electrical equipment degrade the conductive surface, allowing

electricity to escape the equipment and cause flashovers and other damage. The Central Valley Project is particularly susceptible for contaminants as it provides water for more than half of the top-10 agricultural counties in California. [Read the full story about the annual substation wash in the December 2014 *Closed Circuit*.] ■

## Natural Resources gathers for update, celebrates accomplishments

On Sept. 11, Natural Resources staff from Lands and Environment converged upon the Headquarters office in Lakewood, Colorado, for a meeting. During the meeting, staff were updated on changes in regulations, upcoming projects, training and requirements.

Together, the Natural Resources staff have accomplished:

- 120 Categorical Exclusions
- 15 Environmental Assessments
- Two Findings of No Significant Impact
- 18 Environmental Impact Statements
- Two Records of Decision under the National Environmental Policy Act

Additionally, they have:

- Acquired land rights for several new substations and numerous easements for new transmission line construction and maintenance upgrades
- Completed eight consultations under the Endangered Species Act's Section 7
- Maintained 160 Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure plans across 13 states
- Conserved roughly 1,400 metric tons of wood poles, cross arms, mineral oil and dielectric fluid, capacitors, transformer, concrete, asphalt and other items.



Photo by Joel Klassen

# UGP regional manager receives prestigious industry award

by Lisa Meiman

**S**enior Vice President and Upper Great Plains Regional Manager **Bob Harris** received a prestigious energy industry award, Sept. 21, for his leadership, dedication and tireless drive to guide the industry to a new energy frontier.

Harris accepted the RMEL Industry Leadership Award at the organization's 112th Fall Executive Leadership and Management Convention in Kansas City, Missouri.

"It is certainly a surprise to be selected," he said. "It has been my honor to serve our customers and in the critically important energy industry to ensure Americans have reliable power every moment of the day. I could not have achieved such success without the exceptional team in Western's Upper Great Plains region and the entire organization. I would like to thank them for making this award possible."

The RMEL Industry Leadership Award is presented to individuals who have demonstrated singular dedication, service and leadership to the electric utility industry.

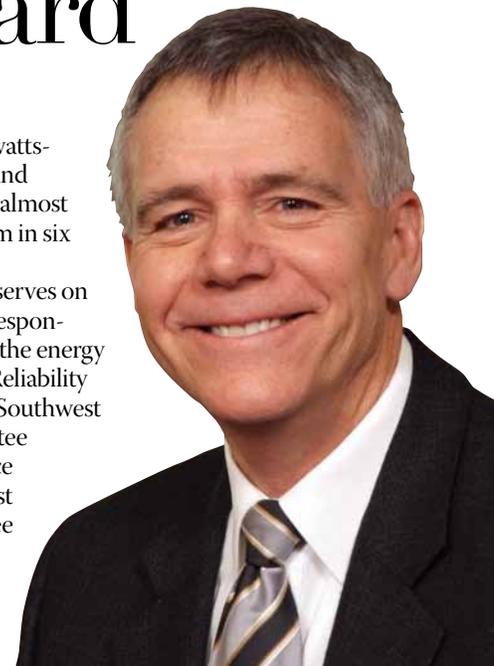
Originally from Colorado, Harris arrived in Billings, Montana, in 1972 to begin his career in government, first with the Bureau of Reclamation, then transferring to Western when that organization was formed from Reclamation in 1977. Harris started at Western as the System Development division director and worked his way through the organization as an engineer, assistant area manager and power marketing manager. As regional manager since 2002, Harris leads more than 350 employees who are responsible for annually

marketing nine million megawatts-hours of federal hydropower and operating and maintaining an almost 8,000-mile transmission system in six upper Midwest states.

An engaged leader, Harris serves on several industry committees responsible for defining the future of the energy business, including Midwest Reliability Operator Board of Directors, Southwest Power Pool Member Committee and the Corporate Governance Committee, and the Northwest Power Pool Market Committee and Executive Committee.

Harris was also recently appointed by the Montana governor to participate on the Energy and Utilities key industry network of the Main Street Montana Project, an initiative to improve business and employment competitiveness in Montana.

"The leadership and foresight demonstrated by Bob Harris are guiding our industry to an exciting future," said Administrator and CEO **Mark Gabriel**. "His extensive industry knowledge and sound advice provide Western valuable insights to the direction and tone of our dynamic industry and the path we should take to continue our successful mission." □



For more information on the award, visit [www.rmel.org](http://www.rmel.org) and navigate to Members, Awards.



Acting Senior Vice President and Assistant Administrator for Washington Liaison **Erin Green**, Administrative Clerk **Danette Sorensen**, Paralegal Specialist **Patty Land**, Administrator and CEO **Mark Gabriel**, Information Technology Specialist **Birundha Jayaraman** and Accountant **Jack Wagy** socialize during a break in the senior manager's meeting, Sept. 18, at Headquarters. (Photos by Kara Lamb)

## Managers, employees mingle

**T**he Senior Management Team invited employees to join them for coffee and donuts, Sept. 18, at Western's Headquarters office in Lakewood, Colorado, where managers from around Western gathered for a bi-annual face-to-face meeting. During the coffee break, they introduced themselves to new employees and caught up with staff. Roughly 50 people participated in the get together.

# Rocky Mountain impresses compliance auditors

by Lisa Meiman

**R**ocky Mountain employees should be blushing with praise after successfully completing an intensive North American Electric Reliability Corporation reliability compliance audit, Aug. 27-Sept. 4, with kudos from auditors, senior leadership and other regions alike.

“It was one of the best executed audits we have ever had,” said Rocky Mountain Reliability Compliance Manager **Brent Sessions**. “The auditors have a high opinion of Western. They commented on our professionalism and felt we demonstrated a culture of compliance.”

About 50 employees were involved in the audit, including the regional reliability compliance managers, a data request team and subject matters experts from Power Operations, Maintenance, Information Technology, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition, or SCADA, Transmission Planning and the Office of Security and Emergency Management.

“The outcome is a reflection of the tremendous dedication and professionalism employees bring to the job every day,” said Administrator and CEO **Mark Gabriel**. “Thank you for all your hard work.”

The two-week audit actually began May 26 with the official notification of the upcoming dates for the audit as well as the initial data request, which is so enormous it is dubbed the “Big Bubba.” For one

of the 50 requirements under review, RM gave auditors a list of all the cyber assets subject to compliance. Auditors pick a random sample of those cyber assets, and then asked for everything related to each component’s compliance documentation for the last three years.

“It’s a huge, huge data request. It takes weeks to compile the evidence, more than 100 megabytes,” said Desert Southwest Reliability Compliance Manager **Matt Schmehl**.

In total, RM provided more than 1,000 documents to the auditors to review by the end of July. The bulk of the document review is completed in the first week of the audit and can indicate how the audit is going.

“A measure we go by is how many data requests we received in the first week,” said Schmehl. “If we did a good job with the reliability standard audit worksheets, we see fewer requests. If we get a bunch of data requests, we didn’t do a good job presenting the story.”

RM completed, on time, 57 data requests to clarify the evidence and other documentation through interviews, tours or written responses. Previous audits exceeded 100 requests. “The auditors were complimentary of how we formatted the big data request and arranged evidence for them,” said Schmehl.

Audits are primarily about evaluating Western procedures and documentation for compliance and not spot checks and observations of these practices in action, although auditors do visit facilities and a small number of substations during the second week, which also went well.



“Tours are surprisingly tough to manage,” said Sessions. “This time, we had one person responsible for coordinating all the tours, and that really helped. We also better structured the tours and provided training to Western employees who would be involved.”

On Sept. 4, the auditors presented an informal briefing, identifying only two potential violations as a result of the audit. Both were minor infractions that stemmed from compliance documentation of the standard in question. “Potential violations are not a failure of the audit. They are rather a statement by the auditors that they believe we were not able to demonstrate compliance with respect to a specific requirement of a standard,” said Schmehl.

“On behalf of the reliability compliance managers, we are thankful for work people put into this,” said Sessions. “It is a lot of work and not a lot of fun. Through all the difficulties getting it ready, it all came together for the audit. Everyone should be very happy with their performance as should their managers.”

### Learning cycle lessens stress

Reliability audits, conducted every three years by NERC’s regional reliability organizations, are a comprehensive review of each region’s evidence and procedures to comply with more than 50 requirements listed in about 30 reliability standards. With four NERC-registered regions, Western experiences an almost constant cycle of preparing

for, completing and learning from audits.

“The standards cover all areas of reliability, from bulk power system operations, the training of the dispatchers, engineering and modeling of the bulk power system to vegetation management, coordination of operations and outages with neighboring utilities, maintenance of the protection systems and responses to system emergencies,” said Schmehl.

RM began preparing for the audit in summer 2014, collecting and organizing three years’ worth of documentation for the upcoming data requests, a daunting task. RM built their effort around lessons learned from other regions’ recent audits including DSW’s in 2014 and Sierra Nevada’s earlier this year—an effective use of time that has lessened employees’ stress about audits.

“Last year, DSW set up a Critical Infrastructure Protection, or CIP, war room,” said Sessions. “Everyone who had a role in CIP met in a big room and answered the CIP data request questions together. It was much more efficient so we used it in SN and RM. RM developed a SharePoint site to share information, a practice first used in SN, so everyone could see the data request log, contact numbers and key information.”

Preparation also included a mock audit in February, essentially a dress rehearsal of the real thing that included data requests, tours and interviews with the subject matter experts. “The real audits are less stressful than the mock audits have been, which is a

good thing,” said Schmehl. “The mock audits are when we are supposed to shake out the machinery and find the bugs.”

### 2016: UGP up next

During its audit in early 2016, UGP will benefit again from DSW’s and SN’s lessons, as well as early improvements from RM, such as the single tour coordinator and how to organize responses to data requests. “We also plan to have subteams during tours so auditors can get more done at once,” said Sessions. UGP’s audit will give clues on how NERC’s transition to risk-based enforcement and monitoring will affect audits to better prepare DSW in 2017.

In the meantime, the Reliability Compliance Standards Team is encouraging people to continue compliance-friendly documenting practices between audits to prepare for future reviews. “There is now a standing team at DSW who will make sure evidence is being accumulated and stored correctly in real time,” said Schmehl.

Sessions added, “We have figured out a lot of things to make the audit process smoother, and we will continue to improve each time we are audited. If people do compliance every day, when it comes time for the audit, the amount of effort to prepare will not be as much as it used to be.” □

*Note: Meiman was a public affairs specialist. She no longer works at Western.*

# Western, Basin, Heartland join SPP

by Lisa Meiman

**A**t midnight Oct. 1, Western Area Power Administration's Upper Great Plains region, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Heartland Consumers Power District successfully transferred functional control of the integrated transmission system to Southwest Power Pool and began operating in the regional transmission organization. This was the final step in achieving full membership in the RTO.

"This major achievement demonstrates Western's commitment to evolve our services in a changing energy frontier so we can continue to reliably, economically and securely serve our customers," said Western Administrator and CEO **Mark Gabriel**. "We appreciate the spirit of cooperation, dedication and professionalism by SPP and the continued involvement and support of our customers during this transition."

Western is the first federal power marketing administration to become a full RTO member.

The integration is the culmination of years of discussions and public involvement between the IS members, SPP, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and customers. The IS owners have studied several forms of potential regional transmission organization participation since the 1990s. Beginning in 2011, the IS participants began to evaluate potential options of joining SPP, joining the Midcontinent

Independent System Operator or continuing operations on a stand-alone basis. These studies identified the option to join SPP as having the most benefit and the least risk. A public process began in November

2013 to hear comments from concerned parties, which resulted in approval to pursue membership in January 2014.

"The successful integration of the Integrated System is a significant milestone for SPP as we prepare to celebrate our 75th anniversary in 2016," said SPP President and CEO Nick Brown. "The IS further diversifies our membership with the addition of a federal agency and creates a more robust transmission network to meet the electrical demand across the region and efficiently operate a wholesale energy market."

Senior Vice President and Upper Great Plains Regional Manager **Bob Harris** added, "I am extremely happy and proud of the Western team. The hard work, attention to detail, time spent on training and dedication of the entire team is the primary reason the integration has gone well. I can't say enough about our team and their positive impact."

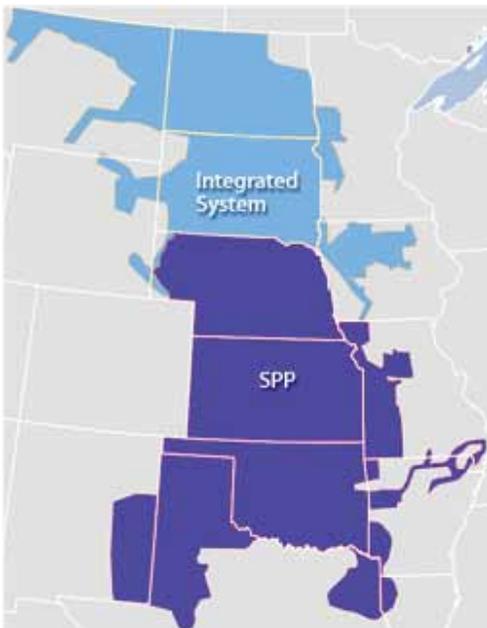
## What changed at UGP

In addition to marketing power and energy from the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin Program – Eastern Division, UGP operates the IS, which is jointly owned by Western, Basin Electric and Heartland.

For the transition, UGP merged its Eastern Interconnection Balancing Authority into SPP's BA, and UGP's transmission facilities in the Eastern and Western Interconnection were incorporated into SPP's new Upper Missouri Zone under the SPP Open Access Transmission Tariff, which was modified to accommodate the IS parties. UGP's Eastern Interconnection generation and load also became part of SPP's Integrated Marketplace.

UGP continues to be responsible for the delivery of firm electric service to its customers. UGP also is still a transmission operator that develops transmission rates, revenue requirements and other necessary rates for use in SPP's tariff. UGP's BA in the Western Interconnection did not become a part of SPP's BA, nor did UGP's Western Interconnection generation and load become part of SPP's Integrated Marketplace.

There are still some details to work out with SPP, but otherwise the transition was successful and will help UGP continue to deliver on its mission. "By joining SPP, UGP will be able to continue to provide our more than 300 customers clean, renewable,



reliable, low-cost hydropower and related services by giving us more access to neighboring generation and transmission facilities,” said Harris. “We appreciate the continued involvement and support of our customers during this transition as well as the significant work by SPP, its members, committees, board and staff.

### Dedicated employees equal smooth transition

The decision to integrate into SPP meant the IS would need to develop systems and tools to successfully operate in an RTO environment. “I have to give a lot of credit to our employees who have been dedicated and tenacious in preparing the cooperative for this transition,” said Paul Sukut, Basin Electric CEO and general manager. “It’s a significant shift in how we have historically operated, and though our decades-old partnership with Western is changing, we have plans to

continue working with them in a number of ways. Today, we have taken a step to evolve our operations and partnerships, but one thing will never change. Our primary focus has and always will be serving our members.”

“Heartland has been preparing for this transition for some time, and we are glad to finally see the process complete,” said Heartland CEO Russell Olson. “This is a necessary step in ensuring we are providing the best possible service to our customers. We will have greater flexibility and increased options for buying and selling power and look forward to the opportunities operating within SPP will provide.”

With the inclusion of the IS, SPP’s footprint spans almost 575,000 square miles in all or parts of 14 states in the central U.S. and includes more than 800 generating plants, nearly 5,000 substations and about 56,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines. The IS will add about 5,000 megawatts

of peak demand and 7,600 MW of generating capacity, including a threefold increase in SPP’s current hydroelectric capacity.

“SPP and its stakeholders have been very accommodating to our unique needs as a federal PMA, such as exempting Western from regional cost sharing charges and also exempting congestion and marginal loss charges when Western is marketing and delivering federal hydropower to its federal load in the Upper Missouri Zone,” said Harris. “We look forward to being full and active participants in SPP.” □

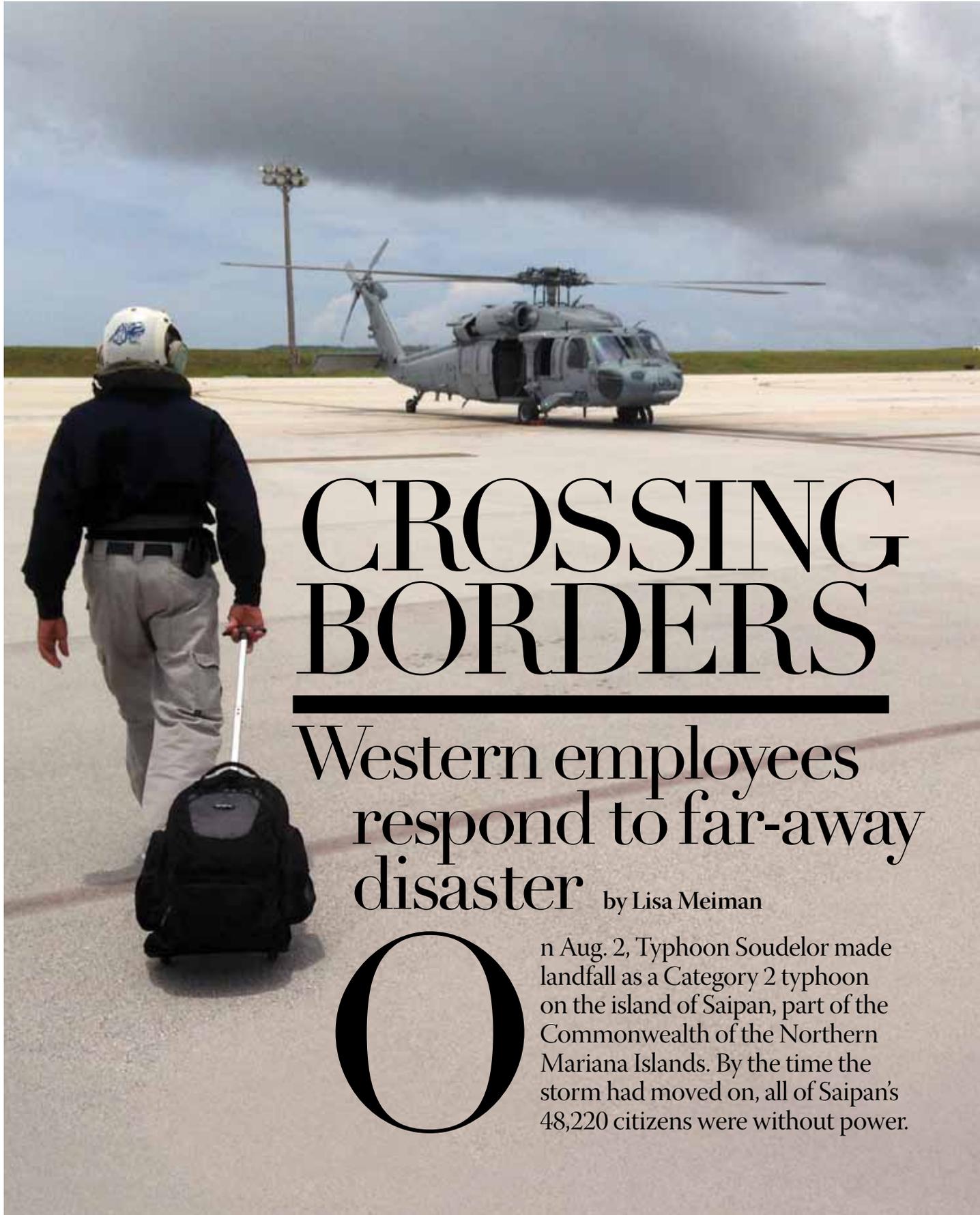
*Note: Meiman was a public affairs specialist. She no longer works at Western.*

For more information on the membership process, visit [www.wapa.gov](http://www.wapa.gov), **Regions, Upper Great Plains, Power marketing**, and click on “SPP Membership”.



## Timeline of transition

<b>Nov. 1, 2013</b>	Recommendation to pursue membership in SPP published in <i>Federal Register</i> ; 45-day comment period begins.
<b>Nov. 13, 2013</b>	Public webinar
<b>Nov. 19-21, 2013</b>	Public meetings held in Lincoln, Nebraska; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Fargo, North Dakota.
<b>Jan. 9, 2014</b>	UGP announced its decision to pursue formal negotiations to join SPP.
<b>June 9, 2014</b>	SPP Board of Directors approve changes to SPP Bylaws, Membership Agreement and Open Access Transmission Tariff
<b>July 9, 2014</b>	UGP approved to take necessary actions to become full member in SPP.
<b>Aug. 21-22, 2014</b>	SPP pre-filing conference with FERC staff
<b>Sept. 10, 2014</b>	UGP signed SPP Membership Agreement.
<b>Sept. 11, 2014</b>	SPP filed revised Bylaws, membership agreement and OATT with FERC.
<b>Nov. 3, 2014</b>	UGP publishes <i>Federal Register</i> notice beginning public process for proposed transmission and ancillary rates.
<b>Nov. 10, 2014</b>	FERC substantively approved changes to the Sept. 11, 2014, SPP governing documents filing and set parts of it aside for hearing and settlement proceedings.
<b>Dec. 2, 2014</b>	FERC Settlement Conference began
<b>June 1, 2015</b>	Western and the Integrated System members transferred to SPP reliability coordinator.
<b>May-July 2015</b>	SPP market trials
<b>July 23, 2015</b>	UGP transmission and ancillary service rates filed with FERC.
<b>July 27, 2015</b>	Notice of UGP Final Transmission and Ancillary Rates published in <i>Federal Register</i> .
<b>July 31, 2015</b>	SPP tariff filing to incorporate UGP transmission and ancillary service rates
<b>July 31, 2015</b>	SPP tariff filing to incorporate Westside contract
<b>Oct. 1, 2015</b>	IS transferred functional control to UGP.



# CROSSING BORDERS

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Western employees respond to far-away disaster by Lisa Meiman

**O**n Aug. 2, Typhoon Soudelor made landfall as a Category 2 typhoon on the island of Saipan, part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. By the time the storm had moved on, all of Saipan's 48,220 citizens were without power.

[A commonwealth is a self-governing territory with a delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives. The U.S. has two: Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, which consists of 15 islands, Saipan being the most populous.]

Two hours later, Sierra Nevada Power System Dispatcher **Pete Miller** flew in on a U.S. Navy Seahawk helicopter with other members of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help get the island back on its feet.

"I have come to the conclusion that no matter what any one of us do, the [people of] Saipan will be without an energized 13.8-[kilovolt] system capable of carrying load for at least a month," Miller wrote in his initial report to FEMA and Department of Energy officials.

Miller estimated at least 25 percent of Saipan's distribution system was on the ground, damaged or destroyed. At least 950 poles and 114 pole top transformers needed to be replaced. Saipan had 77 wood poles and no transformers in stock. The local Commonwealth Utility Corporation possessed only two bucket trucks.

### And that's where FEMA comes in

"It is hard to get materials to an island. It's not like you can call up the neighboring state or utility and ask for help like here in the U.S.," said Miller. "That's where FEMA and the American military can provide the most support. Trucks and poles were shipped in on an aircraft carrier."

Miller is one of a few Western employees trained to serve as a FEMA liaison in Emergency Support Function 12—Energy to advise the agency on power restoration after natural or manmade disasters. Since FEMA is required to deploy to a disaster at a moment's notice, they have a ready reserve team on standby that rotates every month called the incident management assistance team, or IMAT. July happened to be Miller's month.

Since typhoons and their Atlantic siblings, hurricanes, provide advance warning, July's incident management assistance team deployed to Guam in anticipation of the storm.



**On Aug. 2, Typhoon Soudelor made landfall on the island of Saipan as a Category 2 typhoon, flattening the jungle and damaging or destroying about 60 percent of the island's 13.8-kilovolt distribution system. All of the island's more than 48,220 citizens were without power. (Photo provided by Pete Miller)**

"We provide clarity for FEMA employees who do not understand energy, electricity or power grids," said Miller. "The local utilities don't need us to tell them what to do. Our job is to verify what the utility is telling FEMA and make sure they understand what the utility is requesting. Sometimes, a utility may look to improve their system, but FEMA's mission is to return it to pre-disaster status."

In Saipan's case, that was identifying and transporting the necessary materials and equipment to the island and collaborating on a plan with the local utility and neighboring Guam Power Authority to restore power as soon as possible.

### Takes many islands

"The first priority was to re-establish power to the water wells," said Miller. "You can last without power forever, but you need water in a couple days." U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representatives, part of ESF 3, were on scene, and got the water wells up and running in a couple of days.

Miller found himself as something of a celebrity in his time there as he surveyed damaged energy infrastructure and met with local officials. "It was interesting to realize I was well known as a member of DOE energy restoration team in support of FEMA throughout Saipan. I would hear my name on the radio and photos of me showed up on Facebook. They were really counting on me

to help them along the way," he said. "When people saw us arrive, they would come out of their houses and help us clear the roads."

Even though supplies were limited, the CUC line crews immediately began repairs on the most critical distribution paths as soon as the storm cleared, replacing 25 distribution poles in four days with two trucks. "It doesn't matter where you go; the linemen have the same mentality and get-it-done attitude. They are tough guys. It doesn't matter what the challenge is. They worked 14-hour days since the storm," said Miller.

The Guam Power Authority was also on scene, through mutual assistance agreement's providing what equipment and personnel they had.

By the time Miller left nine days later, the island's hospital also regained power, the second most critical infrastructure, and there was a plan in place to complete other repairs. UGP Power Operations Specialist **Dave Waag** took over ESF 12 responsibilities for Miller Aug. 17 until the ESF 12 mission was accomplished three days later.

"I'm really impressed with the leadership on Saipan. The people there are good, honest and respectful and have a lot of pride. I appreciated the focus, attention and drive the local utilities and leadership of Saipan had," said Miller. □

*Note: Meiman was a public affairs specialist. She no longer works at Western.*

# River forges relationships

by Kara Lamb

**J**ust sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of an exciting trip, that started from Hoover Dam aboard a tiny...pontoon.

The 'exciting trip' was actually part of Southern California Public Power Authority's semi-annual Congressional staffer tour, which took place Sept. 2-3. And the 'tiny' pontoon was really a full-scale touring boat, capable of carrying roughly 50 people down the Colorado River. Together, the two created a relationship-building opportunity for Western.

"For me, it was a chance to hear from our industry partners about the complex history the river has played in developing the West," said Acting Chief of Staff and Desert Southwest Customer Liaison **Chris Lyles**, who joined the pontoon ride down a section of the Lower Colorado River.

A portion of the two-day, three-state tour included the ride from Hoover Dam downstream toward Davis Dam. However, the bulk of the tour consisted of visits to SCPPA customer facilities, insights into the competing demands of end-users and presentations by energy providers, including a luncheon



**Southern California Public Power Authority holds its semi-annual Congressional staffer tour, taking a group of staffers and members on a ride down a section of the Lower Colorado River, Sept. 3. (Photo by Chris Lyles)**

address by Senior Vice President and Desert Southwest Regional Manager **Ron Moulton** during the second day of the tour.

Yet, it was the pontoon trip that really brought the group together. From the water, it was easy to view the sheer size of hydropower production at Hoover and see, in person, the direct connection to Western's system.

"Every chance I got, I pointed out our infrastructure and explained how it interfaced with hydropower generation facilities," said Lyles, who participated in the trip and tour from Palm Springs and the Imperial Valley in California to Las Vegas and Hoover Dam in Nevada before the pontoon ride downstream to Willow Beach in Arizona. "It is important that the staffers on the tour relay back to Congress who Western is, what we do and why. But it was also good to be out with the customers, see their facilities, hear their concerns and talk about all of our

collaborative efforts."

"Downtime with Congressional staffers during the August recess is a unique opportunity," explained Acting Senior Vice President and Assistant Administrator for Washington Liaison **Erin Green**, who fielded queries from Congressional staff prior to the tour and helped outline Western's roll as a presenter. "It enables us to have uninterrupted face-to-face time with people who directly support decision makers. There is a lot of value in that."

"I had to smile to myself," Lyles said remembering his day on the river trip. "Some of these folks on the pontoon came out from DC and sort of underestimated the river. We hit some good sized rapids and I saw more than one nice bag or phone take on more water than it should. But that was the point: we had fun and the experience built perspective that might not have existed before." □

*Note: Lamb is a public affairs specialist.*

## brief transmissions

### New Fall Protection video released

**E**arly in October, Western launched the second installment of its video training series, which focuses on maintaining fall protection for work on and around steel towers, including methods to use and equipment for moving around the towers.

Administrator and CEO **Mark Gabriel** explained the significance of the training video in a Westernwide email: "Fall Protection is a critical component of Western's day-to-day mission to keep electricity flowing across our 17,000+ miles of transmission lines. It highlights our continued drive toward business, technology and organizational excellence by leveraging the knowledge and experience of our crews and the engagement of our internal and external partners. The resulting training videos provide an important service to the industry with content that is key to maintaining a safe work environment, as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"As is the case with the entire utility industry, Western's number one concern is the safety of all employees. Taking a leadership role in Fall Protection is one way we can ensure the health and welfare of our hard-working men and women. Our Fall Protection Committee continues to grow its program to ensure our linemen make it home safely at the end of the day."



You can watch the video on Western's YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/user/WesternAreaPower1](http://www.youtube.com/user/WesternAreaPower1) and click on the "Fall Protection on Steel Structures" link.

