

Lessons in
resilience

Check your
badge!

2020 hydrology
conditions

Keep a healthy
heart

C • CLOSED • Circuit

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

FEBRUARY 2021



**Mission
focused**



8



14

CLOSED Circuit

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On the cover

*In summer 2020, WAPA began performing mechanical vegetation management along transmission lines on National Forest land in Colorado, Nebraska and Utah for the first time in over a decade. (Photo by **Daniel Borunda**)*



WAPA debuts updated mission, vision statements

In 2018, WAPA debuted its refreshed set of core values. The new core values were intended to serve as a guide in making decisions and as a standard for the organization's behaviors and actions. Following the success of this initiative, the process of updating the organization's mission and vision statements had begun.

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Mission: Safely provide reliable, cost-based hydropower and transmission to our customers and the communities we serve.

Vision: Empowering communities, securing a resilient energy future.



The process was tailored to ensuring that the updated statements would accurately and concisely define WAPA's role presently and into the future.

"We began the core value refresh process through an integrated team effort in 2017," said Chief Public Affairs Officer **Teresa Waugh**. "At the time, the organization was ready to be newly inspired."

The core value refresh was designed to be inclusive, with employees throughout the organization providing their insight, suggestions and feedback. It was ultimately a big success for the organization.

"WAPA's core values are now deeply embedded into our organization and our work," said Waugh.

Taking a constructive look at WAPA's mission and vision statements was a natural next step, and the timing worked out well.

"Over the past couple of years, the industry and our world have been experiencing rapid change and we recognized a need to revisit our strategic plan prior to our Strategic Roadmap expiring in 2024," explained Management and Program Analyst **Stacey Decker**, who led the refresh with Waugh. "Key to our strategic plan is a clear and compelling mission and vision statement."

The refreshed statements are the result of many meetings, focus groups and rewrites. At each step in the process, the mission and vision statements were refined and evaluated until they best reflected the organization and its goals.

"It is important that our mission and vision speaks to both our workforce and our customers as they focus our efforts and guide our decisions," said Decker. "To

reach a highly compelling mission and vision, we led a highly inclusive process which included a WAPA-wide survey, employee and council focus groups and external customer and industry partner interviews. All the feedback gathered informed the senior leadership discussions and ultimately our new mission and vision."

"Our goal was to have a mission statement that was inclusive of our customers and a vision statement that was forward looking," added Waugh. "I believe we achieved that goal."

With its refreshed mission and vision statements, WAPA is reaffirming its path ahead, clarifying its purpose and engaging with the rapid industry changes that will power tomorrow's world.

"We developed our new mission and vision statements while reflecting on our commitment to our core values and dedication to customers and the communities we serve," said Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel**. "Beginning this year with a renewed sense of purpose helps us refocus our efforts, cuts through the noise and clarifies who we are as an organization."

At the heart of WAPA's new mission statement is safety, a cornerstone of the electric industry. By paying constant attention to safety, WAPA and its customers succeed in fulfilling their respective missions.

In terms of the organization's new vision statement, resilience and empowerment are the keys.

Resilience is the ability to prevent, withstand and recover from disruptive threats and events. In 2020 alone, WAPA

has demonstrated its resilience amid a series of disruptions including a global pandemic, a record-setting wildfire season and a heatwave-induced energy emergency. WAPA expects challenges such as these to continue to shape future decisions and innovations.

Empowering communities with carbon-free energy means driving economic development, providing a sense of security and stability and protecting the environment.

"The electricity we provide to customers, who, in turn, deliver it to more than 40 million Americans, empowers the communities that power the nation," Gabriel said. "Keeping the lights on and the power flowing to homes, businesses and institutions allows Americans to focus on more important things, such as their families and improving their prosperity."

The renewed mission and vision statements serve as an affirmation of WAPA's identity and reflect how its business must continue to adapt with a changing world.

The energy industry is fundamentally changing, from diversified generation portfolios to expanded demands on the power grid.

As WAPA adapts and evolves in this energy frontier, it will be critical for the organization to embody strength, resilience, unity and leadership while also being mindful of its enduring mission, reliability, regional differences and collaborative culture with customers. □

Note: Eric Barendsen contributed to this story.



Statement on Race and Social Justice released

In late 2020, during the Listen-In portion of the Senior Team Meeting, Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel** took the opportunity to debut WAPA's Senior Statement on Race and Social Justice.

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Western Area Power Administration's

Senior Leadership Team commits to tackling critical issues surrounding racial and social justice. In step with our core value to learn more and do better, we commit to the following direct and immediate actions in our workplaces and the communities we serve:

- We speak up against racism and intolerance of any kind; silence is not acceptable.
- We broaden the conversation on racial and social justice.
- We address policies, systems and practices that negatively impact progress on diversity and inclusion.
- We strive to eliminate any barriers in hiring, retention and opportunities for advancement.
- We educate every employee about the importance of recognizing unconscious bias and demonstrating courage to interrupt that bias.
- We make fundamental long-term changes to address these challenges.

Mark A. Gabriel
Administrator and CEO

Dionne Thompson
Senior Vice President and Assistant Administrator for Corporate Liaison

Rodney Bailey
Power Marketing Advisor

Kevin Howard
Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer

Tracey LeBeau
Senior Vice President and Desert Southwest Regional Manager

Melissa Ardis
Chief of Staff

Jody Samplish
Acting Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Dawn Roth Lindell
Senior Vice President and Rocky Mountain Regional Manager

Stacy Becker
Acting Chief Strategy Officer

Michael Montoya
Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer

Sonja Anderson
Senior Vice President and Sierra Nevada Regional Manager

Teresa Wough
Chief Public Affairs Officer

Jennifer Rodgers
Acting Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer

Lloyd Linke
Acting Senior Vice President and Upper Great Plains Regional Manager

Carl Durrett
Power Marketing Administration Human Resources Shared Service Center Director

John Bremer
Senior Vice President and General Counsel

Steven Johnson
Senior Vice President and Colorado River Storage Project Management Center Manager

Nikki King
Senior Human Resources Business Partner

Listen-In is a program that offers WAPA employees the opportunity to “listen in” to the first 60 minutes of senior team meetings. It also provides senior managers an opportunity to bring issues and developments to the attention of employees tuning in throughout WAPA’s 15-state footprint. In this case, that opportunity was used to discuss the Senior Statement on Race and Social Justice.

The Senior Statement on Race and Social Justice is a pledge to employees that the Senior Leadership Team is committed to “tackling critical issues surrounding racial and social justice.”

The statement is intended to formalize the organization’s commitment to ensuring that all employees receive the same respect, treatment and opportunity.

“In my Juneteenth email to WAPA employees, I committed to having difficult conversations and taking action to promote racial equality and advance social justice in WAPA,” Gabriel explained. “This is especially important as we continue to see disturbing events across our nation. As part of my commitment, the Senior Leadership Team and I have signed a statement on racial and social justice, declaring that all people are welcome at WAPA and that we will tackle critical issues surrounding racial equity and social justice.”

Power Marketing Advisor **Rodney Bailey** and Senior Vice President and Desert Southwest Regional Manager **Tracey LeBeau**, who serve as senior sponsors for the Inclusion and Diversity Committee, helped develop the statement.

“On their first day, every federal employee takes the oath of office to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States, including those that enshrine civil rights and the dignity of all people,” said Gabriel. “Proactively combatting racial and social inequity is all of our responsibility as federal employees and Americans.”

When introducing the statement, which has been signed by each member of the senior team, Gabriel thanked the members of the IDC for their work on these important issues and promised employees the team would establish and review metrics to ensure they are succeeding in their promise.

Members of the senior team chimed in to voice their personal commitment.

“We need to find ways to deal with tough issues like this and improve our organization even more,” said Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **Kevin Howard**. “We will make it an even stronger organization moving forward.”

“What I really like about this statement is that it is very action oriented,” LeBeau said. “People are looking forward to seeing some action. Not just out of us, but out of each other.”

“In my heart I believe that most people are really good and may offend simply because of a lack of understanding,” said Bailey. “I hope as an organization that we can go into the discussions with that in mind.”

“I think this topic of social justice can be a topic that creates a lot of feelings, but I feel as a senior team we definitely have to attack this problem,” said Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer **Mike Montoya**. “I think all of us have unconscious bias, and we can learn a lot just by being open minded.”

“Just being safe is not enough,” said Senior Vice President and Sierra Nevada Regional Manager **Sonja Anderson**. “I

“ **The Senior Statement on Race and Social Justice is a pledge to employees that the Senior Leadership Team is committed to ‘tackling critical issues surrounding racial and social justice.’** ”

appreciate that the seniors have gone forward with this effort and this discussion. I’m looking forward to making it a better place at WAPA for all of us.”

“We want to make sure that everybody feels comfortable working here,” said Acting Senior Vice President and Upper Great Plains Regional Manager **Lloyd Linke**. “That is something we really want to be able to do. There is work to be done, and I support that.”

Senior Vice President and General Counsel **John Bremer** also weighed in with support from a legal perspective, and **Michael Peterson**, attending the Listen-In in advance of assuming the role of senior vice president and chief financial officer in August, spoke up as well.

“One of the best things you can do for individuals is providing the same opportunity to all individuals across society,” Peterson said.

“There is much work to be done on increasing racial equity and social justice at WAPA and, by extension, our communities and our nation,” concluded Gabriel. “I am confident that the outstanding people of WAPA will rise to the challenge, as you always do, and exceed our expectations to create a bright, inclusive, diverse and safe WAPA for all.” □



WAPA, union leaders issue COVID-19 pledges

WAPA and union leaders recently pledged to recommit to WAPA's COVID-19 safety practices.

In two joint statements released in early December 2020, WAPA's Western Maintenance Managers Council and both the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the American Federation of Government Employees reinforced the importance of following COVID-19 guidelines as they

continue to evolve, and encouraged employees to take personal responsibility to reduce the risk of exposure.

The statements are presented here, in their entirety, in reinforcement of the organization's commitment to employee safety and well-being during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. □

Subject: Joint Statement of Safety Commitment Dealing with COVID-19

To: All Craft Employees and Maintenance Supervisors

COVID-19 cases are surging across a vast part of WAPA's territory with community spread now rapidly increasing in rural areas across the WAPA footprint. With the latest data showing WAPA's footprint overlapping with the highest rates of infection per capita, both Labor and Management issue this joint statement to amplify our spirit of obligation to our safety responsibilities while dealing with this pandemic. International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Government Coordinating Council No. 1 and WAPA Maintenance Managers Council leadership are committed to protecting the health and well-being of ourselves, our fellow employees and our families. Over the past eight months, WAPA's craft employees have taken on challenges well beyond the scope of normal work practices while responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Efforts displayed in response to protecting yourself and others are deeply appreciated.

IBEW Union and Management leadership continue to encourage our craft workers to remain vigilant by staying current with, and following, the COVID-19 guidelines as they continue to evolve, knowing that

this is uncharted territory. This pandemic has been one of the biggest tests of our flexibility, ingenuity and resourcefulness, and we have been extremely successful in accomplishing our mission. As essential workers, we understand the critical nature of our job as it leads to the reliability of our nation's power grid and the safety and security of the citizens of our nation. This is a unique and challenging opportunity to lead by example, serving as role models for our fellow workers, citizens and families, while expanding the safety culture that we practice in our workplaces, homes and communities.

WAPA cannot eliminate the COVID-19 hazard; however we can manage the risk of exposure to our employees. This strategy is strengthened by everyone playing a part in the process and taking personal responsibility. As we head into the fall and winter seasons with predicted infection rates continuing to trend unfavorably, it is more important now than ever to not let our guards down. We can each contribute individually to the health of our nation by following WAPA guidelines such as wearing masks, washing our hands and socially distancing. WAPA leadership understands your essential role in maintaining the reliability of our nation's critical infrastructure and commends you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to safety as we navigate through these challenging and unprecedented times.

Kevin Howard

- Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
- WMMC Senior Sponsor

Paul Eiler

- IBEW GCC #1 Chairman

Darren Buck

- Vice President of Transmission System Asset Management for Rocky Mountain

Austin Pfeifer

- IBEW 1759 Representative

Bradford Smith

- IBEW 2159 Representative

Bruce Harrington

- Vice President of Transmission System Asset Management for Upper Great Plains

Tom Holmstrom

- IBEW 1959 Representative

Jack Murray

- Vice President of Transmission System Asset Management for Desert Southwest

Delbert Hawk

- IBEW 640 Representative

Will Schnyer

- Director, Transmission and Construction for Sierra Nevada

James Hill

- IBEW 1245 Representative



Subject: Joint Statement of Safety Commitment Dealing with COVID-19

To: All Operations Employees and Supervisors

COVID-19 cases are surging across a vast part of WAPA's territory with community spread now rapidly increasing in rural areas across the WAPA footprint. With the latest data showing WAPA's footprint overlapping with the highest rates of infection per capita, both Labor and Management issue this joint statement to amplify our spirit of obligation to our safety responsibilities while dealing with this pandemic. American Federation of Government Employees Locals 3824 and 3807 and Operations leadership are committed to protecting the health and well-being of ourselves, our fellow employees, and our families. Over the last eight months, WAPA's dispatch, real-time marketing, and field employees have taken on challenges well beyond the scope of normal work practices to continue reliable grid operation and maintenance activities while responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Efforts displayed in response to protecting yourself and others are deeply appreciated.

AFGE Union and Management leadership continue to encourage our operations workers to remain vigilant by staying current with, and following, the COVID-19 guidelines as they continue to evolve, knowing that

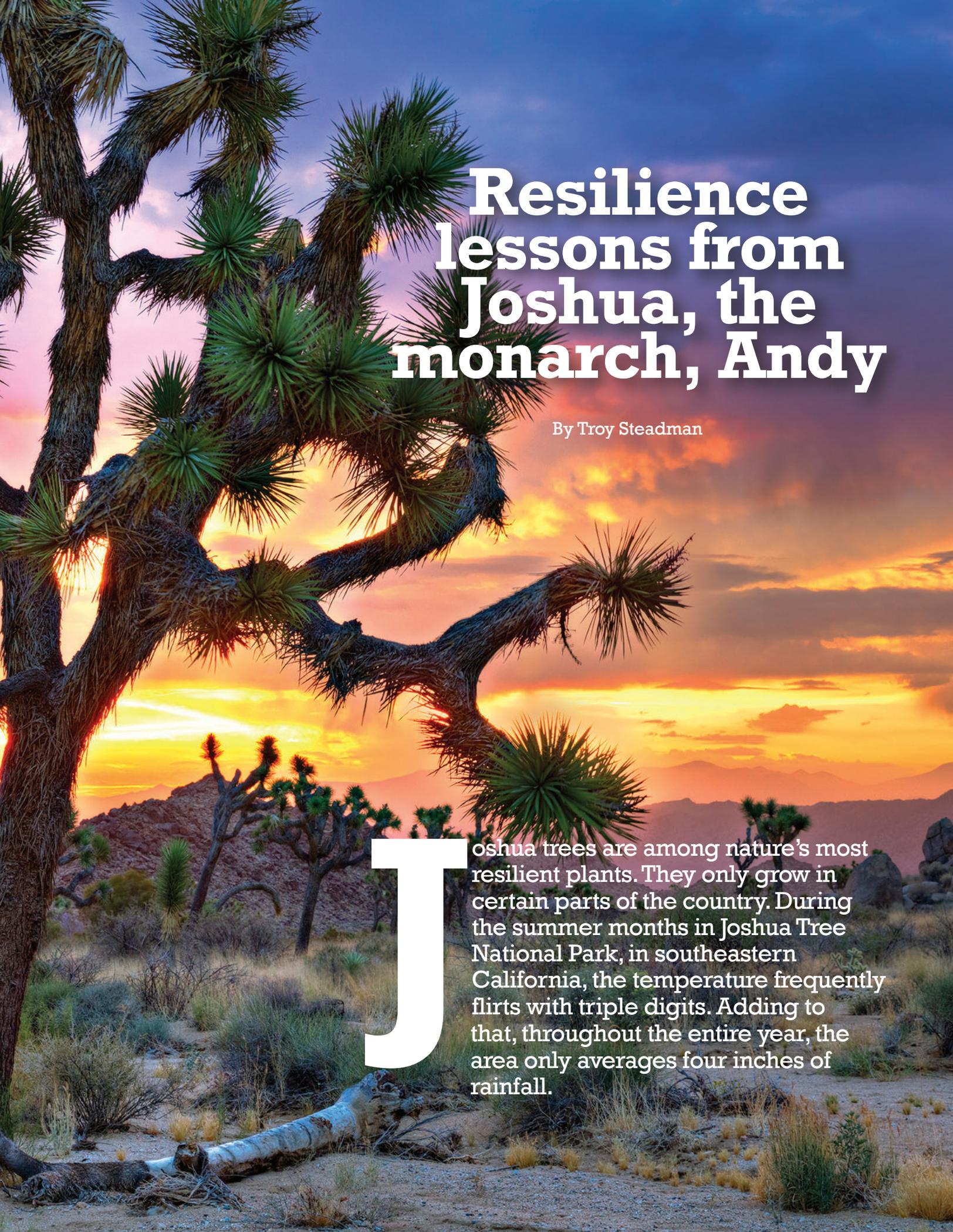
this is uncharted territory. This pandemic has been one of the biggest tests of our flexibility, ingenuity, and resourcefulness, and we have been extremely successful in accomplishing our Mission. As essential workers, we understand the critical nature of our job as it leads to the reliability of our nation's power grid and the safety and security of the citizens of our nation. This is a unique and challenging opportunity to lead by example, serving as role models for our fellow workers, citizens, and families, while expanding the safety culture that we practice in our workplaces, homes, and communities.

WAPA cannot eliminate the COVID-19 hazard; however we can manage the risk of exposure to our employees. This strategy is strengthened by everyone playing a part in the process and taking personal responsibility. As we head into the fall and winter seasons with predicted infection rates continuing to trend unfavorably, it is more important now than ever to not let our guards down. We can each contribute individually to the health of our nation by following WAPA guidelines such as wearing masks, washing our hands, and socially distancing. WAPA leadership understands your essential role in maintaining the reliability of our nation's critical infrastructure and commends you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to safety as we navigate through these challenging and unprecedented times.

Jack Murray
- Acting Senior Vice President
and Rocky Mountain
Regional Manager
- PSOC Senior Sponsor
Ronnie Habacon
- AFGE Local 3824 President

Jonathan Aust
- Vice President of Operations
for Rocky Mountain
Scott Byer
- AFGE Local 3807 President

Lloyd Linke
- Vice President of Operations
for Upper Great Plains
Bryan Griess
- Vice President of Operations
for Sierra Nevada



Resilience lessons from Joshua, the monarch, Andy

By Troy Steadman

Joshua trees are among nature's most resilient plants. They only grow in certain parts of the country. During the summer months in Joshua Tree National Park, in southeastern California, the temperature frequently flirts with triple digits. Adding to that, throughout the entire year, the area only averages four inches of rainfall.



Despite these harsh conditions, Joshua trees can live for more than 150 years and grow to 40 feet tall. How is it that these plants will not only survive but will thrive in such an unforgiving environment?

The answers lie in their waxy leaves, which prevent wilting and water loss; in a complex root system, which can both go very deep and grow horizontally to catch any rain that may fall; and in a trunk that functions as a holding tank for water.

In other words, the Joshua tree has adapted to its environment.

One of North America's most beautiful insects is the monarch butterfly. It begins life as a caterpillar, then creates a chrysalis to metamorphosize into the butterfly. The struggle that takes place next is nature's way of strengthening the insect for the path that lies ahead; it can take up to five days to push, pull and squeeze its way out of its transformative confinement.

Without that struggle, the monarch butterfly is surely doomed. With it, it's literally capable of crossing countries and thousands of miles as part of a critical species migration.

For the monarch butterfly, the struggle is the key to survival.

In July 2019, singer-songwriter Andy Grammer released "Wish You Pain," a song in which he throws his usual free-flowing, positive lyrics to the wind. It is a script-flipping, eyebrow-raising song, with more than a few punchy one-liners.

"I hope your doubts come like monsters and terrorize your dreams," he sings. "I hope you feel the lonely hopelessness," he continues. Then he adds, "I hope you question whether you ever had a chance at all."

Eventually he gets to the why: "Your heart, it grows every time it breaks. I've been here before and I just wanna see you grow."

Grammer's message of hoping that you're torn down so that you can properly grow into a sturdier you, with a bigger, stronger and more powerful soul, resonates now more than ever. (Perhaps he knew what 2020 had in store for us!)

What do these three examples have in common? The lesson of resilience.

The past year or so has been challenging in many ways. One might say that the environment has been harsh, with warring winds of political uncertainty, racial tensions, national elections, violent riots, record-breaking numbers of hurricanes, destructive fires, drought and a deadly pandemic tossing us all about like rudderless ships in a turbulent ocean.

It would be easy to succumb to the intensity as the moments and minutes become months. It would be easy to throw one's hands up and exclaim, "I've had enough!" It would be easy to opt for negativity, hopelessness and escape via unhealthy life choices. It would be easy to bend and then then break under the weight of the circumstance.

Instead, take courage. Be resilient. Do the right thing, every day at each turn.

Keep your eyes on the horizon. Stumble if you must, but stumble forward. Dig deep and find the grit within yourself that has defined the human era. Pick yourself up and put one foot in front of the other. Lead with positivity and hope for a better tomorrow. If you need help, reach out; we weren't meant to go this alone.

Remember these lessons.

Like the Joshua Tree, this harsh environment can be adapted to, and you will come out better for adapting. Like the monarch, the struggling you are going through will make you stronger. Like the inevitable pain wished upon all of us by Grammer, hardship will enable you to grow in ways you thought impossible, triumphantly resulting in a more resilient you. □

Note: Steadman is the Leadership Development Program manager. Brittanie Paquette contributed to this story.

For more information, visit **myWAPA, Programs, Leadership Development.**

Click on Leadership Competency Model Guide or read "10 Habits of Highly Resilient People" at Line by Line- A Non Book Club Book Club.

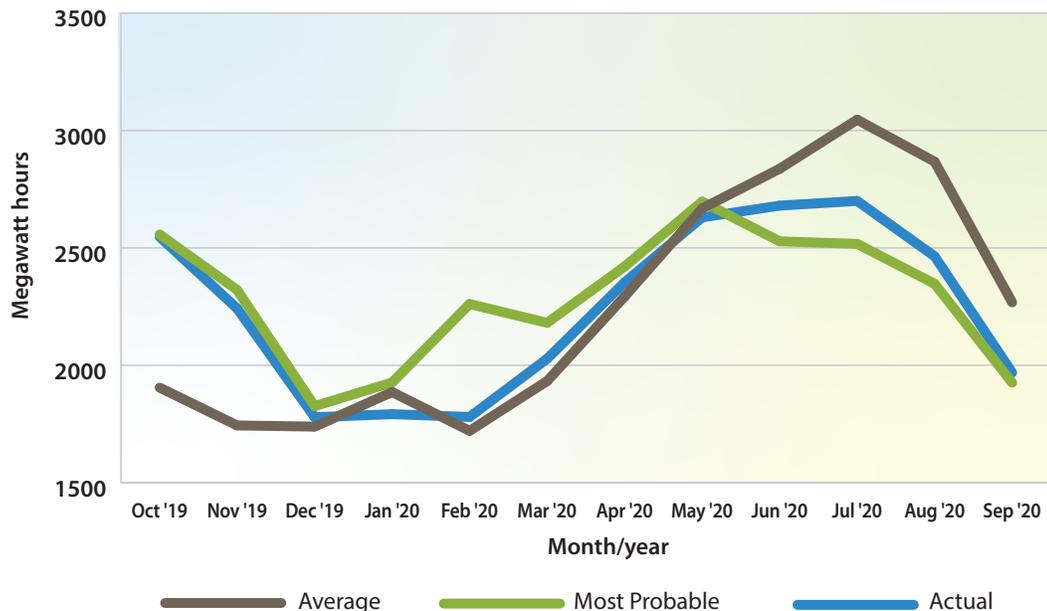


Summarizing 2020 hydrology conditions

Editor's note: The following report summarizes data from WAPA's Hydropower Conditions webpage for straight power purchase costs, which are based solely upon hydrology, actual hydropower generation and related generation shortages. Readers may review all data by visiting wapa.gov, Power Marketing, Hydropower Conditions

One of the biggest challenges for hydropower is water variability due to intermittent drought and flooding. By definition, hydropower needs water to generate electricity. Without it, WAPA must buy power on the open market from other sources to meet contractual obligations to its customers. This is referred to as purchased power.

Water Year 2020
Hydropower Generation
Average vs. Most Probable vs. Actual



Net generation

26,985

gigawatt-hours

100.3%

of average

In an ideal year, snowpack around the West is average or above average, yielding snowmelt runoff to recharge reservoirs behind the dams and powerplants that provide the power WAPA markets. Federal dam owners such as the Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers and the International Boundary and Water Commission move water to federal hydroelectric powerplants.

WAPA markets the subsequent power generated to around 700 preference customers. Its customers, in turn, sell that power to more than 40 million Americans.

Water around WAPA in 2020

WAPA's actual generation was 100.3% of average in water year 2020, for a total generation of 26,985 gigawatt-hours. For the same period, total purchased power was 2,124 GWh with actual purchase power expenses of \$65,959,195 equating to \$31.06 per megawatt-hour.

The Colorado River Storage Project Management Center projected most probable purchase power expenses for water year 2020 to be \$14,195,307. Actual purchase power expenses were \$16,259,069. The cost per MWh was \$28.63.

Lake Powell ended the water year with an elevation of 3,596 feet, which is about 104 feet below the maximum reservoir level and 106 feet above the minimum generation level. The storage volume for Lake Powell was 11.4 million acre-feet at the end of September, or about 46% of capacity. Drought conditions persist in the Upper Colorado River Basin with below-average annual inflow forecasted for Lake Powell again in water year 2021. Currently 9.0 MAF is the forecasted annual release

for WY 2021, but it could be reduced as low as 8.23 MAF.

Desert Southwest's hydrology is mostly dependent on the Colorado River Basin snowpack and precipitation above Lake Powell. Precipitation was 36% of average at the end of September. The region's most probable projected purchase power expenses were \$21,308,920. Actual purchase power expenses were higher at \$22,548,678, with a cost per MWh of \$54.00. Lake Mead ended the water year with an elevation of 1,083 feet, about 136 feet below the full storage level and 133 feet above the minimum generation level. Lake Mead's elevation peaked at 1,099 feet in March.

In Rocky Mountain, at the end of September, reservoir inflows were 66% of average and storage was 107% of average. The projected purchase power expenses were \$10,116,670, but actual purchase power expenses were higher at \$14,480,376. The cost per MWh was \$32.37.

Sierra Nevada ended the water year with 97% of the 15-year average reservoir storage for Trinity, 91% for Shasta, 92% for Folsom and 112% percent for New Melones. Accumulated inflow for the same date was 39% of the 15-year average for Trinity, 63% for Shasta, 57% for Folsom and 60% for New Melones. The region began water year 2020 with a most probable projection of purchase power of \$3,130,909 but ended with an actual expense of \$7,662,135. The cost per MWh was \$15.39.

Much of the Upper Great Plains service area is experiencing moderate drought conditions and small areas in South Dakota and Montana experiencing extreme

drought. The Missouri River basin ended the water year with runoff of 24,400 MAF, or 105% of average. System storage is 57.8 MAF. About 89% of the designated flood control storage is available to store runoff from mountain snowmelt and spring and summer rainfall events. The region's most probable projection for purchase power was \$8,715,786. Actual purchase power expenses were significantly lower at \$5,008,937. The cost per MWh was \$25.97.

Anticipating water year 2021

The Seasonal Drought Outlook provided by the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center in November 2020 predicted persistent drought throughout most of the western United States. Significant drought development is also predicted in states such as Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and areas of Southern California.

The predictions also show drought conditions improving in the northwest and northeast. Drought development is anticipated in the southeast.

The NWS emphasized that its predictions are made in accordance with large-scale trends, which are based on "subjectively derived probabilities guided by short-and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts." They emphasize caution and regular checking of updated drought predictions. □

For more information...

Visit the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center at cpc.ncep.noaa.gov





**Keeping
badges up
to date is
critical**



As an employee of WAPA during the COVID-19 pandemic, your badge is key to working remotely. What's more, access to badging stations, both internal and external to WAPA, can be impacted due to temporary closures, backlogs and limited availability.

If you receive a notification to update your badge, be sure to take action immediately. Don't wait until the last minute.

Frequently asked questions about badging at WAPA are reproduced here for your convenience. Be sure to read the following information carefully.

Q: Is my badge required to work remotely, through the virtual private network, or VPN?

A: Yes. In order to have full computer access you must have an operational badge.

A badge is required to connect to WAPA's VPN. Employees require a badge in order to have full access to their work files and systems.

If an employee does not have an operational badge, they will not be able to fully perform their duties remotely.

Q: When does my badge expire?

A: Each badge actually has two expirations.

Badges have an embedded certificate that expires three years from the date it was issued. Well in advance of the expiration date, a series of auto-

matic emails from USAccess will be sent to the employee's wapa.gov email address notifying them when to update their badge certificate. Schedule your appointment as soon as possible.

Each badge expires five years from the date it was issued. This expiration date appears on the front of the badge. As the expiration date nears, the employee will be notified via their wapa.gov email address with step-by-step instructions to make an appointment at a nearby badging station for badge renewal. Again, schedule your appointment as soon as possible.

Periodically examine your badge and make a note of its expiration date instead of solely relying on automatic reminders. Remember, two years prior to the expiration of your physical badge, you must update your badge certificate.

Failure to address these expiration periods will cause the badge to terminate automatically, rendering it inoperable. It may take several weeks to get a replacement badge.

Pay attention to your junk email folder. Occasionally, USAccess email notifications are sent there.

If you are unsure about a notification you received, contact **personnel.security@wapa.gov**

Q: Where does the automatic email come from?

A: It is generated by USAccess which is a General Services Administration system. This is not a spam email. The email is legitimate and requires action. Here is an example of how it appears:

From: HSPD12Admin@usaccess.gsa.gov <HSPD12Admin@usaccess.gsa.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 1:18 AM

To: NAME

Subject: [External] USAccess - Credential Ready For Certificate Update

Q: How do I report a lost, stolen or defective badge?

A: Report lost, stolen or defective badges immediately. Contact

personnel.security@wapa.gov for assistance. □

Virtual conferencing can bring international risk





The potential for digital exploitation of the COVID environment should be expected because the information theft objectives of foreign governments have not changed.



Editor's note: During the pandemic, virtual conferences have become an essential part of how WAPA continues to accomplish its mission without interruption. However, it can bring with it its own risks. In November 2020, the Office of Security and Emergency Management passed along this information from the Department of Energy Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence. Closed Circuit presents that material here without alteration.

Foreign governments and their intelligence services maintain significant interest in DOE personnel, technology and research even during a global pandemic.

Their need for information and the requirements to collect that information simply adjust as working conditions shift. Current restrictions and limitations on international travel have combined with digital networks to foster increasing combinations of work-from-home offices with foreign-sponsored virtual meetings and events.

DOE employees and contractors who conduct official travel abroad to sensitive countries are expected to discuss with their local counterintelligence office their interactions with foreign nationals with whom they interact. This also extends to participants in foreign-sponsored virtual conferences and events.

When any technology sees its popularity increase exponentially, the number of potential bad actors taking advantage of new users or those unfamiliar with the tools grows. The potential for digital exploitation of the COVID environment should be expected because the information theft objectives of foreign governments have not changed.

Concerns arise first from the technology itself. Foreign virtual conferences that request the download of specific software onto your device in order to participate may contain trojans or malware that can compromise your device to gather data without your knowledge, such as searching stored files, stealing network credentials, or installing key-stroke loggers to identify log-in information for your virtual private network connections, messaging apps and cloud-based collaboration tools. The software may also provide the means for other individuals to surreptitiously eavesdrop via remote microphone activation or access discussions within any built-in chat functions or save messages for later use.

Second, virtual relationships can be as powerful as personal interaction, and they can be exploited in the same way. Intelligence officers trained to spot, assess and vet potential sources of information can perform the same basic tasks virtually as they can in person, especially if within a video conference where participants feel

at ease and “face-to-face.” Intelligence officers also still leverage their citizens to collect information on their behalf.

Online employment interviews mean that virtual recruitment is a familiar circumstance. Being asked for additional personal information, prior publications, or to review a material is common. These techniques can create a sense of bonding and reciprocity that can then be used by an intelligence officer to request additional sensitive or proprietary data without raising undue suspicion. Increasing reliance on social media, messaging apps, cloud storage for data and other virtual forums make responding to such requests appear unthreatening. □



Helpful reminders

- Virtual conferences can pose risks like international travel.
- Foreign government intelligence collection has not stopped due to COVID-19.
- Virtual relationships can be as powerful as interpersonal ones.
- Virtual foreign national contacts are reportable information.
- Foreign intelligence services exploit all forms of contact.
- Virtual employment interviews create perceptions of normality conducive to illicit information gathering.



Take this to heart for your overall health

By Paul Robbins



February is American Heart Month and a good time to remember that small steps toward heart health can make a big difference overall.

Most everyone is at risk of heart disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in every four deaths is related to heart disease, and someone dies from cardiovascular illness every 36 seconds. Men also generally suffer from coronary artery disease 10 years earlier than women.

Key risk factors

According to the Heart Foundation, family history, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, cholesterol, obesity and diabetes are all key risk factors of heart disease. Smoking, drug use and alcohol consumption can also increase the risk.

If you are in one of these high-risk categories, ask your doctor about taking low-dosage aspirin daily as a blood-thinning strategy.

De-stress yourself

Our lives have become more complex during the pandemic and in times of increased political tensions.

A study published in *Biological Psychiatry* explains how stress and other negative emotions such as depression, anxiety and anger affect heart functions and increase heart disease risks.

In turn, positive emotions can counter-balance the negative. *Psychology Today* suggests slowing down, cultivating a sense of humor, meditating, practicing mindfulness and exercising more calmness and self-control.

Eating better

On average, Americans consume 50% more sodium daily than recommended, according to the Food and Drug

Administration. This increases blood pressure and contributes to heart disease.

If you read the nutrition labels on food products, you might be surprised by the levels of sodium and calories that you consume. Cut back on salt and saturated fats found in beef, pork, cheese and butter.

Trans fats found in doughnuts, breakfast sandwiches, biscuits, pies and cakes are also big threats. Balance your diet by eating more polyunsaturated fats found in avocados, fish, nuts and olive oil.

Exercise

You don't have to work out daily to decrease your chances of heart disease.

The CDC suggests starting a simple routine such as walking three times a week for 15 minutes, then increasing to 30 minutes. If you can handle more, try moderate aerobic exercise five days per week for 30 minutes, or more vigorous exercise three days per week for 20 minutes.

Being more active burns calories and contributes to decreased sodium levels. Exercise does not have to be a chore; make it fun by choosing something you enjoy, such as biking, skiing or hiking.

No smoking please

According to the CDC, the chances of heart disease increase significantly if you smoke.

Quitting will reduce your risk within one or two years. Other benefits of quitting include reducing the chances of stroke and vascular disease.

Quitting is easier said than done, but there are helpful aids such as medications, nicotine gum and patches, counseling and behavioral therapy.

Contact the Employee Assistance Program

The EAP can also help. It is free of charge and available to all WAPA employees. The program provides information, classes and counseling on various topics including mental health, stress reduction, nutrition, exercise and smoking cessation.

Don't feel as though you must improve everything all at once when it comes to heart health. Pick one thing to change and gradually add to it. Small steps in the right direction are better than doing nothing at all.

Take this to heart for your overall health. □

Note: Robbins is a technical writer who works under the Cherokee Nation Strategic Programs contract.



Million Hearts Campaign

Help prevent one million heart attacks. For more information, visit millionhearts.hhs.gov

For more information on EAP:

- Call **800.869.0276** 24/7 for toll-free assistance.
- Log in to **espyr.com** sign-in with the password **DOEFEDAP**



Rapid Recaps

Holiday town hall bids farewell to 2020

On Dec. 14, 2020, Public Affairs hosted the final town hall event of the year. Unlike previous town halls, this one was created with the primary intention of nurturing feelings of social connection and fellowship throughout the organization. As a result, it featured a lighter tone and, overall, lighter subject matter.

Leadership Development Program Manager **Troy Steadman** hosted the event. Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel** spoke about resilience, perspective and balance, with a focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. Management Analyst **Jennifer Neville** discussed fitness program



reimbursement benefits. Information Technology Specialist **Ben Nichols** provided pointers to prosper during the pandemic. The town hall concluded with a Q&A session facilitated by Chief of Staff **Melissa Ardis**.

The spirit of the season was also celebrated with an ugly holiday outfit competition. The winner of the People category was Transmission Tariff Coordinator **Dirk Shulund** and his wife, Lisa. The winner of the Pets category was Personnel Security Support Assistant **Olga Coopriider's** dog, Jackson.

Brief Transmissions

Be aware of FY 2021 budget execution and procurement dates

WAPA's Procurement team has established the below cutoff dates for new procurement packages. These cutoff dates ensure that procurement actions can be accomplished this year. Any procurement package received after these dates will be handled on a case-by-case basis and may not be completed this fiscal year.

Remember also that the CIP-013-1 Cyber Security - Supply Chain Risk Management standard, which became effective Oct. 1, 2020, will add anywhere from 30-40 business days to the front-end procurement process and

potentially more time later in the process, during evaluations or determining contractor responsibility for award decision. Plan your purchases accordingly and submit as early as possible.

Additional information can be found in the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Execution and Procurement Dates memo.

If you have a procurement action that needs to be accomplished in fiscal year 2021, contact your local Procurement team as soon as possible.

For questions or concerns related to CIP-013, contact kschulz@wapa.gov. For questions or concerns related to procurement, contact your local Procurement team.



Type of procurement	Amount	Cutoff Date
Source Selection (FAR 15)	Under \$10 million	4/30/21
Sealed Bid and Construction (FAR 14)	Under \$10 million	5/28/21
Interagency Agreements (FAR 17)	Under \$2.5 million	6/1/21
Simplified Acquisition (FAR 13)	\$250,000 to \$7.5 million	6/18/21
	Under \$250,000	7/30/21
Orders/calls against existing contracts (non-WAPA) (FAR 8 and 16)	Up to \$7.5 million	7/30/21
	\$7.5 million to \$10 million	6/1/21
Orders/calls against existing WAPA contracts	Under \$10 million	8/27/21