

Commission on a few solar customer statistics. Mr. Warehime turned the discussion over to Mr. Hendricks. Mr. Hendricks reported eight solar customers were added in 2023 bringing our total interconnected solar arrays up to 68. Of those 68, one is commercial, and one is multi-family. Mr. Hendricks further discussed the capacity and energy produced from solar arrays in Owatonna and discussed the affect different weather patterns have on the net export capacity. Commissioner Vetter asked how long it takes for customers to get connected once, they've requested it. Mr. Hendricks replied, if everything goes smoothly, just over a month from start to finish. Discussion ensued surrounding the renewable energy credits and who gets to claim them. Mr. Hendricks wrapped up by discussing the average retail rate.

General Manager Warehime presented an overview of the 2024 Strategic Plan to the Commission. He began by noting we have had this strategic plan for years and just continue to revamp it every year. He first showed the picture of the future, and noted the changes made this year. He next discussed the details of the four focus areas; One OPU is really about culture; the next one is Technology and we did not make any changes to that one this year; the third one is Proactive Growth Strategies and the last one is Reliability, Security and Resiliency. Each focus area is then assigned key initiatives which Mr. Warehime discussed in detail.

Commissioner Vetter inquired as to what takes so long with the service territory acquisition and is it worth it to us to take over those areas. General Manager Warehime noted the negotiation between the two parties is what takes the longest regarding service territory acquisitions, and the short answer is yes, it is worth it to us, as long as the terms of the agreement make sense. Discussion ensued around how service territories were set, who set them, how often they get changed and the process for acquiring territory.

General Manager Warehime reported about one half million dollars was saved over the Martin Luther King weekend in natural gas costs due to the strategy we developed back in 2021. He concluded by discussing the development of the history book, and asked if any Commissioners wanted to be involved as well as had a discussion regarding potentially moving the February Commission meeting. Mr. Warehime will get back to the Commission.

Director, Engineering & Field Services Fenstermacher discussed the outage at the Ascend project and noted 2200 customers were without power for about 2 hours. Since then, we held an after-action review and had some frank conversations with the general contractor, as well as the excavator contractor, regarding safety and how to mitigate risks going forward. We then sent them a follow-up letter.

Director, Information Technology & Metering Baum updated the Commission on the equipment upgrade for the Morehouse Conference Room. He noted they are looking for a three-day block to schedule the work in the room sometime in February.

Commission Roundtable

There was not anything further from the Commission.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Ringhofer,
Customer Service Rep. on behalf of Executive, Communications and Administration Coordinator Schmoll