At Great Lakes Utilities, we pride ourselves in providing low-cost and reliable electric power for our members. Since forming in 2000, our reach has grown to include eleven communities across Wisconsin and one in Michigan. Discover the innovative work of these members in this newsletter where a community project will be featured in each issue.

Keeping Technology at the Forefront: The Village of Stratford

Since its inception, Stratford Public Works has been making strides to improve the quality of life for its residents. Stratford began as a company town in the late 1800s, settled primarily by lumberjacks and farmers. Incorporated in 1910, the Stratford community currently has a population of over 1,600.

A GLU member since 2018, Stratford Public Works manages the installation, maintenance and operation of a broad range of infrastructure and facilities. This includes the water and electric utility, streets, sanitary and storm sewers, and waste water treatment plant.

In 2020, Stratford Public Works provided utility services for over 800 customers within a 20 square mile service area. The community has a peak demand of 3800 kW. Director of Public Works, Scott Dennee, began overseeing the electric, water and waste water in 2017, and has served the village in various capacities over the past 15 years. He and his team have greatly benefited from their partnership with GLU.

“In addition to helping us keep utility rates down, GLU has also been a great resource for information. We’ve had some changes in our staff the last few years, so it’s been great to know we can pick up the phone and give GLU a call if we ever have any questions. They have a lot of knowledgeable people who are happy to share information. They’re good at their jobs and they know what they’re talking about.”

In addition to providing information and trouble-shooting assistance, the partnership with GLU has also provided the Stratford Public Works team with insights on future trends such as the influence of electric cars on the power industry.
Stratford Public Works’ water system was established in 1921 and the electrical four years later. Both systems have had major upgrades since then, including the elimination of all lead pipes. As a result, the town is now able to offer its residents 100% lead-free water services.

In 2019, Stratford Public Works was awarded the Small System Excellence Award by the Wisconsin Section of the American Water Works Association (WIAWWA). This award recognizes the challenges and achievements of small water systems in Wisconsin. The excellence in water systems is measured by several factors including the quality of water, compliance with drinking water regulations, water system operation and maintenance, water accountability and financial integrity.

Stratford Public Works has also replaced 90% of their sewer system with plastic or slip lining in an effort to phase out concrete. The new pipes provide increased flow capacity and last 2.5 times longer than traditional concrete.

The village also added switch gear in their industrial park, which offers the flexibility to feed from two different sites, in the event of an outage. In addition, Stratford Public Works is currently in the process of switching all village streetlights and ballpark lights to LEDs, saving 122 hours of warm-up time per bulb annually.

Last winter, all water and sewer systems were GIS mapped. They plan to also ensure that all electrical systems, storm sewers and curb stops are GIS mapped within the next couple years. Their partnership with GLU has allowed them to take advantage of the best that technology has to offer while upgrading their various systems.

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