

LIGHT LINES

Newsletter of the Sterling Municipal Light Department

June/July 2017 Edition

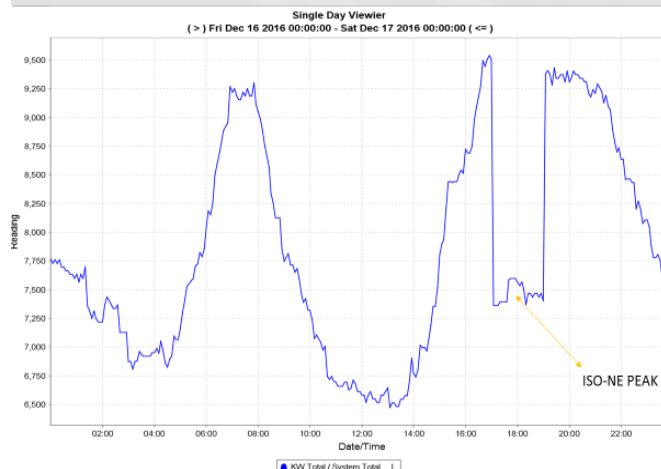
General Manager: Sean Hamilton Light Board: Chairman: Matthew Stelmach; Clerk: Brian Pierce; Third member Joseph Curtin

General Manager's Report June 2017

Community Clean Energy Resiliency Initiative Battery Storage Project - On October 12, 2016 we held a Groundbreaking Ceremony at the SMLD Substation located on Chocksett Road for our new 2mw/3.9mwhr **Battery Storage Project** (photo below). On December 16, 2016, only 33 working days later, we successfully operated the batteries that facilitated a 2mw reduction in our peak load. This resulted in a \$17,334 savings to the ratepayers of Sterling. The **Battery Storage Project** is the first one in Massachusetts and all New England. The project was funded in part from a \$1,463,000 Community Clean Energy Resiliency Initiative Grant from the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) under the direction of Commissioner Judith Judson to the Town of Sterling and administered by SMLD. We were also awarded a grant for \$250,000 from the Department of Energy and Sandia National Labs through their Energy Storage Program under the direction of Dr. Imre Gyuk. Technical support was provided by the Clean Energy States Alliance under a grant provided by the Barr Foundation. Thank you to the Town of Sterling, the Board of Selectmen, Energy Committee, Fire Department, Police Department, Building Department, Electrical Inspector, DPW and the SMLD employees for all they provided during this project.



Began Construction October 12,2016
Operating and Captures Peak on 12-16-2016



Smart Electric Power Alliance Award (SEPA) - On May 11th the SMLD received an award from **SEPA** for having the **most storage watts** per customer (533 watts) in 2016. There were 2,000 public power utilities in the US that competed for this award. This is the second, first place award that we received from SEPA. In 2013 we received the award for the most solar watts per customer (831 watts).

RP3 Award - On May 8th the SMLD received the **RP3 Platinum Award** from the American Public Power Association (APPA). This award recognizes public utilities that demonstrate proficiency in four key disciplines: reliability, safety, workforce and development, and system improvements. The criteria for the award also consisted of sound business practices and utility-wide commitments for safe and reliable delivery of electricity. Recertification for this award must be submitted every three years.

Sterling Municipal Light Department, 50 Main Street, Sterling, MA 01564-2135

Telephone: 978-422-8267 Web: www.energysterling.com

Normal Business Hours: Mon– Thurs 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Friday 7:30-11:30a.m. Full 24-hour coverage for power emergencies

Please call 978-422-8267. After normal business hours Sterling Police Dispatch at 978-422-7331.

Safety Award - The SMLD received the Safety Award of Excellence from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for safe operating practices in 2016. The entrants for this award are placed in categories that are assessed on the number of worker hours and ranked based on the most incident-free records during 2016 and as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Our safety record has provided our ratepayers with substantial savings by lowering our workmens' compensation rates by 65% over the last 5 years.

Tom Sparks Retirement - On April 20th, Line Superintendent Tom Sparks retired after 17 years with the SMLD and over 48 years in the electric utility industry. His extensive knowledge in the industry along with his kind mannerism will surely be missed. We would like to extend a sincere thank you to Tom for all he has accomplished at SMLD and wish him only the best for a happy and healthy retirement.

Electric Vehicle - The SMLD has partnered with the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Energy Company (MMWEC) in the promotion of the Nissan Leaf electric vehicle. rebates of \$10,000 and state and tax incentives would give you the opportunity to own this electric vehicle for as little as \$10,000. The SMLD also offers charger rebates and off peak rates for charging purposes (see enclosed information). Please visit www.munihelps.org or call our office at 978-422-8267 for more information and to be put on our notification list for the upcoming test drive in Sterling to be scheduled soon.

Senior Safety - Our Annual Senior Safety Program with Ray Gouley was held on May 10th at the Senior Center. Mr. Gouley provided samples of items such as counterfeit extension cords, old Christmas lights and offered insight as to why these and other items cause fires. He also warned of the scams being held in the area (see below) and why Dig Safes are so important.

LED Streetlights - We are pleased to report that we have completed the conversion of all overhead streetlights to new light emitting diode (LED) fixtures. We have 22 remaining underground fixtures to replace that are included in our 2017 budget. These new streetlights will provide much better lighting at a substantial savings to the Town budget.

Neighbor-To-Neighbor - The Neighbor-to-Neighbor Fund was established to help Sterling residents during difficult economic times. The Sterling Municipal Light Department has a program in place so our customers can continue to help their neighbors. Since the creation of our bill Round-Up-Program in June 2014, and thanks to your generous memberships to the program, a total contribution of \$7,260.26 has been donated to the fund. The program aids with payments toward housing, utilities, food, clothing and other essential living costs. The way the program works is that your SMLD bill is rounded up to the nearest dollar and each month and the difference is given to the Neighbor to Neighbor Fund. Your maximum donation per account would not exceed \$11.88 per year. To sign up for the Round-Up Program, please stop by our office, call us at 978-422-8267 or visit our website at www.energysterling.com and send your request to Customer Service. To find out more information or how you can make your tax free donations directly to the program, please log onto the **Town of Sterling** website at www.sterling-ma.gov under the Board of Selectmen or you may contact the Community Representative, Patrick Fox at 774-275-1174 or pafox57@comcast.net. Thank you again for your continued generosity.

ACH Program - As an incentive to sign up for our ACH Program we are offering you a free power strip capable of sensing one main fixture being powered off and will automatically power down other items plugged in. The ACH Program gives our customers automated opportunity to receive the discount amount on their bills. By using this program there is no need to put your bill in the mail or drop it off at the office. You will receive your bill as normal (paper or email) and on the discount day the payment is automatically deducted from your checking, savings or credit card account. Once paid you have the option to receive an email or text message confirming payment. Sign up today and never miss your discount day again!

Utility Scam - Scammers continue to make calls to our customers at any time of the day or night, weekday or on weekends identifying themselves as an SMLD employee or from another "utility" and demanding that a payment be made over the phone or the service will be disconnected. **Do not respond or make a payment to this request.** Hang up and call our office at 978-422-8267 (Monday-Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Friday 7:30 to 11:30 am) or after hours call the Sterling Police Department at 978-422-7331. Be aware that if anyone stops by your home claiming to be an SMLD employee and you do not have a pre-arranged appointment, **DO NOT LET THEM IN.** All SMLD employees have photo I.D.'s and will only be at your home for a scheduled appointment. Again, call our office or the Sterling Police Department if these incidents occur.

Have a happy and safe summer.



Sean Hamilton
General Manager

Public Power
"Owned by the People We Serve"