Iowa Energy Workforce
Iowa State University

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Municipal Utility Perspective
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Iowa’s Municipal Energy Utilities

136 Electric utilities
49 Gas utilities
Most are small:
  ▶ Half have <1,000 meters
  ▶ A fourth have < 500 meters
  ▶ Larger systems include: Ames, Cedar Falls, Muscatine
No immunity from aging

- Our surveys look like others with a significant portion of muni workforce eligible to retire in 5 - 7 years
- Our problem is written in our faces
What kind of workers?

- Among eligible to retire in next 5 years, most are managers, skilled trades, and system operators.
- Except for larger utilities, munis rely on consultants and joint action agencies for engineers.
How are we responding?

- New jobs brochure (English & Spanish versions) and jobs website
- Succession planning featured at IAMU meetings/conferences
- New model personnel policies
- New scholarship programs under development
How are we responding?

- Expanded apprenticeship programs
- Interim utility management service
- Gas Operator Qualification program
- Gas system design, construction, and maintenance services
- Models for transfer of senior staff knowledge and skills
- More hands-on training
New models that may help - 1

Collaborative process between community colleges, UNI, and utilities
- AA or AS degree designed around technical program meeting utility workforce needs
- UNI Technology Management BA
  - UNI Major course work
  - Electives (from utility industry)
  - Utility internships
New models that may help - 2

Water/wastewater apprenticeship

On-line course through Kirkwood

- Course work during utility work hours
- Completion in 2-3 years and test for grade 2 DNR permit and apprentice certificate
- Optional AA/AS with 3-5 additional classes
- Optional 2+2 with UNI for Bachelor’s degree
New models that may help - 3

Gas Operator Qualification Program

DOT’s Office of Pipeline Safety requires operators to be qualified in each task they perform on the system

- Written test
- Hands-on skill demonstration
- Ongoing training

For small munis, this allows development of workforce from local labor pool
Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities

www.iamu.org