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INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Former Chairs of AMP Board of Trustees: AMP’s strengths, achievements and its benefits to members

Former chairs of the AMP Board of Trustees took time to discuss the history of the organization, the benefits and strengths of AMP and their memories of significant events in the organization’s history. AMP spoke with Jon Bisher, former city manager for the City of Napoleon, former member of AMP Board of Trustees, Board Chair from 2009-2014 and Wall of Fame honoree; Steve Dupee, village manager for the Village of Wellington; current AMP Board of Trustees member and former AMP Board Chair from 2014-2019; George Pofok, former commissioner of Cleveland Public Power, former AMP Board of Trustees member and Board Chair from 1993-2000 and AMP Wall of Fame honoree; and Mike Weadock, former director of public service and safety for the City of St. Marys and former AMP Board of Trustees member and Board Chair from 2000-2005 and AMP Wall of Fame honoree.

AMP: **What motivated you in your role as a public servant, and why do you believe public power is important to preserve and protect?**

Bisher: I’m going to answer this specifically from an Ohio perspective because Ohio is a strong Home Rule state, but even with that said, you need to continue to guard that opportunity. And the crown jewel of that Home Rule, I think in Ohio, in any case, is being able to operate your own municipal electric system. ... From that perspective, I think it’s important that you guard that right, and you keep that as a part of your own system, and you can control it in your own way. ... Let me give you an example. Let’s say you got a pothole, and somebody calls in and says, “There’s a pothole out here on Main Street. Can’t you get that fixed?” Well, you go out there and you check the pothole, and there’s a pothole because a sewer has caved in underneath it and is sucking dirt away. What you need to do is dig down, repair the sewer, and then fill the pothole. But there’s a utility pole right there. And so, to dig down, you got to go down maybe six feet, well, you have to stabilize that utility pole. And that only requires a bucket truck to come out and hold the top of it while you do it. If you’re a public power community, you talk to your electric supervisor. You say, “Go out there and hold that pole.” You get the sewer people out there, and within a day you have the pothole fixed. Now, that’s the kind of control that I use as an example. But those kinds of tasks happen all the time, where it really has nothing to do with the electric system at all other than you just need the electric people there to hold their pole.

Dupee: My father, Bob Dupee, certainly played an influential role in my career path as a public servant. I had the good fortune to experience and witness how his leadership and vision first as a utility director, and later as a village manager, enhanced the quality of life for the residents of our hometown, and certainly helped me understand the importance of providing high-quality and cost-effective municipal services that residents rely on a day-in and day-out basis. And I was really motivated by that, and felt that a career in public service would be something that I could remain dedicated to and be energized by and take pride in. I would say that public power is important

to preserve and to protect because it has proven time and time again its resilience and strength in the face of many electric industry challenges and changes. And it's really demonstrated that it is the best model to provide highly reliable and cost-effective electricity and related services to customers. I think one of the biggest benefits of living in a public power community is that most if not all of the employees that work for the local municipal electric system live in the community, so they have a stake in the community. They have a certain pride in the community and that pride is demonstrated in their work. And I think for folks living in Wellington who have their own public power system, they can see that pride take place; but also, when they need help, whether it's an outage, whether it's a limb on a line or some other issue that they need help with as quickly as possible, because we are there, we can provide those services in a very efficient and effective manner.

Pofok: Once I got into it, you go into defensive mode because everybody's after you. The investor-owned (utilities) are so big, and they have so much money, and you have nothing, you know. ... So, you quickly realized, Goliath versus the little guy. The way I saw the whole thing is, I was running an electric company, and we had to do the best we can for the consumer. ... I could see what was going on, and I figured, well, we could do a good job here. You just got to do it the right way... We could make it work; it's for the customers, you know. ... I guess it goes back to our mayor here in the early 1900s. It's a barometer to keep the private monopolies in check. And that's how Cleveland Public Power came to be. It was our mayor, Mayor Johnson, who believed that if you let these monopolies, these privately owned monopolies go, they would eventually own everything. ... And you needed to keep some kind of check on them, and that's what public power has done all these years, you know, reigned them in and kept check on them.

Weadock: I started working for the city of St. Marys when I first got out of high school as a summer intern, kind of doing whatever they wanted, whether it was digging holes, or whatever it was. I worked for the city from really about the summers of '63 and '64, and then eventually went to work for the city pretty much full time in about 1966. I was named the director of public service in 1988, and then was director of public service and safety until my retirement in 2006. I always got a great deal of satisfaction from the work that we accomplished and the projects we completed, and just enjoyed working for the public. St. Marys was a generator, you know, generated electricity for over 100 years, and I think the electric utility was really a part of the community. I think that local control, the people in the community felt that that was important. And I think that AMP provided the organization that the city needed to really maintain and improve that utility.

AMP: **Tell us how you first became involved with AMP, your role on the Board and what committees you worked on.**

Bisher: The very first contact I had with AMP was when I was doing economic development for Henry County, Ohio, and the city of Napoleon. And AMP decided to get involved with economic development because a lot of the AMP communities were kind of getting left out. They would put a package together and then send it to communities that qualified for that company. And AMP communities never would get those packets. AMP got involved with economic development ... I served on that committee and then was kind of chair of that committee for probably three to four years. ... When I then became city manager, the main committee that I was on was Gorsuch Station. ... I was chair of that committee and stayed on that committee the longest. ... It (Gorsuch

Station) served us well. And it actually served as an educational tool from the standpoint of how do you own assets and how do you operate them.

Dupee: My father, Robert Dupee, served on the AMP board for well over two decades, and therefore I was introduced to AMP at a very young age, attending various AMP and OMEA functions and events and even the occasional board meeting, which was always an interesting and entertaining experience. After starting my public service career for Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System in 1992, I began attending AMP board meetings as a board member alternate, and then later on served as Oberlin's representative to the board after becoming an electric director in 2004. I have served on almost all the committees for the AMP board and have been fortunate to be elected to a board officer role for many years, including the Board Secretary, Board Vice Chair, and then ultimately Board Chair for a five-year term.

Pofok: I went from CEI to CPP, and that was in the middle '70s. That's after, you know, almost 10 years at CEI. At the time, the commissioner was Warren Hinchey; he's also on the Wall (of Fame). And he and a group of six other guys formed the organization. He calls me in his office, you know, I was really young. I was in my early 30s. And he says, you're going to represent CPP down there for me. I had no idea what OMEA or AMP was, nothing. So that's how I got into the picture. Right away, I'm there three months, and I'm just trying to learn about the public side of the business and now I'm a representative to both OMEA and AMP. ... When we would go to dinner after (Board meetings), we used to sit around (and) we all talked about our individual problems. And sometimes I learned more at our dinner meeting than I did at a board meeting, because everybody was facing a certain problem. And this guy had figured it out, or that guy figured it out, and you could bring it back. And to me, that, that was really great.

Weadock: St. Marys always had kind of a different relationship with AMP, I think, because when Ken Hegemann left St. Marys, Ohio, in 1984, and later became the president of AMP. When I was appointed to the safety service director's position, I was elected to the AMP board to represent the North Central AMP-Ohio Service Group, which was really those people that were connected to Ohio Power at that time. And I represented that group until 2006. I was on so many of the committees over that 16 or 17 years. I remember always being on the Power Supply and Generation Committee, and St. Marys was one of the communities that bought an interest in Gorsuch when AMP acquired Gorsuch Station, and I was always on that committee. And then, you know, when I became Board Chairman, obviously, you're pretty much involved with all the committees. You know, there were a lot of great people that were involved with AMP over that period of time. And I think the relationships with those people — you probably remember more about them than you do about what committee you were on.

AMP: **When you think of American Municipal Power, what words come to mind?**

Bisher: We're really talking about a joint action agency ... and then it's a very unique joint action agency. And especially today, covering multiple states, and multiple villages, cities and boroughs. I thought the work we did at AMP was really important, and I still think that today. It's a crucial agency. It was for the city of Napoleon, and it is for each of the member cities.

Dupee: The two words that come to mind, for me are really joint action. This is the central focus. It is the strength of the AMP organization. It's really all about the members working collaboratively as one to achieve our public power goals. A municipal electric system's sole purpose is to provide highly reliable and cost-effective electricity and do that in a way that ensures that we're meeting our customers' needs. And working collaboratively, joint action gives us that opportunity to achieve those goals on a myriad of levels related to all the services and support that AMP brings to its membership.

Pofok: Well, it helped save Cleveland, to tell you the truth. Without it, we would have never saved the system. So that's one thing they can hang their hat on. And I think, if my stats are right, once AMP was formed, we never lost a municipal electric system in the state of Ohio to an IOU. It stopped all the buying and all the takeovers. And I think it's still that way today. So, I mean, those are two big stars. You look at it, you saved us, who was the biggest, but you saved all the little ones from going under, too.

Weadock: When I think about public power, and more specifically AMP, I guess I always thought of AMP as being one of the leaders in the public power communities. Through my involvement as Chairman, I got to meet a lot of those people from the other joint action agencies or different groups from all over the United States. And I always took a lot of pride in being involved with AMP and the accomplishments that they were able to achieve. The industry was changing very fast at that time; deregulation had come along, independent system operators, transmission, reserves or transmission rights. When I think of AMP, I think of a reliable public power supplier, an organization that met the needs of the communities, had enough foresight to develop their own assets, you know, such as Fremont Energy Center, the hydro projects, solar projects. The management that we had at that time — people like Marc Gerken, Bob Trippe and Jolene Thompson and Pam Sullivan, John Bentine — that kind of held the organization together and provided the leadership that it needed. And I think they always managed to have a Board that took an interest and wanted to see the organization succeed and public power get stronger.

AMP: **In the early days of the organization, did you ever envision then how big AMP would grow or what it would become today?**

Pofok: Oh, absolutely not. I know at some of the conferences, I always tell the story that we were on Lane Avenue and we were in the basement of our auditor's building. And back then everybody smoked, you know, it was horrible. We're in that basement and there's this cloud of smoke all over, and nobody could breathe. Somebody brings up on the board that we should buy a smoke eater for the room. And we looked at the budget. And we didn't have enough money in our budget to buy a lousy smoke eater for the room. But those are the things I kind of remember. And I never realized how many munis (municipally owned electric utilities) there were, because in Cleveland, we attempted to fight everything by ourselves. And the City of Hamilton was the same way; they fought everything by themselves. And once we got together in a room, we figured it out, that by joining together, we can fight better, you know, and bring the rest of the guys, the rest of the munis into the picture. It all helped because everybody can contribute something. Everybody would throw something into the puzzle because everybody was fighting one of the investor-owned (utilities) in the state.

AMP: **Reflecting on the organization's 50-year history, what key milestones — battles won, decisions made — do you see as critical in the organization's success?**

Bisher: AMP was an agency that was formed as a joint action agency because investor-owned utilities were just beating up public power communities, even if they were big, like Cleveland or Columbus. So, in Ohio, folks decided that they had to have more clout in Columbus, from a legislative or political standpoint. And that's how it stayed for some time, until the board decided that, you know, maybe we could become more of an operational type of organization if we own some electrical assets. ... That went into the second phase, where AMP started, very, very slowly, but with Gorsuch Station, with Belleville hydro, to become an electrical generation asset owner. And now, a focus became on operating these systems and mutual aid issues and learning from each other and doing some training. The thrust in that second phase, I would say was that of operating the systems. The third phase was the transition now to a multi-state organization, the transition from AMP Ohio and the box that we built — the Ohio box — to step out of that box and go to multi-state. And understand that politically, still, we still did those kinds of things, but you weren't dealing with THE governor's office, you were dealing with nine governor's offices. You weren't dealing with (one) state's legislators, you were dealing with multiple state legislatures and multiple rules. And most importantly, you were now really dealing with federal agencies. You were dealing with EPA; you were dealing with FERC and stuff. So that was the development of the organization.

Dupee: I think one of the successes you can point to is the organization's IRS tax relief that permitted AMP to issue tax-exempt financing on behalf of the membership. This really helps support our mission of cost-effective power supply and financing our generation asset development strategy with low-interest debt, providing the organization and its members with long-term supplies and allowing us to hedge risk against rising fuel costs and rising capacity markets.

Pofok: The City of Cleveland had gotten into the licensing of the nuclear power plants up in northern Ohio. And AMP helped us in that. By putting all that together in kind of a common fight, we were able to break down major things. Like one of the biggest things that happened at CPP is we got transmission rights from the license conditions for the nuclear plants; same thing down in Hamilton, they got transmission. And it enabled AMP to negotiate an agreement with AEP to have transmission rights through the AEP organization for all of the different munis. And that's what basically opened up and let the individual munis survive — was all this transmission rights that were presented in different ways through the different fights that we had. And (another) big (event) was, of course, the New York Power Authority power that came in. I was a representative of the governor to the New York State Power Authority, representing all the Ohio munis to negotiate for the power. Because there was this little provision in the New York state law that says that a certain percentage of the power from the Niagara dam had to be distributed within economic transmission distance of the plant. That has enabled us to bring all that New York State Power Authority (power) into the state, which, you know, it's the cheapest power you can buy. So those are the things; the big thing was the agreements to move the power.

Weadock: Well, when I look back at how AMP was formed ... I think I can remember him (Ken Hegemann) going to DC and fighting in federal court for things at that time that they wanted from Dayton Power & Light, and some of the other investor-owned utilities. And I think they finally figured out, from losing those battles, that the only way they were going to get any place was if they figured out a way to organize in Ohio. And I think the Ohio Municipal Electric Association kind of provided that groundwork. And

then, finally, the decision to create a joint action agency and create AMP. I think that, again, the ability to change some of the interconnection agreements that were negotiated early on, that allowed St. Marys, for instance, to tie to Ohio Power and disconnect from Dayton Power & Light gave the city some abilities that a lot of communities just didn't have. I think deciding to buy an interest in Gorsuch Station was a big decision for the members of AMP that decided to buy into that project when it started. I think AMP's ability to negotiate power supply agreements became more important, and with deregulation came the ability to buy from other suppliers or buy from somebody besides who you were interconnected with, negotiating the deals for point-to-point transmission. ... I would also say the decision to expand AMP-Ohio to start taking in other membership. You know, the West Virginia communities came in, Michigan South Central, and Blue Ridge Power Agency, and opening up in Kentucky and Pennsylvania communities. And obviously that was the right decision for AMP, and I think made AMP a leader in the public power area in the country, not just in one state. And then I think the development of (generating) assets, obviously, those other members came in because they could buy into those projects. And I guess the neat thing about AMP is it was never a take-all organization. You got to decide, your community — your council — decides whether you want to participate in each project, and it was a pick and choose by community, which I think is quite a bit different than most other joint action agencies.

AMP: If you had to identify significant achievements in AMP's history, what would the top three achievements be?

Bisher: The first, and this would be No. 3 in importance, was a project that we didn't do. The Meigs County coal plant was an idea that was sold, and the output from that plant was sold. ... I can't remember exactly how many millions of dollars we had spent when we (the members) decided, especially with what we were doing with Prairie State at the time, that we just weren't going to be able to operate two large coal plants. ... But — *but* — I really believe that had we not done that and not taken those losses when we did, that it would have changed the entire complexion of the organization. ... We took quite a loss on it when we did but I know we did the right thing from the organization standpoint. Number 2 on the list also has to do with a generation asset, and that was a decision by the Board to build run-of-the-river hydro ... Look, in Napoleon's portfolio, my least expensive power was hydro, and my most expensive power was hydro, and my middle power was hydro, Belleville. And the difference here with hydro is that ... until you have the debt service paid off on the hydro, it's very expensive. To give you an analogy, I mean, someone said, once, you don't plant a major species of tree like an oak tree for yourself, and you don't plant it for your children. You plant it for your grandchildren, because it's going to take you 30, 40 years to get any kind of a tree, but it's going to be a hell of a tree when you get there. Well, that's how hydro was. Niagara hydro that Napoleon had in its portfolio, one, two-cent power, because it's hydro that has all the debt service off of it. Belleville hydro is reasonably priced hydro, because it was built 15, 20 years ago. The hydro that's in the portfolio now is expensive. But you know, what, in 20, 25 years, that is going to be power that's in the community's portfolios that is maybe 1/10, 1/20 of what power is going to be on the open market. So, it's an investment in the future. ... Let's talk about No. 1, and this I can almost guarantee is on nobody else's list. We found ourselves in a dilemma with Gorsuch Station. The Environmental Protection Agency decided that they would levy substantial fines on us for operating that generating station. And these were millions of dollars of fines. ... Marc Gerken came up with the concept for the EPA to not fine us, but we would spend that money in energy

conservation. ... We're a not for profit. There were cities, and those millions of dollars in fines would go right into our rates. And it's my grandma who lives in Napoleon, Ohio, or someone who's struggling to pay her bill, and now her electric bill doubles because we're paying the EPA some exorbitant fine. So, you took something that was really negative, and turned it into a positive. Marc's concept was "Look don't fine us. We will run a multi-million-dollar energy conservation program. It will be good for the environment." But you see what happens to our customers? They're now benefiting from an energy conservation program, instead of paying for some fine.

Dupee: The organization has many, many achievements that it can be proud of over its 50-year run. When I think about the top three achievements, for me, I think the organization's first renewable generation construction project, the Belleville hydro facility, which is a 42-megawatt, run-of-the-river hydro generation station on the Ohio River. The foresight and the determination of the organization and the 42 project owners to construct this type of facility was a significant leap forward for renewable generation in Ohio, and certainly well ahead of the focus on carbon free electricity that we have today. A lot of foresight, in my view. The second achievement would be the creation and the establishment of the energy efficiency program, Efficiency Smart. I cannot think of any other program or service that the organization has offered, that has done more to help strengthen and support the relationship between the member municipal electric system and its customers and enhancing the value for every energy dollar that our customers spend. And lastly, and I think most recently, I think about the creation of AMPT. Transmission costs continue to pose a significant risk and continue to pose significant challenges and threats to our ability to provide competitively priced electricity, and the creation of AMPT will assist the members with taking greater control over transmission costs and associated transmission system operations and maintenance.

Pofok: Basically, it's the transmission rights. ... One time my power supply guy comes in. And he says, "There's a rural electric co-op in Iowa that has excess power. Do you want me to buy it?" I say, "Can you get it here? Can you work the transmission arrangement out?" He says, "Yeah, I gotta go through seven companies." And I say, "Well, when it gets into Cleveland, is it cheaper than what we're buying?" He says, "Yeah." I say, "Then go out and buy it." So that's what we did. We started bringing this stuff in from Iowa. But that's what you could do once you had these agreements in effect. Because up until then, you know, they grouped together and they'd buy from their host utility, and they were a captive audience.

Weadock: I think the expansion of the organization into other states, and the construction or development of the assets, the projects that we've already talked about (are the most significant). And I think AMP always maintained the ability to be responsive to the members' needs. And maybe that, above all else, is one of most important things.

AMP: **What primary changes have occurred over the years that you think really propelled the organization and its members forward?**

Bisher: This gets back to probably some of the hardest decisions that the board had to make. I mean, this was, "What are we going to do with the organization? And how is it going to go forward?" ... As AMP-Ohio, we decided that we wanted to own assets. We had dabbled with Gorsuch Station. We'd owned Belleville, but really, we didn't have a lot of other assets. We had some diesel generation at places and things. But we're talking about going big-time electrical generation assets, to be a real player, to come to the

table, along with the investor-owned (utilities). You know, AMP, as a joint action agency is interesting, because typically, somebody owns a coal plant, and then they form a joint action agency to sell the power off of it, and that's about as far as it goes. But AMP's never been that way. AMP has always said to the communities, "Well if home rule's good for us from the standpoint of owning an asset or something, then it would be good for you, from the standpoint of you choose. You make your own portfolio. If you want to be an all-green community, we'll supply that for you. And if you want to be a mix of this or that, and if there's something you want or don't want, Okay, fine. We'll allow you to do that." We were talking about many directions in electrical asset generation development, and the intuitive conclusion — everybody thought that was a good idea. ... And so that became the need to expand to the multiple state agency. And if you want the multiple generation assets, and you want the wherewithal to do that, then you have to include these other people, but they aren't going to do it without having a say, the same say that you have. ... That governance issue was a critical issue. ... But that was a huge primary change in the organization. And that took place while I was on the board, and chair for a good part of it.

Dupee: The organization's beginnings were rooted in joint action amongst Ohio municipal members, and that served us well for many years. But as the industry changed and became more complex, it became necessary for AMP to grow its membership across the multi-state footprint. And this growth has allowed the organization to participate in or construct a diverse, reliable and competitively priced power portfolio, and it has also allowed us to create a stronger voice for public power advocacy. I think the second transition was the generation asset development strategy that was deployed over the past two decades. I think the organization has done an excellent job at creating a balance of market power resources with the development and construction and operation of generation assets to ensure that the membership has long-term assets that it can rely on to provide stable pricing and reliable generation during periods of rising energy costs. Likewise, it can be mixed with shorter term, market-based supplies to take advantage of lower cost like we experience today. In addition, I believe that the organization's bold move to construct and deploy cleaner, lower carbon and carbon-neutral generation assets will prove to be a wise investment as we grapple with climate change and its impact on energy policy in the future.

Weadock: One of the primary changes was obviously with the deregulation, came the development of ISOs, the independent system operators. We were in more than one of those control areas, which made it even more confusing. And, then, you know, having to make transmission reservations and trying to stay involved with those organizations, so you knew what they were doing and how they were going to charge for things, how that was going to affect the members because it had a big effect on whether you could get in a project or not, depending on how you were going to get those assets delivered to you and what that cost was going to be to the member to get into those projects. It was the flexibility and the foresight on the part of management at AMP to realize that we're probably going to be in trouble if we didn't grow. And so, I think that was probably a real milestone and what kept the organization going and growing. And I think that the fact that AMP was able to keep some real consistency in the leadership and the management had an awful lot to do with its success today. I think that's what propelled the organization to where it is today.

AMP: **How has your community benefited from being a part of AMP?**

Bisher: You have to look at it backwards from how AMP looks at it. You see the folks like me that spent a lot of time at AMP did so because we felt that there was real benefit, in many ways. But council only sees that you're out of the office. And they know they're paying you a salary. They know that there's a lot of tasks to get done and a lot of things they want done. They come by to see you, and you're in Washington, or you're in Columbus, or in some crazy board meeting again. And so, they ask the question, "Well, what are we getting out of this?" And certainly, one of the answers is, "Well look at our budget." ... If you do the AMP thing, and you hang in there with the AMP model, as that board member, you are going to spend a lot of time in Columbus lobbying, and with AMP moving into federal legislative issues, you're going to spend a lot of time in Washington lobbying. If you're doing these assets, you had to spend a lot of time with bond counsels, learning how to raise the money to do these projects. Well, all of those things are extremely useful for the city of Napoleon. ... We went to Washington a lot just on the city of Napoleon, because we knew how to do it. We knew how to use lobbyists. And we were able, during that period of time, to get money for a \$2 million water tower; we were able to get, oh, eight, nine million dollars for an updated river crossing that was critical for the community; and the centerpiece to our industrial park was an interchange that we needed, and that was a \$10 million interchange that we were able to get. So, there are benefits. ... If you follow the model, you're going to learn a lot about how politics works and how financing works, and how you could do these things, not just for AMP, but you can do it for your own community. And so, to me that's as big of an asset as just the benefits you get for your electric system.

Dupee: I think my community has benefited from AMP in a number of ways, most notably, allowing our municipal electric system to offer a diverse, reliable and competitively priced wholesale power supply. But it's also allowed us to maintain a well-trained and educated workforce, with a "safety first" work mentality through its education and training program. And finally, it's allowed us to create a financially stable and credit-worthy municipal electric system through its oversight and guidance with the municipal credit scoring program. ... One of (AMP's) significant achievements is energy efficiency. It's allowed us to develop a stronger, closer relationship with our customers, and building upon the provision of not just providing wholesale power, but also providing services that they need in order to reduce costs and make them competitive in their various business markets.

Pofok: In Cleveland, I had three big gas turbines and they were in bad shape. And AMP was able to come in and rebuild them for me. And that saved my bacon a lot. Because I was able to do all the crazy things, you know, peak shave and everything, with my own machines. And they came in and we put diesel generators in, too. So, I had my three gas turbines, (and) I had a family of diesel generators, which all affected the way you created your power supply. And they did that all over the state.

Weadock: AMP provided a method for St. Marys to make their assets worth money. Like I said, the interconnection agreements were negotiated with Ohio Power through AMP at that time, (and) allowed St. Marys to interconnect to Ohio Power. I think that had tremendous benefits financially for many, many years. I think that the Council's decision to participate in the Fremont Energy project, in the Prairie State project, and in the hydro projects, has provided a long-term power supply for the community for a long period of time. Some of those projects, you know, the hydro projects are very expensive upfront. You got a lot of debt payment that you have to pay off. But in the long term, you know, there's going to be reasonable power supply costs associated

with those for a long time. When we had opportunities to get new industry in town, obviously, their concern was the rate structure and what kind of rate structure we could put in place. I think our ability to have those people get reasonable costs and long-term agreements and knowing how important those jobs were in the community, those power supply costs had a lot to do with our ability to get new industry to locate in St. Marys and know that we had a long-term commitment and had some control over their electric cost. And those are big costs with a lot of industry, especially today when you have aluminum melder and metal fabrication, people who use large amounts of electricity.

AMP: **Why is it important for people to understand the history, the hard-fought battles won?**

Dupee: I think without understanding history and the hard-fought battles won by public power, we may lose the significance and understanding of the value that public power offers, potentially creating an environment for short-term, uninformed decisions or mistakes, which could have serious repercussions or detrimental impacts for the organization and its members. I think understanding history is important to preserve and protect the interests of public power.

Pofok: Well, because then like they say, history repeats itself. You need to know where you were, how you got out of it, you know, because it can happen to you overnight again. That's my feeling. You got to know where you came from, to figure out where you're going.

Weadock: Well, it's kind of hard to figure out sometimes where to go if you don't know where you've been already, and I think that's one of the things that happens is, as people leave organizations and you get turnover with age and retirements, etc. You know, all I can think of is the Bill Lyrens, and the Bob Dupees, and the George Pofoks and all those people who were around when the organization was started. Ken Hegemann and you know, Dick Gorsuch. I think that the common bond there in all that was that most of those people all came up working for those public power communities. But most of the people that were involved with public power had tremendous interest in seeing their own communities benefit and grow, and maintaining that electric system was a real source of pride in most of those communities that did have public power, whether they had generation or they only had their transmission system. ... I think that common purpose, the ability to get shoulder to shoulder and pull or push where you needed to, I see as a thing that was maybe the glue that has always held AMP together.

AMP: **Looking to the future, what do you think will be important for AMP and its members to focus on?**

Dupee: Looking to the future, I think it will be most important for AMP and its members to remain resolute and focused on communicating and educating customers on the central principles and goals and mission of public power — who we are, why we do it, why it's important. Customers need to understand the value of what public power offers to maintain its stability and maintain its strength. We're going to be entering a phase, in particular as it relates to climate policy, of the electrification of the industry. And I think about whether it's self-generation by solar on a roof or electric EVs, I think there are ways in which public power, because of its relationship with its customers,

can push that forward and be of a value to customers as they make those decisions and choices.

Pofok: They gotta understand who their customers are. It's easy to get away from that. Especially in an AMP situation, you got your customers in a muni, and then you got somebody who runs the show, like, in my case, I was the commissioner. Then the commissioner comes on the board...and they make decisions that go up to another level. You can quickly forget who's paying your salary, and that's the customers.

Weadock: I think the most important thing for AMP to focus on is to continue to always put the needs of the members first. What's in the members' best interest? What's in that community's best interest? And I think that's why AMP's a leader in the public power community today is because it maintains that contact with its membership. And a lot of that you got to give the credit to the members. I think they've always taken an active part in the organization. I think the fact that they've managed to keep a strong management team, an involved membership, and an active Board probably has a lot to do with where they are today and where they're going to go in the future.

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