



## **Rodents cut power to MHS**

Arron Hustead, March 31, 2016

Something found the electrical cables at Marshall High School to be tasty.

After a power outage at the school was reported around 6:30 a.m. Thursday, March 31, investigation by Marshall Municipal Utilities personnel revealed multiple high-voltage cables had been gnawed on, likely by mice. Whatever the culprit, one cable had its insulation and interior wiring chewed through to its aluminum core, while another had its insulation partially chewed, exposing the wiring.

"It's kind of disappointing," Electric Distribution Director Jeff Bergstrom said during a discussion of the cable repairs at that morning's Board of Public Works meeting. "It's pretty new cable. We just put it in a few years ago. I don't know how you'd prevent mice from eating something that doesn't taste very good, but we'll have to try to find some solutions there."

The cables had been connecting to a conduit, and the point where they were chewed was about 30 feet in the air, Bergstrom said. Services were not disrupted to any other buildings in the area. MMU personnel spliced cables in order to restore power as quickly as possible. School was not delayed as a result and the high school reported the power came back online around 9:00 a.m.

"If we replace the whole run, we're probably looking at 300-feet by three cables, so about 1,000 feet total," Bergstrom said. "...I'm not a big fan of splices, just because you're never as good as the original cable, but that's what we're going to do just to get 'em going, and then we'll kind of go from there and see what we can do."

Bergstrom estimated the cables, which had a 2009 manufacture date, would typically have a 40-year lifespan before needing to be replaced.

The board also discussed an unusually high number of job openings at MMU. Employee Relations Director Megan Baldrige reported there are currently 11 vacancies, though five of those are temporary seasonal help. Baldrige said she couldn't recall there being that many all at one time before.

General Manager Kyle Gibbs reported a hearing on Senate Bill 946, which could restrict the broadband Internet services that municipal providers like MMU can offer, had been postponed another week, now scheduled to take place Tuesday, April 5.

He also reported a new interconnect agreement between six cities, including Marshall, and Kansas City Power & Light was nearing completion.

"It's certainly not a negative or a positive," Gibbs said. "It's just a different agreement than what we had before. I don't really see any issues with it."

The board will next meet at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, April 14.