December 9, 2015
Southwestern Announces New Managers

Southwestern Power Administration (Southwestern) has named several individuals into management positions in the latter half of 2015.

Hart Designated as Chief Financial Officer

Doug Hart was named Chief Financial Officer of Southwestern in July 2015. Hart is Southwestern's Director of the Division of Financial Management, and will continue to serve in that position.

Since 1992, Hart has served in various positions within Southwestern's financial organization, including Accounting Technician, Budget Analyst, Accountant, Acting Budget Officer, and Accounting Officer. As Accounting Officer, he was responsible for coordinating completion of the independent audit of the combined financial statement of Southwestern and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Hart also served as a functional lead and project manager, respectively, for the two most recent upgrades of Southwestern's financial accounting system. He was selected as Director of the Division of Financial Management in December 2013.

Hart holds a bachelor’s degree in finance from Oklahoma State University and is a Certified Public Accountant and Certified Government Financial Manager.

Smith Selected as Vice President of Transmission Strategy

Aiden Smith, a former Public Utilities Specialist at Southwestern, has been selected as Southwestern's first Vice President of Transmission Strategy, effective July 26, 2015. The Division of Transmission Strategy was recently created at Southwestern to align the agency with ongoing changes in the electric utility industry and to coordinate Southwestern’s work associated with Section 1222 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

Smith began his career as a student intern at Southwestern before transitioning to full-time in 2006, first as an Electrical Engineer and then as a Public Utilities Specialist in the Division of Customer Service (now Electric Power Marketing). While working closely with customers to develop power sales, transmission service, interconnection, and communications agreements, his responsibilities expanded into transmission policy areas as well. "As the industry evolved, transmission policy issues were growing in scope and impact for both Southwestern and its customers, and I became more involved in initiatives such as Southwestern’s relationship with the Southwest Power Pool, emerging markets, and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rule-makings," says Smith.

In March 2014, Smith took a position with Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO) managing PSO’s largest customer accounts across the state. At PSO, he was involved in economic development, regulatory issues, energy efficiency, and distributed generation.

As Vice President of Transmission Strategy, Smith manages Southwestern's coordination with regional transmission organizations and energy markets to ensure that the hydropower resource remains valuable to the agency's customers, organizes Southwestern's efforts with Section 1222, and oversees compliance with environmental regulations. "The scope of issues encompassed by the Division of Transmission Strategy represents important areas of opportunity for Southwestern," says Smith. "Our job is to protect the agency's resources and assets from impacts that might decrease their value, and to take advantage of opportunities to create benefits for our customers and the American people."

Smith is a Certified Energy Manager and holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics with an emphasis in power systems from the University of Tulsa.
Biffle Picked to Head Electric Power Marketing

Beau Biffle, former Chief of Hydropower at the Tulsa District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), was selected for the position of Director of the Division of Electric Power Marketing at Southwestern, effective August 24, 2015.

Most recently at the Corps, Biffle was responsible for the operations and maintenance of eight hydroelectric projects in Oklahoma and Texas, serving as the effective program manager for the Tulsa District’s Hydropower Business Line. In that position, he worked closely with Southwestern as a project manager on customer-funded capital improvement projects throughout the District.

Biffle began his Federal career in 2000 as a student intern at the Corps assisting with the design, review, and management of civil works and military electrical projects. He joined the Corps full-time as an Electrical Engineer, serving as a project engineer and project manager for the design and construction of security upgrades and other projects for various military and civil works, including hydropower dams. From 2007 to 2011, Biffle served as the District’s Civil Works O&M Electrical Engineer, planning and coordinating major maintenance projects, and served for a time as acting Chief of the Civil Design Section. In 2013, he relocated to Washington, D.C., as the Senior Hydropower Program Manager in the Budget Development Branch of the National Civil Programs Integration Division at Corps Headquarters. He returned to Tulsa District as Chief of the Hydropower Section and then transitioned into a developmental position as Chief of the Technical Support Branch, in which role he was responsible for all maintenance activities carried out by the District’s Operations Division.

As Southwestern’s Director of Electric Power Marketing, Biffle oversees the development and execution of all contracts and agreements regarding power sales, transmission, communications, and the funding of Corps maintenance projects, as well as the public affairs activities of the agency. "I’m excited by the challenges and opportunities ahead," says Biffle. "My goal in this position is to ensure the mission of Southwestern is executed successfully by fostering long-lasting relationships with our preference customers."

Biffle holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Oklahoma, and lives with his wife and two children in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Long Named Director of Acquisition and Facilities Services

Sean Long, a Senior Contract Specialist and the Small Business Program Manager at Southwestern, was selected as the agency's Director of the Division of Acquisition and Facilities Services, effective July 26, 2015.

Long began his Federal career working in various positions in the Civil Service in North Carolina after serving four years in the U.S. Marine Corps. He came to Southwestern in 2004 as a Contract Specialist responsible for cradle-to-grave contracting for commercial supplies, services, and construction contracting. He transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2007 as a Contracting Officer, where he developed and implemented policies and procedures for the Contracting Division at the Regional Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Long briefly worked as a Purchasing Agent at the Claremore (Oklahoma) Indian Hospital for the Department of Health and Human Services before returning to Southwestern in late 2008 as a Senior Contract Specialist.

Long has served as Southwestern’s programmatic manager for the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI), Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), and the Small Business Program, and has also served as the Procurement Team Leader and Acting Division Director. He has been instrumental in implementing process improvements, and sees such streamlining as a major focus of the Division’s efforts in the future.

"The procurement office impacts Southwestern's operating expenses not only through effective contract negotiations, but also through streamlining its workflows," he says. "Procurement activities can be very resource intensive. One of my immediate priorities is to continue the move from a paper environment to a paperless one to increase cost savings and efficiency."

Long holds an associate degree in Applied Science/Management from Tulsa Community College, and a bachelor's degree in Technology from Rogers State University in Claremore, Oklahoma. He holds a Level III Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting.