

and reliable service – and at the most affordable price possible. It's the wisdom of the local boards and councils to determine how to achieve the needs of the present ratepayers and new applicants.

Speaking of new applicants, there has been a general practice that any new applicant to a rural water district in Kansas is likely asked to pay for the full costs of any extension. In most cases, the cost of the extension is compounded by what may seem to be an exorbitant connection or membership fee. The question is if there a justification for a water district that has no debt and has the capacity to serve to be charging thousands upon thousands of dollars plus full costs of extensions to applicants? I recall Elmer stating to me once that a district in central Kansas had increased the connection fee to \$15,000. I was amused when he told me that he asked the board chairman if the residential site for the new house was thrown in on the deal. The RWD eventually backed that price down to something more realistic. Today, some Kansas RWDs require that any applicant provides all the leg work, even including obtaining easements.

To me, with interest rates at historical lows, and with the numerous funding programs that are available, RWDs and cities should be moving to make improvements to help not only present customers, but to extend services to those who need access to better drinking water. I commend systems in Kansas that continue to obtain financing for subsequent

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projects, or help provide funds to extend services to those who do not have access to a public water system. Today's applicants should be treated fairly. Established RWDs should be aggressively working to help provide new services. That's the mission.

Few people can afford to pay for necessary utilities in full, up front. Had the original steering committee members and board members not

worked to obtain financing, there would be no rural water systems. Developing a system from scratch was more work than most people can imagine. KRWA has the capacity to provide good advice to any system that seeks to make improvements or expand services. From rate reviews to suggestions on how to fund a project, you will find KRWA staff with answers and good referrals to help any water or wastewater system make fair and reasonable decisions. Call your Association if you have any interest in moving forward rather than just digging in your heels to keeps things as they are.

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