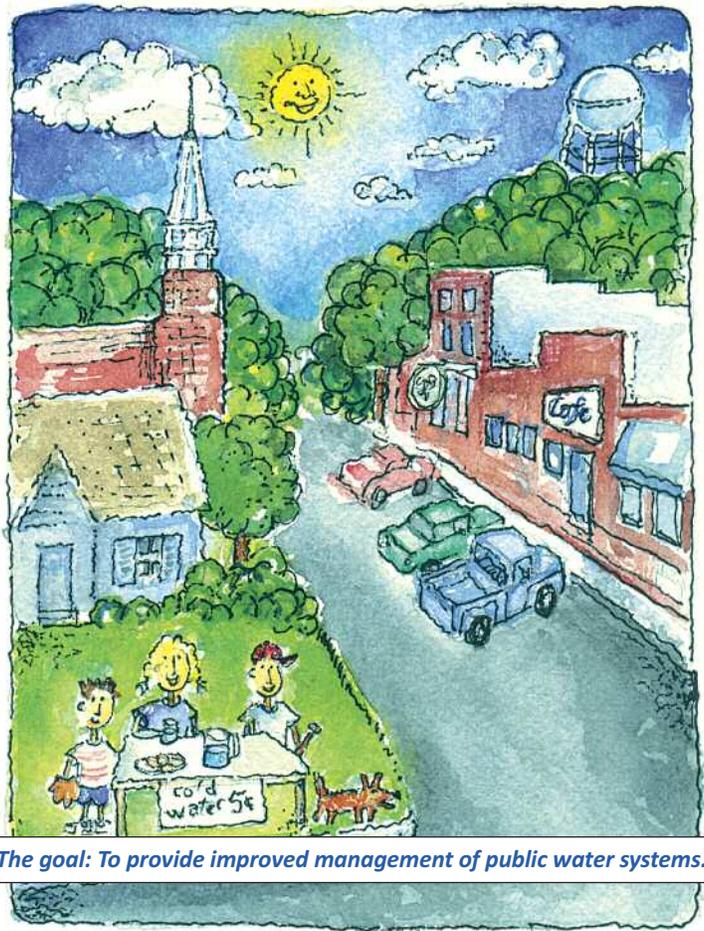


# BE SMART — AND GET SMARTER; ATTEND KANCAP TRAINING



*The goal: To provide improved management of public water systems.*

**P**icture yourself as a new mayor, chairman, city council member, rural water district board member, city clerk/administrator, or even an operator. You shake your head and wonder, “What have I gotten into? I don’t have a clue as to what this is all about. How can I learn what’s right and what’s not? What do they mean when they talk about the open meetings laws?”

There are many people, young and old – who feel this way and frankly, are in the same situation. Many people may have little or no experience serving on a public body. And, the local communities have entrusted their utilities or rural water district to the judgment of those board/council members.

Well, I’m writing to let anyone know that there is help – and there is specific help. It’s available in many forms. There are organizations such as KRWA that are dynamic and that get things done, helping people help themselves. All they need to do is ask

the questions and if KRWA, or other organizations cannot provide answers, they’ll find someone who can. That’s referred to as “technical assistance” – and it’s not just KRWA’s staff members helping look for a water system leak in an emergency or measuring sludge in a lagoon, that technical assistance can also be helping board/council members understand how to go about obtaining competitive pricing on repairs or services, review rates or obtain financing. Like I stated earlier, if a question is asked and the answer is not known immediately, someone will get that answer and respond to the system.

### **KanCap – helping boards/councils (and staff!)**

Another tool directly aimed to benefit board/council members is the KanCap training program. And while it targets training for boards/councils, it’s a big help for staff too. I’ll explain.

KanCap training has become successful across Kansas in recent years. The program was designed and developed by Kansas Rural Water; it was paid for with funds from the Environmental Protection Agency that were provided to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment’s (KDHE) set-aside from the Public Water Supply Loan Fund. Today, KRWA works with KDHE and local sponsors to provide KanCap training. There is no cost to cities and rural water districts to attend. KRWA will conduct twelve sessions in a calendar year. There will be two sessions in the northeast, north-central, southeast and south-central KDHE districts and one session in the northwest and southwest districts. Two additional sessions will be held based on interest. One of the sessions is provided at the KRWA Annual conference. That session is one of the “pre-conference” sessions. At the

regional sessions, KRWA provides a free lunch or evening meal. Any way you look at it – it’s FREE – and it’s a real bargain! For the most part, KanCap training sessions are held during the day while some areas prefer evening sessions. Evening scheduling generally requires two consecutive sessions.

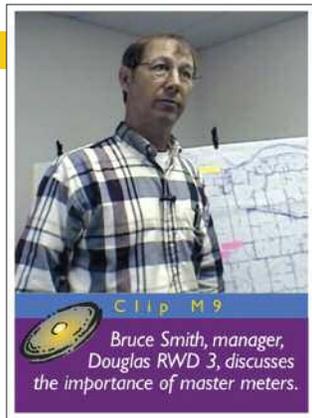
Why would KanCap training be helpful? You be the judge.

These sessions include a broad discussion of managerial, financial, and technical topics such as:

- ◆ Ideas for efficient meetings;
- ◆ Application of the Open Meetings and Open Records Act;
- ◆ Customer communications.
- ◆ Employees, do’s and don’t;
- ◆ What’s new with funding?
- ◆ Up-to-date technology issues, the latest rules and regs for your system.

I present the managerial training with a wide range of topics. I bring to light topics concerning employees, system planning, executive sessions do’s and don’ts, insurance, and numerous other topics that management deals with on a day-to-day basis. John Haas or Rose Mary Saunders of Ranson Financial Consultants, Wichita, provides the financial section. They discuss funding options, budgets, audits and rate setting, just to name a few. Jeff Lamfers or Bert Zerr, KRWA consultants, explain the technical portion of KanCap training. This section discusses the operation and maintenance of a city or rural water system. Topics range from water meters to record retention.

Each participant takes home a three-ring binder with an interactive CD that contains 52 videos featuring former and current officials. The CD links to more than 200 additional resources



**The KanCap program includes 51 videos. In one, Bruce Smith, Manager of Douglas RWD 3, discusses master meters.**

with detailed information in pdf format. KDHE provides an additional CD titled “Public Water Supply Information.” The CD is loaded with all types of forms, guides, contacts, and operator certification formation. KDHE and KRWA are

working to “update” the KanCap manual. This is because of the way files are stored and displayed with newer technology. Some videos will be replaced and the format will be upgraded as today’s technology allows for larger files to be stored on DVDs.

I encourage board/council members and staff members to attend KanCap training. Let’s visit about staff attending “board/council” training. People who work in smaller water systems and in small and even medium-sized cities know that the council depends heavily on the operator or manager, city clerk or other staff for advice. In too many communities, the boards/councils see themselves as one entity with the staff at another level. In some cases, it may be the other way around, with the staff being more in authority than the board/council. My point is that good governance requires cooperation of both boards/councils and staff



**Assistant City Clerk Lyla Lonnberg and Council Member Jeff Hillman of the city of Jetmore attended a KanCap training session in 2010.**

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**Mick West, Chairman of Atchison RWD 1 and Board Member Charles Jaegle, II, attended KanCap training in Atchison in December 2011.**

members. KRWA believes it is important that staff members attend the KanCap training. The outcome should be that there would be a greater cooperation between the boards/councils and staff, and additional respect for the responsibilities of each party. So just because KanCap was developed for boards/councils, there's a lots of

material that will benefit staff members too. Here is some encouragement: when the majority of the governing body attends with the operator, the operator will be awarded five hours of credit towards water operator certification. Again, in many communities, it's the operator or manager, city clerk or RWD bookkeeper who are invaluable to provide assistance and resources to the board or council. It's helpful when governing bodies and

staff see themselves as being one team – and attending KanCap can provide a good learning atmosphere for that.

### KanCap's calendar

For the 2011-2012 fiscal year, a “day” training was held in Chetopa with 19 people attending and the two “evening” sessions at Atchison saw 10 attending. In 2012, sessions will be held

at Hillsboro, Sterling, Concordia, Marysville, Wichita, Greensburg, Russell, and Cherryvale. There are two “floater” trainings available, meaning training can be held anywhere in the state.

So, be the SMART one, attend KanCap training, and take home the training manual with all the resources your city or RWD will need to find answers to nearly any question anyone can have about owning, operating and maintaining a public water system. I encourage any city or RWD that would like to host KanCap training for their area to contact me by email at [rita@krwa.net](mailto:rita@krwa.net) or call KRWA's office and we will be happy to schedule training in your hometown – and we'll invite the neighbors.

### KanCap, the KRWA conference, and beyond

The KanCap training program will be offered on Tuesday, March 27 at the KRWA conference in Wichita. See page 38 of this issue for a more complete description. In the meantime, if your city or rural water district is interested in participating in a good board/council training event, then I encourage you to contact KRWA or email me directly at [rita@krwa.net](mailto:rita@krwa.net), or contact any other KRWA staff member to discuss KanCap training in your community. You'll go home a lot smarter and better equipped than you've ever been to help improve your utilities and community.

*Prior to joining KRWA's staff in 2009, Rita worked with the city of Troy, KS, for 11 years. She was a certified EMT and served as the Ambulance Director for two years and supervised the volunteer staff. Rita also*



*worked on or completed most water and wastewater utility reporting requirements. Her focus at KRWA is to assist with training sessions and to provide applications for funding for community facilities.*

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