

Let's Pull Together

I want to take this opportunity to invite everyone to the 46th Annual Conference & Exhibition sponsored by KRWA, March 26 – 28 at Century II Convention Center in Wichita. In my 28 years of working for Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 4 in southeast Kansas, I know of no other event that offers as much for anyone in the water or wastewater utility industry – whether a water or wastewater system operator, a member of the board or council, as an administrator or manager or for agencies to be able to have the opportunity to meet so many people in one place at the same time. Exhibitors are a major focus of the conference and with 309 booth spaces available, it would be impossible for anyone to see everything that is available even if the total time were spent in EXPO Hall. The KRWA conference is one of the best investments that anyone can make. I can say that with all sincerity; I've attended many other conferences and KRWA is tops. And, while I don't mean to sound defensive, the registration fee at KRWA is a token compared to most other such events – and the noon lunches are still priced at the same as they were in 1984! No, the KRWA conference is not a fund-raiser for the Association – the Association's goal is to make it an investment that is as affordable as possible to anyone who wants to attend.

I am particularly pleased that KRWA selected the theme "Let's Pull Together" for the upcoming conference. My lands, regardless if it is in Topeka or Washington, or in the local city hall or RWD or public wholesale water system board meeting rooms, it is necessary to pull together. Everyone doesn't always get everything they might want in a political forum.

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After serving on a variety of boards and committees and as a leader of the National FFA Alumni, I often wonder why it is sometimes so difficult for people to get along. There has to be a willingness to address difficult issues; effective leaders have to have a vision for the "big picture" problems in a city or water system. There has to be capacity to lead. The local boards/councils need to have a relationship with their staff and they need to have confidence in their staff. When those elements are absent, then the result is a lot of micro-management. When boards/councils see themselves as customer service representatives, then they miss the bigger picture of identifying issues or setting goals to result in the investment needed for the future of the community.





Let's Pull Together!

There seem to be two challenges in particular to developing a productive relationship between staff and the board or council. First, all the board members may not see themselves as members of a team, the governing body. The second challenge is often the lack of communication.

There is nothing easy about governing. It's a big challenge for fellow board members when one or two have difficulty assimilating into the group. And staff members sometimes may not appreciate being governed. And yes, for those reasons, all of us can become disappointed in ourselves from time to time. There is no easy test to determine what problems are more important than others. The question often becomes if it's Sam's values that prevail or do we instead go with Joe's and Mary's? We all need to avoid getting into a clash of conflicts; personalities won't solve whatever the problem is. And that's how I close this article. I have been pleased to serve as the President of the KRWA board this past year. KRWA endorsed and vigorously supported various legislative proposals that have helped save water systems huge sums of money; the Association's board of directors has worked in concert with KRWA staff to fulfill the mission of KRWA long-term. Yes, there have been challenges and there will be

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more. But as just one member of the KRWA board, I'm pleased to know that this Association stands for something and as an affiliate of the National Rural Water Association, and KRWA will continue to make a difference.

See you in Wichita

I hope to see you in Wichita at the Annual Conference. I want to also remind everyone of the annual meeting of membership which will be held in conjunction with the conference at 8 a.m. on Thursday, March 28 in Room

209A. Delegate forms were sent to all KRWA voting members in early January. Regardless if a city or RWD is a member or not, anyone is welcome to attend the meeting. And, if anyone has an idea or suggestion, the KRWA board and staff want to hear it. An Association helps individuals accomplish what they may not be able to do on their own. Let's Pull Together and help make things as good as they can be for everyone.

Sam Atherton has been a member of the board of directors of the Kansas Rural Water Association since March 2006. He received a bachelor's degree from Fort Hays State University; he is also the past-president of the National FFA Alumni. He retired in late 2011 as manager of Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 4.



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1994 - 8%;	1995 - 16%;	1996 - 24%;	1997 - 11%;	1998 - 5%;
1999 - 11%;	2000 - 18%;	2001 - 22.4%;	2002 - 22%;	2003 - 26%;
2004 - 27.1%;	2005 - 19.4%;	2006 - 21%;	2007 - 21.1%	2008 - 37.8%;
2009 - 27.9%	2010 - 31.7%	2011 - 26.4%, amounting to \$348,514.		

Since 2000, RWDs have received \$2,667,194 in refunds.

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<i>Inland Marine</i>	<i>Fidelity Bonds</i>	<i>Directors and Officers Liability</i>	

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