

By Greg Duryea, Assistant General Manager, KRWA

# On-Site Technical Assistance – Critical to Many Water Systems in Kansas

**A**mong the contracts operated by the Kansas Rural Water Association is one that is administered by the Kansas Water Office to provide Technical Assistance for Public Water Suppliers throughout the state. Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) ended on June 30, 2017. This was also the end of a 4.5-year contract. The contract is funded through the Clean Drinking Water Fee. KRWA has provided assistance to cities and rural water districts, trailer courts, etc. since 1992 thanks to contracts administered by the Kansas Water Office.

I am writing this article, not as political fanfare for KRWA but to report on the work that was made available through the contract in FY17.

First, the contract requires KRWA to provide on-site technical assistance concerning the operation, maintenance, finance, management, regulatory requirements, water quality and public health concerns and/or other critical issues. KRWA provided assistance to 193 cities and 121 rural water districts and other public water supplies through this contract alone in FY17. KRWA also operates other contracts that are not reported on this contract.

## Unaccounted for water

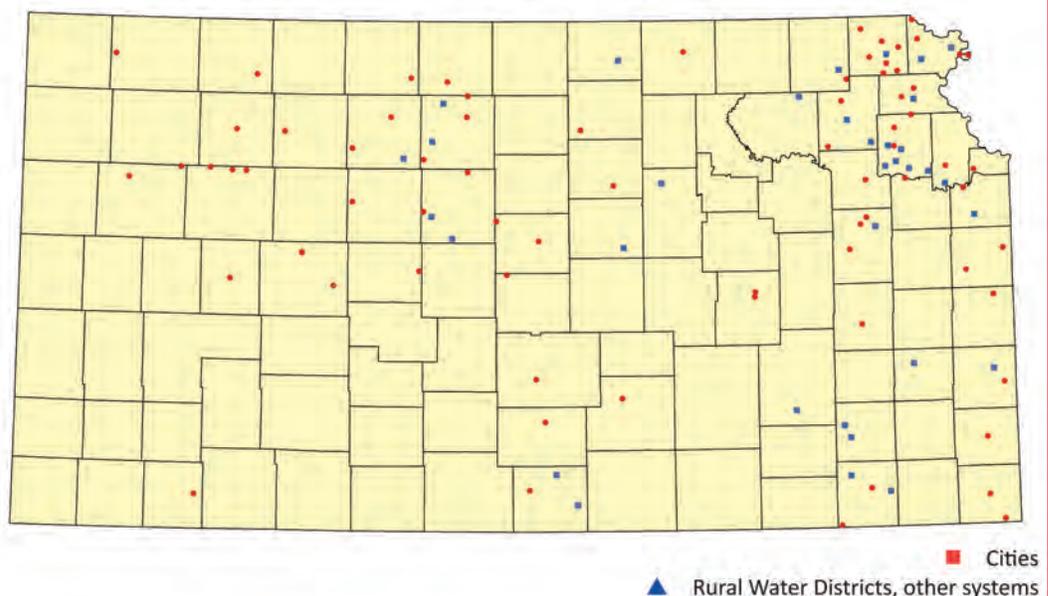
A focus of the contract is to help water utilities reduce excessive unaccounted for water. Who are candidates for help? It's those water systems that have unaccounted for water of 30 percent or more. The information is taken from Annual Water Use Reports submitted by systems to the Kansas Board of Agriculture Division of Water Resources.

KRWA visited each system to determine the primary factors for the high percentage of loss. Additional assistance was provided to these system in monitoring the quarterly water use information and then by providing assistance in meter testing and/or leak detection methods if it was determined the loss was actually due to leaks. KRWA conducted 107 water loss surveys in FY17 locating an estimated 634 gallons per minute of unaccounted for water. Annual savings in water loss equates to 333,624,600 gallons. The cost of that water on an annual basis would be \$1,321,329.

## Water Conservation Plans

The contract also provided funding for assistance in developing water conservation plans. A draft of a plan is provided to the system by the Kansas Water Office. KRWA contacted those systems identified and provided assistance in completing the plan to the systems' needs. A total of 22 utilities were provided assistance in completing their plans in FY17.

**Locations of the 107 systems where water loss surveys were conducted. The loss located totaled 635 gpm. Since 1992, this program has located 11,962 gpm in 1,830 water loss surveys.**



Another aspect of the contract was to provide assistance with Regional Public Water Supply Activities as identified by the Kansas Water Office.

Kansas Rural Water Association maintains a database of assistance provided by Association staff. Staff members are required to report activities performed when providing assistance to public water supplies. Without the dedicated staff members and the use of a database to maintain the information the reporting and recordkeeping would be a challenge.

Each quarter KRWA reports the activities performed under this contract to the Kansas Water Office.

In my twenty-plus years of work at KRWA, what I find unique and somewhat interesting is that KRWA never spends time on trying to meet “minimums” of any contract. Elmer has always suggested to staff to “just go do what needs to be done – and the agency requests will be met rather than focusing on meeting a contract minimum.” In other words, if staff just log the system and agency requests, there should be no issue with “meeting contract requirements”. KRWA does not operate on a eight-to-five basis. Many times the assistance provided requires work late at night, on weekends and even on holidays. Systems have called for help during holidays because they had operational issues and needed help. And help was provided by KRWA. KRWA staff realize the importance of maintaining water pressure in a water system. The hour or day are irrelevant when leaks occur, when chlorinators fail, when pumps stop running, etc.

KRWA also operates other contracts to provide technical assistance and training to public water and wastewater supplies in Kansas. Having dedicated staff keeps many water systems from ever making a news headline, such as, “X water system down because of main break” (or whatever the issue may be). The end goal is to empower each utility to operate with the technical, financial and managerial capacity necessary to provide water service to their customers.

### **KRWA is transparent!**

Explanation and communication is the key to keeping everyone informed. To that extent, KRWA prepares an annual report on the operation of this contract on its website. The report is at this link:

<http://krwa.net/TECHNICAL-ASSISTANCE/Assistance-via-KWO-Contract>. Readers can pull up the listing of assistance by name of system or by Regional Planning Area. Also, readers can find copies of correspondence by KRWA posted online at <http://krwa.net/TECHNICAL-ASSISTANCE/Letters-Tech-Assistance/Letters>. The KRWA website is open to the public. No,

you don't need to be a “member of KRWA” and no, you don't need to have a username or password to access any information, document or program on the KRWA site.

I am also pleased to report the Kansas Water Office just recently awarded a new five-year contract to KRWA to provide this assistance. KRWA had to bid that work and there was one other bidder.

### **Annual Conference**

I spend most of my time at KRWA in the office. One of the responsibilities I have is to help with the annual conference. It's only October 1 when I write this but I am pleased to announce that 250 of the 364 available exhibit spaces are already reserved. They will all be reserved once we send out a notice and confirmation. The exhibitors are a huge part of the conference. The number of exhibitors makes the KRWA conference the largest in Mid-America – and for that matter, for most of the U.S. Mark your calendar for March 27 – 29 and plan to attend at Century II Convention Center in Wichita. It's the biggest “down-home event annally. I hope to see you there.

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