



In April 2009 the Kansas Rural Water Association joined WaterSense®, a partnership program of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Practicing its role of leadership to sustain Kansas' communities, KRWA will use this partnership to promote water conservation in more ways than just assisting with the drafting and adoption of water conservation plans, an activity that has been performed for nearly 20 years.

The WaterSense program encourages the efficient use of water by partnering with water fixture manufacturers, landscape irrigation professionals, distributors and retailers, professional certifying organizations and promotional partners.

Like the EnergyStar program for electrical products, EPA has established standards for water conserving fixtures for the home and office. Manufacturers of these products can label their products that meet these standards as WaterSense-compliant fixtures if they have registered with the program. Over 80 manufacturers have entered the program. Additionally, over 100 retailers and distributors of WaterSense products meeting the EPA criteria have registered, including KRWA associate members Hajoca Corporation, Ferguson Enterprises and HD Supply.

Currently the program only covers bathroom faucets and toilets that use 20 percent less water than standard models, but will consider other indoor and outdoor water fixtures in the future. Flushing urinals and showerheads are targeted next.

On another front, WaterSense targets the use of water outside homes and businesses. EPA estimates that more than 3.5 billion gallons of water are wasted daily by inefficient landscape irrigation systems in the United States. By setting educational standards, organizations such as the Irrigation Association can offer certificates showing

expertise in the practice of residential and commercial irrigation. By becoming a certified under a WaterSense labeled certification program as an irrigation designer, contractor or auditor, the professional can become a partner and use the WaterSense Partner logo to promote himself or herself. Currently, only a dozen individuals holding such credentials are listed as working in Kansas, and three of these professionals appear to offer their services nationwide.

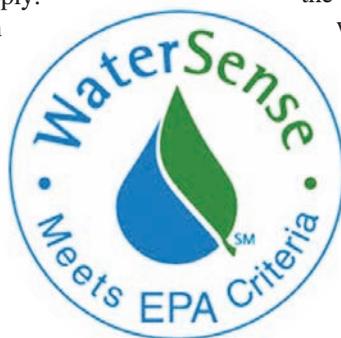
Irrigation equipment, specifically that equipment using weather- or sensor-based technology, will carry WaterSense designation in the near future. Systems that operate when the irrigated vegetation actually needs water are significantly more efficient than timer-based systems.

Promotional partners are the final piece of the WaterSense partnership. These partners typically include public water systems, branches of locals and state government, trade associations and non-profits.

Before mentioning the efforts of promotional partners, the reasons why conservation is important should be reviewed, and for most of us, reviewed again.

The most obvious reason to conserve water is to avoid a water shortage. Early-American pioneers knew how long the water in their barrel had to last before the

wagon train would arrive at the next spring or river on the trail. Water systems that rely on a single reservoir know that their ability to supply water is a process of balancing the supply and the demand. When the supply is reduced by drought, the balance must be maintained by reducing the demand, usually at a time when demand is accentuated by drought. Some groundwater users have also experienced drought impacted source water supplies. Conservation over the long-term can delay costly system capacity upgrades, save on electrical and gas energy demand and ultimately can save money.



This is the WaterSense® label used to identify qualifying products and services.



Every Drop Counts!

DID YOU KNOW...
that more than 50 percent of commercial and residential irrigation water use goes to waste due to evaporation, runoff, or overwatering?

To reduce the more than 7 billion gallons used for landscape irrigation every day, WaterSense® promotes efficient irrigation technologies such as weather-based irrigation controllers and certification programs for irrigation contractors.

Want to learn more? Visit the WaterSense Web site at www.epa.gov/watersense for a list of WaterSense irrigation partners.



The two-sided color bill stuffer above is one of many marketing products available to water utilities that become partners of the WaterSense program. Currently, there are seven different bill stuffers promoting water-efficient water fixtures in the home and efficient irrigation technologies.

Less water use results in leaving more water in the natural environment, which is good for our natural wildlife and plant communities. Less water use also results in less wastewater to treat. Overall, water conservation leads to a smaller negative environmental impact.

To bring more awareness to the ethic of water conservation, Kansas Rural Water Association has become a partner in the WaterSense program, to help water systems understand the role and the influence they have in educating their customers. Although our formal partnership is new, our practice of conservation is not. The earliest water conservation work performed by KRWA was probably leak detection, a service we still provide. It's easy to understand that water pumped and treated (the product) that never makes it to the customer meter is truly money down the drain. As inevitable as leaks are, it pays to keep leaks to a minimum. KRWA has sonic listening equipment, probes and leak correlators to diagnose, isolate and pinpoint leaks in pipelines. With years of experience and the willingness to assist water systems when the work needs to be done, many times late into the evening, KRWA is here to help. The first step taken by KRWA to promote WaterSense to the water utilities of Kansas was to update the water conservation link of the KRWA Web site at www.krwa.net.

The Kansas Water Office (KWO) is another WaterSense partner in Kansas. This agency plays a key role with their responsibility to draft and provide guidelines for water conservation by municipal, industrial and irrigation water uses in Kansas. Municipal water conservation guidelines were first formulated in 1986. They have since been revised in 1990 and 2007. Kansas water conservation plan templates have two major parts. The first part is a discussion of water conservation goals and the identification of practices to maintain current conservation levels and proposed practices to improve conservation. The second major part of a Kansas water conservation plan is drought management. Three stages of drought response (Water Watch, Water Warning and Water Emergency) and the triggers to declare each of the three stages are written and presumably made available to customers to educate them of their role in conserving the system's water supply.

KWO currently estimates that 75 percent of the public water systems in Kansas have adopted a water conservation plan. Kansas Rural Water Association has and will continue to partner with KWO when assistance is requested. KRWA will also continue to assist water systems that request assistance directly.

The city of Olathe is the most active Kansas public water system WaterSense partner. They have a stand-alone web page (www.olatheks.org/OMS/Water/Conservation)



The city of Olathe Water Conservation Plan is available online.

dedicated to explaining water conservation to their customers. The web page displays a WaterSense Partner logo and provides a link to the EPA WaterSense web page. There is also a link to the city of Olathe Water Conservation Plan in portable document format (pdf). The only other public water systems enrolled as WaterSense partners are the city of Alma and Rural Water District No. 2, Clay County. The city of Alma relies on two surface water reservoirs. Clay RWD 2 is a groundwater system with a relatively small, drought-susceptible recharge area. These two water systems have only been registered for a few months or less, but are on the way to increasing their viability through education.

Becoming a partner allows a water system to learn how other water systems have used these tools and tools of their own design to reach their water conservation goals.

When a promotional partners registers with the program, they will receive a Promotional Tool Kit. It is currently a 34-page booklet with a compact disk (CD) that contains digital files of the examples and graphics. The booklet explains the program and the proper use of the

registered logos. It also gives tips for communicating with the public and provides web tools, brochures, fact sheets, presentations and resource cards. It also has tips for working with the media, and provides sample press releases, letters to the editor, and opinion-editorials. The Tool Kit also provides public service announcements (PSA's). Becoming a partner allows a water system to learn how other water systems have used these tools and tools of their own design to reach their water conservation goals.

Kansas Rural Water Association is the third state-level member of the National Rural Water Association to become a WaterSense partner. With one or more areas of the country suffering from water shortages at what seems to be every day of the year - every year, the importance of conservation will only become more recognized. With greater recognition of the challenges water systems will face, more and better solutions will become available and more widespread. Eventually, what is currently practiced as improved water conservation will become the norm, where the waste of water is recognized and avoided.

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