

Disasters Will Strike – Let's Be Ready to Help Each Other

In the United States, many winter storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, floods, and even a couple of Tsunami Wave Major Disaster Declarations have been issued since January 2011. If the Emergency Declarations and Fire Management Assistance Declarations are added to the major disasters that have been issued in 2011 the impact is even more wide spread. Looking at the Presidential disaster declarations map from January 2000 to January 2010, it is easy to see that disaster has struck Kansas more than once in many counties in the state during this ten-year period. There is nothing we can do to prevent disasters but we can be prepared to assist our neighbors when disaster does strike.

The Kansas Mutual Aid Program for Utilities (KSMAP) has been increasing membership in recent years; presently there are ninety-five members. This program is a cooperative effort of Kansas Rural Water Association, Kansas Municipal Utilities, Kansas Section American Water Works Association, and Kansas Water Environment Association along with support from Kansas Department of

Health and Environment and Kansas Corporation Commission. This program was developed because after recent disaster experiences, it was determined that:

- ◆ Utilities require specialized resources, equipment, and trained, certified personnel to work on utility systems;
- ◆ Those responding to a disaster often count on having basic utility services to perform their responsibilities;
- ◆ Widespread disasters can quickly outstrip the local or regional resources that might be available to help;
- ◆ Disasters can impact utility employees and their families, creating an even greater need for help from other utilities;
- ◆ Agreements need to be in place before a disaster strikes in order to receive federal reimbursement.

The process of becoming a part of KSMAP is simple. The process is completed through the KSMAP Web site at www.ksmmap.org.

Your organization must approve the KSMAP Program Agreement by having your governing body or board of directors adopt a resolution authorizing your organization to

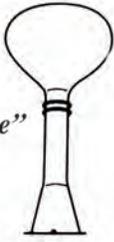
sign the Program Agreement to become a part of KSMAP. In general, the program agreement outlines the purpose of the program, the responsibilities of participation, the procedures for activating the program, and the reimbursement of expenses. Once your city or RWD approves the Program Agreement, you then complete an information survey about each utility you operate including basic information about the system, resources, and personnel that could be made available. The information surveys will be made available after you register your system online. When you login, use the "My Account" Tab. Your utility's information will be included in an online, searchable database to allow for effective coordination of resources when disaster strikes. This database will allow participating utilities and coordinators to search for resources by city, county, or region to find the needed assistance as close as possible.

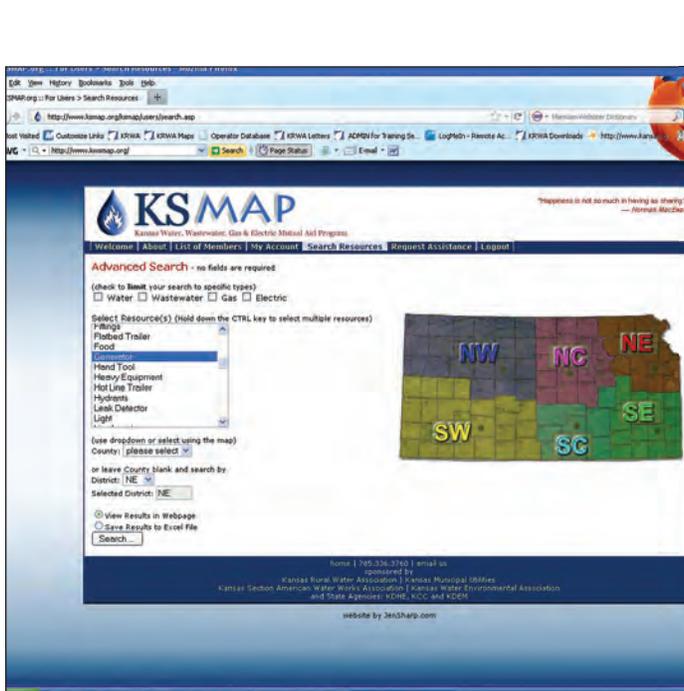
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all information is updated and that you provide a complete itemization of the resources and personnel that your system may have available. If you are not a member you can find the program agreement and resolution at www.ksmap.org. You can also contact me by email at jim@krwa.net or by phone at 785-218-9061. KSMAP is planning on holding a two-day training session and tabletop exercise at Crisis City near Salina on October 19 and 20, 2011. Further details will be available later this summer.

Kansas Rural Water Association will have this session and other training sessions on the KRWA Web site at www.krwa.net under the training menu. I encourage you to attend.

There is no cost involved in joining KSMAP. The hope is that your system will never need to call for assistance because of a disaster. Knowing that help is just a phone call away is always reassuring. Citizens of Kansas have always shown the strong commitment to helping each other and this program will better assist the coordination efforts in a disaster or large scale emergency. If your system is already a member of KSMAP, please take some time to make sure

Jim Jackson has been employed by KRWA since January 2004; he is currently KRWA Training Director. Jim began working in the utility industry in 1985 and has both municipal and rural water experience. Jim holds Class II Water Operator Certification.





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