



Thursday Luncheon

National Rural Water Association President Joe Liles Addresses Thursday Noon Luncheon

I tell you what – one thing about Kansas people – they sure do like to eat. I’ve never eaten so much in three days in all my life. I told my wife last night that I was going to have to go home and go on a diet.

Congratulations to all the award winners named last night. I am very proud for you and I know that you are all well deserving. It’s great to be recognized for the work that you do. Many of these ladies and gentlemen have worked many, many years in the water industry; we are all proud that they are able to attain this recognition.

It’s good to be here in Wichita. It’s my first trip here; it’s a wonderful town. I’m really impressed with the river that runs through here. I’m a water enthusiast, a boater with my family over the years. We always enjoy the riverfront.

Congratulations on your 44th Annual Conference. Kansas has been mentioned as probably one of the oldest associations around the country. On behalf of the National Rural Water Association (NRWA), I would like to congratulate you for all the hard work that you’ve done to build the Kansas Association into the rural water association that it is today.

Dennis (Schwartz) alluded this morning to the organization of the National Rural Water Association and we are so proud that after thirty-four years, that the National Association has a state association operating in every state. In December 2010, we organized the Hawaiian Rural Water Association.



Joe Liles, NRWA President

And it was a grand time – and I could just see your former director from Kansas – how proud he would have been had he been here to take part with us that day. Kansas was one of the original water associations that organized the National Rural Water Association in

1976; there have been many of us who have worked for many years to be sure that there would be an association in every state. It has not been easy. But T. J. (Dickerson, founding KRWA and NRWA director) would have been a proud person as an original director from Kansas and the six other state directors at that time.

On behalf of the NRWA Board of Directors, we would also like to congratulate Dennis, Sam and the board of directors for the wonderful job that you do, along with the staff, and

especially the membership. I know that sometimes members think, “We’ll just leave that up to the board or leave that up to the staff to take care of that.” But members play such an important role in the rural water association in Kansas and across the country. You have an impact all over the country. Kansas is among the best associations in the country. I was in Texas last week. Elmer, they told me to tell you how great I was treated in Texas and you couldn’t top it – but you have. I just want to tell you how thankful Sally and I have been to come to Kansas this week to spend time with you and to become acquainted. We try to do this with as many states as we can. You have a wonderful organization. With almost 2,300 in attendance, that’s the largest attendance of any association that I’m aware of being held anytime. The 58 educational sessions that you held, more than 300 exhibit booths – you put together a great show – so congratulations to you on that.

I would like to update you a little on the National Association funding levels for 2011. The funding level and the federal budget were supposed to start back in October, but this Congress that we have has not been able to agree on that.

I thought the theme of your conference this year is very timely and very appropriate. Help make a difference! I want to discuss how you as members of the Association can help make a difference, not only for Kansas Rural Water but all across the country.

Today's political climate; concern for funding

This year, we have more than one hundred new members of Congress elected to represent us in Washington, D.C. We've all heard about the Tea Party. Let me clarify one thing right here. I want to make sure that everybody understands that Kansas Rural Water, National Rural Water, Kentucky Rural Water – we are all non-partisan. We would like to think we have friends on both sides of the aisle. I don't want anyone to take it that I'm slamming the Democrat or the Republicans; I have friends on both sides. Please don't take offense to anything I'm going to say here. We've all heard about the Tea Party and they have changed the direction that our country has been going. We've all heard that they have brought to a national focus the balancing of the budget – elimination of earmarks and cutting the budget. Earmarks have been utilized all over the country. I don't know about your local communities, but I don't suspect there are many communities here today that have not gotten an earmark at some point in time from their senators or representatives. These were used to build water lines or sewer lines, or roads, or parks, or some capital improvement within your community. We have all benefited from that. So, they are not all bad. I think the bad thing about them was that they were abused in a few cases. In some way or another, for Congress to be able to direct funds, as they would like to be directed, they will have to come up with a new course to be able to do that. Because in many cases, many of the projects would not have been funded that were funded and those were very needed by the communities. And who knows better than your elected



representative what you really need? The changes that have been brought about in the elimination of earmarks is a new political reality in D.C. It is changing the way that Congress does business. It has changed the way that we're going to have to do business in the future. There is one thing that is very clear to us and it affects us very deeply. The elimination of earmarks at this time has eliminated NRWA's EPA training and tech assistance and source water protection programs. That's a program that's been funded by Congress through earmarks since 1976. And that program has provided training and technical assistance all across the country since 1976. So what are we going to do? We've been working in Congress since last December trying to convince Congress that we need to continue this program of training and technical assistance to rural water and wastewater systems across America. We've lobbied in the House; we've lobbied in the Senate. One week we think we have things worked out, the next week we find we don't. The House passed the budget. That budget did not include the EPA training and technical assistance programs. It did include the Circuit Rider program, wastewater circuit rider and FSA Source Water Program that are funded through USDA Rural Development. The FSA Source Water

Program was cut \$370,000. They cut the USDA Rural Development loan and grant program by \$163 million. So, we didn't fare too bad – we just lost the EPA program.

A little over a week ago there were efforts by the Obama Administration to reach out to the House to try to negotiate a budget. I also meant to say that the budget passed by the House back in February was rejected by the Senate. The Senate has not been able to come up with a

budget for anything. We are advised today that the Senate and the House leadership are in conference to try to come up with a budget. And there's a possibility that they may do it. And there's a possibility they may not do it. But we have really worked through our state rural water association to try to be sure – and Kansas has played a major part in this – that your Congressional representatives know where you stand as far as the EPA training and technical assistance programs. We think we are going to be all right as far as the USDA and others are concerned, but we are really concerned about the EPA programs. We asked each state to contact their representatives whether they are Republican or Democrat to be sure to express the need and benefits of the training program. We've done that in every state. Hopefully, we've made our point. And we've gotten clear indications that we have. The House Appropriations Chairman is from Kentucky; his name is Hal Rogers. He's a good friend of rural water. We've known Hal for many years. He has been a big earmark man, and he's a big supporter of rural water. When he accepted the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, he had to commit that he would be for eliminating earmarks, that he would be for balancing the budget, cutting the budget back to a realistic level. He will

support rural water if he has the opportunity. Through his staff the opportunity comes when they begin negotiations with the Senate. The House budget began with a proposed reduction by about \$60 billion; we are told today that they may agree to about \$33 billion in cuts. That's a substantial cut. We are just hoping and praying that our representatives in the House and Senate do not forget rural water and the EPA training and technical assistance programs.

Developing relationships

We need to think about the future. For years we have concentrated on building relationships. But with the new thinking about balancing the budget, we are going to have to really step up our efforts. We will have to direct more effort to an educational process with our representatives. We need to educate them on the needs and benefits of what Kansas Rural Water does for you, the local utilities. You are the key; it's not the Kansas Rural Water Association. It's the local utilities – the grassroots

that make the difference. That back-home contact right there in your district or city – every time we have a chance we need to try to make sure that we talk to our representatives about it. I know it's a very difficult thing to do; I've been there; it's hard. They didn't know Joe Liles and it took years to build a relationship. But we try to do that in Kentucky, whether they are Democrat or Republican. I was parking at the Reagan Airport; I let my wife Sally out with the bags. My congressman passed by and then backed up and said, "Hey Joe, where you going?" I told him I was headed to Kansas. He picked me up and took me into the terminal. He parked his car right there. I asked him if he would talk to Congressman Rogers about our EPA training and tech assistance programs. He told me he would do that. I just throw that out there; you don't develop a relationship with your congressman like that overnight.

Our strength of the National Rural Water Association is really built on small communities standing together for our state associations delivering for the common message all across the country about the needs and benefits of the association. It's because of what systems do back home. I encourage you to become involved at every opportunity you can.

I want to touch for a minute on that National conference this fall in Louisville, Kentucky. I want to be sure to invite everybody to attend. Please try to put that on your agenda if you can. There will be more than 1,000 exhibitors on the days of the conference, October 4 to 6. There will be eighty educational sessions so it's another opportunity for you to come together with rural water people from across the United States.

I want to thank all of you again, on behalf of the 27,900 rural water systems across America for the job you are doing here in Kansas. Just keep up the good work; keep working together. Thank you very much.

Never run out of food at a conference! And KRWA doesn't.

The ala carte items at any function sometime seem to make or break a meeting. The KRWA conference is no different.

And even though glazed donuts should not be a top menu item on anyone's list (as a healthy food), they continue to be the first item that goes and people ask for more when they are gone. But oh boy, is that German coffee cake good!

For the hospitality food, the 2011 conference-goers consumed the following:

50 doz. glazed donuts	12# regular coffee
40 doz. cake donuts	4# decaf
40 doz. blueberry/strawberry strudels	36 cases soda
24 doz. danish	16 gallons orange juice
20 doz. cinnamon twists	10 gallons apple juice
20 doz. bagels cut in half	30 gallons mixed fruit
25 coffee cakes (24 servings each)	5 bags apples
40 doz. muffins	4 bags oranges
170 doz. cookies	42 hands of bananas
	4,000 bottles of water
	57 cannisters of soda



Conference Goers Donate \$5,065 to WaterPAC

The WaterPAC Raffle is an event that keeps the KRWA board members pretty much occupied during the Annual Conference. In addition to raising funds for WaterPAC, the National Rural Water Association's political action committee, the event also provides an opportunity for the KRWA directors to meet many of the conference-goers, and to visit with members and non-members alike.

As an affiliate of the National Rural Water Association (NRWA), KRWA members benefit from the legislative representation of NRWA in Washington. NRWA works in support of reasonableness for regulations dealing with water and wastewater utilities. Work by NRWA and other water organizations has helped to impact in the development of legislation or reauthorization of programs. The WaterPAC Raffle is one opportunity for conference goers to support the NRWA political action committee, WaterPAC. In 2011, the raffle raised \$5,065, all of which was sent to WaterPac. Donations ranged from \$1 to \$100; donations were made by 221 individuals. The chart at right shows the names of the winners of the WaterPAC Raffle prizes. KRWA contributes the cost of the prizes for the raffle. KRWA and NRWA appreciate the outstanding support for WaterPAC by Kansans. Donations in prior years have been as follows: 2005 - \$3,001; 2006 - \$3,000; 2007 - \$4,324; 2008 - \$4,692; 2009 - \$6,110; 2010 - \$5,073.



WaterPAC Raffle Winners

Prize	Winner	System
"Hunters' Star" Quilt	Jeff Schlabach	Washington RWD 1
Campbell-Hausfeld SHP Air Compressor	Richard Carter	Wilson County Health Department
EdenPure Heater	Jim Knight	City of Seneca
Dyson DC25 Vacuum Sweeper	Debbie Schlabach	Washington RWD 1
Chevrolet Tool Box	Frank Hulsing	Nemaha RWD 3
Weber Grill	Debbie Schlabach	Washington RWD 1
DeWalt 18V Impact Wrench	Allen Markely	Douglas RWD 2
Stihl FS90R Weedeater	Debbie Schlabach	Washington RWD 1
Stihl MS250C Chainsaw	Jim Knight	City of Seneca
Sanyo 32" LCD TV/DVD Player	Kyla Schlabach	Washington RWD 1

Quilt Winners

The 2011 conference featured pieced quilts as door prizes with one as a WaterPAC Raffle prize. "Hunters' Star" was won by Jeff Schlabach, Washington RWD 1. At right, Connie Weller from Saline RWD 1 was the lucky winner of "Sunflower Prints". Below, Terry Brown, Butler RWD 5, won the original design "Sunflower Stars" by Kathleen Ronnebaum in honor of the Kansas sesquicentennial. And, shown lower right, Dan Fischer with USDA Rural Development in Manhattan, was the winner of the pattern, "Popsicle Sticks." KRWA conferences have given away more than sixty pieced quilts since 1983. Patterns for 2012 are already in the works.





Pump Boys & Dinettes – an Entertainment Delight

Transforming the Mary Jane Teall Theater at Century II into a gas station was not the goal. The goal was to present another top-notch musical entertainment for the 2011 conference. And the challenge was met head-on by the troupe from Crown Uptown Theatre as they presented *Pump Boys & Dinettes*.

The stage was that gas station on Highway 57, somewhere between Frog Level and Smyrna. In the show, across the blacktop is a roadside eatery called the Double Cup Diner. The four guys at the station – Jim, Eddie, Jackson, and L.M., have been known to do some auto repairs, but only when aided by quantities of time and beer. The Cupp sisters, Prudie and Rhetta, celebrate their home cooking with the same zeal they bring to being neighborly with the boys. *Pump Boys & Dinettes* is their musical tribute to life by the roadside!



And the 2011 conference-goers loved the show! Between changing tires and baking pies, the gang performed a rousing, down-home mix of country western, rock ‘n’ roll and blues in this charming tale of friendship, romance and life’s simple pleasures. The show was filled with beautiful harmonies reminiscent of Southern Gospel music roots, the twangs of old country music, and down home humor. Produced by Crown Uptown Theatre, *Pump Boys & Dinettes* was a wonderful, fun show, and a great way to cap off the day of sessions and exhibits, luncheons and awards.

Thanks again to Crown Uptown Theatre for bringing *Pump Boys & Dinettes* to the KRWA conference.





44th Annual Meeting of Membership Draws 109 Delegates; Schwartz, Shroyer and Soetaert Elected To Three-Year Term

A total of 109 delegates were registered by Association members to attend the 44th Annual Meeting of Membership. The meeting was held on Thursday, March 31, 2011 at the Century II Performing Arts and Convention Center in Wichita, KS. Delegates elected Dennis Schwartz (Shawnee RWD 8), Bill Shroyer (city of Sabetha), and Allan Soetaert (Johnson RWD 7) to a three-year term on the KRWA board.

Treasurer Darrell Schlabach presented the Treasurer's Report. A copy of the completed audit report for 2010 was distributed to every person in attendance. In his review, Darrell commented that the Association had received an unqualified opinion on the audit by the firm of Arthur White & Associates. Several sections of the report were reviewed in detail.

Dennis Schwartz, Chairman of the KRWA Legislative Committee, reported that few bills advanced in the 2011 Kansas Legislative Session. He commented that Doug Mays & Associates was again providing legislative liaison on behalf of KRWA. He also reviewed the formation of the National Rural Water Association and commented that KRWA is among the strongest state rural water associations in the nation. He referred to ongoing efforts by KRWA and other affiliates of the National Rural Water Association to obtain support for the



The Board of Directors, Kansas Rural Water Association 2011. Seated: Patricia Shaffer, Sharon Dwyer. Standing: Sam Atherton, Bill Shroyer, Allan Soetaert, Dennis Schwartz, and Darrell Schlabach

National Rural Water Programs that provide training and technical assistance and Source Water Protection.

President Atherton complimented KRWA staff on providing good services on behalf of the Association.

Elmer Ronnebaum, General Manager, presented a report of the Association's activities in 2010, including attendance by 5,760 people at training sessions with the largest percentage of those attending being operators. Elmer stated that operators in Kansas rely on the KRWA training program to gain necessary credits towards certification.

A review of membership showed a total of 440 municipal members, 256 rural water districts and public wholesale districts and 249 associates. KRWA also has conducted 965 water loss surveys from 1992 to 2010. Other discussions included the Kansas Mutual Aid program, board/council (KanCap) training, Utility Management Certification and the Association's Website where follow-up letters concerning assistance by KRWA staff are posted. John Provove offered complimentary remarks concerning the assistance that their district, Butler RWD 4, has received from KRWA.