

RWDs, Cities Send KRWA to Washington with Their Support

Traveling to Washington may seem like a vacation to some – and it might well be – but my trips on behalf of the Kansas Rural Water Association have not been what I consider vacations. Although I was unable to go this year, in early February, Dennis Schwartz and Elmer Ronnebaum represented KRWA at the National Rural Water Rally; it was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, two blocks north of the Capitol. They joined other state rural water associations from across the U.S., meeting with congressional offices to ask for support for funding of USDA Rural Development loan and grant programs and for state revolving funds for water and wastewater systems. They also asked for support of the Circuit Rider programs that have for years funded three staff members at KRWA. They also asked for support on behalf of National Rural Water Association for the new training and technical assistance and source water protection program that Congress has appropriated funds for and which was included in the reconciliation budget approved by the House and then signed by the President. They also discussed ways to streamline the public notification requirements of the Total Organic Carbon Rule and thanked Senators Roberts and Moran and Representatives Jenkins and Pompeo for supporting legislation to end the mailing requirement of the Consumer Confidence Report. We all know that the temperament in Congress is somewhat changed – but KRWA asked for support of funding programs just the same. Providing funding for improvements in utilities is necessary for many systems to develop or improve. And keeping systems operating and in compliance is essential.

The dedication by local systems and KRWA can make a difference! It is important that we focus continued efforts on informing those who are elected of the needs and concerns of water and wastewater utilities in Kansas.

Systems support KRWA

The EPA funding that was approved by Congress is to be awarded competitively and is to go to an organization that demonstrates it has the support of a majority of the water systems in the country. National Rural Water Association has nearly 28,000 members through its affiliate state associations. KRWA asked member and non-member cities and RWDs in Kansas to consider offering a letter in support of this funding and the application by NRWA for the training and technical assistance program. I am pleased to report that the KRWA

office received more than 600 letters as of February 15. A listing of those was provided to the members of Congress from Kansas; printouts of several letters were included in the information packets provided to them. All letters were scanned and will be presented to EPA or delivered in a package, whichever way is preferred, to make the point that large systems and small systems – cities, rural water districts and public wholesale districts in Kansas support this training and technical assistance program and KRWA.

As President of the KRWA board and as a long-time manager of Public Wholesale District No. 4, I know that the Association has rarely asked systems to write letters of support. But in this case, there is no better way to demonstrate support than by having statements from the systems. If support were not there, people in systems would not be willing to offer such letters. I think it shows that systems appreciate the help and support they have received for many years through the KRWA – whether attending free training sessions, receiving onsite technical assistance, being helped in finding the right financing, or through the myriad of regulatory issues, needless to mention the legislative proposals that were introduced, passed and now benefit RWDs and cities in Kansas. The receipt of nearly 600 letters was a strong statement by systems. More will come!



More than 600 cities, RWDs and Public Wholesale Districts provided a letter to KRWA in support of the Association's training and technical assistance programs. Here are excerpts from a few of those letters.

Saline Rural Water District #7 is operating on a budget with little room for consultants, attorneys, engineers, GIS experts, etc. The board has been able to provide water to our consumers at a reasonable cost, thanks to the Kansas Rural Water Association and their support.

– Laurie Trautwein, Saline RWD 7

The staff work tirelessly and have helped us in so many ways these past seven years during my tenure. We have called upon them in the middle of the night with some water issues and they always respond promptly! I don't think they ever sleep!

– Brenda L. Adkins, Jackson RWD 3

We rely heavily on the training assistance provided by KRWA. If not for this program, our employees could not be certified operators without an increase to the public to pay for training. Most of us smaller utility providers do not have the resources to contract or hire a regulatory compliance expert. Again, KRWA steps in to meet our needs to comply with state and federal regulations.

– Dana Carney, Solomon, KS

“The city’s Water and Wastewater Divisions attend the annual KRWA conference, which provides an easy and affordable way to obtain continuing education credit hours. Staff also assists the City with random water meter testing to ensure that our system is properly accounting for water use.”

– David B. Dillner, City of Abilene

We have been members of KRWA for many years. During that time, their assistance has been invaluable. We have called for help with water leaks, advice on how to handle difficult installations, how to handle filing reports for the State, testing our master meters, developing a new Emergency Water Supply Plan, and help with preparing ARRA reports. The items listed are a few of the ways that we have benefited in our District. In addition, our operator and at least two of the district board members attend the Annual Conference hosted by the Kansas Rural Water Association in late March of each year. They attend training sessions in various areas of interest.

– Ann Ochampaugh, Rooks RWD 3

We are a new, small water district (first operational in 2007) and have relied totally on KRWA-sponsored training and assistance to get this new water district operational. Without this training/assistance we would not have a rural water district to serve the farms and ranches in this historically dry part of the state. This training/assistance has been and continues to be critical to the operation of the RWD.

– Nick Kennedy, Phillips RWD 1

The city of Sabetha has four operators who are certified in both water and wastewater from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. All four operators were trained using KRWA workshops. The KRWA workshops are the most informative of all the training providers in the State of Kansas. KRWA’s training sessions are generally free which obviously can be a major issue with small city governments like the city of Sabetha. KRWA has also provided assistance to the city of Sabetha with water rate reviews, compliance issues at both water and wastewater plants, and many other issues. KRWA’s services have proven to be invaluable to cities like Sabetha throughout Kansas.

– Bill Shroyer, City of Sabetha

Our rural water district has requested assistance from the Kansas Rural Water Association on various occasions concerning detection of water loss, explanation of water regulations passed down to us, and assistance with rate reviews. We have greatly appreciated the amount of training provided to our personnel through KRWA-sponsored workshops and specialized training sessions. In addition, the KRWA Annual Conference & Exhibition is a wealth of information on finances, long range planning, personnel issues, and public relations, to the betterment of not only our small district, but all public wholesale water supply systems in the State of Kansas.

– Donna R. Neal, Cowley RWD 4

I want to invite everyone to attend the upcoming 45th annual conference and exhibition sponsored by KRWA. This is one of the premier water and wastewater conferences in the U.S. and we have it right here in Wichita, Kansas! The program is printed in this issue and a booklet was mailed in early January. From the Attorneys’ Forum to sessions on new metering technology, financing, operation and maintenance issues – this conference has something for everyone There’s a lineup of fun too – including the opening nite “Carnival Roundup”, special guest speakers Marci Penner of the Kansas Sampler Foundation on Wednesday and Patricia Clark, State Director of USDA Rural Development at the Thursday luncheon. I hope you will join in congratulating this year’s award winners and then settling back to hear the phenomenal Cindy Summers on stage in her show, “One Voice!” It’s going to be a terrific event overall and it’s only available because of your strong Kansas Rural Water Association. Enjoy!

Sam Atherton recently retired as Manager of Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 4 located at Big Hill Reservoir near Cherryvale, KS. Sam 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.



Mark your calendar!