

Technological Advances Won't Change KRWA's Mission



Technology has changed over the last 20 years; KRWA's mission has not.

I began work with the Kansas Rural Water Association in June 1993. There have been many changes since then in how data and information is processed and stored by KRWA. It's no different for cities and RWDs.

My first introduction to a computer was by KRWA. Elmer showed me the first computer KRWA owned. It is a Kaypro 10, which was the first hard drive transportable computer made. With a 10-meg hard drive and 5.5-inch monochrome screen, KRWA used it to efficiently organize training sessions, track attendance and prepare a magazine and type thousands of letters. The only thing I really knew about computers even in 1993 when joining KRWA was how to flip the "ON" switch. With patience by other staff, I finally became better acquainted with the use of various

software programs. Few people likely realize that it was KRWA that provided computer training in the early 1980s. With Merle and Linda Windler, KRWA rented computer labs at Baker University, and four other community colleges across Kansas to provide training. Often a van full of desktop computers with the typical CRT monitors were hauled to places like Salina or other towns where training sessions were held. In those days, the challenge was to first help people understand that the computer was a tool, not just another game toy. Remember PacMan and the Atari?

The advancements in computer technology are mind-boggling. No longer considered by most people to be game machines, computers today are nearly essential for any office to operate efficiently. Computers help people better determine correct calculations for all sorts of questions to help them make better decisions – or to track tens of thousands of bits of information. The information world is compounded with the use of the Internet and its associated media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Today, searching for replacement parts for a 1967 Mustang is a few clicks of the mouse away.

Speaking of Facebook or Twitter, I frankly don't need to know nor do I care what my cousin might have had for lunch today! People often post information about themselves that is more revealing than they might like to realize. Like all new tools, social media may have a place, if used appropriately.

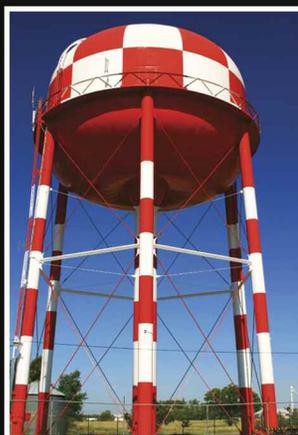
From bag to I-pad

Another technological wonder is the cell phone. I remember having a bag phone. The purpose was to communicate with work and also family. However, it was only useful while in a vehicle because of needing a power source. But it worked very well. Today's cell phones are basically handheld computers. Often, someone is using a cell phone to surf the Internet while at the same time talking to someone on the phone. That's

WHEN DO YOU SERVICE YOUR WATER STORAGE TANK?

IF THE ANSWER IS "AFTER A PROBLEM"
...YOU'RE SPENDING TOO MUCH

- COATINGS
- CLEANING
- INSPECTIONS
- REPAIRS
- ACCESSORIES
- SERVICE
- CHLORINE RETENTION
- PORTABLE PRESSURE TANKS



CUNNINGHAM

Sandblasting & Painting Co, Inc

"Your Tank & Tower Company"

RIVERTON, KS

620-848-3030

info@WATERTANKSPECIALIST.COM

overload for me. Skype allows a person to see who they are talking to if both parties have the program on their cell phone.

KRWA's mission: unchanged!

The point of this article is to give a brief review of changes in technology over the last thirty or so years. While the tools and resources KRWA uses have changed, the mission of KRWA has not, nor have the needs of systems. KRWA staff members continue to provide excellent water and wastewater system training, help with water loss detection, meter testing, line locating, rate reviews, and helping systems better understand and comply with regulatory issues.

There's no "app" to load on an iPhone to help anyone find that water leak. It still takes a logical thought process and some experience and good equipment. KRWA uses sonic listening, leak correlation equipment and data loggers to detect leakage. It still requires discipline and determination to locate all the contributors to a water loss problem. It requires accurate mapping of pipelines in order to locate leakage. Anyone who's ever tried to locate a three-gallon per minute leak on a line that was installed diagonally across a cultivated field, pasture or cow lot understands what I'm referring to. When there's no tracer wire or GPS mapping, you can only hope that there is still someone who is available who may recall the location of the pipeline.

Sustaining Kansas communities

The dedication required to operate a local water or wastewater system or any other utility demands that it be more than "just a job". From board or council members who donate their time at meetings or who may even help operate the smaller systems to the operators, clerks and bookkeepers who deal with the administrative challenges, it's important that everyone pulls together to provide the best services possible to customers. Customers depend on you to provide quality services.

Since 1993 my work at KRWA has changed from being on the road daily working with utilities, to now being in the office a large part of the time. Working one-on-one with a system, whether it is looking for leaks, helping calculate

From 1992 to December 31, 2012, KRWA conducted 1,257 water loss surveys. That effort has located an estimated 9,925 gallons per minute, or 5.216 billion gallons of water loss. The value of that water, in costs, was \$11,071,470. That is a mind-boggling amount of water and money. Don't believe it? Every leak that KRWA has located has been logged. Today, there are approximately 50 public water systems in Kansas that continue to lose 30 percent or more of the water produced or purchased. With increasing costs, such losses will devastate the financial statements of many of those systems. Anyone wanting help with water loss is encouraged to call KRWA. Funding to help provide assistance with water loss is a benefit of a contract between the Kansas Water Office and KRWA with funding from the Clean Drinking Water Fee.

The dedication required to operate a local water or wastewater system or any other utility demands that it be more than "just a job".



water rates, or changing a pump, was always very satisfying – and it still is. KRWA staff have unique relationships with thousands of people across the state. I am grateful for having the opportunity to work for KRWA, which means working for cities and RWDs and other utilities. Working together makes the work by KRWA staff something more than a job – it's personally gratifying to partner with so many people.

I read a line in another article in this issue. It says, "I will let you do well what you do well so that I can continue to try and do what I do better!" It's through the sharing of experiences and training that KRWA excels in providing the best training and technical assistance available. KRWA understands systems' needs and KRWA has an excellent rapport with cities and RWDs and other utilities across the state.

Please do not hesitate to contact KRWA if your water or wastewater system needs any type of assistance or if you have suggestions for training topics. Let's all continue to pull together to make things the best they can be for everyone.

Greg Duryea has worked for KRWA since 1993 as a Technical Assistance. He presently also serves as Assistant General Manager which includes help in managing KRWA's training and technical assistance programs. Greg holds a Class I water operator certification; he is the certified operator for Sycamore Springs Resort in Brown County.

