

The KRWA Conference is Like a Huge Family Reunion; KRWA Works To Keep It Relevant

The 2016 annual conference is behind us and KRWA staff are already working to make the 2017 annual conference bigger and better. It is an extraordinary task to keep such a conference relevant and interesting each year; the work behind the scene often is taken for granted. To make the conference run smoothly it takes lots of people behind the curtain. All of the KRWA staff and other volunteers are critical. Folks with the Wichita Visitors Bureau have commented that KRWA is the most-organized large conference that is held at Century II. That takes planning and attention to detail from start to end. The presenters at sessions, special guest speakers, the moderators and of course the exhibitors all combine to make the KRWA conference a top-flight event, unparalleled in mid-America.

It was great to hear all the comments on the last day of the conference that most felt this was the best conference

in years. In order to improve on each year's conference the board of directors as well as staff need your input as to what you would like to see in future years. KRWA is *your association* and it's *your conference*. Without you it would not exist. So my challenge to any reader is: just do not sit on your ideas – please share them with the board and staff.

Each year the conference is somewhat bittersweet. Every year we lose members of the industry that have served their communities well. It is sad that the rest of us will no longer see these people at future conferences but KRWA welcomes the new faces that have taken their place. The general meeting of the membership that was held on Thursday, March 31, marked one of those bittersweet moments for me. Sharon Dwyer finished her term on the board after 18 years. Sharon was one of those mother figures that I looked up to when I first came on the

board. Sharon will be missed on the board but we welcome Scott Robertson, Utility Superintendent from the city of Hesston, who was elected for his first term. I am confident that Scott will serve the membership well.

Following the meeting of the membership on Thursday, the KRWA board of directors held their meeting to select new officers for the year. I consider it a great honor to have been elected by the board to serve as president of the Association. In my 16 years working in the water and wastewater industry I have found that KRWA is the Association that I could turn to whenever I had an issue I was unsure about. I always found guidance that was based on facts and tried and proven methods. It did not matter what time of the day or night that I called, there was always someone there to help.

As president of your Association it is that “always there” type of service I



“It is an honor for me to serve as President of Kansas Rural Water Association’s Board of Directors.”



“The Annual Conference sponsored by KRWA is like a huge family reunion.”

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want to ensure continues. During the conference I sat at the head table several times during lunch. While looking out into the crowd I could only think about how different each person is and the difference in systems they represent. There were operators from very small systems and there were operators and managers from very large cities as well. The audience included representatives from state and federal agencies. There were suppliers, engineers, and other consultants. Everyone had come together for the same purpose in this conference which was to improve on what we are doing and to work for the betterment of the water and wastewater systems in Kansas.

The 2017 Conference & Exhibition will be held at Century II Convention Center, March 28 – 30. KRWA has signed contracts with the convention center and major hotels that will keep

the conference in Wichita through the 2019 conference. Other locations have been explored, however, Wichita's more central location and the capacity of the facility works very well for KRWA's conference. A goal also is to encourage more members of city councils and RWD boards to attend. We're all in this together and those are the folks who often make the decisions on improvements, personnel policies and more. It will be a great investment.

Paul Froelich is City Superintendent at Enterprise, Kan. Since 1983, he has worked extensively in law enforcement, emergency management and municipal operations. He holds numerous accreditations in Emergency Management and Fire and is a certified water and wastewater operator.



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