



In my tenure as a board member of the Kansas Rural Water Association from 1976 until I was employed by KRWA in 1983, a personal goal has always been to help make KRWA a respected and strong Association. KRWA was “dirt poor” in 1976 – and even more so in 1983.

I helped form a rural water district in the early 1970s. The nine steering committee members were dedicated, holding weekly and semi-weekly meetings, driving hundreds of miles to see landowners and making trips to Topeka to beg funding agencies to accept our application. Agencies had no “marketing agents”. And while KRWA existed in name, it was only an advocate to the extent of helping secure funding through the Farmers Home Administration and a state grant that over seven years invested \$7 million in numerous water districts in Kansas.

In 2017, KRWA conducted 102 training sessions that were attended by 6,622 people.

As an organization, KRWA has evolved – but it has remained absolutely true to its mission which is to *Provide education and leadership necessary to enhance the effectiveness of Kansas’ water and wastewater utilities*. I would like to take this opportunity to showcase the work of KRWA in 2017.

Training is First . . .

First and foremost, KRWA provides a major portion of training for water and wastewater utilities in Kansas. In 2017, KRWA conducted 102 training sessions that were attended by 6,622 people. KRWA has tracked training since 1976. From July 1976 to December 31, 2017, KRWA has conducted 2,647 training sessions attended by 170,923 people.

Having “hands-on” technical assistance is critical to the daily operation and maintenance and in helping water and wastewater systems meet longer term goals. Concerning technical assistance, much of the work that KRWA provides is supported through contracts with National Rural Water Association, or agencies in Kansas. Under NRWA contracts, KRWA is able to employ two licensed geologists and five technical assistants. Three Circuit Riders helped 213

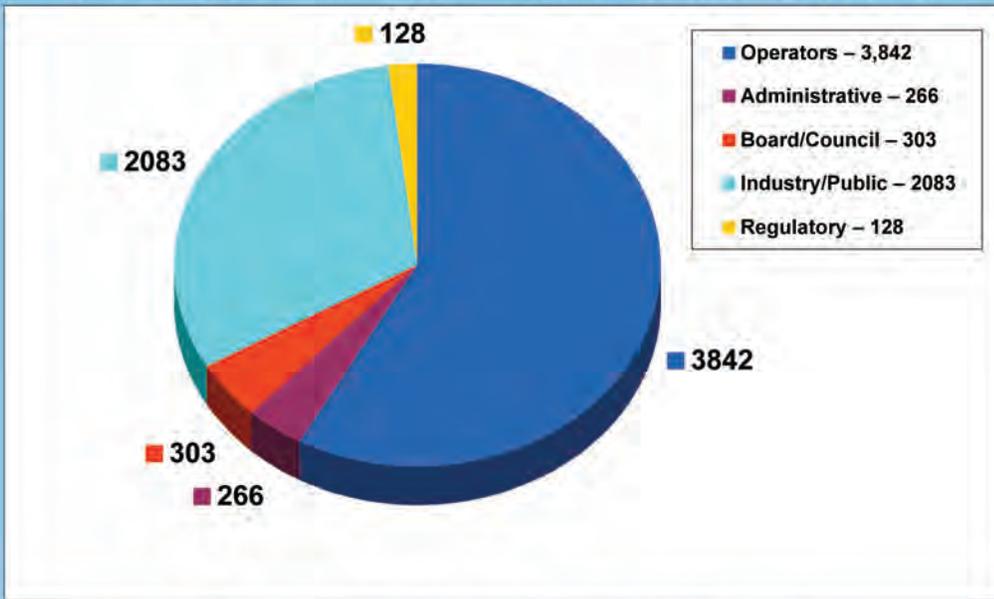
systems (many multiple times); two geologists helped 43 systems with water rights issues and 20 systems with source water protection plans.

Wastewater Tech Charlie Schwindamann helped 101 systems including measuring sludge in lagoons and smoke testing. Technical Assistant Monica Wurtz presented on drinking water regulations at numerous training sessions and helped systems with regulatory requirements. All of the NRWA contracts remain in force.

A contract administered by the Kansas Water Office has a focus to provide help to reduce water loss, conduct leak detection and address other operational issues. Funded at \$325,000, that contract provided help to 199 cities and 131 rural water districts or other systems. KRWA conducted 180 water loss surveys, locating a total of 544 gpm that would cost systems \$1.065 million to purchase or produce annually. KRWA is pleased to have been awarded a new five-year contract based on the competitive proposal that was submitted.

Under a contract with KDHE for wastewater systems, KRWA provided help to 77 systems. The contract was under-funded by \$10,178.90 for the work that was completed, based on the

Training by Kansas Rural Water – Attendance by Category in 2017



Attendance in 2017 – 6,622 at 102 Training Events

inspection services and technical assistance on 87 KAN STEP projects. KRWA has assisted with GPS mapping on more than 300 projects and has provided untold hours of support to systems that attempt to do their own mapping. There have been many changes in legislation that have been helpful to public water systems. Thanks to the support of key state and federal legislators, it has been because of the efforts of KRWA and often in partnership with the League of Municipalities and WaterOne that helped gain support for those proposals. KRWA supports the NRWA's legislative efforts in

contract. The contract is funded at \$75,000 annually. KRWA was successful in bidding on a new five-year contract.

The Association provided help to 325 systems in 2017 under a contract with KDHE for assistance to public water systems. That contract began five years ago at \$290,000 and was reduced to \$215,000 the next year, then to \$200,000, and the last two years, the funding was \$189,460 annually. The proposed contract to begin January 1 suggested only \$50,000 of expense would be allowed in the first six months of a new contract. KDHE invited responses to their request for proposal by mid-December and KRWA submitted. As of February 7, KRWA is not aware of any award on any aspect of the request for proposal.

KRWA invested \$247,992 in training in 2017. There was \$62,010 in revenue from the cross connection and confined space training, leaving a contribution by the Association of \$185,982. KRWA's training efforts are largely supported with internal funds. KRWA does NOT impose charges for training other than for the cross connection / backflow prevention and confined

space training. KRWA has declined to involve itself in "for fee training". I don't anticipate any future board or staff changing from that. KRWA's board of directors and staff continue to hold that training for water and wastewater systems is best delivered on a regional basis vs. a centralized location. Smaller water and wastewater utility operators do not have the resources for extensive travel to attend training.

Membership is important

As of February 1, 2018, KRWA was supported with active membership of 457 cities and 269 rural water districts or other public water systems. In addition, 210 Associate Members support KRWA with membership. KRWA membership fees are very modest. The charge is \$.90 per water service with a maximum payment capped at 1,000 meters, plus \$20. Associate Memberships include a cadre of manufacturers, distributors, consulting firms, attorneys, auditors, contractors and suppliers.

So from being "dirt poor", KRWA has been able to accomplish many things. The Association provided

Washington to reduce the impact on water and wastewater systems. And last but not least, KRWA's staff is second to none with the knowledge and experience to provide assistance to water and wastewater systems. KRWA's efforts to be transparent are obvious with unlimited public access on the website www.krwa.net, including even posting of letters to systems in follow-up to technical assistance. That is just one more example where KRWA goes above and beyond and is unmatched.

I hope that readers will attend the annual conference. It's a great place to learn in the technical sessions, see myriad products and services and create new friendships. The conference has something for everyone, all the time. Hope to see you there.

Elmer Ronnebaum is KRWA General Manager; he has been employed by KRWA since 1983. He served seven years on the KRWA board of directors prior to that. He also helped develop a large



RWD and served for fourteen years on a water district board of directors.