

Attend Training and Be Better Prepared for Your Next Emergency



KRWA conducted several certification workshops for water and wastewater operators in 2019. This photo shows the water system segment held at Garden City on October 16. A total of 37 attended representing 22 water systems.

Of all the training sessions that KRWA provides annually, one of my favorite training sessions is the emergency preparedness training that KRWA sponsors. KRWA provided three such trainings in 2019. The sessions were held in Grandview Plaza, Stockton, and at Ellsworth. All were held in November 2019. These trainings provided system operators and managers with lots of excellent information.

Kevin Jones and Fred Rinne presented during the morning segment of the training. Kevin is Fire Chief of the Chanute, Kansas Fire Department. He has been certified as a Fire Service Instructor since 1996. Kevin holds Associates Degrees in Business and Applied Fire Sciences, is a qualified HAZMAT Technician and has been a certified CPR instructor since 1981. Fred has been Coordinator for the Southeast Kansas Health Care Coalition since 2012. He has more than 25 years' experience in emergency preparedness, public safety and disaster management. Fred is a member of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management Training Cadre.

These two excellent trainers explained the paperwork and documentation that is needed to receive funding through

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FEMA. There are several steps to take before and after to ensure that the funding will be available after the emergency has taken place. Emergencies create a very stressful time and if the utilities don't cross the T's and dot the I's it is likely that some funding may not be allowed that otherwise would be justified.

Records and Paperwork

As I mentioned, one of the most important aspects that I have learned to appreciate concerns the necessary paperwork. Documentation concerning emergency preparedness

is essential. It's also important to maintain that information in several locations. An invaluable benefit is to have all the emergency contacts written down and available to all the right people. This should already be a part of a system's emergency response plan. That plan needs to be in place before the emergency arises. I have noticed several times that even people who have worked together for years have never had the necessary conversation of who to contact in an emergency. Usually one person knows who to call but what happens if that person is injured or heaven forbid, is a fatality in the crisis?

FEMA is extremely particular about having an inventory of the damage to facility and what remedial actions were taken to rectify the situations. A list of persons who were on-site, the amount of materials, equipment, and hours that were expended to repair the damage are all crucial to being reimbursed for those costs. Kevin and Fred give excellent examples of horror stories about what to do and what not to

 Darin Cahoy President Cell: (641) 330-6051 Email: djcahoy@cahoyump.com	Cahoy Pump Service, Inc. <i>Well And Pump Service</i> Municipal • Industrial • Environmental 24568 150th Street • Suite 200 Sumner, Iowa 50674 Corp. Office Phone: (563) 578-1130 Corp. Office Fax: (563) 578-1135
	200 Grant Street Marne, Iowa 51552 Branch Phone: (712) 781-2030 Branch Fax: (712) 781-2032

do before, during, and after an emergency.

The part that I enjoy the most is the tabletop exercise that takes place after the noon lunch break. Maps of a make-believe city are distributed and then a natural disaster scenario occurs. The training turns into several hours of non-stop problems that crop up. Each person at their table has a task that he or she is responsible for. With teamwork and critical thinking everyone must work their way through the situations together. What I have learned is that everyone has different areas of expertise. It's during this period where it becomes obvious to the attendees just how prepared they are. After the fact is a bad time to learn how unprepared anyone is.

All the local stakeholders should attend. Many times, after the tabletop exercise is completed, many attendees have stated how they wished that the top decision makers from their communities had attended. Those are the persons in charge of approving the expenses to pay for the needed repairs. Usually, the "boots on the ground" do not have the authority to write the checks. Another task for board or council members is to handle the press by having factual information and holding press conferences regularly to keep



Rick Penner, Viking Industrial Painting, was one of the presenters at a water system workshop in Chanute on October 29. Attendance was 43 representing 17 cities and RWDs.

patrons and others updated on repairs and where residents are to go to obtain needed supplies.

I hope the next time that KRWA holds this training in your area you make a point of attending and bring all the people who need to take advantage of this valuable training. It's a great exercise.

Annual Conference

The Annual Conference program is reprinted in this issue of *The Lifeline*. To say that the KRWA annual conference is among the best in the country is an understatement. This is YOUR conference. The goal of the KRWA board and staff is to make it as complete and beneficial as

possible. I hope you will attend and participate. Spend some time touring the exhibits, talk to agencies and consultants, enjoy the hospitality that this conference always provides. It's a great learning opportunity – and a fun experience.

Bret Beye joined the KRWA staff in March 2017. He previously worked for 30 years at the city of Herington where he was Water Distribution and Sewer Collection Foreman. A Class III water operator and certified as a backflow device technician, Bret also served on the USD 487 Board of Education from 2003 to April 2017 where he was board president and vice-president.





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