

Dedication That Doesn't Stop – That's Kansas Rural Water Association

The past year has been a year of tremendous change for everyone, including the Kansas Rural Water Association. Usually, this issue of *The Kansas Lifeline* would be chock-full of information about KRWA's upcoming conference. Not only did the Association have to cancel the conference in 2020, but it did so also this year. Who would have ever thought that during the week when Century II would have typically hosted the 53rd KRWA Annual Conference and Exhibition, Wichita officials would need to convert the event center into an impromptu drive-thru decontamination station for ambulances and other emergency vehicles? But the rest of the Association's core mission has continued unabated. KRWA continued with in-person training with mask requirements. Association staff have also implemented online training, which has proven to be extremely popular. And, KRWA never left up providing technical assistance. If a water or wastewater system called for help, it was delivered. Readers who have called KRWA staff in evenings and on weekends know that KRWA has always been ready, willing and able to do what needed to be done.

It was also a tumultuous election year, with a new president and a new incoming administration hoping to unite Americans. At the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Andrew Wheeler is to be replaced by Michael Regan, who has been nominated by President Biden. If he is confirmed to lead the EPA, Regan would return to an agency where he spent much of his early career, working on air quality for nearly a decade under the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. Regan has said that protecting drinking water and working for environmental



**Ready
Willing
& Able**

Association staff have also implemented online training, which has proven to be extremely popular. And, KRWA never left up providing technical assistance.

justice should be priorities for the EPA under the Biden Administration. Regan's nomination has been endorsed by many rural and agricultural groups, including the American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Farmers Union, National Pork Producers Council, North American Meat Institute, United Fresh Produce Association, and USA Rice Federation.

Under Regan, Radhika Fox has been appointed as the EPA Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water by the Biden Administration. She will serve as the Acting Assistant Administrator for Water, serving as the agency's top water official. According to the National Rural Water Association, Fox is well qualified to take the position, formerly serving as the Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Water Alliance, a national nonprofit organization advancing policies and programs that build a sustainable water future for all. "Radhika is a courageous leader in the water sector," said NRWA CEO Matthew Holmes. "We have worked together to tackle the most difficult problems facing rural Americans, including historically underserved communities, which unfortunately tend to have higher concentrations of minority residents. Radhika maintains a fair and honest mind when working to address these water issues, even when people disagree on the best path forward."

New Directors at state agencies

Change isn't limited to the federal level, with several changes happening at the top levels of state government as well. Earl Lewis has been selected

Support Associate Members

When a city or rural water district needs products or services,

SHOP ASSOCIATES FIRST

for a current directory, with contact, e-mail addresses and

Web site information for Associate Members, check out

www.krwa.net

(under membership)

to serve as the Chief Engineer for the KDA's Division of Water Resources, replacing David Barfield, who retired last February. Lewis has dedicated his career to water resources in Kansas, including more than 20 years with the Kansas Water Office, serving as the director since December 2018. He began his career with KDA-DWR in 1992, and has been a licensed professional engineer since 1998. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Kansas.

Lewis' departure from the Kansas Water Office sets off a cascading series of additional state leadership changes. On January 21, Connie Owen was confirmed by the Kansas Senate as the new Director of the Kansas Water Office to replace Lewis. She had previously served as Chair of the Kansas Water Authority. She had been an administrative hearing officer for the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources (KDA-DWR) since 2004. She presided over the initial hearings for the first two Local Enhanced Management Areas (LEMAs) and numerous hearings addressing abandonment of water rights, water law enforcement actions, applications for new water rights and change aspects of existing rights. Before that, Connie served as legal counsel for KDA-DWR, advising the Chief Engineer and staff on water law administration and enforcement and conducting all administrative and intrastate

litigation before the Kansas District Courts and Kansas Appellate Courts. To replace Owen as chair of the Kansas Water Authority, Governor Laura Kelly has nominated Dawn Buehler.

In the legislature, a newly created Kansas House committee will focus on water issues. The new Water Committee will examine water policy, particularly concerning ag and rural economies. The Water Committee replaces the Rural Revitalization Committee.

The Association looks forward to working with all of these new officials to further the needs of public water systems – the rural water districts, public wholesale districts, and the municipalities. KRWA will continue with a strong staff and outstanding management to continue to meet the challenges ahead. I am proud to be part of KRWA and I will continue work to ensure that KRWA remains among the strongest state water associations in the nation.

Bill Shroyer is Assistant City Administrator at the City of Sabetha. Bill worked for KRWA from 1994 to 1999 as KRWA's first Wastewater Circuit Rider. He was elected to KRWA's Board of Directors in 2014 and to the National Rural Water Association Board of Directors in 2016. He holds Class III water operator certification and Class IV wastewater operator certification in Kansas.



Letters (continued)

things like the water tower that I just have no knowledge of or have experienced. It is so nice to have someone I can trust to give me sound advice and what steps to take next.

Every year, just like many other water systems, we have a difficult time maintaining chlorine levels during summer and fall months. Jeff Lamfers has been a huge help with advice on water and wastewater issues. Also, I would like to extend my appreciation for the education classes that your organization and staff provide. We are a small town and budgets are tight. I'm not sure we and many other cities would survive long without KRWA assistance. Thank you so much.

*Brian Knight
City of Reading*

Thank you for your continued support of the city of Luray. We appreciate the guidance and knowledge your team provides. A special thanks to

Doug Guenther and Pat McCool for their assistance on reports and projects. We would like to wish everyone at KRWA Happy Holidays and a very merry New Year!

*Jack Cochran, Mayor
Robert Rose, Superintendent
Krysta Cash, City Clerk*

I would like to thank all of your staff that have helped me get to where I am today. In August of 2019, I was hired with the city of Canton with no knowledge of water or wastewater. By January of 2020, the operator who was supposed to be training me had quit and moved on. With little knowledge of water, wastewater, chlorination, SCADA systems, and everything else that I would be dealing with on a daily basis I had a city council, mayor and a town of 699 residents looking at me for answers to all their questions. To say I was stressed and overwhelmed would be an understatement.

With the help KRWA, I have been able to get a grasp on my day-to-day challenges and start training my new hired help how all this stuff works. I'd like to give a special thanks to Daryn Martin, Bret Beye, Jon Steele, Doug Helmke, Pat McCool and Charlie Schwindamann for everything they have done and helping me get my certification in water and wastewater.

Thank you for all the help and peace of mind,

*Cody Miller
Maintenance Superintendent
City of Canton*

A big thank you, for having the class, (Online training on January 26, 2021 - Water Treatment and Distribution) for us water workers. Gained tons of knowledge, towards understanding what I am studying and reading about, to take the exams.

*John Steiner
City of Abilene*