

Board Chairman of 35 Years, “Mo” Meirowsky Has Made a Difference



The water system for Harvey RWD 1 includes three elevated tanks. This photo shows the 300,000-gallon tank located southwest of Walton.

Maurice (Mo) Meirowsky was a member of the board of directors of Harvey County RWD No. 1 for 38 years and served the past 35 years as board chairman. That tenure has earned him a bit of reputation around Walton, Kansas of being Mr. Rural Water.

Mo talks about how much has changed since he became involved with the RWD board. When it was formed, the RWD had about 450 customers. The RWD office was in a small building in Peabody and the district was literally operating on a shoestring. Office furniture at that time was basically home-built tables and folding chairs. By January 1, 2022, the district has increased in size with approximately 600 miles of pipeline serving about 1,175 customers in Butler, Harvey, Marion, and Sedgwick counties. Water storage is provided by three elevated storage tanks with capacities of 300,000, 100,000, and 75,000 gallons. In 2001, a new office with modern furniture and computer monitoring was secured in Walton, Kansas.

The district originally began operation by purchasing water from the city of Newton. For various reasons though, the board decided to look into securing its own source. Eventually, wells were drilled into the Equus Beds in western Harvey County, southwest of Hesston. The connection with Newton remains and serves to provide water to either system in an emergency.

Mo has seen changes over the years, including the replacement of all meters with a radio read system allowing district operators to read



Maurice (Mo) Meirowsky and Michelle Watts, Office Manager at Harvey RWD 1, discuss changes and improvements that have been made to the district.



Mo points out the location of a water line on the wall map in the district's office.



Harvey RWD 1 constructed a new office and shop in Walton in 2001

all meters in the first two days of the month. The district also implemented an auto-pay system allowing customers to set up an auto-withdrawal from their bank accounts. Customers can also elect to receive their water bills electronically by email.

Mo retired from the board in February; the district hosted a retirement party at the office on Sunday, February 20.

Mo says the RWD board of directors has been effective in charting the course for the district. And he appreciates the collegiality of the board members in giving long-term direction to the district. Also, he is especially complimentary of the employees. "We have an excellent and dedicated staff," he says.

In addition to the many years serving on the RWD board, Mo also served as president of the Kansas Rural Water Finance Authority (KRWA) from 1988 to 2011. Harvey RWD 1 was an original founding agency of the Authority, with Johnson RWD 7. The Authority was created to help water

systems analyze the potential for the purchase of their outstanding debt from the Farmers Home Administration during what was called "The Discount Purchase Program" under the Reagan Administration. The Authority subsequently went on to also provide marketing support and oversight to the Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund for non-rated borrowers (RWDs) and smaller cities that would benefit from reporting assistance.

In addition to his work with "Rural Water", Mo has given freely of his time and energy to his friends, church and

community. Mo has served on governing boards of the local fire district, church council, alumni scholarship fund, cemetery board, Farmers Co-op and local Main Street Association.

Bert Zerr is currently a consultant with KRWA. He has been with KRWA since 2005. Prior to that, Bert was a District Engineer with the KDHE in the Salina District Office for 32 years.



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