

New Training Stations Coming for KRWA Electrical Training Sessions

Electrical technical training courses have been provided by Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) since 1986. The classes help prepare maintenance personnel to successfully troubleshoot and repair equipment used in their water and wastewater utilities. In order to decrease downtime and improve workforce safety, water and wastewater operators must have a thorough knowledge of how such systems operate, from an introduction to electricity and electronics to step-by-step electrical system troubleshooting. The KRWA training workshops provide this knowledge through a combination of expert instruction, demonstrations, visuals, and case study discussions.



Bob Blume, who has conducted electrical training sessions for KRWA since 1986, tests a new training station that he has constructed. The new training stations will provide for additional troubleshooting techniques for future electrical training by KRWA. The training stations were developed based on comments from class participants.

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Robert (Bob) Blume has provided the electrical training classes through KRWA. From June 1986 to February 1, 2022, KRWA has conducted 504 days of electrical training attended by 9,619 people. Over the 35 years, Bob has always tried to keep the classes fresh and the content pertinent to the changing times for the water and wastewater systems across Kansas. The topics have expanded over the years from basic electricity to advanced training on programmable logic controllers. Bob recently retired from

“I found the PLC class very fascinating and quite helpful.”

– Robert Gayle
City of Florence



“Bob’s class gave our city the knowledge to be able to build and operate our own well SCADA system.”

– John Terron
City of Ellinwood

The new electrical training stations will help attendees perform more hands-on experiences with issues similar to that which may develop in the daily operations of programmable logic controllers and other control systems in water and wastewater utilities. The units can simulate many problems that cause equipment malfunctions.

teaching classes at Hutchinson Community College after eight years.

With more free time Bob decided to update the modular trainers that are used in the classes. The existing trainers are fifteen years old and are somewhat limited in options. Bob

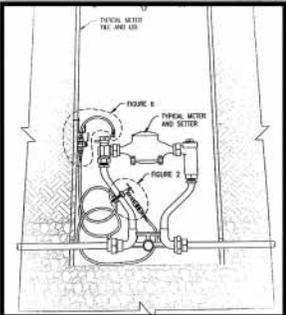
estimates that he has invested more than four hundred hours on research and development of what he thinks will be a great improvement to the electrical training. He has used eight 3-D printers to make the parts needed for the upgrades.

The new trainers will have more capabilities for troubleshooting variable frequency drives and programmable logic controllers. They can be programmed with faults that operators can work through to find and correct the faults. The focus of the training will also change from spending time on programming to more time on troubleshooting. All the changes have been driven by input from those who have attended the KRWA electrical training sessions. Bob tested out some of the changes last year at a few classes and the attendees were really excited for the changes. Many

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“A very good hands-on class. The instructor utilized up to date equipment and technology.”

– *Clinton Kissinger
City of Olathe*

thought that they could go back to their systems and correctly repair their own electrical components after the classroom experience.

These new trainers will be used to teach basic electrical maintenance and troubleshooting, advanced electrical schematic reading troubleshooting, understanding and troubleshooting electrical motors and variable speed drives, and programmable logic controllers. KRWA typically holds six, two-day courses annually. They begin with the basic class and progress through the PLC class. All four classes are held in one location for four years

and then are relocated to a new location and start over again. KRWA welcomes any community that might like to host the classes to contact the KRWA office at 785/336-3760 or email me at bret@krwa.net.

Having facilitated dozens of these electrical training sessions with Bob, I know that they provide beneficial training. The electrical systems in water and wastewater utilities are more and more complicated. Information learned at these sessions will help reduce time in troubleshooting components. I know that after attending the training, operators at one city were able to design and build their own SCADA system. Knowing how to use a voltmeter properly will save time and money for anyone. There are proper ways to check electrical components that Bob walks attendees through. The VFD class is another chance to gain knowledge. VFDs are a great way to save electricity and prevent water hammer. Many water system operators have learned that by adjusting the VFD to monitor pressure, they can control pumps when taking the water storage tanks out of service.

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Suggestions for training?

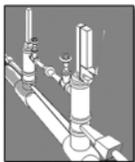
In closing, KRWA is always interested in updating its training program. Bob Blume’s efforts that are presented here are just one example. As the Covid pandemic hopefully subsides, KRWA hopes to provide more hands-on training for water and wastewater operators. And, new training opportunities will also be made available for office staff, both in person and online with QuickBooks and other office software such as Excel. And if anyone has other suggestion, KRWA is always interested in receiving them and will attempt to accommodate the request.

Last, the Annual Conference & Exhibition is just weeks away. KRWA hopes to host another great conference. There are 57 different training sessions, EXPO Hall will again be filled with Associate Members and agencies; there will be good food, a lot of fun and fellowship. Let’s make it the best ever!

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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