

Making Every Drop Count

After a Two-Year Hiatus Because of Covid, the 2022 Conference Was a Bellwether

It was great being able to hold the Kansas Rural Water Association's annual conference on March 29 – 31 after missing the last two conference dates due to the COVID pandemic. I've often referred to the KRWA annual conference as a family reunion. And this year it was even more so, having not seen each other in nearly three years. Reconnecting with friends and making new friends was great. I was again elected to continue to serve on the KRWA Board of Directors. During the board's reorganizational meeting on March 30, I was elected Board President. I am both proud of that – and humbled.

It is truly an honor to serve as KRWA board president. KRWA is a solid organization. KRWA is a voice for the water and wastewater systems in the state of Kansas. With more than 20 years of experience working in the water and wastewater industry, I have found that KRWA is the organization that I could always turn to whenever I had an issue that I was unsure about. I always found guidance based on facts, utilizing tried and true methods. It did not matter what time of the day or night I called, there was always someone there to help.



The 2022 conference had a near-record turnout. We welcomed many new faces as everyone tackles the challenges of worker attrition in both the water and wastewater industries. But sadly, a high turnover rate means that every year we miss seeing some of the good men and women who have served their communities so well for so many years.

Not only do we face the challenge of a depleted human resource, but we also face the challenges of a depleting water resource. During the Wednesday and Thursday luncheons at the conference, speakers highlighted Kansas's water resource problems across our diverse state. Dawn Buehler, Chair of the Kansas Water Authority, spoke about challenges along the Kansas River, the efforts to restore the rivers and streams, and the sedimentation of the state's reservoirs. Rex Buchanan, Director Emeritus of the Kansas Geological Survey, spoke about the challenges with continued declines in the Ogallala Aquifer, especially in southwest Kansas. As the state agencies, along with the Governor and Legislature work to

SIMPLY SEALS!

FORD

Rated to 305 psi

MJTS

MJSC

MJBE

No field trimming required!

260-563-3171
fordmeterbox.com

Fully encapsulated for the most challenging applications.

- Tapping Sleeves
- Couplings
- Bell Joint Encapsulators

come to a consensus on how to solve these very serious problems, I would like to urge KRWA membership to take advantage of any opportunity to weigh in on these matters. Public water suppliers need to have a seat at the table.

And although the conference was dedicated to have a learning experience and see all the products and services in EXPO Hall, it was also a lot of fun. Everyone had come together for the same purpose, which was to improve on what we are doing and how to better the water and wastewater systems in Kansas. The Tuesday night “Meet & Greet” featured Festus, impersonated by Mark Staggs from Fort Worth, Texas. Festus reminded the 1,500 or so who attended the opening session to stay true to the core elements of a CODE: Cooperate, Respect and Work Ethic. “Doc” and “Miss Kitty”, professional actors from the Wichita area, were sidekicks who helped round out the skit during the opening session. And if you missed “Girls Sing Elvis” on Wednesday evening, you missed a tremendous production by The Forum Theatre. It’s pretty rare to have a

The 2022 conference had a near-record turnout. We welcomed many new faces as everyone tackles the challenges of worker attrition in both the water and wastewater industries.

standing ovation after a song during the show; Chelsey Ersham’s “How Great Thou Art” received and deserved that and more.

Although the 2022 annual conference is well behind us now, KRWA staff are already working on plans for 2023. It is an extraordinary task to keep a conference relevant and exciting. The work behind the scenes often is taken for granted. To make the conference run smoothly requires

lots of people behind the curtains. But this conference is about YOU – those who attend. Thanks to all the presenters and exhibitors for making the KRWA Annual Conference one of the best in the nation. Anyone with any suggestions is encouraged to contact a KRWA staff or board member. My challenge to any reader is to share your ideas.

The 2023 Conference & Exhibition will be held at Century II Convention Center, March 28 – 30. KRWA has signed contracts with the Century II Convention Center, and hotels are being blocked. In the meantime, I hope that everyone has a safe and productive year.

**54th Annual Conference & Exhibition
Century II Convention Center
March 28 – 30, 2023**

Since 1983, Paul Froelich has worked extensively in law enforcement, emergency management and municipal operations. He holds numerous accreditations in Emergency Management and Fire. Certified in both water and wastewater, he recently retired as City Superintendent of Enterprise, Kansas. He has been a member of the KRWA board of directors since 2013.



Letters

Continued from page 3.

I would like to thank Daryn Martin for the study information for the operator exam. Also, for the extra help and information he has given me with questions I have had with the operation of our district. KRWA has always had someone that was able to get me thru the troubles.

*Jon Houser
Cherokee RWD 3*

I want to compliment you, Doug Helmke, on your article in the latest edition of *The Lifeline*, and thank you.

It is an excellently written article. Well done! The article shows the proper and fair thinking and goals of KRWA regarding rate setting and assistance. And it offers KRWA’s help

for many systems that struggle with rate setting. I hope, after folks read the article, you all will get very busy with rate setting assistance. If you do, many, many systems will arrive at adequate and fairer rates.

I also want to thank you for mentioning me and my influence on KRWA regarding rate setting. I am honored that you and other KRWA folks think highly of me and my advice on rate setting. Professionally and personally, I could get no greater compliment than to have you and others recognize my mindset – I want to treat others right. I want utilities to be properly funded, so they can serve their customers well. And I want the customers to be fairly billed for that

service. It’s all about people caring for people. Thanks for seeing that in me. I see that in you, too.

Take care,

*Carl Brown
GettingGreatRates.com*

Elmer, I would like to thank you and the rest of your staff at KRWA for hosting a fantastic show.

When it’s ready can you please send an electronic conference registration listing?

We are looking forward to attending in 2023 and support your trainers throughout 2022.

*Mike Pontrelli
Stenner Pump Company
Jacksonville, Florida*