



KRWA Staff Member Greg Metz explains some of the components in the Apprenticeship Training Trailer.

WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATORS ARE ESSENTIAL TO EVERY COMMUNITY, CREATING A STABLE JOB OPPORTUNITY FOR LONG-TERM CAREERS.



The KRWA Registered Apprenticeship Program is recognized by the Kansas Department of Labor and with other state associations through National Rural Water Association, under the U.S. Department of Labor. The Apprenticeship Program is designed to help train the next generation of skilled workers and provide standardized training across the nation in Drinking Water and Wastewater professionals' occupations. Apprentices will earn-while-they-learn in a structured two-year training program that combines on-the-job training with related technical instruction. Apprentices work with knowledgeable and passionate people who ensure that Americans can continue relying on safe drinking water and vital wastewater services that protect public health and the environment.

Water and wastewater workers provide an invaluable service – day in and day out. Their work is essential to protecting public health and the environment. See the next page for more information about the KRWA Apprenticeship Program. To apply, contact KRWA Apprenticeship Coordinator Monica Wurtz.

Program Overview

Over the next decade, the water sector is expected to lose between 30 and 50 percent of the workforce to retirement. To combat disproportionate retirement, KRWA has partnered with the National Rural Water Association to develop an Apprenticeship Program that will offer two new career paths – Water System Operation Specialist and Wastewater System Operation Specialist.

Minimum Requirements for Apprentices:

1. At least 18 years of age
2. High school diploma, GED or equivalent
3. Physically capable of performing essential functions
4. Take and pass drug screen
5. Pass a background check
6. Valid state issued driver's license



The mission of the Kansas Rural Water Association is:

Provide education and leadership necessary to enhance the effectiveness of Kansas' water and wastewater utilities.

Benefit for Apprentices

Water and Wastewater System Operators help provide safe drinking water to millions of Kansans and protect our natural waterways. Operators are a vital part of our communities. Without properly trained personnel in these roles communities can suffer. During their training, apprentices will work alongside professional operators, learn skills that can be taken anywhere, and earn a wage while they learn.

Participating Apprentices will be required to:

- Meet the Minimum Requirements for apprentices
- Register as an Apprentice with KRWA
- Be employed or be willing to become employed by a Participating Member System
- Complete the 2-year program:
 - 4,000 on-the-job training hours
 - 288 related instruction hours (classroom hours)

Benefit for Systems

Many Water and Wastewater Operators in Kansas have worked at the same utility for most of their career. With retirement, they will depart with decades of valuable institutional knowledge. These training programs will offer member systems a way to pass down and retain critical skills and knowledge of their water and wastewater systems to the next generation of industry workers.

Participating Systems will be expected to:

- Identify and support an experienced mentor to provide guidance and on-site training to apprentices
- Pay the apprentice's wages
- Take advantage of Program Coordinator to resolve concerns and ensure best outcome for apprentice
- Strongly consider retaining apprentices following program completion

If you are interested in registering as an Apprentice or becoming a Participating Member System contact KRWA Apprenticeship Program Coordinator:

Monica Wurtz, KRWA Technical Assistant
email: monica@krwa.net
cell: 785-262-7301

Spotlight on Apprenticeship

Name of Apprentice: Dylan Chilcott

System: City of Leon

Apprenticeship Track: Water Systems Operation Specialist

Apprenticeship Start Date: January 17, 2022



KRWA Apprentice, Dylan Chilcott, pictured with his wife Keneil and sons Stetson and Tate.

KRWA: How long have you worked for the City of Leon? Any previous experience?

Chilcott: I have been working for the City of Leon for one year, and have no previous experience with water systems.

KRWA: What are your main responsibilities at the City of Leon?

Chilcott: I perform routine water checks, road maintenance, oversee the sewer systems, and day-to-day needs that our town might have. Some of those include cleaning out ditches, removing pesky animals, and fixing our water leaks.

KRWA: What is your favorite part about being a water system operator?

Chilcott: I take pride in knowing that I am supplying clean and safe water to my community, it is a big responsibility, and if not done right can cause major problems for our town.

KRWA: What is the most challenging part about being a water system operator?

Chilcott: Coming into a long-standing community like Leon, the lines and equipment that we are servicing are significantly older. This is incredibly challenging at times when water leaks occur. The city and I are looking forward to updating our system with a new chlorine building and transmission line.

KRWA: What made you interested in KRWA's Apprenticeship Program?

Chilcott: This Apprenticeship Program has allowed me to gain knowledge on ground water and surface water all while I continue my full-time job. I did not have to take time away from my family or my job to work toward this credential, the classes have been informative, and KRWA trainer, Stewart Kasper, has made online learning enjoyable.

KRWA: What do you hope to achieve or what have you achieved by participating in the program?

Chilcott: I am hoping to achieve my Water Operator Certificate and to continue learning with on-the-job experience. This certificate is the doorway to many opportunities to learn in the field and with others.

KRWA: Would you recommend the program to anyone that might be considering it (either already employed by a utility or not)? Why?

Chilcott: This has been a great program loaded with individuals full of knowledge and I would recommend it to anyone interested in it. The KRWA staff have been beneficial to my learning and sharing their knowledge with me. Through this program, I have been able to network with other individuals and build relationships that could come in handy when troubleshooting or needing help.

KRWA Apprenticeship on display at K-ACTE Conference

In August, KRWA Apprenticeship Coordinator, Monica Wurtz, was an exhibitor at the Kansas Association of Career and Technical Educators (K-ACTE) conference in Wichita. K-ACTE acts as a resource to vocational-technical teachers, counselors, administrators, and teacher educators. Throughout the conference, Monica had the opportunity to speak with dozens of high school educators, counselors, and others, about the importance of careers in the water industry, the need for more water and wastewater professionals in the workforce, and explained the benefits of KRWA's Apprenticeship Program. Monica also provided classroom experiment kits to interested educators, which included a lesson plan and all the necessary supplies to teach a group of students about where their drinking water comes from, what happens after they "dirty" the water, and they can create their own process to try to clean the water, while learning about the wastewater treatment process.



Monica Wurtz began work with KRWA in October 2013. She previously worked at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and also worked at US EPA Region 7 for four years. Monica is considered a national expert on various drinking water regulations.



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