

KRWA helps ensure your community's future

It has been a terrific experience for me to have served as president of the KRWA board of directors for the past three years. Like other KRWA directors, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to represent your Association.

In October, I attended the National Rural Water Association's (NRWA) annual conference in Biloxi, Miss. More than 2,600 people were registered. They came from rural water/wastewater systems, cities large and small, vendors, state and federal primacy and funding agencies. It was the NRWA's largest conference ever.

*Patricia Shaffer
KRWA President*

It is interesting to visit with other colleagues from different parts of the country.



A big part of the learning experience at the conference for me was to visit with other state rural water associations, board/council members and staff members from individual systems.

Like KRWA, the other state associations operate contracts to provide services for systems. This funding originates with Congress' recognition of and support for funding of technical assistance and training programs for cities and rural water systems. The funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Dept. of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency helps enable Kansas's and other state rural water associations, and some other organizations I might add, to provide training and assistance in partnership with those agencies.

Kansas systems from Wichita to the very small, such as the 33-member Doniphan County Rural Water District No. 1 at Leona, benefit in that they either attend training sessions or have a KRWA staff member responding to systems' calls for help. That help addresses a huge spectrum of issues

covering technical, managerial and financial aspects of public water and water treatment issues.

system in America turn on their tap, they expect and deserve to have safe water. Boards and



KRWA's training provides relevant information on a wide variety of topics. While operation and maintenance issues are popular with operators, KRWA will begin provide many more sessions using the new KanCap program in 2005.

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Safe water for everyone

The point that the NRWA conference repeated was that water is our most precious commodity and the work to produce and provide a quality water supply has a profound impact on the public. In our ever-changing world, more demands are put on smaller systems — sometimes with what seems like too little concern by regulators of just how many other projects and how much work people in these small systems face daily. But when customers of any public water

councils do not like to increase rates even when the need to do so is so apparent. I suggest that people stop and consider how much rates have increased in the last five years? Look at the price of gas — and people still are buying SUVs and driving them! There's cable TV with many households paying a monthly pricetag of \$30-\$80; a cell phone typically is \$49.95 a month; and four dollars for a cup of cappuccino is normal. What amount should customers be willing to pay to have safe, life-sustaining water?

A large number of the sessions at the NRWA conference pertained to the responsibilities of boards and councils to system security. We must always be aware of the potential of a crisis and prepare a plan to be able to respond to that crisis. KRWA provided six training sessions targeting systems serving populations of 3,300 to 10,000 to help them meet the required Vulnerability Assessment and Response to EPA. KRWA intends to continue to provide training and assistance with security issues offering the very user-friendly Security Emergency Management System (SEMS) software. KRWA staff members have attended national training on all the major "VA" softwares. Systems in Kansas — from El Dorado and Junction City down to the smallest systems have embraced this software to help conduct and prepare security-related programs.

At the National Conference, Kansas Rural Water received the "Magazine of the Year" award. Read more about the award on page 13. All the colored ink aside, the purpose of *The Lifeline* magazine is to provide timely information to help systems. The NRWA award is a tribute to the effort that KRWA staff makes in providing a quality publication. *The Lifeline* has enjoyed a good readership

for more than two decades under the capable watch of editor Elmer Ronnebaum.

Conference 2005 planning

While not everyone can travel to Biloxi for a national conference, systems in Kansas are making plans to attend the KRWA conference and exhibition at Century II in Wichita, March 29-31, 2005. A preliminary announcement on the conference can be found in this issue. I hope you will take advantage of what will be another outstanding training program, the largest exhibition for water and wastewater systems in the Mid-West — and I hope that you will learn from visiting with people from other systems, agencies and the hugely popular exhibit hall. You won't find a friendlier, down-home meeting where the training, food and fellowship come in an unlimited supply.

In the July issue, I wrote, "KRWA will do more, not less!" In this issue, I encourage you to read about the new staff members and expanding programs that KRWA is offering. Your Association is helping people improve their communities, the operation and maintenance of their water and wastewater systems. KRWA is doing that in ways that are unique both in Kansas and the nation. And what's at the heart of it all?

Quality Water! What better way to ensure your community's future! What better theme to have for the 2005 conference.

I am so proud to be part of KRWA — a truly dynamic



KRWA works in partnership with local communities, state and federal agencies such as on the KAN STEP program by the Kansas Department of Commerce. As of November 1, 2004, KAN STEP has 15 projects completed. There are 15 projects under contract or in progress. Architectural or engineering services have been assigned to 11 additional projects. And 16 additional projects are in earlier stages of development. Above, workers prepare for pouring of concrete on the fire station project at Washington, Kan.

organization that's out there every day of the year helping communities and RWDs across the state. I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Conference, March 29-31 in Wichita. It's training, technology and a celebration of water.



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