

It's not KRWA: It's YOU!

The last two articles I composed for *The Kansas Lifeline* were about GPS/GIS mapping. I am always happy to discuss mapping but I am going to change the pace a little by relating some of my ideas and experiences at KRWA.

I've worked at KRWA for just a shade over a year. Since starting, I've worked with hundreds of people from Kansas and beyond. Whether it's been working in GPS data collection, swinging a hammer with the KAN STEP program, or making calls in preparation for the upcoming Annual Conference, I have come to a significant conclusion: "It's

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not just the KRWA staff that makes everything go smoothly, it's the good people that we work with that make these jobs easier."

Being a Kansas history buff and traveling a lot on the job allows one to soak up the sights

and local history – if you speak to the right people! Learning the heritage of an area can be done in libraries, which offer a wealth of information, but a 30-minute conversation over a cup of coffee can glean a great deal more – and you may get someone's personal history recollection or that of one of their relative's.

KRWA has been helping municipalities and RWDs since 1966. The Association has nearly 300 Associate Members and nearly 775 municipal, RWD and public wholesale system members.

KRWA staff members wear many hats, keeping in touch with and responding to a large number of requests from Association members. They meet many people

problems; operators gaining knowledge from training sessions; boards and managers getting answers or assistance on financial concerns; and opportunities for all

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with different personalities and to date, I've not heard a negative remark made about KRWA. Moreover, compliments from around the state encompass the list

association members to network, learn and have fun at the annual conference.

New programs implemented recently were developed in



Always happy! Washington City Manager Tim Schook, left, residents Jerry Alderidge and Tom Zab stopped last fall for this photo overlooking the city's new 80 ft. x 160 ft. Fire Station/EMS project. Tim, Jerry and Tom are among the more than 100 volunteers who have donated their labor on the Washington KAN STEP project.

of Association services. Compliments result from circuit rider or field tech assistance on water system or wastewater

response to the needs of cities, RWDs and others. Making all the details come together to get work done takes leadership and

dedication. It's rewarding to be part of a team that gets things done, and has fun at the same time!

First assignment – on the phone

My first job at KRWA was to generate 221 Consumer Confidence Reports. This seemed easy. General Manager Elmer Ronnebaum gave me the list and I started typing away. On that cold and snowy January day I was relieved to be working inside and was optimistic about finishing the reports in a week. I could generate a typed report in about 10 minutes, but then I had to call the system for verification and realized the job would take much longer. Despite spending more time, the job allowed me to speak with many people. I was hooked! It was also very comforting to be welcomed to KRWA by not only co-workers, but by the many folks I talked to for verifications – all who in some way had been helped by KRWA.

Solo mapping out west

My first spring as a mapping tech saw the number of systems on the GPS list grow steadily. My first solo mapping assignment was a five-hour drive away. To get to the extreme western Kansas town by 8 a.m., I had to leave home by 3 a.m. in the morning. In that week of doing data collection, I met nearly half of the town. Every day was interesting. During work I visited with several retired gentlemen and received a good history on how the town was settled, who noteworthy citizens were and what happened to them. One of these local historians offered to take me arrowhead hunting. It was a joy to work with considerate people who did not hesitate to help. This made me feel at home.

Mapping and fishing

As spring turned to summer I was working in the southern part

of Kansas. During 100 degree plus July days of work from dawn until dusk, I was trying to quickly complete a mapping job. At the end of one day, sweaty and exhausted, I was extended an offer to go fishing at the system operator's favorite fishing hole – with him as my fishing guide. Good conversation and good fishing made for an enjoyable time down south. Taking that break to relax was appreciated.

Long days and hard work make these community projects move in the right direction. Hanging tin and pouring concrete is the standard work fare, but being invited to a steak dinner at the end of the day is sometimes also the standard fare.

The hospitality of folks worked for during my KRWA year has been a pattern that has made my job very enjoyable. These folks have made it so.

Hammer time

I've also worn a KAN STEP hat since working for KRWA. On these construction projects I am happy to report about more good people, positive outlooks and a lot more Kansas hospitality.

Long days and hard work make these community projects move in the right direction. Hanging tin and pouring concrete is the standard work fare, but being invited to a steak dinner at the end of the day is sometimes also the standard fare. An occasional game of cards or other activities add to a pleasant mix in helping pass the time while away from home.

To confirm the atmosphere around these projects, check the pictures on the KAN STEP Web link at www.krwa.net. Smiles are everywhere! What's wrong with this picture? People actually enjoy

working on these projects? There is great satisfaction to work with people possessing a good attitude and work ethic. I am proud to be able to assist.

In summary, there is one consistent observation in my first year's work and travels. People I have come across have made my year a great one.

For questions about GIS/GPS Mapping, KAN STEP, or other project, please get in contact with

KRWA. As the organization keeps growing, we are more than willing to assist cities or RWDs with a wide variety of problems. KRWA is here to help – and more than likely, we'll have a good time helping.

Stop by the KRWA booth in EXPO Hall to visit with Steve, Lowell or me about GIS and GPS mapping or any other interest you have.

38th Annual KRWA Conference & Exhibition
March 29, 30, 31
Century II
Wichita, Kansas