

Looking forward to 2009: Helping Today For A Better Tomorrow!

I am pleased to present this brief review of 2008 for the Kansas Rural Water Association.

First, KRWA continues to be among the strongest rural water associations in the U.S. This is only possible because of the vision of a board of directors who take an active interest and participation in directing the Association.

Second, the Association's membership is at an all time record. That allows KRWA to be a responsible voice in Kansas and through National Rural Water in Washington. The participation in programs that KRWA provides is unparalleled. They are unique – and they have been developed in response to need and the desire to help Kansas communities be sustainable. From training sessions to leak detection, from helping a single operator install a fire hydrant to attending late night board/council meetings to explain added regulations or programs, from KAN STEP to GPS Mapping, KRWA is providing meaningful education and assistance that communities need and want. And since 1993, KRWA has provided assistance to wastewater systems including work such as with lagoon measurements, smoke testing, correcting blockages, etc. I encourage you to check the article on page 70 by Wastewater Tech Charlie Schwindamann. It's just one example how KRWA's work and follow up will hopefully save one small town a lot of money.



At the national level, KRWA appreciates the strong support of the entire Kansas delegation for funding of programs operated by the National Rural Water Association. Rep. Tiahrt, Rep. Moran, Rep. Boyda, Senator Roberts and Senator Brownback all signed letters of support in 2008 for those appropriations.

KRWA speaks up . . .

During the 2008 Kansas Legislative Session, KRWA testified on several Bills of interest. They included:

- HB 2638: Location and mapping requirements for underground water and wastewater utilities. KRWA supported this Bill; the Bill did not advance from committee.
- Sub for HB 2127: Kansas underground utilities damage prevention (One Call). KRWA opposed this Bill; amended.
- SB 559: Prohibit use of eminent domain for public wholesale water supply districts. KRWA opposed this Bill. Bill did not advance.
- HB 2807: Require RWDs to accept payment for outstanding debt held by USDA if offered by cities or others, redefining "participating members" for RWDs. KRWA opposed this Bill. The Bill did not advance.
- HB 2080: Use of eminent domain for public wholesale water supply districts. KRWA opposed this Bill. The Bill did not advance.
- Sub HB 2860: Restrict approval of an application for a permit to appropriate water. KRWA opposed this Bill. Bill failed in Senate by a vote of 21 to 19.

As KRWA President Dennis Schwartz states in his article in this issue, the territorial disputes between several RWDs and cities have resulted in lawsuits between neighboring communities. KRWA has and will continue to provide educational forums to help all systems learn to communicate better, plan better and work as cooperatively as possible. I encourage those interested in this subject to check out the various sessions planned for the 2009 Conference. KRWA appreciates the efforts of Counsel Gary Hanson to again lead these discussions. Also check the preconference session, "Resolving Disputes In A Neighborly Way." The presenters are people who are practitioners; they bring a wealth of experience on this topic.

At the national level, KRWA appreciates the strong support of the entire Kansas delegation for funding of programs operated by the National Rural Water Association. Rep. Tiahrt, Rep. Moran, Rep. Boyda, Senator Roberts and Senator Brownback all signed letters in 2008 in support for those appropriations. KRWA Director Darrell Schlabach and I met with each of our Congressional Offices in early February; KRWA returned to Washington in April to participate in

the National Rural Water Rally and to personally thank each of the members from Kansas for their support of programs that are important to rural water districts and cities.

It's nuts and bolts issues, daily

There is no such thing as a "normal routine" in the utility business. Cities and RWDs in Kansas were again dealt a heavy blow of early winter ice storms, devastating tornados in Chapman and Jewell and other communities, power outages and water quality issues during the summer months. Confrontations with Mother Nature reinforced many lessons for KRWA and its members. First, we continue to be at our finest when responding to crises. Second, the investments of planning and coordination made by cities and RWDs, KRWA and other organizations, helped systems recover in as timely a manner as possible. Everyone affected by storms immediately pulled together to try to put life back to normal. KRWA was pleased to be a participant with other organizations, principally Kansas Municipal Utilities, in formulating KS MAP – the Kansas Mutual Aid

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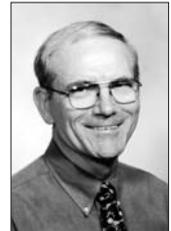
Program. We encourage all systems to become members of that program so disaster planning and assistance will be ready to roll when needed.

Last, KRWA could not respond to the requests of cities and RWDs, members and non-members alike, were it not for the hard work of KRWA's dedicated employees. KRWA's employees care about helping people and the communities across the state. They put in the time and miles necessary to help RWDs and cities with emergency situations, address regulatory compliance problems, and a vast array of operation, maintenance and financial issues. It doesn't matter if it's a weekend or a holiday, day or night, KRWA staff respond when and where they are needed. Your Association has employees who meet and exceed expectations.

The 2009 Annual Meeting of Membership will be held on Thursday, March 26 at the Century II Convention Center. Members have been provided delegate registrations. Other member representatives – and non-members – are also encouraged to attend the business meeting. I encourage you to attend, meet your Board of Directors and management, ask any questions you may have and provide your suggestions.

Thank you for your continued support of the Kansas Rural Water Association. I pledge that all our staff will continue to live the conference theme throughout 2009: Helping Today For A Better Tomorrow. Thank you for sharing that vision.

Elmer Ronnebaum is KRWA General Manager; he has been employed by KRWA since 1983. He served 7 years on the KRWA board of directors prior to that. Elmer served on the stirring committee and for 14 years on the Board of Directors for Nemaha RWD 3.





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