

KRWA announces award winners at 2005 conference

The Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) announced awards for outstanding water and wastewater staff, Consumer Confidence Report winners, best tasting water in Kansas and a Friend of Rural Water at the recent 2005 Conference in Wichita. More complete stories will be featured in the July issue of *The Kansas Lifeline*.

Melodi Bowen, City of Burden, wins City Clerk Award

In keeping with the Association's award criteria of sustaining the community, Melodi Bowen has achieved this goal on several levels. "To keep a smaller community running you have to wear more than one hat," notes Bowen. She received her Class 1 Wastewater Operator Certificate in August of 2001, her Class 1 Water Operator Certificate in April of 2002 and most recently her Certified Municipal Clerk Certificate in November of 2004.

Besides working in the Burden city offices, she helps with both of the city water functions when needed. Her dedication to the community in obtaining both water and wastewater operator licenses has helped the community remain in compliance while training and certifying a full-time water and wastewater employee. Along with the other certified city employee, Melodi Bowen helps the city provide essential services that ensure public health, welfare and safety.



Melodie Bowen is congratulated by KRWA President Patricia Shaffer.

Nyle Larson, Riley RWD 1, named Rural Water Manager of the Year

Nyle Larson has been diligent and dedicated in taking care of the day-to-day business of Riley County RWD No. 1 with no less concern than for his own business. Whether securing easements for a new customer or negotiating water rates with cities that supply the RWD with water, Nyle has put in the extra hours. "I've been manager of this RWD since its inception and it has been changing ever since," noted Nyle. "In order to ensure a continued supply of good water for Riley County No. 1 customers, we have recently contracted to purchase water from the city of Manhattan. They will start supplying our water in the near future."



Nyle Larson, Riley RWD 1, names Rural Water Manager of the Year.

Nyle Larson grew up north of Manhattan in Olsburg, Kan. After leaving home to serve for six-months active duty in the Kansas Army National Guard he returned home in 1957 and spent seven years with the National Guard. In 1958, he took a job in the water construction business in Manhattan. After 22 years with that company he purchased and renamed it Larson Construction in 1980. With the help of his wife, Norma, who was instrumental in setting up and administering bookkeeping and billing systems, the company grew substantially in subsequent years.

Ed Foster, Stockton, named Water and Wastewater Director of the Year

Ed Foster began his near 30-year career with Stockton's utilities in August of 1975. During that time many career opportunities for Foster turned into benefits for the city. He relates saying, "Education was a benefit that included learning the technical aspects of water utilities, learning how to work with people and learning to do the hands on work needed to keep our systems running well."

Foster routinely completed treatment of water wells himself, saving the city thousands of dollars. He managed the extension work for a new water main to the city industrial park and helped develop a wellhead protection project. He has helped many new area water system operators to learn the ropes. Besides doing extensive work with the city's new water treatment plant, Foster made recommendations and helped implement major updates and improvements to the city's wastewater system.



Ed Foster shakes the hand of KRWA President Patricia Shaffer.

Donna Wools, Shawnee Cons. RWD 3, named Rural Water Office Manager

In keeping with the Association's award criteria of sustaining the community, Donna Wools has achieved this goal on several levels. "The biggest challenge in recent years for RWD No. 3 was the consolidation with neighboring District No. 7," notes Wools. "If I had it to do all over again, I'd do it over in a minute, consolidation has made our district much stronger!" She has been an advocate of future planning saying, "When installing water mains in an area that has potential for growth, put in the larger line-most of the cost is labor, not materials."

Starting her position with the water district in September of 1981, Donna Wools has ties that go back much further. Her father was one of the founders of the RWD in 1962. Today she manages the district's new office and shop facility adjacent to Jay Shideler Elementary School on SW Wannamaker Road. She still drives a school bus for Auburn-Washburn USD 437, a position she has relished for the past 31 years. She also has driven the Washburn Rural High School boy's basketball team bus to all away games for the past 15 years.



Donna Wools receives congratulations from KRWA President Patricia Shaffer.

Allen Markley, Douglas RWD 2, named Rural Water Operator



Allen Markley, Douglas RWD 2, Rural Water Operator of the Year, 2004.

Allen Markley has been diligent and dedicated in taking care of the day-to-day operation and some administrative duties for Douglas County RWD No. 2 since becoming a certified system operator in 1994. He started work with the District two years earlier. Allen along with his wife, Donna, system bookkeeper, manage the 433-customer RWD from their home office three miles from the district tank and tank house. Markley's position is a part time position with the District. Future planning for the district will locate the office in a new building adjacent to the storage tank and shed.

Besides testing for chlorine residuals, checking valves and fixing leaks, Markley takes calls from customers. "Not a lot of calls are compliments," he notes. "When everything is working right, the phone doesn't ring, but when it does-we get busy and get things fixed."

Cheryl Beatty, City of Kingman, receives Municipal Business Manager Award

Cheryl Beatty has been instrumental in the planning and oversight of recent major building and maintenance projects for Kingman including: the municipal airport's complete reconstruction; construction of an award winning wastewater treatment plant with comprehensive wastewater system renovations; a water system maintenance program achieving a reduction in water loss from 32% to 15%, with a goal of keeping it under 15% for the future; and a CDBG Neighborhood Development and Housing Rehabilitation project involving 20 homes and 19 blocks of street repaving in the target area.



Cheryl Beatty was named Municipal Business Manager of the Year.

"These projects have helped prepare Kingman for the future," said Beatty. "With continued leadership and support, the current Kingman Downtown Renovation and state-of-the-art, 21-mile, Kingman Electric Utility transmission line projects will further enhance Kingman and address the quality of life issues so important to our community's families."

Lee Wymer, Morrill, named Wastewater Operator of the Year



Lee Wymer, Morrill, accepts Wastewater Operator of the Year Award.

Since starting work for the city of Morrill in June of 2000, a normal workday for Wymer entails wearing any of a number of city hats for duties that include: essential water and wastewater operations, management of the city electric grid, performing a portion of the city's street repairs and is occasionally called to round up that pesky stray dog. When there's a fire in the community he dons his volunteer fire helmet. Wymer is also a Kansas Army National Guard member and recently returned from a year of wearing a combat helmet in Iraq. Community members and co-workers are very happy to have him again wearing their hats and taking care of the City of Morrill.

Lee Wymer's community volunteer involvement goes beyond the fire station with his volunteer work on the KAN STEP Community Center and Fire Barn building project now under way. "It's been great to see the new facility taking shape," said Wymer. "Morrill residents will use this community center every day!"

Rex Gandy, Galena, receives Special Recognition Award

KRWA was pleased to name Rex Gandy, long time operator at the City of Galena as a Special Recognition Award Winner. Rex has held a Class III water operator license since 1977. He is considered as the "local consultant" by the city manager and council. Obviously with all the years of experience, why not? His opinions and input are well respected and his advice has been very valuable to the City. He has been involved with all recent water and wastewater improvement projects for the city.



Long time Galena city employee Rex Gandy received a Special Recognition Award.

What's so special about this award winner? Well, he began work for the city in May 1957 and has worked there a total of 48 years for the same town. He's 72 – and going on 50 years with the city. That's commitment!

Gary Smith, USDA Rural Development, named "Friend of Rural Water"

KRWA was pleased to honor Gary Smith, Chief of Community and Business Programs at USDA Rural Development with the Association's "Friend of Rural Water Award" at the 2005 Conference. KRWA works in concert with many agencies and organizations to help provide services to members. These involve training and technical assistance and financing. One of the original purposes for the formation of KRWA was to help gain political support for funding of water systems.



Gary Smith, Director, Community & Business Programs, USDA Rural Development, was named "Friend of Rural Water" by KRWA.

One of those funding agencies is USDA Rural Development. Formerly the Farmers Home Administration, this agency has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to Kansas communities. It takes leadership and guidance, and commitment to try to help communities do the right thing. It takes people who are willing to work with people - It is an honor for KRWA this evening to present its friend of Rural Water Award to Gary is a native of Kansas, raised on a farm in Washington County near the small town of Mahaska. He has a degree in Agriculture Economics from Kansas State and a Masters in Public Finance Management from American University in Washington, D.C. He began his career with FmHA/Rural Development at El Dorado and has worked in the Rural Development Office in both Kansas and Colorado and several years in the national Office in Washington. Although he has received various other awards for service, KRWA expresses appreciation for all the work Gary Smith has done (and will continue to do) to help sustain Kansas communities - both rural water districts and the hundreds of small towns that rely on USDA Rural Development.

Best Tasting Water: City of Emporia

Water from the [City of Emporia](#) was judged 'Best Tasting Water In Kansas'

Consumer Confidence Award Winners named were:

For RWDs and privately owned systems:

- 3rd place goes to Leavenworth RWD 7
- 2nd place goes to Pottawatomie RWD 2
- 1st place is: [Public Wholesale District 4](#)

For Municipalities under 3000:

- 3rd place goes to City of Nortonville
- 2nd place winner is the City of Bentley
- 1st place winner is the [City of Enterprise](#)

For Municipalities 3000 - 25000:

- 2nd place goes to the City of Holton
- 1st place winner is the [City of Winfield](#)

For Municipalities serving more than 25,000:

- 2nd place goes to the City of Garden City
- 1st place winner, is the [City of Manhattan](#).