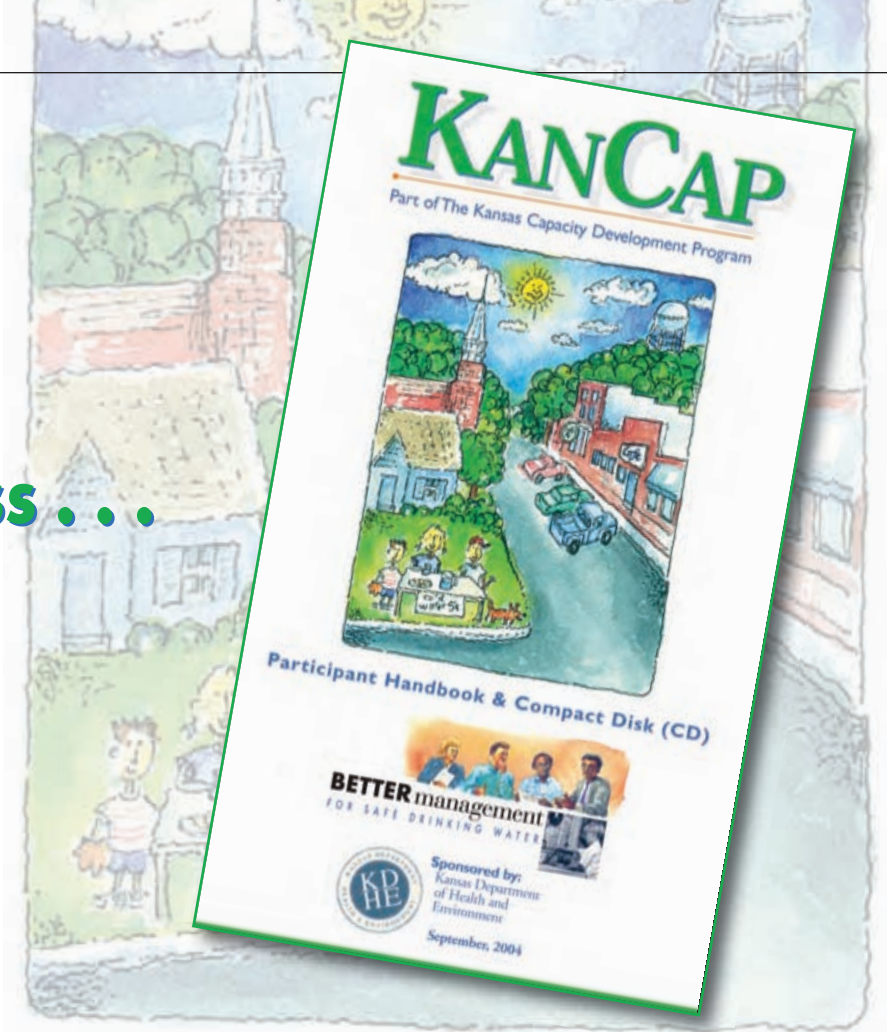


KANCAP – It Really Is YOUR Business . . .

In my years of experience working as deputy city clerk and in other capacities involving local units of government, I have found there is one common denominator. Everyone can benefit from board/council training. While there may be persons on the board/council who are knowledgeable in their private business, board/council members must also be aware of how to apply their knowledge and experience to the “business at hand” in their city or RWD. Matters that would be considered routine in private business can become inefficient when there is a public agency that needs to deal with the issue. Here’s where training for the board/council pays off.

I attend numerous board/council meetings. My listing of concerns that I see at board/council meetings includes:

- ▲ poor planning or management of the meeting
- ▲ unresolved issues not being addressed and brought to closure
- ▲ poor-decision making
- ▲ relationships among board or council members and between board and staff that can become strained
- ▲ personal agendas to help friends or certain segments of the community



KanCap to the rescue

KanCap training has become quite a successful training across Kansas in the last year. Have you heard of KanCap? Have you received an announcement brochure about KanCap from KRWA and thought, “Eh, I don’t need that!” and then tossed it in file13? I’m sorry if that happened. I submit that KanCap is a training that is aimed for RWD board and city council members, city clerks, city administrators, mayors, chairmen, managers, bookkeepers, and yes, operators. KanCap is a policy and procedures’ training that educates or refreshes the people who have chosen to be part of the managerial, financial or technical areas of their rural water system or city administration.

KDHE and KRWA are working together to provide this FREE training across the six KDHE districts in Kansas beginning in 2007. KRWA began in 2009 and 2010 sponsoring two training sessions in each of KDHE’s six districts

with one of those sessions being held at the KRWA Annual Conference in Wichita. To encourage conference attendees to select KanCap training at conference, reimbursement of registration fees were offered in both 2009 and 2010 for those board/council members who registered early and then attended the full day training. At regional meetings, KRWA has been providing noon or evening meals.

I want to describe the different aspects of KanCap so you can judge for yourself should KanCap be for your city or RWD. These sessions include a broad discussion of managerial, financial and technical aspects such as:

- Tips for better board/council meetings
- Who requires what and what happens if your board/council doesn’t comply
- Reducing risk and liability with written plans, assessments, audits, insurances, regular reviews and more

- Communications – over-rated or essential?
- Funding options from federal loans and grants to rate reviews
- Preparing and understanding financial statements
- Ever-changing technology – frill or foundation?

Presently, Cathy Tucker-Vogel, who heads up the Capacity Development Program at KDHE, provides a wide range of topics in the management section. John Haas or Rosemary Saunders of Ranson Financial Consultants, Wichita, provides training on the financial section. Jeff Lamfers or Bert Zerr, KRWA consultants, present the technical section (operation and maintenance) of the KanCap training program. There is no charge to attend KanCap; the training is underwritten by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Capacity Development Program.

Participants take home a 3-ring notebook with an interactive CD that contains 52 videos featuring former and present officials discussing hot topics such as employee evaluations, Open Meetings and Open Record acts, funding options, etc. The CD links to more than 200 additional resources with detailed information in pdf format. There's even a crocodile in one of the "mind games" that eats your answers! KDHE provides an additional CD entitled "Public Water Supply Information". This CD is loaded with all types of forms, guides, contacts and operator certification information.



**Jeff Lamfers,
Consultant,
KRWA**

"The reason KanCap has a technical component is so that elected officials have some familiarity with issues that operating staff face. One example would be compliance with all the various State and Federal rules and regulations. While the system's operating staff deal with the day-to-day issues of complying with these regulations, elected officials also need to have some basic understanding of the regulations as the board or council (not the operator) are ultimately responsible for ensuring the system is in compliance. Should KDHE or EPA decide at some point to take enforcement action against a system for non-compliance, they will not send an order and/or fine to the operator. The order and/or fine will be sent to the elected board or council for response. Consequently, some technical knowledge by board/council members is mandatory for a responsible and well-run water system."

Attendance at KanCap sessions beginning July 2009 to May 2010:

- 119 individual cities and RWDs
- 45 city council members
- 47 RWD board members
- 9 administrators
- 27 city clerks
- 18 mayors
- 9 RWD office managers
- 9 RWD chairpersons
- 67 operators or managers

The next time a KanCap Board/Council training brochure comes to you, consider attending. Water is YOUR business! Just as it's essential to have pipes that don't leak, board/council members need to know what to do to make their governance more efficient and effective. KanCap teaches that. You'll be glad you participated. This training is for both governing bodies and staff. In fact, it's a win/win when some staff can attend with board/council members.

Professionalism in the board meeting room or city council chamber plays a key part in the prosperity of any organization. Training and development of individual directors and council members and their boards as a whole is an important investment for any organization that intends to operate at its greatest effectiveness. Give KRWA a call if your community would like to host a KanCap training session or email to me at rita@krwa.net or to KRWA Training Coordinator Jim Jackson at jim@krwa.net.

Rita has extensive municipal experience with the city of Troy, KS for 11 years. She was a certified EMT and served as the Ambulance Director for two years and supervised the volunteer staff. Rita also worked on or completed most water and wastewater utility reporting requirements. Her focus at KRWA is to provide assistance with applications for funding for community facilities.





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