



What's all the buzz? It's the 43rd annual technical conference Opening Session?

Concert Hall in Century II is a grand setting. With its 60-foot wide stage, those who walk out onto it cannot see the audience because of the bright lights.

So what's the buzz? Oh, it's the bees? And where are those bees? Together We Thrive? (It rhymes with hive?) Busy bees – they were buzzing! But where? Soon, a rooster's crowing gave the heads up to the estimated 1,200 who had settled in for the Opening Session. Next, a video opened to the sounds of bees buzzing and swarming. The message in that 3-minute show was how all bees work together to maintain a community. One bee drifts away from the daily routine and is confronted with all sorts of perilous situations. In the end, that bee rejoins the others in the hive and the bee is again a productive member.

It's likely that no one was expecting a lesson in community cooperation by watching an animation of a swarm of bees – but that's what set the theme for the Opening Session for KRWA's 43rd annual conference, Wednesday morning, March 31.

The Butler Community College Smorgaschords quartet sang the National Anthem.

In his welcome, KRWA President Dennis Schwartz commented, "You will learn something new and beneficial

here over the next few days – whether you want to or not." Schwartz alluded to the conference theme "Together We Thrive". He continued, "KRWA has endeavored for decades to instill in all of us that our mission should be to provide the best quality of service to the people of Kansas. Communicating and cooperating with our neighboring entities is

critical to ensure that end." Schwartz reminded the audience that the KRWA mission is "to provide education and leadership to water and wastewater systems to enhance the public health and sustain Kansas communities."

The invocation was delivered by Paul Froelich, Superintendent for the city of Enterprise.

Wichita Mayor Carl Brewer addressed the conference.

"I want to give you a very warm welcome to the air capital of the world, Wichita, KS. Thank you so very much for coming. I want to thank you for holding the Kansas Rural Water

Association annual convention and exhibition here at the Century II performing arts and convention center. And let me say, how much I appreciate your dedication to the highest standards for Kansas public water and wastewater treatment. The work of this organization over the past 43 years in providing education, technical assistance, and leadership to cities, rural water districts and investor-owned utilities is impressive and essential if we are to protect our water, our most precious resource. You know, there are people who come from all over the country and world to Wichita just to see the things that we are doing to preserve our water. Many people in our country take it for granted that water is



Wichita Mayor Carl Brewer



KRWA President Dennis Schwartz



Butler Community College Headliners



something that we have every day to shower with and other uses, to water our plants, to water our crops. But how many people ever think of what it would be like if we did not have water? The services that you (water and wastewater utilities) are providing are very important to your communities, to our country, and to the world. The work that you are doing is so definitely needed and so definitely appreciated by everyone.”

Another rousing musical revue was presented by the Butler Community College Headliners. Under the direction of Valerie Lippold Mack, the Headliners had just returned from a 60-hour trip to Chicago to host the FAME national showchoir competition with 750 HS students from all over the nation. MTV-Made filmed the showchoirs. For the 2010 KRWA conference, the Headliners presented a 23-minute set entitled, "Peace, Love and GLEE! on the ROAD". The standing ovation was very deserved.



The Gumbo Soup of Leadership



New Orleans native, Dr. Joseph V. Trahan, III, amplified the conference theme “Together We Thrive” with his keynote, “The Gumbo Soup of Leadership.” Trahan, with more than 25 years of public relations/affairs experience in governmental, association, educational and non-profit public relations, led the audience through a fast-paced presentation that described the traits of a leader.

“What is the first thing that a leader must have?”, Trahan asked. “A leader must have outstanding oral and written

communication skills. The second thing a leader must have is a vision. A leader must be someone who believes in where he’s going – where he’s taking you. Third, a leader must have the ability to deal with rejection. And finally, a leader must have a sense of humor.”

He added to his imaginary kettle of leadership gumbo soup.

“To be a leader, you must love the people you lead. And being a leader means listening to people – and really listening to them. Leaders must also be enthusiastic,” he explained.

“I also want a leader who gives action – not someone who just talks.”

“Leadership is also being an ‘example.’ As leaders, you are watched 24 hours a day. What you do and what you do not do, they watch. As a leader you set the example, and your examples speak volumes.”

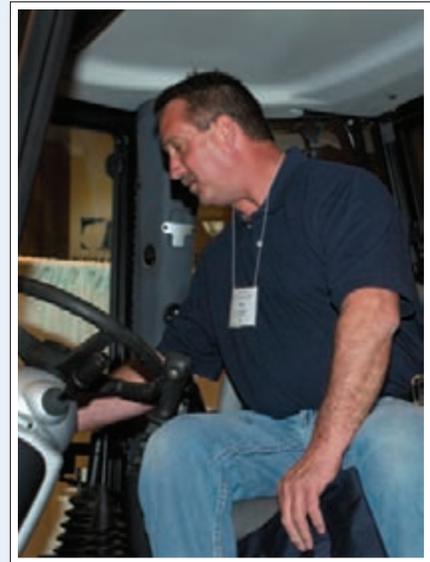
“A leader can never, ever escape responsibility.

Accountability? Sure, a person can be held accountable – but a true leader will say, ‘It is my fault.’ Being a leader means accepting a responsibility,” Trahan said.

Dr. Trahan alluded to numerous events in lives of leaders that revealed the power of motivated choices. He alluded to the famous quotation made by President Theodore Roosevelt: “Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure... than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat.”



EXPO Hall Opens



Exhibitors are a big part of the KRWA annual conference. Conference attendees come to inspect and compare products and equipment vital to the water and wastewater utilities. They come to network with the professionals – and, to do business! In 2010, exhibitors filled 288 booth spaces. In 2011, the floor plan will be modified to allow 306 booth spaces. Mark your calendars now for Mid-America’s greatest show, March 29 – 31, 2011.



