

How to Help KRWA Maintain Accurate Contacts

Have you ever had the need to contact someone but did not know the phone number? Where do you get the phone number? Possible sources are the local phone book, whitepages.com or even calling a friend who may have the number you need.

KRWA often deals with the same situation. Having accurate contact information is essential to helping all systems. KRWA maintains a database of associate members, agency personnel, and member cities and rural water districts. This information is updated almost daily. However, the database is only as accurate as the information received from systems.

KRWA has made its contacts available in an online directory on the KRWA Web site. There are approximately 7,600 names and addresses that will display through searches for water and wastewater utilities in Kansas. The site has been promoted in prior magazines but I think it is a topic that deserves further attention.

On the KRWA Web site (www.krwa.net) go to "Online Resources" and then "Systems Directory". See the graphic above. The user can then enter the name of the city or water district in the "City or RWD" field. For example if someone wants to obtain results for contacts with the city of Morrill, the user can either enter "Morrill", or "City of Morrill". Next, click on the "submit query" button. The results will display on the page in alpha order by last name of all contacts in the database from the city of Morrill.

The KRWA office receives many calls from people who are attempting to determine which rural water district they are within in order to obtain new service. Many rural water districts in Kansas do not have an individual telephone listing. Often when they have such a listing, there is no consistency in the order of the listing in the phone directory. Do you look under "water" or "rural" or the "county?" Citizens who contact KRWA generally find the Association through an Internet search for "Kansas + rural water".

Combined with the RWD maps that are posted on the KRWA Web site, KRWA's service of helping others locate people is unparalleled. In addition to private citizens, KRWA



has received numerous compliments from contractors, engineers, agencies and realtors for the ease of access of contact information available through the Web site.

How does KRWA obtain contact information?

Membership for utilities in KRWA costs \$20 per year plus \$0.70 per active service connection. The maximum fee is set at 1,000 meters. This results in a present maximum annual membership fee of \$720. The anniversary renewal date is established from the date of the membership. As a result, membership renewals and requests for contact updates go out each month. In requesting contact information, the Association asks for the basics, including:

- ◆ Name of the System or Utility
- ◆ Key Contact Person (this is someone who agrees to be responsive to special notices)
- ◆ Complete Street or Rural Address
- ◆ Phone Number
- ◆ Fax Number
- ◆ Email Address

Use of contact information

The purpose of having all the contact information is so the Association can efficiently contact respective systems or personnel by title. KRWA conducts training sessions throughout the state for water and wastewater operators, office managers, bookkeepers, city clerks and board and council members. Having correct mailing addresses is essential to mail notices to appropriate groups. KRWA needs to have confidence the person will receive the mailing. KRWA also sends training notices via bulk rate

with “Address Service Requested”. This means that the postal service is supposed to provide notice of any change of address back to KRWA (which creates an additional cost to KRWA). This is one more step that is taken to verify mailing addresses. When it comes to mailing the KRWA magazine and conference program, the addresses are processed through mail labeling software that identified any mis-match prior to labeling the material.

Help KRWA have accurate information

When KRWA mails membership renewal information it is important to make sure the addresses provided will be delivered by the local post office. Some post offices will not deliver mailings if a physical address is required and a Post Office Box is on the address, or vice versa. We don’t know what the postal service rules are, but they are not consistently applied – that we know for sure. Cities and RWDs need to provide accurate contact information so that KRWA can provide mailings that the system staff and board/council members anticipate.

Anyone can go to the KRWA Web site and check on their information. Go to the ‘Systems Directory’ link and enter at least one character in the City or RWD field, then the ‘title’ such as Mayor, or Chairman, or Office Manager – or just call all the contacts up by entering the name of the system. Again, RWDs are listed as “Coffey RWD 2” or “Cherokee RWD 4” (the county name, then “RWD”, then the number). Another example would be to search for Kansas Rural Water Association staff. Just enter “Kansas

Rural” and then hit “Submit Query”. All records with Kansas Rural will be displayed with contact information.

Similar information is available for KRWA’s Associate Members. On the KRWA Web site, Associate member information can be found under “Membership”, and then “Associate Members”. Searches can be made for these categories: Attorneys, Consultants, Contractors, Financial/Accounting, Insurance, Services/Suppliers, and Utilities.

KRWA works every day to maintain accurate database information. The contact database contains nearly 9,000 records. Some are not posted such as addresses of agency employees, legislators, etc. The “mailing list” database is one of many individual databases; the mailing database is a mainstay for KRWA. Any errors or necessary updates can be easily provided to KRWA by clicking on the link in the shaded frame to the right of the directory search fields. Or, just contact KRWA by phone at 785.336.3760 or email to krwa@krwa.net or greg@krwa.net. We are more than anxious to help make sure your contact information is updated and accurate.

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Other voices . . .

Conservation Vital to Future of Farms, Towns

The *Marysville Advocate* offered the following opinion in support of changing state law dealing with water rights.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture dedicates about half its staff and money to one vital issue for farms, ranches, and rural communities: water.

With declining groundwater levels a growing concern, even in eastern Kansas, the agency is now trying to bring more conservation into play.

To do so, Agriculture Secretary Josh Svaty asked the Legislature this year to amend state law.

Svaty’s plan was to let farmers keep their water rights if they choose to conserve their water.

Lawmakers failed to even hear the proposal.

Current Kansas law is based on a “use it or lose it” approach. If Kansas irrigators who own water rights stop irrigating for at least five years, they lose the legal right to pump it. But a Supreme Court battle between Kansas and Nebraska show how outdated that policy is.

It’s a false notion that water will always run when the pump or the faucet is turned on.

Kansas recently called Nebraska back into federal court for violating an agreement on water use in the Republican River basin not far to the west of Marshall County.

Nebraska has failed to adequately restrict irrigation in the basin. As a result, Kansans see less water flowing down the Republican, affecting not only farms, but also cities downstream.

The basin’s future is likely a dry one if conservation does not prevail.

The same goes for irrigation water in Kansas. If a landowner chooses to conserve, he shouldn’t face the penalty of losing his water right, which has not only a monetary but also an environmental value.

“People only think about water when the river runs dry,” Svaty said in a recent story in the *Salina Journal*.

It’s time for the Kansas Legislature to change that mindset.