

A Viewpoint – 2010 and Beyond

The ability of the Kansas Rural Water Association to provide services to cities and RWDs and wastewater utilities is highly dependent on contractual relationships with National Rural Water Association and contracts administered in Kansas through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Water Office and Kansas Department of Commerce. Membership dues from RWDs, cities and Associates supplement KRWA's budgets. The GPS Mapping Program at KRWA is becoming self-supporting, which it needs to. I am pleased to report that KRWA ended 2010 with a solid year of performance in meeting system requests for training and onsite help.

In 2010, KRWA staff drove more than 400,000 miles to provide training and assistance. Thankfully, there were no accidents other than a few broken windshields. That's a lot of miles.

In addition to all the previous contracts, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment invited KRWA to enter into a new contract to provide additional help to wastewater systems. That work is being provided largely by Jeff Lamfers who has been with KRWA since 2009 when he retired from KDHE after thirty years of work for the agency. By the same token, funding for one program to monitor the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects for USDA Rural Development ended in October. The other similar position, held by Rita Clary, had funding extended to March 31, 2011. After that, Rita will work for KRWA in support of KanCap and other KRWA training programs, help ensure that the quarterly financial reports are provided by the borrowers of the Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund, and other duties including monitoring some Davis-Bacon compliance as a "for fee service" on construction projects.

Kansas Rural Water's tradition of hard work and a "let's get it done" approach have gone a long way to support past successes and hopefully, will do so for future endeavors. KRWA's programs have an extensive history of documented accomplishments and results. Audits of the Association's finances show a financially solid organization; program contracts continually meet all compliance tests. I am pleased to mention that KRWA's single entity audits have never had an issue of non-compliance and have always received an "unqualified opinion" from our auditors.

The true test of distinction however comes from membership – those that KRWA serves day in and day out. But membership is not a criteria for receiving help. Several members have challenged me personally on this topic. I explain that use of public money does not allow KRWA to restrict services to members, plus some of the systems that need help the most are least likely to be members. Nor

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should anyone want to limit service to those who are in need. Can you imagine when a water system calls in to ask a question and staff would first have to determine what their membership status is? KRWA's membership dues have not been changed since 1989! The reason rates have not had to increase is because

staff have continually taken on more commitments, some of which have helped generate funds that end up supplementing other KRWA programs. By the same token, there has not been any effort at KRWA to see how much income could be generated by increasing conference registration fees or costs of other services that have to be charged for such as GPS mapping, for example. The one imbalance that probably will need to be addressed is the amount of work that is expected for the funding that is made available through some contracts. In the meantime, KRWA will work to be as prudently as possible in utilizing the funding that is available.

TRAINING, always the mainstay

As you can read in the report by Jim Jackson beginning on page 78 in this issue, KRWA conducted 95 days of training in 2010. The attendance totaled 5,747 people, of which 3,152 were operators. The KanCap board/council training was expanded to provide nine sessions which were attended by 301 people. KRWA has kept track of training attendance since 1976. From July 76 to December 2010, KRWA has facilitated or conducted 1,847 training sessions, which were attended by 124,830 people. The numbers tell the story; Kansas Rural Water achieves results. In 2010, KRWA also announced plans to expand training for managers through the Utility Management Certification program. The first sessions will be held this coming summer.