

## Legislative representation

Over the last five or six years, a great deal of time and effort has been put into the topic of transfer of RWD territory involved in an annexation by a city or transfer of territory between RWDs. In 2010, KRWA supported amendments to HB 2283, a bill that was in conference committee from the 2009 Session. That bill spelled out additional factors that should be considered in a transfer of RWD territory involved in an annexation. The bill was passed and incorporated additional amendments suggested by KRWA. Thanks to KRWA Counsel Gary Hanson for all his work in help draft guidelines on the topic. KRWA also appreciates working with other partner organizations on the guidelines: 1) Kansas Municipal Utilities; 2) REAP; and, 3) the League of Kansas Municipalities. The guidelines were the basis of conference sessions and have been widely distributed as a model for how cities and RWDs ought to try to reach service area agreements before heading off to court.

KRWA also tracked various other legislation; Doug Mays & Associates was employed as legislative liaison in 2010, and continues in 2011. Ongoing reports have been posted on the KRWA Web site, [www.krwa.net](http://www.krwa.net).

Also, similar to recent years, KRWA made the largest donation to the National Rural Water's WaterPac with more than \$5,000 raised during the raffle at the KRWA conference.



## Strength through members

Growth in KRWA membership continues at all levels and breaks down as follows: Cities – 485; Rural Water and Public Wholesale Districts – 299; Associates – 237.

## Help Make A Difference!

The KRWA conference theme for 2011 is “Help Make A Difference!” While it may have a nice – it’s more than a cliché. It’s a challenge for all of us to do something. People can make a difference by just voting “No” regardless – but that doesn’t solve problems. People who make a difference show leadership; they evaluate options and help others in whatever ways they can. That’s the challenge for local water and wastewater systems, members of governing bodies and likewise, the same holds true for KRWA. A man I once worked for had a great motto. It was “If we don’t have time to do it right, when will we have time to do it over?” That was true then and it’s more true now. The world is not ending, contrary to some talk shows! It’s up to all of us to do something to help improve communities and lives for others. Helping others and each of us doing our part to help make a difference should always be our priority.

*Elmer Ronnebaum is KRWA General Manager; he has been employed by KRWA since 1983. He served seven years on the KRWA board of directors prior to that. He also helped develop a large RWD and served for fourteen years on a water district board of directors.*



## Gary Smith Retires From USDA Rural Development

**G**ary Smith retired January 1, 2011 as the Community Program Director for USDA Rural Development in Kansas. Gary was familiar with and well known by hundreds of municipalities and rural water districts in Kansas.



Gary has worn many hats. After graduation from Kansas State University, he began his career on July 3, 1972 as a Student Trainee with then Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) in Washington County, Kansas. Gary went on to become an Assistant County Supervisor, Deputy Director of Strategy, Business and Community Programs Director and Community Program Director. He worked in the USDA Rural Development National Office, in Colorado, and in Kansas for a total of more than thirty-eight years.

Most recently in Kansas, as Director for Business and Community Programs/Community Programs, Gary was responsible for administering all of the Agency’s Business Programs, Community Facility Programs and the Water and Environmental Programs. He was the approval

official and oversight official for all loans and grants in those program areas.

During the ten-year period from 2001 through 2010, he approved more than 680 projects representing in excess of \$525 million. Of this amount, water and waste disposal projects represented approximately \$311 million (approximately 220 projects) and community facilities represented approximately \$76 million (approximately 135 projects). The balance of approximately \$138 million was represented by business and energy related projects.

Gary developed a collaborative relationship and partnership with other state and federal agency officials, and local, state and national associations and organizations, bond counsel, architects, engineers, financial advisors, economic development directors, attorneys, other lenders, etc. to help promote USDA Rural Development Programs and to accomplish projects.

Kansas Rural Water Association recognized Gary in 2005 with its honored “Friend of Rural Water Award”. Representatives of KRWA are planning to attend a retirement celebration in Gary’s honor on March 12 in Topeka.