



44th Annual KRWA Conference Opening Session

The Opening General Session is a big moment for conference-goers. The 2011 conference lived up to all expectations. With approximately 1,400 people assembled in Concert Hall, the conference opened with a video, “The Power of One.” This video carried a powerful message, beautiful images, and inspiring music and ended with the theme, “Help Make A Difference!”

Sam Atherton, President, KRWA Board of Directors

“Welcome to the 44th Annual Conference and Exhibition of the Kansas Rural Water Association. The next two days you’ll have the opportunity to see old friends, make new friends and of course the main reason we are here is to learn about our natural resource – water, which we cannot live without. Our staff has done an outstanding job in the construction of this convention. During the conference, there will be no less than eighty-eight presenters, fifty-seven moderators, 201 associate members, state and federal agencies providing 306 exhibit spaces for your education and enjoyment. In November at our annual long range planning session, your board of directors voted to change the mission statement by changing the order of the wording. It is now, ‘To provide leadership, education, technical assistance to public



Sam Atherton



Veronica Base



Jacob House

water and wastewater utilities to enhance public health, and sustain Kansas communities.’ That’s a dynamic mission statement. During these tough economic times, your board of directors has remained committed to staying the course by educating and providing services to you, the Kansas consumer. You are all here because you are leaders in your community, and you are here as our team is, ‘To help make a difference’ and become better educated about the chosen profession. Our keynote speaker Mark Mayfield will talk to us about making a difference. With Mark and myself wearing the blue and gold jackets of FFA, we know the importance of leadership. As Walter Brennan would say, ‘No brag, just facts.’ Thank you for making this one of the best conferences in the nation; I hope the next two days will be as educational as possible. Thank you and God bless.”

Veronica Base, City of Smolan delivers invocation

“As we come together for this conference, let our hands be used for good purpose; give us strength to not withdraw them when the work is hard. Let our mouths speak against injustice; help us not to whisper for fear of accusation. May we live our lives to serve those around us; may we not pull away to avoid getting too involved. Prevent us from serving only when it is convenient for us in places where we consider it safe, and only for those who make it easy to do so. As we come into this conference, we ask that we be renewed and empowered. Use us as an instrument of peace that we may seriously be both servants and leaders. Help us to Help Make a Difference!”

Jacob House, Sales and Communications Manager, Century II Performing Arts and Convention Center

“On behalf of the entire staff of Century II, it is my pleasure to welcome you to back to Wichita for the 2011 Annual Conference and Exhibition. As one of the largest events at Century II during the course of the year, we are absolutely thrilled to be of service to you again. Now it is my understanding that this is your twentieth year for being here at Century II, so I must say, ‘Happy 20th Anniversary!’ I wasn’t here at that first event twenty years



Butler Community College Headliners provided an exuberant, opening musical review, "Turn The Radio On."



ago but I can attest that there is a wonderful partnership between our two organizations because if there weren't I can tell you we would not allow beer and a spinning carnival ride in Convention Hall every single year. But for you, it's no problem. I also talked to our veteran staff to see if they had any fond or interesting stories or tidbits they wanted me to share with you. And the same story kept coming up and I hope he doesn't mind my sharing this, and I don't know all the details, but there was Greg and a mechanical bull and a not so graceful fall one time; I will let him tell you about that."

Jacob also described the WaterWalk project that is slowly but surely continuing its mission to become an urban village with the incorporation of residential, retail, office, and entertainment uses to create a 24/7 living environment. Water Walk will play a large role in this year's new and rebranded River Fest, occurring June 2 to 11. He also commented on the new Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott Hotel, and Broadview Hotel will open its doors in the summer of 2011 after more than a \$20 million renovation. Cambridge Suites just south of Kellogg on Main is also undergoing renovation. The hotel will be renamed to "Hotel at WaterWalk". The success of the Intrust Arena has been overwhelming; management has continued to bring a diverse range of entertainment to the city. Jacob explained the investment by the city in renovating Century II. Nearly \$750,000 was spent in Concert Hall, installing all new seating and carpet, paint, wiring and act curtain in 2010. Over the next few years, approximately \$22 million will be invested in Century II renovation and equipment. He concluded: "Welcome back; we'll see you again in 2012!"

Mark Mayfield, Keynoter says, "Help Make A Difference!"

Keynoter Mark Mayfield charged up the opening session with his presentation "Help Make A Difference!" Telling stories of growing up on the family farm at Caney, Kansas and milking cows by hand, to claiming to be the first "tenured student" at Kansas State University for nine years

of undergraduate study, Mayfield explained the success models of various businesses including Southwest Airlines and McDonald's Corporation. He told the audience that the reason for their success included responsiveness to market trends and conditions.

Addressing local situations, he asked, "Are you willing to help? How quickly do you respond? What's the most important thing that 'difference-makers' know? They know what the letter 'E' in word 'CARE' stands for. It stands for experience. What is the experience that is created when your people, when your clients, when your customers work with you? What is their experience? If you want good behavior to occur, the consequence has to be good," he said.

Mayfield implored the audience to see the customers' perspective, examining issues of credibility, reliability, and responsiveness. He suggested they try to understand the myths of customer service and to see how to move customers beyond satisfaction to advocacy.

Mayfield ended to cheers from the audience as he took the theme of the conference "Help Make A Difference" and presented it in a hilarious fashion.



"Are you willing to help? How quickly do you respond? What's the most important thing that 'difference-makers' know? They know what the letter 'E' in word 'CARE' stands for. It stands for experience. What is the experience that is created when your people, when your clients, when your customers work with you? What is their experience? If you want good behavior to occur, the consequence has to be good."