

Rate Setting Sessions and KanCap Get New Life

Among the more than 100 training sessions to be offered by KRWA in 2012 were six sessions dealing with water rate setting and ten featuring the board/council training program, KanCap. A total of 132 people attended the rate setting sessions; 167 attended the board/council training sessions. The sessions were held in all corners of the state. Locations were Chetopa, Atchison, Russell, Greensburg, Leoti, Concordia, Marysville, Valley Center, Hillsboro, Sterling, Garden City, Hays, Enterprise, Lawrence, Wichita and Independence.

What about KanCap?

KanCap is policy and procedures training for boards, councils, administration, and operators. Actually, staff members and board/council members who attend together gain because of becoming better team players. KanCap was developed under contract by KRWA with funding from the Capacity Development set-aside of the US EPA capitalization grant to KDHE for the State Revolving Loan Program.

What is KanCap? It's board/council training to help improve management of local water systems. Attendees receive a 300-page training binder. It is divided into three sections: Managerial, Financial and Technical. It comes with an interactive CD. The CD has 216 additional pdf links, along with 51 video clips and a host of other interactive quizzes. Bringing all that technology together with the driving software in 2003 was a challenge – and ever since that, Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft updates have made the program difficult to operate, given the many operating systems and versions of Acrobat that are on users' computers. For example, since 2003, Adobe Acrobat has made twelve major security upgrades to their program. Therefore, the CD will not play properly on newer versions and on Windows

versions newer than XP. KDHE has requested that KRWA update the program; doing so will be a focus of KRWA in the coming months.

What about credits?

According to KDHE's policies, no operator credit is awarded for attendance unless the operator is accompanied by a majority of the board or council. The operator then receives five hours of credit towards water operator certification. But what about board/council members receiving some sort of credit? Yes, KDHE does keep track if the majority of board/council has attended KanCap. By attending KanCap the board/council receives points toward a Kansas Public Water Supply State Revolving Loan should the system seek funding from KDHE.

At a recent training, a board member asked, "Why can't I get credit hours for attending?" Board/council members do receive a "certificate of attendance" providing they "pass" with a 70 percent of the worksheets for managerial, financial, technical.

Is it worth it?

Is KanCap training worth spending a day or two evenings in a classroom? KRWA thinks so. KanCap helps with all types of managerial, financial, and technical questions board/council members may have. Most board/council members do not realize the responsibility they assume when they campaign for that city office or rural district office. KanCap can be a big help for newcomers or for those who have served many years. Attendees cannot know all the rules and regulations and KanCap brings it all



together. One city that was recently well-represented at a KanCap session is discussing adopting an ordinance that any new board/council member must attend eight hours of KanCap training. That would not only be beneficial for the newcomer but a huge advantage for the council.

Rate setting gets new spark

The sessions dealing with rate setting took a different turn this year. Rather than just cover the typical "rate setting/financial" subject, KRWA's Pat McCool provided instruction on the Water

Use Report. The accurate accounting for water use and water loss is critical to any water system and it is basic for any system to have that information before they can really begin an honest evaluation of rates. It's easy to just dump numbers into a spreadsheet

and have it calculate some rate ... but as they say, "garbage in, garbage out." KRWA is aware that many systems are not doing accurate accounting of water use/loss. Understanding how that report can help as a management tool was the emphasis of the training. Others on the rate setting training team were Angela Buzard of the Environmental Finance Center based at Wichita State University and John Haas of Ranson Financial Consultants, Wichita. Angela's initial survey of the audience was important in having people provide what their expectations were by attending. John Haas provided various scenarios for setting rates and explained the factors needed to compile the analysis for setting the rates.



Watch the KRWA Web site at www.krwa.net for future training sessions on these and many other topics.