The Many Hats We Wear

2015 KRWA Annual Conference Review

The 2015 KRWA conference promised much – and it delivered, again! With a total registration of exactly 2,300 people, the three-day event was second to none in the Midwest, and the KRWA conference is among the most respected regional water and wastewater conferences in the U.S.

The Many Hats We Wear outlined the registration banner. From hard hats, ball caps, cowboy hats, military hats, firemen's helmets, etc., everyone was covered. And from the time that people picked up their registration packets to the end of the conference, everyone had a good time. The conference featured a total of 59 training sessions with more than 85 presenters being involved. Nearly 230 water and wastewater operators took the operator certification exam on Thursday, March 26. That is a record number at a KRWA conference. KRWA appreciates the certification staff at KDHE for their extra efforts in helping provide special training for water and wastewater operators on Tuesday, March 24. Those who took the exam appreciated that very much.

Who attended?
In 2015, registrants came from 305 cities and 208 rural water districts or other public water or wastewater systems. The attendance breakdown is as follows:
❖ Operators: 1,019
❖ Administrative Staff: 144
❖ Board/Council Members: 143
❖ Industry: 928
❖ Agency: 66

There were 199 different exhibitors filling all 331 available booth spaces in EXPO Hall. Manufacturers’ representatives and exhibitors registered from 34 states, and France.

What did they eat?
The answer is, “Just about everything in sight!” Seriously, the a la carte hospitality items never run out at a KRWA conference. KRWA conference-goers consumed the following:
❖ Glazed Donuts: 62 dozen
❖ Glazed “Raised Donuts” (there’s a difference): 29 dozen
❖ Cake Donuts: 34 dozen
❖ Strudels: 44 dozen
❖ Blueberry Coffee Sticks: 10 dozen
❖ Coffee Cakes: 27 (x 12 servings)
❖ Twists: 40 dozen
❖ Muffins: 50 dozen
❖ Cookies: 170 dozen
❖ Fruit Salad Cups: 1,000 servings
❖ Soda Pop: 1,080 cans
❖ Premix: 32 canisters
❖ Coffee: 28 pounds
❖ Beer: 26 kegs

While this issue summarizes the 2015 conference, initial plans are already underway for 2016. For starters, EXPO Hall will have additional booths in 2016 taking the total to 341; more than 200 spaces were already reserved as of June 1.

Enjoy the next 32 pages as you review the 2015 conference. For those who didn’t attend, KRWA extends this welcome for 2016. Mark your calendar now for March 29 -31 at Century II Convention Center in Wichita.
Pre-conference Sessions

The 2015 KRWA conference featured nine preconference sessions on Tuesday, March 25. Below is a summary of those sessions.

“A City Clerk I Am – A City Clerk I Shall Be...“
How many hats does a city clerk wear? City clerks do much more than send out water bills! This session focused on two main topics: 1) Dealing with budgets and other city clerk administrative issues; and, 2) Avoiding mistakes in payroll practices. Anita Goertzen with Custom Micro Works, Colorado Springs, CO, explained the basics of municipal budgets. Karen Skillman, KJS Computer & Training Services, LLC, Topeka, KS discussed payroll issues and how to avoid mistakes. Skillman explained IRS compliance concerning taxable compensation, corrections on withholdings, commons mistakes on W-2s and the new rules for I-9. There were 58 clerks who attended this training.

Waste Stabilization Ponds: Operational Theory and Troubleshooting
Both new and experienced operators participated in this session. They learned that the most common type of wastewater treatment for municipalities in Kansas is the facultative lagoon. Facultative lagoons have an aerobic surface layer, an anaerobic bottom layer, and a zone of facultative bacteria in the center. Topics covered included the biological processes at work in a waste stabilization pond, operational issues, maintenance problems and solutions, a review of permit requirements for both discharging and non-discharging ponds, how to interpret laboratory results and how to produce a good quality effluent and consistently meet permit limits. Presenters were Kitty Rhynerson, Shelly Shores-Miller and Greg Taylor, all with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Attendance was 197.

Water System Components, Operations and Technology Updates
Attendance at this pre-conference session filled Room 210C as 174 people filled every available chair.
This training covered a multitude of operational issues including under pressure installations, line stopping techniques, hot taps, valve insertions, cutting pipe and new products. The afternoon presentations included fire hydrants and valves, metering technologies and methods of chemical injection. Presenters were Bradley Brush, Neptune Technology Group, Kansas City, MO; Brett Hanes, Team Industrial Service, Crown Point, IN; Bob Hening, Municipal Pipe Services, Hastings, NE; Andy Singer and Jason Shelby, Mueller Co., Kansas City, MO; and, Allan Strobl, Municipal Supply, Inc., Lincoln, NE.

Building The Board/Council Team
This fast-paced presentation that included many handouts and worksheets was professional in every way. Bob Fitch, President of Non-Profit Solutions, Hawarden, IA, encouraged those attending to work to make their board/council experience as productive as possible. Topics included managing liability and risk, identifying board/council members' fiduciary responsibilities, understanding the board's role in delegation, policy creation, planning and goal-setting, and advocacy. A good share of the discussion by participants focused on preventing and resolving conflicts on the board/council team. There were 31 who attended this session.
Chlorination: Operation, Maintenance and Safety

Knowing about the characteristics of gas chlorine, sodium hypochlorite and calcium hypochlorite is essential for the operators and managers of water and wastewater. This preconference session, presented by Ron Grage, Fort Pierce, FL, again drew a large audience, with 86 attending. This session familiarized attendees with the safe operation of all three types of chlorinators including direct cylinder-mounted, all vacuum gas chlorinators and chemical feed pumps injecting bleach and hypochlorite solution. The training focused on properties of chlorine, chlorine safety, safety devices, comparisons of the three forms of chlorine, how gas chlorinators work, troubleshooting and maintenance of gas and chemical pump systems.

Water Operator Forum – Preparing for Certification Exams

In an effort to provide additional preparation for those who wish to take the operator certification exam, KDHE and KRWA have worked to provide a longer period of training especially for those planning to take the exam. This training session covered many topics that operators need to understand and that might be on the exam. The morning session focused on small systems and Class I operators. The afternoon session was geared to Class II, III and IV operators. Practice questions addressed issues such as surface water treatment, disinfection, safety, pumps, sampling and recordkeeping, and a math review. Presenters were Vickie Wessel and Marsha Fleming, Kansas Department of Health and Environment. A total of 143 attended this training.

Geology, Aquifers, and Water Wells – Ensuring a Good Water Supply

This preconference session was geared to those systems operating wells as their source. The types and characteristics of subsurface geological formations and aquifers were discussed. The topics included water well yield, specific capacity, zone of influence, static water levels, drawdown water levels and recordkeeping. The construction of water wells was also a major focus of the training. It included a review of site selection, test drilling, water quality, drilling of the bore hole, well casing, grouting of the annular space, gravel packing, screen placement and well development. KDHE design standards and source water protection were discussed. Presenters were Ned Marks, Terrane Resources, Stafford, KS; Mike Schneider, Water Systems Engineers, Inc., Ottawa, KS and Brad Vincent, Ground Water Associates, Wichita, KS. Attendance was 125.

The Many Hats Worn by Rural Water Office Staff

Those attending this RWD office forum were reminded of the many hats RWD office staff need to wear to help their systems operate efficiently. Presenter Karen Skillman, KJS Computer and Training, Topeka, KS started the day with presentations to help system personnel avoid mistakes in payroll practices. Karen reminded those attended that the size of the RWD doesn’t exempt anyone from paying the
price when making mistakes concerning payroll. The afternoon portion of the training allowed roundtable discussions on policies and procedures for RWDs. Extended discussions were on filing techniques and record retention. Facilitators were Sharon Dwyer, Douglas RWD 5; Mary Jane Gouvion, Crawford RWD 6; Lanna Kettler, Miami RWD 2 and Patricia Shaffer, Butler RWD 5. Attendance was 44.

USDA Forum: Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Design & Engineering

The 2015 KRWA conference partnered with USDA Rural Development to provide the setting for the first USDA Forum. This training was targeted to engineering firms and those communities planning to make improvements in the near future, particularly those who intend to utilize USDA Rural Development funding. The topics were selected by USDA Rural Development with the goal of consistency in the development of engineering reports, while ensuring that rural communities and rural water districts receive the most for the investment they plan to make. Panelists included Sháne Hastings, USDA Rural Development, Topeka, KS; Richard Boyles, USDA Rural Development, Newton, KS; and, Randy Stone, USDA Rural Development, Topeka, KS who discussed preliminary engineering reports. After lunch, representatives of other agencies including the Kansas Water Office, Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Department of Commerce made presentations concerning funding programs. They urged communities to consider regional projects where feasible. Sixty people attended this session.

**Attorney’s Forum – The 15th Annual**

KRWA was pleased to host the 15th Annual Attorneys’ Forum at the 2015 conference. This forum has been very appreciated by the attorneys who attend as it provides an opportunity to share the more unique experiences dealing with matters related to water utilities and water law. The exchange of ideas and discussions have well served the legal counsels for communities across Kansas. In addition, attorneys were again able to obtain 6.5 hours of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit. Topics and presenters included the following:

- **Public Sector**
  - *Corruption Here at Home* by Mark Malick, Special Agent, Kansas Bureau of Investigation, Topeka, KS;
  - *Water Assurance Districts in Kansas* by Kent Weatherby, Esq., Shawnee, KS;
  - *The Vision: The Next 50 Years for Public Water Supplies in Kansas* by Suzan Metzger, Kansas Water Office, Topeka, KS;
  - *Recent Developments in Kansas Legal Ethics* by Suzanne Valdez, University of Kansas School of Law, Lawrence, KS.

Roundtable discussion topics in the afternoon included: *New/Pending Legislation; Recent Cases; The SEC Municipal Advisor Rule, Preventing/Prosecuting Employee Misuse of Funds, RWD Bylaws Review; IRS Rules Governing Elected and Appointed Officials; Notice of Claim; Joint Use and Re-Use of Easements; and, Status of USDA Direct and Guaranteed Loans.* The program was organized and facilitated by Gary Hanson, Stumbo Hanson, LLP, Topeka, KS. There were 36 attorneys in attendance.
The opening session at the 2015 KRWA Conference began with a music video featuring “The Once-ler”, a Dr. Seuss story of reckless use of environmental resources, and a welcome address by Sharon Dwyer, President of the KRWA Board of Directors. Excerpts are printed here.

“Whether city clerks, mayors and councils to rural water district staff, members of boards and councils, from operators to engineers, from trainers to vendors, and agencies too, we all work to meet our communities’ water and wastewater needs. “It takes many people with a wide range of abilities and training. Training is one of the big hats worn by the staff at KRWA. In 2014, KRWA provided 105 days of training with attendance of more than 6,200 people.

“As Dr Seuss would say... ‘The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.’

“Then there’s the ever-so-important hands-on technical assistance that KRWA staff provide. KRWA staff help with minor and major problems – whether they are related to regulations and compliance or helping find leaks, or treat a well for iron bacteria or helping with an environmental review so a project can obtain funding, I think you’ll agree that KRWA’s staff is ready, willing and able. They put on their hat and pull on their boots and they go when needed – day or night, 365 days a year.

“During this conference, I hope that you will participate in as many of the training sessions as possible. I hope you make the rounds in EXPO Hall. Talk to vendors; thank them for helping make this the largest water and wastewater conference in Mid-America. I hope you discuss your concerns with agencies; that’s why they are here. And after this conference ends on Thursday and you return home, I hope we can all feel more prepared to take on the challenges that so many of our Kansas communities face.”
“I am afraid of heights,” confessed keynote speaker Jen Sharp who has more than 3,500 skydives, some of them recently near Mount Everest Base Camp. “I know that is illogical, but fear is not always logical. Heights can’t hurt you… it’s the sudden stop at the end!”

Sharp, who wears the hat of a skydiver, a mom, a computer programmer, a musician, along with many other hats, delivered the opening keynote address to the 2015 Annual Conference and Exhibition for Public Water and Wastewater Utilities. She made her first jump at the age of 18. Over time, she became a tandem instructor, taking more than 1,000 people for their first skydive and training hundreds more to become skydivers, and more still to become instructors themselves. She recently traveled to Nepal with the Everest Skydive Team to skydive near the base camp of Mt. Everest.

Yet for all of her experience and practice, she said, she still experiences fear, just as everyone does in new situations. She reminded a crowd of water operators, city clerks, bookkeepers, and more that Change is a natural part of life. She urged that having fear of change should not keep us from action. “I will always be afraid of heights,” Sharp said. “But the absence of fear is not a prerequisite. In other words, no one said you couldn’t be afraid.”

She challenged everyone in the audience to use the lessons she has learned through skydiving to make a difference in their own work. Her approach, which she describes as “Be Here Now,” is one she learned by developing ways to teach skydiving students.

Instead of keeping a “to do” list, Sharp suggested, keep a “to be” list that focuses less on specific tasks but more on specific personality traits: helpful, friendly, wise in making good choices.

“Get comfortable with being uncomfortable,” Sharp said. “When the same customer comes in to the water office again to complain about their water pressure, don’t think about what to do, think about who to be,” she said. “That can help with conflicts.”

Skydiving has also taught her to pay attention to the positive resources immediately “here” at your disposal. She relayed humorous skydiving stories about human nature, and how “we go where our eyes go,” meaning, what is in our attention and vision comes to us.

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The idea of “Now” she said, hinged on focusing on the main immediate goal, the right goal, instead of getting distracted with problems that correct themselves.

“Tenzing Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary were NOT the first to summit Mount Everest,” she stated. “They were the first to go up AND come back down. That was the main goal.”

One of the most important lessons, she said, is to “Get comfortable with being uncomfortable,” and realize the fear of change can inhibit our achievements.

“I’m not saying you should be an adventurer and skydive next to Mount Everest, but in small ways, get used to being uncomfortable,” she said. “Drive to work a different way. At that Chinese restaurant, actually eat with the chopsticks!”
The Butler Community College show choir, The Headliners, again entertained the attendees of the 2015 annual conference with a high-energy performance.

This year’s theme – “Lights, Camera, Action” featured a number of songs related to the motion picture industry and fame.

From “20th Century Fox Mambo” to 1980s hit “Freeze Frame” and a rendition of Lady Gaga’s “Paparazzi”, the choir sang and danced to songs that spanned decades.

There are 36 singer/dancers in the show choir, said Valerie Lippoldt Mack, who directs the group. A five-piece combo accompanies the group with instrumental music; two other students serve as stage manager and sound manager.

The students must maintain a minimum grade point average to participate in the group, Lippoldt Mack said. The group’s members go on after they graduate from Butler to become performers for the Walt Disney theme parks, Worlds of Fun, and to own their own dance studios, direct church and community choirs, and become doctors, lawyers and teachers.

“We love performing at the Kansas Rural Water Association Conference,” Lippoldt Mack said. “The students don’t even complain about meeting at 5:30 a.m. to load the vans!”

As the last song ended, the audience, which had been listening quietly during the first session of Wednesday morning, stood and cheered enthusiastically.

It was a rousing way to begin a day of sessions. KRWA provides a $2,000 stipend to the Butler Community College for use by The Headliners. They are repeat performers at KRWA’s conference – and they always have a complete new show; they’ are just fabulous,” said KRWA President Sharon Dwyer.
Thank you to all the 2015 Presenters!

KRWA appreciates the time and effort by the 2015 conference presenters. Thank you for helping all those who attended to appreciate and recognize the Many Hats We Wear!

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<td>Salih Doughramaji</td>
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<td>Sharon Dwyer</td>
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<td>Kellly Emmons</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Fitch</td>
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<td>Marsha Fleming</td>
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<td>Anita Goertzen</td>
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<td>Lana Kettler</td>
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The 2015 KRWA conference featured 331 exhibit spaces, showcasing products and services for the water and wastewater industries. The KRWA conference provides the largest such display in Mid-America! Vendors who exhibited in 2015 came from 33 states, and the country of France. EXPO Hall is “the place” to learn about new products and technologies, visit with agencies about funding or programs such as water conservation plans, GIS mapping, etc. And there’s no better place to make new friends and renew acquaintances in the service/supply industry.

Plans are already underway for 2016. The floor plan will be expanded to 341 spaces and will provide more space in the hospitality area also. As of June 1, more than 200 spaces have already been reserved for 2016. KRWA’s 2016 conference dates are March 29, 30 and 31. Mark your calendars now if you haven’t already done so.

The doors to EXPO Hall are OPEN! At 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 24 all the preparation by Associate Members, agencies and KRWA in setting up booths is for this moment. After being in training sessions all day, conference attendees are ready to meet vendors, see new technologies and make some deals.

Almost everyone loves popcorn! Lucky Chin with Hawkins, Inc. keeps the popcorn popping and the boxes available to conference attendees who crave for the snack. It’s a treat that attracts a crowd.

Randy Dye with Brenntag Southwest visits with Clayton and Rachel Merrick of Public Wholesale District No. 4. The district is located just outside Cherryvale, KS. The conference is a great time to renew friendships and to make new friends.

Dennis Bowman and Patricia Earles with Earles Engineering & Inspection, Inc. provide information to conference-goers concerning the services Earles provides.

Curtis Kilian, Jessi Kerchal and Bill Houlberg with Salina Supply Company listen intently as Alan Brown with the City of Riley explains projects in Riley. Both Salina Supply and City of Riley have participated in the KRWA conference for many years.
Terry Brown, Operator with Butler RWD 5 and Paul Meyer with Jim Jolly Sales discuss the operation of a hand-held, battery-powered, valve wrench. Cities and RWDs and others attend the KRWA conference every year to learn about new products to help their utilities with their day-to-day operations.

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Water and wastewater utilities are looking at the benefits of HDPE pipe. Representatives of Industrial Sales Company show the tools used and explain the process of fusing that type of pipe.

David Lady, city of Salina, Ray Tauser with R H Tauser & Associates and Mike Moore with Copperhead Industries, LLC discuss the specifications of good tracer wire and proper installation procedures.

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Justin Seiler and Cliff Gamblin with Foley Equipment Company and Tracy KcKown with Foley Power Solutions take a well-deserved break.

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Jake Good with CoBank, Jimmy Seago with Oklahoma Rural Water Association, Same Wade (CEO) with National Rural Water Association and Charles Hilton, President of National Rural Water Association, pause for this photo in EXPO Hall. There were 331 exhibits booth filled with products and services at the 2015 KRWA conference.

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2015’s Welcoming Party ... Chow & Chat

There’s no other opening night conference welcome like it. It’s food, fun and social. It’s KRWA’s 2015 Welcoming Party – Chow & Chat.

Nearly 1,500 people attended the Tuesday evening event. Five buffet lines were stocked with nearly 1,100 pounds of barbecued beef brisket and pulled pork, potato salad and beans – and soft serve ice cream for dessert. There’s always plenty of social beverages too.

But the real hit is the midway-sized carnival games, casino, game room, caricaturists, an amusement ride, and more – all backed up by the oldest Rock ‘N Roll band in Kansas – King Midas & The Mufflers. They’ve been rockin’ the Midwest now for 50 years! (Check their Web site: kingmidasband.com). Winners at games lined up in Exhibition Hall to place tickets in the prize buckets of their choice for the drawing that began at 9:45 p.m. Some of the prize winners are shown on these two pages. KRWA appreciates sponsors who help pay a portion of the costs of this event. Prizes totaled more than $10,000.

Ready, Set, PULL!!!. Okay, so what’s the best way to cook Clay Pigeon? Laser Skeet Shoot is popular at the Tuesday evening Chow & Chat party.

Alan Scheuerman, John Leiker and Steve Homburg are ready to enjoy the great BBQ meal at the Chow & Chat, Tuesday evening welcome.

Practice, practice, practice. The Indianapolis 500 is coming up in May. We need to find someone to sponsor us!

KRWA annual conferences and the schedule for March Madness are often parallel. Fans have an opportunity to practice making free throws at the Chow & Chat to win tickets for prize drawings.

Having a full size carnival ride inside Century II is not what most folks would expect to see. Attendees who rode “The Sizzler” in 2015 received tickets for prize drawings later in the evening.
Chow & Chat attendees don’t leave hunger. Corporate Caterers prepared nearly 1,100 pounds of brisket and pulled pork and side dishes for the Tuesday evening opener.

The Game Room area was popular. Pool players were waiting their turn to take on the previous winner. No sharks allowed in this pool.

The Casino area is always popular during the conference. While no money is involved, players earn tickets to enter into the prize drawings. The State of Kansas is missing out on this one.

How do you make a bunch of people all say “DARN” at the same time? Just yell out “BINGO!”. Water Bingo attracts a large crowd of participants every year.

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### Chow & Chat Party Prize Winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>System</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Carmen Behrens</td>
<td>City of Derby</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>David Blau</td>
<td>Miller &amp; Associates</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Don Johnson</td>
<td>City of La Crosse</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Emmett Merrick</td>
<td>City of Mound Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Janette Womack</td>
<td>USDA Rural Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Justin Engemann</td>
<td>Doniphan RWD 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Margaret Fast</td>
<td>Kansas Water Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Mike Weidenhaft</td>
<td>Mitchell RWD 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Sandy Benoit</td>
<td>Rooks RWD 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250 Gift Gard</td>
<td>Victor Ibarra</td>
<td>City of Manhattan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airhead 2-person Towable Water Tube</td>
<td>Alex Weller</td>
<td>Saline RWD 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine Fire Hydrant Water Fountain</td>
<td>Alice Geisler</td>
<td>City of Leonardville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bella Triple Slow Cooker</td>
<td>Carol McManigal</td>
<td>City of Denison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Browning Deer Trail Camera</td>
<td>Dennis Albrecht</td>
<td>City of Herington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calphalon Waffle Maker</td>
<td>Dawn Haywood</td>
<td>Jefferson RWD 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craftsman 1/2” Drill &amp; Driver Set</td>
<td>Austin St. John</td>
<td>City of Chapman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craftsman 165 pc Tool Set</td>
<td>Charles Gouvion</td>
<td>Crawford RWD 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman 17 pc BBQ Set</td>
<td>Jeremy Strauss</td>
<td>Dickinson RWD 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman 2-Work Bags and LED Worklight</td>
<td>Trent Row</td>
<td>City of Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman 3/8” Drill/Driver Set</td>
<td>Myron Schmidt</td>
<td>Marion RWD 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuisinart Ice Cream Maker and Book</td>
<td>Allen Markley</td>
<td>Douglas RWD 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eden Pure Heater</td>
<td>Gary Strait</td>
<td>City of Concordia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ematic Wireless Bluetooth Soundbar</td>
<td>Calina Dachenhausen</td>
<td>City of Harveyville</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-Z Pop up Canopy</td>
<td>Sam Atherton</td>
<td>KRWA</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoPro Camera Bundle</td>
<td>Kerwin McKee</td>
<td>Public Wholesale 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Itouchless Robotic Vacuum</td>
<td>Monica Torres</td>
<td>Ana-Lab Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kettle Style Popcorn Maker</td>
<td>Gary Strait</td>
<td>City of Concordia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keurig Coffee System</td>
<td>Lisa Kanoy</td>
<td>Leavenworth Water Dept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KitchenAid 5 qt Artisan Mixer - Cobalt Blue</td>
<td>Allen Markley</td>
<td>Douglas RWD 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnavox 40” Smart TV</td>
<td>Kyla Schlabach</td>
<td>Washington RWD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaritaville Frozen Maker</td>
<td>Kerwin McKee</td>
<td>Public Wholesale 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nesco Reversible Grill/Griddle</td>
<td>Julie Winter</td>
<td>Riley County Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninja Blender/Food Processor</td>
<td>Robert Reinhardt</td>
<td>Harvey RWD 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>NuWave Induction Cooktop</td>
<td>Alex Weller</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCA 10” Tablet with Keyboard</td>
<td>Heath Carroll</td>
<td>City of Wellington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smart Fishing Rod</td>
<td>Bob Ummel</td>
<td>City of Bazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stihl Leaf Blower/Vac</td>
<td>George Mathews</td>
<td>Jefferson RWD 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip to Washington DC</td>
<td>Ed Kowalewski</td>
<td>Leavenworth Water Dept.</td>
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Regional water systems were the focus of the USDA engineering forum discussion held on Tuesday, March 25 at the KRWA conference.

The story is becoming a routine for governmental funders: a community needs to find money for an expensive water project. They decide not to partner with neighboring cities, preferring to go it alone. They receive millions of dollars from the funding agency to complete the project.

A few years later, they find that they need to address their sewer infrastructure. They are paying off the first project and are desperate to find the funds to solve the new problems.

“The governmental funding agencies that have stepped in to help those small communities are beginning to push even harder for those communities to work together as a condition of funding,” said Patty Clark, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Kansas.

Clark joined other representatives from the USDA Rural Development, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, the Kansas Water Office, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and BG Consultants to discuss their individual experiences with regional water projects during a training session for engineers during the 2015 annual conference.

In the above scenario Clark offered to the group, if the community had participated in a regional project to address the first concern, they would have been able to afford the sewer project work.

“This is about giving communities additional resources,” she said.

Clark said the state’s smallest communities in particular will be less able to continue to maintain their own sets of costly utility services, making regional projects even more important in the coming years.

“We need to start minimizing the city boundaries, the county lines, and start working toward more shared services as a way to be able to provide education, provide health care, provide water, and provide streets and sidewalks and other amenities that citizens of those communities need,” she said. “The time is now, and will become only more critical as finances become tighter at the local level.”

The concept is nothing new, said Margaret Fast, a public water supply planner for the Kansas Water Office; the Interlocal Agreement Act allowing local governments to work together went into effect in 1957. The state water plan first encouraged regionalization in 1993.

In Kansas, state and local agencies have used funding priorities to encourage local governments to share services, she said, but have not used laws or statutes to require the cooperation.

“There has never been the will or the authority to force entities to work together,” she said.

The barriers to collaboration are “usually somewhat political,” said Cathy Tucker-Vogel, an environmental scientist in the Public Water Supply section of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

“Communities are concerned that there will be a loss of control,” she said.

People in Kansas still remember the mandate to consolidate school districts in the 1960s, Tucker-Vogel said.

“It takes years to overcome some of those things,” she said. “I really think in the long run, that’s how communities will survive – by joining forces.”

“It’s not easy work,” said Bruce Boettcher, whose engineering firm, BG Consultants, worked on the team that developed Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 26 in Chase County.
Boettcher said he encouraged the cities of Strong City and Cottonwood Falls to work together with Chase County Rural Water District No. 1 to address their water supply needs.

But, he said, “personalities were involved.”

It can be challenging for private engineering firms to have the conversation, but the strong support of the funding agencies provided the backup that the engineers needed, Boettcher said. “Being in the private world is a risk,” he said. “The more the cities hear from the state agencies, and how positive they are about the upgraded system, helped with the situation.”

All panelists agreed that building trusting relationships between all of the entities at the table – the funders, the regulators, the local government representatives and the engineering firms – was critical to the success of regional projects.

“The funding agencies at the state and federal level have had some issues amongst ourselves over time,” Tucker-Vogel said. “For us to speak with a unified voice is important, so we aren’t sending mixed messages to you.”

Chris Miller, of Miller & Associates, Consulting Engineers, P. C. in Kearney, NE, who attended the session, said the regional approach is one being considered by local governments across the state.

“They’re going to run out of budgets,” he said. “It’s a taxation issue. Budgets are increasing, and no one wants to raise taxes or raise rates. Regionalization is a way to share resources and limit expenses.”
Peter Grevatt, Director of the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, Asks to Understand Local Challenges

The nation’s top official responsible for federal drinking water laws called for working together to approach regulatory changes.

Peter Grevatt, Director of the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, appeared as a special guest before the attendees of the 2015 annual conference and exhibition. Grevatt addressed the 1,200 who attended the Wednesday, March 26, noon luncheon.

Grevatt thanked the conference organizers for introducing him by his full title, but said he couldn’t take the credit for keeping water safe.

“The people in this audience are responsible for safeguarding drinking water in the State of Kansas,” he said.

Grevatt, a native of the Cleveland, Ohio area, said he appreciated the invitation to attend the conference. He didn’t grow up in a small town, he said, and doesn’t live in a small town now, but wants to learn about the impact that federal regulations have on the communities that must abide by the laws.

“‘My number one goal here is to understand, as well as I can, the challenges you are facing, and how we can work with those.’”

Grevatt told a story about a small public water district in Oklahoma that suffered from high water loss, problems with its purchasing system, and limited supply issues.

Grady RWD 6 was able to work through its issues through leadership and working with other partners, Grevatt said, turning a troubled system into a success story.

“When people talk about challenges with small systems, those problems are not about the people in those small systems,” he said. “They can figure these things out if they have the support.”

There’s more than $1 billion included in President Barack Obama’s budget for drinking water programs in the coming fiscal year, Grevatt said, including set-asides for state programs such as the State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Program.

Grevatt highlighted the push for emergency preparedness and all-hazards preparedness, including the city of Hillsboro that will receive funding to prepare for extreme weather events. A new mobile Web site will also help the agency connect communities with funds and other resources during emergencies.

Grevatt said he stopped in to a session about emergency preparedness before delivering his lunchtime address – to find a full room of attendees.

“That speaks well to the state’s commitment to emergency and disaster preparedness, he said.

“You folks are the kind of folks that, when someone across the state has a big storm come through or a tornado that comes through, you guys and gals are hopping in your trucks to go help,” he said. “That dedication really comes through.”

He also spoke about items that will become more of a focus for the agency in the coming months and years.

EPA has contacted the National Rural Water Association and state water agencies to discuss regulations for Strontium, for instance. The agency has also been conducting training with USDA Rural Development on the Revised Total Coliform Rule.

Concerns about the testing requirements for lead and copper, in Kansas and in other places, have prompted a new look at those regulations, he said. A stakeholder group has formed, including big and small utility companies, non-profit organizations and other industry representatives to provide input on the new rules, with one clear goal in mind.

“How do we make it all work to reduce public health risks?” he asked. “Everything I do is about public health risks.”

The EPA is also preparing to issue guidance on algal toxins after the city of Toledo experienced a weekend-long water outage in 2014 from a massive algal bloom.
There’s work to be done with on protecting water sources, he said, to address both algal blooms and other concerns, such as nitrates. “I figured I’d hear a lot about nitrates,” during his visit to Kansas, he said. “That’s something we will be focused on. How do we get our arms around these issues, both from a source water protection standpoint and from a treatment standpoint?”

The EPA may write the regulations, Grevatt said, but the state of Kansas must implement them. The partnership between the two levels of government, he said, is “tremendously important.”

“I do want to be very clear how much we appreciate the work the state of Kansas does, and KDHE does, on these issues,” he said.

**The 2015 “Almost 5K-KRWA Conference Run/Walk”**

Weather was not an issue for this year’s 3rd annual “Almost 5K-KRWA Conference Run/Walk”, with the race time temperature being around 60 degrees. Without snow or ice on the ground as was the experience during a prior conference, the only elements participants had to contend with were the rather large amount of goose droppings on the River Walk. Yes, there are perils to running!

Bobby Luttjohann, staff member at the Kansas Water Office, remains the undefeated champion of the event after her victory this year. Her husband Steve earned the 2nd place trophy.

Thirty two participants signed up this year, making it a record-high attendance. Each year the race continues to steadily grow with a few more participants, which is good to see. KRWA’s Run/Walk has everybody from “competitive marathon runners” to the “walkers”, just looking to get their exercise. The “Almost 5K-KRWA Run/Walk” is yet another opportunity for conference attendees to make new friends while getting a good morning exercise and fresh air along the River Walk. It was great fun and participants should look forward to this event in future years. Congratulations to all; welcome aboard to anyone else in 2016.
One of the many features of the KRWA conference includes top-notch entertainment. This year, “the show” after the awards banquet on Wednesday evening was the fabulous musical comedy Route 66.

As you may recall, Route 66 was affectionately called “The Main Street of America” or “The Mother Road” as it wound its way through the scenic heartland from Chicago to Los Angeles. It stretched 2,448 miles through eight states – including 13.2 miles in eastern Kansas near Galena.

Route 66, produced by The Forum Theatre, lived up to and exceeded all expectations for the 2015 KRWA conference entertainment. The show was a lively and nostalgic jukebox musical, celebrating America’s love of the open road during the highway’s 1940s-1950s heyday.

Cast members were Ray Wills, Ted Dvorak and Chelsey Moore and the three-piece combo with pianist Steve Rue, Phil Snow on bass and percussionist Kim Garey Trujillo. Wills has an incredible resume in acting on and off Broadway and also starring in television. He and other company members sang and pranced as Route 66 re-created a road trip using 34 popular tunes of the era to describe the sights and sounds along the way, from doo-wop and pop through Missouri and Kansas, to country-western through Oklahoma and Texas, to Beach Boys’ hits in sunny California.

Among cleverly presented treats were “Six Days on the Road”, “King of the Road”, “On the Road Again”, “Beep Beep”, “Dead Man’s Curve”, “GTO”, “Little Old Lady from
Ray Wells brought the house down when he involved Jen Sharp and KRWA staff member Greg Metz in “Don’t Haul Bricks On 66”.

Ted Dvorak, with his high classical tenor voice, did solos that included “Truck Stop Cutie”, “Truck Drivin’ Man” and The Little Old Lady From Pasadena”.

As the only female in the cast, Chelsey Moore had the advantage of getting to play the flirty card on occasion. She played the role of a tomboy who added a lot of spunk to the show.

Pasadena” and, of course, the title tune where – as promised – you can “get your kicks on Route 66. “I’m Long Tall Texan” had the crowd howling with laughter.

“Route 66 is something a little different for us, but it’s a huge crowd-pleaser that has done really well wherever it has played. We really love the music. We thought it would just be a lot of fun for us and the audience – and the Kansas Rural Water Association audience is just tremendous to perform for,” said Forum Theatre director Kathryn Page Hauptman.

The audience in Little Theatre showed their appreciation with a rousing standing ovation as the 90-minute production ended.
Mike Weidenhaft has worked for Rural Water District No. 3, Mitchell County for five years; he began as a part-time employee and was soon made full-time. From the beginning of his employment, Mike noticed discrepancies in water purchased versus water sold and began investigating the payment history of each benefit unit. A number of nonpaying and underpaying customers were identified and a system was implemented to return all users to paying customers. By creating a database with all users and checking it routinely, delinquent accounts were easily identified. Those accounts now receive past-due notices and a shut-off notice with a note of a $1,000 reinstallment fee sent to accounts that are sixty days past due. These efforts along with the process of collecting underpaid water dating back several years have resulted in water loss being reduced to less than 10 percent and has allowed the district to actually become profitable. More than $300,000 was collected in back bills.

Other improvements at this system include GPS mapping of all meters, valves, water mains and service lines allowing district personnel to view digital images of any location in either the office or on a laptop computer. Mike is also largely responsible for the district moving ahead with satellite read meters. Currently about 50 of the 620 meters have been replaced with satellite-read meters. Satellite read meters will be installed by district personnel at all locations and the cost will be covered by district funds.

Mike served as Interim District Manager for several years and was promoted to General Manager in June 2014. Mitchell RWD 3 has more than 600 miles of pipeline and includes nine water storage tanks, 10 pumping stations, and also serves four small cities. Thanks in great measure to Mike’s efforts, Mitchell RWD 3 has gone from a small, struggling water district to one that is becoming technologically advanced and self-supporting. Board Chairman Joe Eilert added that Mike could easily prepare a protocol on how to turn around a floundering district.

Terry Brown, Operator for Butler County RWD 5 is a highly motivated and very dedicated individual. Terry contends that he knows just enough to be dangerous but he always presses forward looking for new and better technology and ways to help save money for the District. Since his employment he has taken the District in the direction from “contract labor” to “in-house” work. Equipment has been purchased over the years and the District has realized an annual savings of $50,000 to $100,000. Terry holds a Class II Operator Certification. He has been employed by the District since 2006.

In addition to the daily maintenance and repairs within the system, Terry also benefits the district because of his electrical license as he performs necessary electrical work. Terry has created and maintains a current computer GIS map of the District including all lines, meters, hydrants, and valves. His “wheeling and dealing” skills for purchasing materials, equipment and vehicles have saved the District thousands of dollars.

Within the past year Butler RWD 5 acquired Butler RWD 8 through a merger process that was requested by Butler RWD 8. Instantly, Butler RWD 5 grew by 520 customers resulting in a total of 1,885 customers. With the addition of two water storage tanks and a pumping station, Terry oversees about 370 miles of pipeline, two separate water sources, five pump stations and four water storage tanks.

In addition to being a certified operator and having an electrical license, Terry is certified in Backflow Prevention, has converted the system to radio-read meters, has upgraded the SCADA system, and is collecting data points and mapping the entire system. When Terry has time, he enjoys evening sideline work for companies by installing or repairing fountain beverage systems, a skill he learned while employed with the Coca Cola Company prior to his employment with the District. For recreation, Terry enjoys weekend tractor pulls and driving his t-bucket. For those who don’t know, a t-bucket is a hot rod based on a Ford Model T.
Adrianne Feeney  
Rural Water Bookkeeper  
Dickinson RWD 1

Adrianne Feeney, Bookkeeper at Dickinson RWD 1 based in Talmage north of Abilene, received the award, Bookkeeper of the Year, at the 2015 KRWA conference. Adrianne began work for the district in 2009. As the District’s only employee, she took it upon herself to gain the knowledge and experience to successfully pass the water operator’s certification exam administered by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Subsequently, another employee was added to cover the traditional functions of water system operation outside of the office, but Feeney also still remains the District’s back-up operator in addition to overseeing all office recordkeeping and reporting responsibilities.

Dickinson RWD 1 serves approximately 365 customers in an area north of Abilene. The water source is from wells owned and operated by the District.

The District has been troubled for many years with sections of pipeline that were inferior, resulting in many leaks and repairs. And because of drought conditions, there is always concern to have adequate water for customers. Feeney has always emphasized the need for water conservation; her work in the District’s office includes close monitoring and reporting of water levels in the wells. She has worked tirelessly to help gain support for improvements to the water district. Unaccounted for water has been dramatically reduced, thanks in great measure to her persistence for good operation of the District. The unaccounted for water in 2010 was a high of 45 percent. That loss is now down to approximately 20 percent. Adrianne is somewhat amused at the thought of having been involved first-hand in helping make many of the pipeline repairs. She sums that experience up with this remark, “Who’s afraid of a little mud?”

Jon Voss  
Wastewater Operator  
City of Stockton

Jon Voss is known in Stockton as someone who takes his job very seriously, is very dedicated to his job and community, and does everything with a passion. KRWA was proud to name him Wastewater Operator of the Year at the 2015 KRWA conference.

Voss began employment at Stockton about eight years ago and five years later, was promoted to superintendent. The city’s wastewater treatment plant was an activated sludge system that suddenly needed upgrading when the State issued a discharge permit containing a schedule of compliance for the city’s meet nutrient limits. Voss picked up on the recommendation by the former superintendent to move the city to a non-discharging lagoon system. With his continued persuasion, it was decided that a new concrete lined, three-cell lagoon would be constructed. With his problem-solving savvy and mechanical ability, Voss was the logical person to be in charge of the project. The old wastewater plant was completely removed and a large lift station installed at that location. Since the lagoon site is located four miles outside of town, ozone was added at the lift station for odor control. Voss then worked with the engineering firm on the planning and design of the sewer lagoons. He also promoted pumping the overflow of water to the county’s golf course as a way to water the greens as part of a water conservation project.

Voss currently holds Class II certifications in both wastewater and water. Jon studied biology and chemistry at Fort Hays State University, and attained a degree in General Science with an emphasis in chemistry. He was a secondary science teacher who taught just about everything related to science at some point in his teaching career. Jon also wears a hat that says, “Fire Chief”, Stockton Fire Department. He also serves on the rescue squad and is a dive team member; he has served on the hospital board for ten years, and is presently vice-president. Jon also coaches Special Olympics basketball and finally with any time left, does some farming on the side.
Ian Martell
City Administrator
City of Eureka

Ian Martell, City Administration, City of Eureka, was named City Administrator of the Year at the KRWA 2015 conference. Ian says his present position as Eureka City Administrator is a rewarding one. There are many challenges but just as many rewards. Adequate finances are a hurdle that many small communities in Kansas face. Ian sees the prioritization of needs as essential to the efficient use of public tax dollars.

Growing up working for his father’s drilling company in the Kansas oilfields gave Ian the ability to work with his hands and he gained the common sense to know what will and won’t work. He previously worked as a Segregation Sergeant at El Dorado Correctional Facility. Ian says that the experience there provided him with the training to treat people fairly, firmly and consistently. He also spent 14 years at Greenwood County Courthouse as Maintenance Supervisor, E-911 Director and Information Services Director which put him in close touch with the community of Eureka.

As Eureka City Administrator he works closely with the different organizations in the area in an effort to achieve some common goals and benefits for their community. As a small rural Kansas town, Eureka faces many of the same problems other towns have and some that are unique. Ian’s philosophy is that the answers to these can best be provided by partnered solutions gained by working together and supporting each other.

“Planning for future improvements and growth rests firmly upon the foundation of understanding our present,” he says, adding that this understanding is gained by an objective review and analysis of our present infrastructure conditions. Insight into the wants and needs of the citizenry and the local social structure is just as, if not more than, important to achieving the goals that are needed to move ahead.” An effort is made to stay six months to a year in front of the city crews with project planning and ten years out with long-term planning in conjunction with the mayor and city council.

Kim Everley
City Clerk
City of McLouth

Kim Everley, City Clerk at McLouth, was named City Clerk of the Year at the 2015 KRWA conference. Kim has worked in city hall at McLouth since 2009. After accepting the position of city clerk, she soon learned that important records were missing or worse yet – were lost! Also, she inherited accounting records that were incomplete. She found out that she would have to learn two software systems, an old one then in use and a new software system that was being installed to replace the old one. Additionally, there were Municipal Court Clerk procedures to learn and implement. With patient tenacity, late accounts payable and receivable were paid and closed, software was installed and operating, and office efficiency improved immensely. That efficiency is now at an all-time high, according to Mayor Keith Meador.

Kim earned the designation of Certified Municipal Clerk within three years of employment. When the McLouth city administrator left for another job, Kim quickly proved that she could handle many responsibilities in his absence; her abilities were recognized by the city council which then promoted her to City Administrator and City Clerk.

While she served her community as a City Council Member before becoming an employee with the city, she also expanded her service by becoming the President of the Jefferson County Area Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Courtesy Chair for the KACM, Kansas Association of Court Management, Court Clerks Association.

Kim has a very busy schedule but when she has time or needs a break, she and her husband like to take their Harley to places they haven’t visited, but only when her commitment to the family has been met. Her three children and three grandchildren live close by. One of her sons is a Marine who served two tours – one in Iraq and one in Romania! Her second son is an iron worker. Her daughter is in graduate school, studying psychology.
Fred Washburn
Municipal Operator
City of Hoxie

Fred Washburn, City of Hoxie, was named Municipal Operator of the Year at the 2015 KRWA conference. Fred has worked for the city of Hoxie for 30 years in various positions and is currently city superintendent. His responsibilities include oversight of the city’s utilities which include both water and wastewater systems as well as streets, cemetery, parks and swimming pool. Water rights are an issue in the area and several years ago when the city found they were bumping the upper limit of their water appropriations, Fred was instrumental in persuading the city to investigate purchasing irrigation rights. The city was successful in obtaining water rights and is now in a good position in that regard. A new well was added, giving the city five wells and two elevated storage tanks to supply the city. Fred, along with six employees, are responsible for manually reading meters which they can read in half a day and quickly respond to leaks keeping water loss to about 13 percent.

Fred values the longevity of the city staff. The city’s employees average 28 years of experience and two of them are certified operators. Fred hold a Class II operator in water and Class I in wastewater. His current challenge is with the wastewater plant which is in line for an upgrade to meet KDHE permit requirements.

Fred is a lifelong resident of Hoxie and is involved in the volunteer fire department, loves to coach baseball and softball teams, and serves on community committees when needed. He is an avid hunter and fisherman and has made two trips to Africa to hunt big game. Another trip is being planned. Those who know him say he is happiest when he is outside. It doesn’t matter if the birds aren’t flying, the deer are sleeping in, or the fish aren’t biting.

Most Improved Water System
City of Green

Green, with a population of fewer than 130 people, was named “Most Improved Water System” at the 2015 KRWA conference. Located in Clay County in north-central Kansas, Green faced a number of water system needs. The old concrete elevated storage tank had deteriorated and needed to be replaced. It was replaced several years ago with a flared steel column tank commonly referred to as a “golf ball on a tee”. Another problem was the city was required to repair many leaks in the distribution system, with an average annual cost of about $18,000. And finally, three of the city’s four wells were placed on emergency use only, because of elevated nitrate levels. The city operated for several years in that mode but eventually found it uncomfortable relying on only one good well. As a result, the city began searching for funding to correct some of these problems.

Thanks to a Community Development Block Grant of $278,000 and a USDA Rural Development Grant of $186,000, the city was able to make improvements to both the distribution system and the water source. These improvements were completed in two phases: Phase I consisted of replacing most of the distribution system with the installation of 8,600 LF of PVC pipe; 1,400 LF of high-density polyethylene pipe, and 12 fire hydrants. Phase II consisted of solving the nitrate problem. To solve that issue, the city considered three possible options. The first option was to connect to the Clay Center water system. That option was determined not feasible due to costs. Option 2 was to test drill for a well or wells that would meet the drinking water standard for nitrate. When that option proved to be unsuccessful, the city approved the construction of a nitrate removal plant. The project included a total rehabilitation of the three nitrate wells that had not been used for some time and the construction of an ion exchange treatment plant. The treatment plant consists of three pressured vessels with nitrate selective resin. Sodium chloride is used to regenerate the resin. The plant is totally automatic with a capacity of 40 gallons per minute. To complete funding for all of these improvements, the city financed $201,000 of the cost by issuing general obligation bonds.

Mayor David Jermark accepted the award on behalf of the city.

Save the Date!
49th Annual Kansas Rural Water Conference
March 29, 30 and 31, 2016
Margaret Fast
Friend of Rural Water
Kansas Water Office

Margaret Fast, a staff member at the Kansas Water Office, was recognized by KRWA for her work on behalf of public water systems with the “Friend of Rural Water” Award.

Margaret began employment with state government in 1977, at the Department of Health and Environment and has been at the Kansas Water Office since 1984. She has worked under various managers and agency directors – and has remained dedicated to the task no matter how many challenges there were or how many hats she was asked to wear. Most of the time, one of those hats included a focus on public water supply systems. And while her work is in Topeka, her home is in rural Jefferson County.

She has been a longtime proponent of encouraging interlocal cooperation and coordination in all aspects of services for Kansans. Presently, among the many challenges that Margaret handles is chairing the “Public Water Supply Coordinating Committee”. That group of agencies and organizations is diverse – yet Margaret chairs the meetings with the goal of having everyone in the room provide whatever insights they may have concerning various projects, for the purpose of finding efficient and cost effective solutions.

Margaret’s education with a Bachelor’s Degree in Biology from Thomas More College in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, and a Masters Degree in Environmental Health from the University of Kansas provide a good background to go with the everyday experiences of trying to help communities across Kansas. Whether it’s water conservation, water use, water contracts from state owned storage, various task forces, basin planning, she’s had involvement.

Margaret is married and has two sons. Her family has hosted several foreign-exchange students from Brazil, Germany and Kenya. This summer she will be making a trip to Brazil to attend the wedding of one of the former students.

And just in case you are driving on some Jefferson County, Kansas roads, and if you meet a Mazda Miata, a two-seat convertible, racing through the hills – yes, that is likely to be Margaret Fast behind the wheel.

City of Emporia
Taste Test Winner

Emporia, Kansas has good tasting water. It’s so good that in the 13 annual taste tests that KRWA has conducted at its annual conference, Emporia has won six times. The years were 2004, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2012 and 2015.

The Kansas winner goes on to compete in the Great America Taste Test held in conjunction with the National Rural Water Association’s annual Rally in Washington, D.C. in February. In 2005, Emporia placed second in that competition.

Judges for this year’s contest were Bobbi Luttjohann from the Kansas Water Office; Jerry Blain from Burns & McDonnell (formerly city of Wichita well operator); Anita Goertzen with Custom Micro Works (former city clerk from Goessel, KS); and, Alan Scheuerman, Utility Director, City of Ellis.

KRWA re-presented the award at a city council meeting at Emporia on May 6. Plant Superintendent is Phil Cooper. Other plant operators are Bill Metcalfe, Shane Dye and Jeff Demler. Emporia was the first water supply in Kansas to install ozonation as a water treatment process. Ozonation produces exceptionally good tasting water while also reducing the regulated disinfection byproducts to very low levels. The high quality water is greatly appreciated by both Emporia city customers and customers in other cities and RWDs that purchase water from Emporia.

KRWA Consultant Jeff Lamfers presented the 2015 Taste Test Trophy to Phil Cooper, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent, city of Emporia. The presentation was made during a city council meeting. Emporia has won first place in the KRWA contest six of the thirteen contests held.
Remembering Our Fallen

Exhibit Draws Praise, Many to Tears

The “Remembering Our Fallen” exhibit, an exhibit featuring photos of soldiers from Kansas who were killed in the line of duty, visited the Century II EXPO Hall during the KRWA annual convention.

Debbie Austin, a “Gold Star Mother” whose son was killed in Iraq in 2006, said that conference attendees extended a warm and respectful welcome to her and others who staffed the exhibit. The exhibit was sponsored by the Kansas Rural Water Association.

“This has been overwhelming,” Austin said. “We’ve felt so welcome. The traffic that has come through has been powerful.”

According to information provided by the Remembering Our Fallen organization, a father from Nebraska started the traveling display when he felt like his son, SGT Joshua Ford, who was killed in duty, had been forgotten. The group has visited 22 states and is attempting to travel to the rest of the country.

Austin’s son, PFC Shane Austin, was among those pictured on the display. He was 19 when he died.

Her family’s story prompted visitors to talk about their own experiences losing loved ones in combat, even as far back as Vietnam and World War II.

Those stories, Austin said, are an important way to keep memories alive.

“Those who died in all of our conflicts are never forgotten,” she said.

Austin also uses the time to raise awareness about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, particularly for soldiers who have recently returned from deployment.

“It’s a reminder that some start to fight their battle when they get back on American soil,” she said.

Cindy Usher and Jennifer Yount work with the U.S. Army’s Survivor Outreach Services division. They help families navigate the various policies and procedures for benefits that occur after a loved one has died in service.

They also attended the conference to provide information about their services. They never know when they’ll meet someone who can use their assistance.

The conference was good outreach for the organizations, Usher said.

“We didn’t realize how many people we would reach at the Kansas Rural Water Association conference,” she said.

At the conclusion of the conference, KRWA President Sharon Dwyer recognized Austin and thanked them for their participation.

The crowd responded with a standing ovation.

“We can’t thank the Kansas Rural Water Association enough for inviting us. They’ve been so caring and so thoughtful with our needs,” Austin said.

“As a mom of a fallen hero, this helps with the feeling by showing us how those fallen are never forgotten. It’s a very good feeling,” she concluded.
Municipal Water Critical to State’s Economy

*Kansas Water Office Director Tracy Streeter Offered Praise, Thanks to KRWA Members*

The success of the state’s economy can largely be attributed to access to clean water – and the work of local utility systems, the Director of the Kansas Water Office told the crowd assembled for the noon luncheon on Thursday, March 26.

“All of you are an integral part of this process,” Tracy Streeter said. “You not only assure have this basic need provided to us on a daily basis, but when you look at the economics of this state, we all play a role in making sure the aircraft industry has water, that our biofuels plants have water, that our feedlots have water, and as we export products out of this state and around the world, it all starts with having a very good, plentiful supply of water. I express my appreciation to you for making it happen.”

Several state agencies are in the midst of developing a new plan for the state’s future water supplies, Streeter said. The “Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas” captures the work of everyone who attended the conference.

The mission, read by Streeter during his presentation, states that “Kansans act on a shared commitment to have the water resources necessary to support the state’s social, economic and natural resource needs for current and future generations.”

“If anyone embodies that vision, it’s the folks who belong to the Kansas Rural Water Association and those of you who are sitting in audience,” Streeter said.

The vision has shifted to focusing on strategies – 181 in the current draft – and setting regional goals to be carried out by local governments and users, Streeter said.

Hundreds of meetings have taken place across the state, engaging thousands of Kansans in the process. Streeter thanked KRWA members for their participation in the process, including those who are serving on local goal-setting teams.

“In the many hats that you wear, not only do you what you do at home with your water systems and your other community activities, but you’re also helping us out on the state level,” he said.

There are 181 strategies to address future water supplies in Kansas in the Vision document, Streeter said – many
Kansas Water Office Director Tracy Streeter cited the following examples of local initiatives that have been taken to ensure longer term water supplies:

◆ Osage City, a water marketing customer of Melvern Reservoir, dredged its city lake to create additional capacity and a reliable back-up supply of water.

◆ A number of customers that purchase water from Hillsdale Reservoir formed an interlocal agreement to share remaining storage in the lake. Almost all of the storage has been obligated at the lake; the agreement allows several communities to make their own decisions about the best use of the water – taking the decision out of the state’s hands and giving it to the local water customers.

◆ The Water Office worked with local users to update the plan that guided releases from Kanopolis Lake. The new plan allows the lake to release water only when it’s needed the most. It saved approximately 1500 acre-feet of water in the lake during the 2012 drought.

◆ A group of entities in far southeast Kansas endured “trials and tribulations and frustrations” to create Public Wholesale Water Supply District 19 in order to find a regional solution to meet their water needs.

◆ Scott City Public Works Superintendent Mike Todd approached rapid groundwater reductions in Groundwater Management District 1 by asking city residents to conserve water during the 2012 drought, even though municipal use is a very small percentage of overall water use in that region. The result was a shift from a usage rate of 341 gallons per capita per day in 2012 to 212 gallons per capita per day in 2014.

Pancakes on a Mission – KRWA Breakfast – Food and Fun

It flies high into the air, in a surprisingly delicate arc, before landing with a quiet slap on your plate. It is brown. It is humble. It is a pancake. It is a pancake made by a hypnotically fascinating machine that extrudes pancake batter in perfect rows of six discs. It is a pancake flipped, and soon thereafter, flung through the air with the flick of the griller’s wrist and her long spatula. It is a pancake on a mission. A pancake that has dreams of flying. It is a pancake that rises high and then flops down to a steaming climax on your plate – if you can catch it.

It is a pancake – and it is also a Chris Cake.

It is surprising how magical breakfast can become when it is thrown at you. Kathy, from Chris Cakes in tiny Rose Hill, KS does that with a style all her own. She makes it fun. “Short Stack”, as she’s known, is one pancake-making machine – and she comes loaded with one liners. Audience feedback is appreciated – but she always wins the debate.

No one is concerned about any cake that doesn’t land on the plate. “Hey, you’re standin’ too close – back up so I’ve got something to aim at,” Short Stack shouts. It’s all part of the show. The joking is as much a part of the experience as the pancake that arcs towards your plate. It’s a ritual.

As you leave, you are so very full of spongy pancakes, sausage, fresh fruit cups, juice or coffee. You see more conference-goers lined up. The first holds up his plate. Short Stack digs her spatula beneath a pancake and flips it, high, high, high into the air. It hesitates at the top of its arc for the briefest of instants, traveling neither up nor down. Then, it begins its descent to oblivion.

Will the man catch it in his plate? He can, he will, he must! Come by next year and watch!
Conference-goers Contributed $6,478 to WaterPAC

Kansas Rural Water Association conference-goers in 2015 supported the WaterPAC Raffle with donations of $6,478. WaterPAC is the political action committee of the National Rural Water Association (NRWA). The WaterPAC Raffle is one way that the Kansas Rural Water Association conference-goers support the legislative efforts of the NRWA.

Charles Hilton, President of the National Rural Water Association board of directors, commented during the annual meeting of membership of the KRWA how important the support by Kansas Rural Water Association has been to WaterPAC.

“The NRWA provides a strong voice to make sure that federal regulations are made as reasonable as possible,” Hilton told the membership meeting on Thursday, March 27. Hilton commented that WaterPAC has allowed the NRWA to support those members of Congress who have helped keep legislation moving that has been in the best interests of water and wastewater systems.

During the conference, it’s the KRWA directors who explain programs and also receive donations for the Raffle. The process also allows directors to visit with many attendees.

It’s been said before but it’s appropriate to say it again. “Water and wastewater systems in Kansas benefit from the legislative representation of NRWA in Washington.” NRWA works in support of reasonableness in regulations dealing with water and wastewater utilities. For example, it was the NRWA and its state affiliates who led the effort to ask Congress to end the mailing requirement of the Consumer Confidence Reports. That was just one of the many ways that power of an association was apparent. KRWA also annually participates in the NRWA “Water Rally” in Washington. During the Rally, KRWA meets with members of Congress and asks them for their past support of various loan and grant funding programs and training and technical assistance programs that directly benefit water and wastewater utilities.

Darrell Schlabach, Washington RWD 1, won the Stihl Weed Eater at the WaterPAC Raffle Drawing on Thursday, 3/25.

Emily Pierson, Pottawatomie RWD 4, was the lucky winner of the quilt “Autumn Leaves French Braid.” It’s in the cloth carrying bag.

Tim Heinen, City of Seneca was the winner of this Water Paddle Boat at the WaterPAC Raffle.
Donations in 2015 were made by 218 individuals. KRWA contributed the prizes for the raffle so 100 percent of the donations go to WaterPAC. KRWA and NRWA appreciate the support for WaterPAC during the KRWA conference. Donations in prior years have been as follows: 2005 - $3,001; 2006 - $3,000; 2007 - $4,324; 2008 - $4,692; 2009 - $6,110; 2010 - $5,073; 2011 - $5,065; 2012 - $7,193; 2013 - $7,350; 2014 - $7,650; 2015 - $6,500. Donations over the last ten years totals $59,936. Prizes for the Raffle are donated by KRWA.

### WaterPAC Raffle Winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quilt – Autumn Leaves French Braid</td>
<td>Emily Pierson</td>
<td>Pottawatomie RWD 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-box Game System</td>
<td>Greg Metz</td>
<td>Kansas Rural Water Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KitchenAid 5 Quart Artisan Mixer</td>
<td>Janette Froelich</td>
<td>City of Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vizio 42 inch Smart LED TV</td>
<td>Casey Cornelison</td>
<td>City of Derby</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyson Animal Vacuum</td>
<td>Stacy Barbour</td>
<td>Sedgwick RWD 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cajun Electric Smoker</td>
<td>Pat Shaffer</td>
<td>Butler RWD 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-Pad Air with Power Case</td>
<td>Ron Rettele</td>
<td>Brown RWD 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hitachi Compound Miter Saw</td>
<td>Mark Thomas</td>
<td>Kansas Rural Water Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman 165 Piece Tool Set</td>
<td>Charlie Vieselmeyer</td>
<td>Republic RWD 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stihl Weed Eater</td>
<td>Darrell Schlabach</td>
<td>Washington RWD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuisinart Ice Cream Maker</td>
<td>Bert Zerr</td>
<td>Kansas Rural Water Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smart Rod Fishing Rod</td>
<td>Richard Tatum</td>
<td>Cowley RWD 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Paddle Boat</td>
<td>Tim Heinen</td>
<td>City of Seneca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stihl 16-inch Chainsaw</td>
<td>Charlie Vieselmeyer</td>
<td>Republic RWD 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ed Kowaleski, Leavenworth Water Department is congratulated by KRWA General Manager Elmer Ronnebaum for winning the 3-day vacation trip to Washington D.C. Greg Metz, KRWA Tech present the Margaritaville Frozen Maker to Kirwin McKee, Public Wholesale District No. 18.
Unless you attend a national “quilters’ rally”, it’s extremely unlikely that you will find the level of investment of time and talent as the KRWA conference provides in its grand door prizes. And the national quilters’ conferences don’t give away queen and king size quilts as door prizes.

But, as in past years, KRWA again had drawings for four beautifully crafted, pieced quilts. The design, Autumn Leaves French Braid, was won by Emily Pierson of Pottawatomie RWD 4 in the WaterPAC Raffle.

The other designs were: Plum Baskets, Mysterious, and Nine-Patch Trails.

Since 1984, the KRWA conference has given away 87 quilts with Kathleen Ronnebaum being responsible for the design and assisting her mother-in-law Anna Ronnebaum with ten of the quilts from 1984 through 1988; Kathleen assumed designing and piecing of the subsequent 77 quilts given away from 1985 through 2015. The patterns for 2016 are already selected. It’s a tradition, unmatched.

KRWA Gives Unique Door Prizes: Kansas-made Pieced Quilts

Tim Goetz, Leavenworth RWD 5, selected the design Nine Patch Trails at the Wednesday evening Awards Banquet.

Bradley Wagoner, city of Quinter, chose the design Mysterious as his meal ticket was drawn for one of the two quilts given as grand prizes at the Thursday luncheon.

Roger Ploeger, Brown RWD 1, was the lucky draw for the quilt Plum Baskets at the Thursday luncheon.

Save the Date!

49th Annual Kansas Rural Water Conference

March 29, 30 and 31, 2016
**Prizes Donated by Associates**

Thank you to all the sponsors who donated; these prizes were given at the Thursday noon luncheon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donated by</th>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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<td>B G Consultants</td>
<td>Gift Card</td>
<td>Michael Slobodnik</td>
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<td>Team Laboratory Chemical</td>
<td>Hunting knife</td>
<td>Max Behrns</td>
<td>City of Derby</td>
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<td>Custom Micro Works</td>
<td>$50 Waymart gift card</td>
<td>Ken Routon</td>
<td>City of Derby</td>
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<td>$25 gift card</td>
<td>Janeice Rawles</td>
<td>City of Edgerton</td>
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<td>City of Harveyville</td>
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<td>B G Consultants</td>
<td>Gift Card</td>
<td>Calina Dachenhausen</td>
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<td>Evans, Bierly, Hutchison &amp; Assoc.</td>
<td>Craftsman wrench combo</td>
<td>George Staley</td>
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<td>Gift Card</td>
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<td>Harris Computers</td>
<td>Kindle Fire</td>
<td>Brenda Stewart</td>
<td>City of Minneola</td>
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<td>Gift Card</td>
<td>Randall Maxwell</td>
<td>City of Moscow</td>
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<td>Mid West Fire Training Associates</td>
<td>Training certificate and pencil holder</td>
<td>Don Boyer</td>
<td>City of Solomon</td>
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<td>Evans, Bierly, Hutchison &amp; Assoc.</td>
<td>Craftsman 17-piece screwdriver set</td>
<td>Don Colson</td>
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<td>TREKK Design Group</td>
<td>Shotgun</td>
<td>Kaleb Johnson</td>
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<td>Custom Micro Works</td>
<td>$25 Walmart gift card</td>
<td>Susan McKenzie</td>
<td>City of White City</td>
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<td>KU Public Management</td>
<td>Supervisory Leadership Training Program</td>
<td>Pam Erhart</td>
<td>City of Winchester</td>
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<td>Elliott Insurance Group</td>
<td>Keurig coffee maker</td>
<td>Glenn &amp; Pam Hermon</td>
<td>Johnson RWD 7</td>
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<td>Jayhawk Software</td>
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<td>Donna Jeanneret</td>
<td>Lyon RWD 3</td>
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<td>Copperhead jacket</td>
<td>John Mast</td>
<td>Lyon RWD 3</td>
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<td>Tool combo kit</td>
<td>John Rueger</td>
<td>Marshall RWD 3</td>
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<td>A.Y. McDonald Manufacturing</td>
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<td>Dave Allert Company</td>
<td>Cooler with thermal cups</td>
<td>David Blessent</td>
<td>Professional Eng. Consultants</td>
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<td>Golf bag</td>
<td>Ken McNickle</td>
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<td>Chris Olsson</td>
<td>Riley RWD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Lyons</td>
<td>Gift basket</td>
<td>Mike Dawson</td>
<td>Shawnee Cons. RWD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett &amp; West, Inc.</td>
<td>Two KC Royals tickets with lodging; $100 VISA gift card; $75 Royals gift card</td>
<td>Ralph Ohl</td>
<td>Sumner RWD 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Pipe Services</td>
<td>Home reverse osmosis unit</td>
<td>Joyce Holle</td>
<td>Washington RWD 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I wore the hat of embedded reporter during the 2015 annual conference hosted by KRWA March 25 - 27 at the Century II Convention Center in Wichita. I also wore the hat of a first-time conference attendee.

From the minute I walked in, so many of you greeted me warmly, asking me about my work and myself. The experience reminded me of a family reunion. (A family reunion with a carnival in the middle of it all.)

During the opening night “Chow and Chat,” I sat next to Cheryl Flory, who had an incredible story about her connections to the convention.

In an earlier phase of her life, she said, her first husband Eldon Flory developed billing software for water systems. He tested the software on Douglas RWD No. 2, just south of Lawrence.

The conference was much smaller in the early 1980s, when they participated as vendors, she said.

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When he became ill with cancer, they sold the software business, Jayhawk Software. That new owner still sells the billing software and exhibits at the KRWA conference each year.

“Their kids still come by the office to see what their Dad started,” said Steve Prasko, vice-president of the software company. “He was way ahead of his time.”

Today, Cheryl is married to Michael Flory, who is on the board of Douglas RWD 2, the same district that piloted the software 30 years ago.

She said she was impressed by how large and comprehensive the conference has become.

“We look forward to coming every year,” she said.

Susan Stover of the Kansas Geological Survey convinced me to ride The Sizzler. For journalistic purposes, I agreed. The two of us spun faster and faster through the air, wind whipping through our hair like we were in a rock video.

I sat with the guys from Hesston at lunch on Wednesday. Scott Robertson, who is the utilities superintendent, said he had been coming to the conference for 21 years. It’s the 26th year for Kyle Headrick to attend. We went around the table figuring up attendance records.

Just that city staff alone has a combined 70 years of attendance.

The conference is the best place to get their hours for certification, they all said.

Robertson said he enjoys visiting the vendors and keeping up on current topics. He had attended a session that morning about water regulations that will be coming in 2016, information that he said was always useful.
Plus, he said, “I get to see a lot of people I haven’t seen in a while.”

Adam Ulrich is a relative newcomer from the Hesston group. The 2015 conference was the third he had attended.

“I think it’s really useful for me, because I’m so new at it,” he said. “There’s so much I haven’t seen or experienced yet.”

I had conversations about local boards spending late nights hashing out serious issues. How some board members have served their communities for decades. How it’s a struggle to recruit young people to become involved.

I talked to operators who told me about why they do what they do. It’s often because they truly like the work, and are proud that they help make their communities the best they can be.

Shouldn’t that be the goal for which we all strive, no matter what hats we wear?

Thank you, KRWA, for welcoming me to your reunion. And thank you for the care and time you invest in all of us who live, work and play in Kansas. We are healthier and more prosperous thanks to you.

Sarah Green is a writer, editor and consultant. A graduate of the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas, Green has written for local and national publications including The Hutchinson News, the KHI News Service and Saveur magazine. She lives in Wichita.
EXPO Hall Draws Big Crowds

Vendors Value Trade Show Opportunity at KRWA Conference

The largest water and wastewater conference in mid-America brings with it one of the largest exhibitions of goods and services.

The EXPO Hall at the 2015 KRWA annual conference featured 199 companies and agencies that filled 331 booths.

Here’s a look at three of the vendors who attended the trade show.

The Grasshopper Company

Dave Pitman has city council experience; he’s on the city council in South Hutchinson.

The product support and demo consultant for The Grasshopper Company enjoys getting to know others who work for and with cities who attend the KRWA trade show.

“The government entities that come to this show are very well known and respected,” he said.

Grasshopper manufactures commercial-grade mowers and other maintenance equipment. The company is based in Moundridge, KS.

Pitman has made business connections through the KRWA convention across the country, selling mowers to cities, companies and individuals in other states – even as far away as Washington, D.C.

But the local connections are a big selling point for buyers from Kansas, he said.

“They do know that it’s basically Kansas-build, U.S.-made,” he said.

City of Lyons

Lyons City Administrator John Sweet attends the KRWA conference annually to recruit businesses and employees to live and work in his central Kansas town.

Sweet also wants to tell everyone about the city’s relationship with KRWA, which he says has been beneficial to the town through the years.

“We’re advertising our community, where we are and what we have,” he said. “It’s a great life if you want to live here. And we understand the importance of what this organization does and what it can do for you.”

One KRWA service Sweet highlights is GIS utility mapping. The city mapped its utilities several years ago with assistance from the rural water association.

Now they can quickly identify the location of their water valves, they know how many houses are affected when a gas line breaks, and they have the exact location of every manhole when they need to address sewer problems.

“I can’t even tell you the number of times it has been a lifesaver for our community,” he said.

Mid West Fire Training Associates

Cheryl Treptow has only missed one year as an exhibitor since 1996.

Treptow is the administrator of training operations for Mid West Fire Training Associates, based in Burlington, KS. Mid West Fire Training which conducts a number of training opportunities for working in confined spaces and in trenches based on OSHA regulations and is regularly sponsored by KRWA in regional sessions.

“This is a good show,” she said. “There’s lots of traffic.”

Treptow said the KRWA conference provides her with opportunities to meet new potential clients and reconnect with those she works with on a recurring basis.

Also, she said, she enjoys the fun atmosphere of the EXPO Hall.

“I call it adult trick-or-treating,” she said. “All the vendors bring candy.”
Complete well service for Kansas

- Distributors of Regal Chlorinators
- Sales and distribution of Redi Clean products
- Underwater video camera inspection
- Telemetry
- Extracting and setting pumps and motors
- Well remediation, restoration
- Rebuilding, restoring pumps and motors
- New pump and motor sales
- Variable frequency drive sales and service – Square D, Yaskawa
- Starting panels
- Consulting services with surge blocks with brushes and sand buckets
- Complete parts service

In a well remediation, Alexander Pump's unique truck mounted hydraulic walking beam (above) cycles the surge tank, double surge block and brush (left) up and down through the well. The action forces 'Redi Clean' chemicals into the gravel pack to dissolve iron bacteria, placing it into suspension for removal.

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