

# 2018 – From Winter Goes Straight to Summer – and Drought Conditions Impact Large Areas of Kansas

It seems that we have jumped from winter straight into summer. Most of Kansas has been experiencing above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. The city of Enterprise where I am superintendent of utilities, has been blessed with two very stable wells that have consistently produced all the water for the city without any adverse effects during this or past droughts. Past history does not mean that we can just ignore the fact that Kansas is in a drought. Recently Enterprise installed a pressure transducer in the bottom of one of the city's wells so that water levels can be logged on a continuous basis. The data is recorded in a data logger. Enterprise's wells are only one-quarter mile apart so the sensor also captures the influence on the water table when either well pumps.

The real purpose of the sensor was not necessarily to capture what effect the wells have on each other but to obtain the total picture of the water table

in the well field and what effect the six nearby center pivot irrigation rigs have on the city's wells. As the corn is growing we will soon see the center pivots running. I am interested to see the data of the water levels after the irrigation wells start pumping.

It has already been interesting to see what effect the

Smoky Hill River has on the city's wells. The well field is slightly more than two miles from the river. There was rain upstream in early May. The river came up six feet for about 24 hours. We saw a two percent (2%) increase in the water table elevation at the city's well field. The good thing is that this demonstrates that we can have a rapid recharge of the well field if significant rain falls upstream.

Permits to develop water rights are becoming difficult to obtain,

especially in certain aquifers in the state. As stewards of public water, we owe it to our customers to be responsible and proactive in the management of our well fields and our water rights. Public water systems need to work with our agri-producers as there is only a finite amount of water to go around.

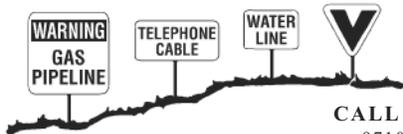
**As stewards of public water, we owe it to our customers to be responsible and proactive in the management of our well fields and our water rights.**

## Communication pays . . .

I was speaking with a local farmer who was installing two new center pivots just across the road from our wells. He will operate the two pivots from one common well. The farmer actually lives nearly twenty-five miles from this field and will likely not be in the area to stop the operation of the irrigation wells if we were to receive significant rain. I asked him if it was possible to have a sensor installed that

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measured rainfall so it could automatically shut off the system if it were running and we received significant rain. He checked with the manufacturer and it was a common option and it was installed. Such a simple device saves possibly hundreds of thousands of gallons of unnecessary irrigation and helps protect the aquifer and save pumping costs. Communication goes a long way if we will just work with all the water users in close proximity of the public water supply wells. It is much the same with our wellhead and the source water protection program. When we update our assessments of possible hazards to our well field we need to include aquifer performance and water use, not just chemicals that may impact the water quality.

Staying proactive is the key; we can't just bury our heads and think drought will never have an adverse effect on your city or water district. All public water systems need to have their emergency plans up to date. This includes water restriction codes in the event the day comes that it is necessary to take such action. Dust off that book on the shelf with your emergency plan and make sure it is current. Also have your legal staff review the plan to be sure it is still enforceable.

**And if your community or system wants help with emergency plans or any other management issue – from master meter testing to applying for funding, KRWA staff are ready, willing and able to help.**

As I commented earlier, communication can be the best tool you have. Establish a working relationship with the other water consumers that affect your public water system's wells and the relevant state agencies too. We all have a stake in the future of our water so let's work together to use this precious resource wisely.

And do not hesitate to utilize the resources of the Kansas Rural Water Association. Two staff members are licensed geologists and have years of experience working with the Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources in water rights. And if your community or system wants help with emergency plans or any other management issue – from master meter testing to applying for funding, KRWA staff are ready, willing and able to help.

*Paul Froelich is City Superintendent at Enterprise, Kansas. Since 1983, he has worked extensively in law enforcement, emergency management and municipal operations. He holds numerous accreditations in Emergency Management and Fire and is a certified water and wastewater operator.*



## Letters continued . . .

I would like to thank KRWA and all you do and also Tony Kimmi again for all his help and all of you in helping us to maintain our infrastructure here in Fort Scott and other cities throughout Kansas.

*Bill Lemke  
City of Fort Scott, Kansas  
Water Distribution Supervisor*

**I would like to apologize for my absence during the scheduled session that I was supposed to moderate on Tuesday, March 27 at 10:00 am.** My absence is inexcusable, for some apparent reason I had written down on my calendar that I was scheduled for Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. instead of Tuesday. When I gathered my paperwork to leave for Wichita it was

Tuesday at 11:15 a.m. when I saw that I was supposed to be moderating at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday.

Please accept my apologies and I would be willing to moderate two sessions for the 2019 KRWA Conference to make up for my mistake this year.

On another note, I would like to congratulate you, your staff and everyone that has put effort into this year's conference, as it was a tremendous success. I have attended this conference for three years and must say it is one of the best conferences in the industry.

I look forward to the 2019 conference.

*Timothy Kelly  
President  
Brotcke Well & Pump, Inc.*

**Hey Elmer! I just want to thank you again for allowing me the pleasure of speaking to the Kansas Rural Water Association last week.** I had a great time with all of you and I appreciate you hosting me. Thanks especially for your thoughtfulness and helpfulness in making sure things ran smoothly.

Thanks also for allowing me the thrill of playing with King Midas and the Mufflers. What a great bunch of guys! I posted a little video of me jamming with them at [www.facebook.com/charlesmarshallspeaker/videos/10156241583638142/](http://www.facebook.com/charlesmarshallspeaker/videos/10156241583638142/).

Thank you again for all you have done. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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