

KRWA's first registered apprentice,
Clint Bivens, City of Sabetha



WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATORS ARE ESSENTIAL TO EVERY COMMUNITY, CREATING A STABLE JOB OPPORTUNITY FOR LONG-TERM CAREERS.



Learn and Earn!

Kansas Rural Water Association

**APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAM**

The KRWA Registered Apprenticeship Program is recognized by the Kansas Department of Labor and with other state associations through National Rural Water Association, under the U.S. Department of Labor. The Apprenticeship Program is designed to help train the next generation of skilled workers and provide standardized training across the nation in Drinking Water and Wastewater professionals' occupations. Apprentices will earn-while-they-learn in a structured two-year training program that combines on-the-job training with related technical instruction. Apprentices work with knowledgeable and passionate people who ensure that Americans can continue relying on safe drinking water and vital wastewater services that protect public health and the environment.

Water and wastewater workers provide an invaluable service – day in and day out. Their work is essential to protecting public health and the environment. See the next page for more information about the KRWA Apprenticeship Program. To apply, contact KRWA Apprenticeship Coordinator Monica Wurtz.

Program Overview

Over the next decade, the water sector is expected to lose between 30 and 50 percent of the workforce to retirement. To combat disproportionate retirement, KRWA has partnered with the National Rural Water Association to develop an Apprenticeship Program that will offer two new career paths – Water System Operation Specialist and Wastewater System Operation Specialist.

Minimum Requirements for Apprentices:

1. At least 18 years of age
2. High school diploma, GED or equivalent
3. Physically capable of performing essential functions
4. Take and pass drug screen
5. Pass a background check
6. Valid state issued driver's license



The mission of the Kansas Rural Water Association is:

Provide education and leadership necessary to enhance the effectiveness of Kansas' water and wastewater utilities.

Benefit for Apprentices

Water and Wastewater System Operators help provide safe drinking water to millions of Kansans and protect our natural waterways. Operators are a vital part of our communities. Without properly trained personnel in these roles communities can suffer. During their training, apprentices will work alongside professional operators, learn skills that can be taken anywhere, and earn a wage while they learn.

Participating Apprentices will be required to:

- Meet the Minimum Requirements for apprentices
- Register as an Apprentice with KRWA
- Be employed or be willing to become employed by a Participating Member System
- Complete the 2-year program:
 - 4,000 on-the-job training hours
 - 288 related instruction hours (classroom hours)

Benefit for Systems

Many Water and Wastewater Operators in Kansas have worked at the same utility for most of their career. With retirement, they will depart with decades of valuable institutional knowledge. These training programs will offer member systems a way to pass down and retain critical skills and knowledge of their water and wastewater systems to the next generation of industry workers.

Participating Systems will be expected to:

- Identify and support an experienced mentor to provide guidance and on-site training to apprentices
- Pay the apprentice's wages
- Take advantage of Program Coordinator to resolve concerns and ensure best outcome for apprentice
- Strongly consider retaining apprentices following program completion

If you are interested in registering as an Apprentice or becoming a Participating Member System contact KRWA Apprenticeship Program Coordinator:

Monica Wurtz, KRWA Technical Assistant
email: monica@krwa.net
cell: 785-262-7301

Spotlight on Apprenticeship

Name of Apprentice: Jeff Mucklow
System: City of Garnett, Water Treatment Plant
Apprenticeship Track: Water Operations Specialist
Apprenticeship Start Date: February 24, 2021
Hobbies: Hunting, Fishing, Boating, and the Outdoors



City of Garnett Water Treatment Plant Operator Jeff Mucklow, runs a chlorine residual test on a sample collected out of the clearwell.

KRWA: How long have you worked for the city of Garnett? Any previous experience?

Mucklow: I started working for the city of Garnett on July 23rd 2020. Prior to working for the city, I had ten years of experience in residential and commercial plumbing, I was self-employed for ten years in the driveway business, one year of carpentry, two years of heavy equipment operation, and five years in auto parts.

KRWA: What are your main responsibilities at the treatment plant?

Mucklow: My responsibilities include: water treatment, of course, along with administrative duties (filling out monthly and yearly reports), daily testing (pH, chlorine residual, chlorite, chlorine oxide, monochloramines, fluoride), keeping track of chemicals and filling chemicals, collecting and shipping state samples, jar testing, washing filters, maintenance and repair to the plant, and training of new personnel.

KRWA: What is your favorite part about being a water plant operator? What is the most challenging part about being a water plant operator?

Mucklow: I find it rewarding to produce good quality drinking water. It's challenging, because our source water is constantly changing, sometimes an overnight rain can dramatically change our water treatment process. I've had to learn how to read the results of the lab testing and figure out how to make adjustments to the treatment process.

KRWA: What made you interested in KRWA's Apprenticeship Program?

Mucklow: I was interested in receiving more education and I would like to further my career in water production.

KRWA: What do you hope to achieve by participating in the program?

Mucklow: I hope to learn more and have a much better understanding of the water treatment process. I would also like to obtain a Class IV water operator certification.

KRWA: Would you recommend the program to anyone that might be considering it? Why?

Mucklow: Yes, I would recommend the KRWA Apprenticeship Program mainly because of the curriculum and the courses provided. I completed both Volumes 1 and 2 of the "Water Treatment Plant Operation" California State University, Sacramento courses, on my own. As I get further into the SunCoast training materials (online Apprenticeship courses), a lot of the same material is covered, but in a more direct manner. In my opinion, it's a better read (easier to stay focused) and not over worded. The California State courses are in a college course format. SunCoast is teaching you the same thing, but it's much easier to follow. You receive hands-on training with the apprenticeship program, as well.

Monica Wurtz began work with KRWA in October 2013. She previously worked at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and also worked at US EPA Region 7 for four years. Monica is considered a national expert on various drinking water regulations.

