



Kevin Jones is shown presenting an Emergency Response Training at a KRWA-sponsored session in Grandview Plaza.

I realize sometimes it's like preaching to the choir – but there is no getting around the fact that water and wastewater utilities need to be as prepared as possible for emergency situations. You might ask, “What is the emergency?” Well, if we knew the answer for that, the emergency might not even be an emergency because it could be dealt with as proficiently as possible. To help cities and RWDs achieve that goal, the Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) is again sponsoring emergency response training. These sessions will be held November 16, 17 and 18. Additional sessions will be held in 2022.

This year, KRWA is offering the training to the apprentice program and are looking forward to having the apprentices join the regular classes. As for the Apprentice Program, I encourage readers to check out the articles and information in this issue. See pages 40-42 to learn about the program and how to take advantage of this program. KRWA staff member Monica Wurtz administers the

program and she is available to discuss it with anyone. There are many benefits of participating in this program to help train new operators.

Emergency response training

I have always enjoyed helping facilitate the emergency response training sessions that KRWA has facilitated. The presenters, Kevin Jones and Fred Rinne, are most knowledgeable on the topic. The training provides practicable information as well as real world experiences. The morning training section addresses what to expect from reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Dealing with documentation on an emergency “after-the-fact” is

sometimes too late to have damages covered by FEMA. If the paperwork is not filled out correctly, the city or RWD may lose out on funding. Kevin and Fred will give you the information on how to ensure having most expenses covered.

Emergency Response Training will be offered in Garnett on November 16, Council Grove on November 17, and Holton on November 18. I recommend that the administration, board, or council members attend. I hear from operators that they would appreciate it if their governing bodies and administrators would also attend. These people are very important to the process after the fact. Dealing with the aftermath of emergency situations is very stressful and the more you know before the fact is extremely important if the city or RWD wants to be reimbursed.

FEMA is very particular about having an inventory of things that were destroyed and what was done to rectify the damaged property. A list of who was present and the amount of materials, equipment, and hours that were taken to repair the damage is

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crucial to being reimbursed. Kevin and Fred give excellent examples of what to do and some horror stories about what not to do before, during, and after the emergency.

My favorite part of the training takes place in the afternoon segment. Those attending break into smaller groups. Everyone is given a part to play, and a disaster hits your system. Everyone must think and work together and work through many difficult and changing situations. It always seems like some people have their own area of expertise. Because one person has their own job, the training forces attendees to step out of their comfort zone and apply skills that they might not realize you possess. Administration can be quite helpful in this time to keep the press informed so the staff can complete their own tasks.

As always, if anyone has suggestions for training topics of interest, please let KRWA know.

KRWA performs this training three times a year and moves the sessions to different areas of the state to allow as many people as possible to participate. The trainings are limited in class size -- so sign up early. If you do sign up and can't make it, please call the office, and let KRWA know. The office keeps a wait list after sessions fill. If anyone needs to cancel attendance at these or other training sessions, don't hesitate to get in touch with KRWA and let the Association staff know so others can be invited.

Another important item is to go to KRWA's website www.krwa.net. Open the "Online Resources" dropdown, click on the "System Directory"; then type in your system and see who is listed as contacts. These contacts are how KRWA knows who to send out the mailers to inform members of upcoming training sessions.

As always, if anyone has suggestions for training topics of interest, please let KRWA know. KRWA strives to provide training sessions that is relevant to the needs of operators, managers and others. The one advantage of suggesting a topic for training is that

KRWA will do everything possible to hold the session in the immediate vicinity of those making the request.

2022 Annual Conference & Exhibition

Because of COVID, KRWA was forced to cancel both the 2020 and 2021 annual conferences. But with COVID more under control and higher percentages of people being vaccinated, KRWA is planning to hold the 2022 Conference & Exhibition on March 29 – 31. As of October 1, nearly 280 of the exhibit spaces have been reserved. Let's plan to have a great and safe conference at the Century II Convention Center in Wichita.

Bret Beye joined the KRWA staff in March 2017. He previously worked for 30 years at the city of Herington where he was Water Distribution and Sewer Collection Foreman. A Class III water operator and certified as a backflow device technician, Bret also served on the USD 487 Board of Education from 2003 to April 2017 where he was board president and vice-president.



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