

You are KRWA – recapping KRWA’s 40 years of service

Forty years ago, a few visionary pioneers founded the Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) to provide support and leadership to a fledgling rural water industry in Kansas. Today, the Association helps sustain water and wastewater utilities through training, technical assistance and legislative support in ways that could hardly have been imagined by the founders of KRWA.

In 2007, KRWA celebrates 40 years of service to help bring water and improved quality of life to tens of thousands of rural residents, hundreds of communities, farms and businesses across the state. The spirit of KRWA has remained strong through decades. From the early days of guiding the formation of rural water districts, to lobbying

for funding to construct those facilities, to promoting innovation and improving practices in today’s utilities, to the partnering with state and federal agencies to provide services to Kansans, to the unwavering

commitment of the Association’s directors, staff and its members, the spirit of KRWA is stronger than ever as we all look forward to the Association’s next decade of service.

There are many reasons to celebrate this 40th Anniversary. In 2006, KRWA provided training sessions attended by 5,682 people. Financially, KRWA ended 2006 in the strongest position ever – and in

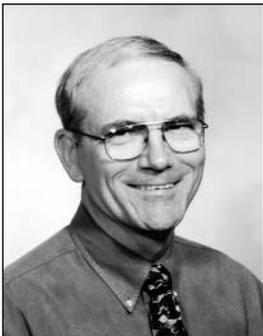
delivering more services to systems – and doing so without an increase in membership dues since 1989. KRWA’s board and staff have implemented new programs and streamlined others to strengthen and

“Mrs. O’Leary’s well-known Chicago cow has nothing on what should be the most famous cows in Kansas. They started our state’s modern rural water movement . . . and the Kansas Rural Water Association.”

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sustain KRWA’s future financial position. And although KRWA has changed in many ways during the past 40 years, it remains true to the founders’ core vision of helping Kansas’ rural water districts and cities so they can better help themselves.

Few people today can recall that in the late 1940s, Mrs. Mary Mercer of Chicopee wanted to sell Grade A milk from her 27-cow dairy to grocers in nearby Pittsburg. Pittsburg wouldn’t license her herd due to lack of an adequate water supply at her farm. Mrs. Mercer



*E. Ronnebaum
General Manager*



At a 1967 board meeting, some of the founding board members of The State Association of Kansas Rural Water Districts (later became KRWA) can be seen around a desk in the meeting room. The Association President Carl Conger, lola, left foreground, leads the meeting that includes: T.J. Dickerson, Fort Scott, Vice President; Robert Hill, Secretary, Lafontaine; P. H. Netherland, Topeka Treasurer; Dan Lickteig, Richmond; William Fribley, Crestline; J. C. Haigwood, Tonganoxie; W. H. Ruch, Leona; Beryl Ross, Ottawa, and Jackson George, State FmHA Director.

The Cows That Started It All!

In 1991, KRWA chronicled the founding of the rural water district movement in Kansas in a Silver Anniversary Yearbook. It began:

didn’t take that refusal sitting down. Instead, she sat down and sought help from a fellow Midwesterner.

And so it began. Mrs. Mercer’s letter to President Harry S. Truman made waves. It moved from the

White House to the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) in Washington. Then it went to FmHA's Topeka office. The outcome was one of the nation's first FmHA loans for a rural water



Jackson George, now residing in San Antonio, Texas, was State Director of the FmHA in 1965. He worked with rural water leaders to develop and support the KRWA.

system. The non-profit Chicopee Cooperative Water Corporation began operation on July 1, 1950. That rural water district proved its critics wrong. The \$27,000 from FmHA helped all aspects of Chicopee's life. The loan was written for 30 years at 3%

interest. In October 1981, national FmHA Administrator Charles W. Shuman was the main speaker at a gathering in Pittsburg when the last payment was made. Chicopee

But with new systems there also came challenges. Local people – farmers, teachers, and businessmen – now found themselves as owners and operators of public water systems. Part-time operators made

formed. Others, including state FmHA Director Jackson George, joined them to plan the formation of a new organization. By Fall they were ready. On October 27, 1965 at a meeting in Lawrence, bylaws were

In March 1965, four rural water leaders met at a restaurant in Iola, Kan. They were T. J. Dickerson of Fort Scott, Bob Hill of Lafontaine, Carl Conger of Iola and Joe Rosacker, of the FmHA. They jointly determined that a 'self-help' organization needed to be formed.

sure pumps operated – but there were other challenges of making sure funds would be available for new systems or expansions of existing systems. In March 1965, four rural water leaders met at a restaurant in Iola, Kan. They were T. J. Dickerson of Fort Scott, Bob Hill of Lafontaine, Carl Conger of Iola and Joe Rosacker, of the FmHA. They jointly determined that a 'self-help' organization needed to be

adopted under the name "The State Association of Kansas Rural Water Districts." Carl Conger was elected President; T. J. Dickerson was elected Vice President; Robert Hill was Secretary and P. H. Netherland, Topeka was elected Treasurer. Other directors were Dan Lickteig, Richmond; William Fribley, Crestline; J. C. Haigwood, Tonganoxie; W. H. Ruch, Leona and Beryl Ross, Ottawa.



It was the introduction of PVC pipe that was to spur the rural water development into a full sprint.

became the first FmHA loan in the nation to pay off – on schedule and in full.

State laws were changed in 1957 to streamline the process by which Kansas landowners could form rural water districts. From 1951 to 1960, a total of 14 FmHA loans were made, totaling more than \$1.3 million. The rural water movement was picking up steam.



Al Miller, Sr. and his father, Roy A. Miller, visit at the 1984 KRWA Conference held at the Lawrence, Kan. Holiday Inn. A long-time KRWA supporter, Al Miller presented numerous sessions on tank maintenance over the years at KRWA and other organizations' training. As a representative of Midwest Tank Company, Pittsburg, Kan., Al was the only exhibitor at KRWA's first annual meeting in 1967. Al and Roy are both deceased.

KRWA Board Members, past and present

**The following persons
have served on the KRWA
Board of Directors from
1965 to 2007.**

* Founding Directors

Carl Conger * 1965 - 1982
T. J. Dickerson * 1965 - 1988
Dan Lickteig * 1965 - 1984
P. H. Netherland * 1965 - 1970
Robert Hill * 1965 - 1969
Bill Fribley * 1965 - 1970
J. C. Haigwood * 1965 - 1968
W. H. Ruch * 1965 - 1970
Beryl Ross * 1965 - 1973
Harland Wittmer 1970 - 1976
Marshall Tatum 1974 - 1986
Elmer Ronnebaum 1976 - 1983
C. E. Cayot 1977 - 1984
Owen O'Brien 1977 - 1985
Dennis Schwartz 1977 - Present
Harry Schmitt 1977 - 1978
Robert O'Shea 1982 - 1984
Dorothy Milsap 1982 - 1985
Ellsworth Willhite 1983 - 1990
Uriel Brown 1984 - 1988
Mike Crowe 1984 - 1995
Charles Mueller 1985 - 1985
Dale McDaniel 1985 - 1988
Gene Bland 1986 - 1989
Marvin Klumpe 1986 - 1990
Rita Mathews 1986 - 1997
Dallas Post 1988 - 1989
Patricia Schlesener 1989 - 1991
Carl Carroll 1989 - 2006
Neil Hartter 1990 - 1997
Nova Searcy 1991 - 1992
Delbert Shaffer 1991 - 1997
David Mueller 1993 - 2005
Bill Goheen 1996 - 1996
Mike Mayberry 1996 - Present
Darrell Schlabach 1997 - Present
Patricia Shaffer 1997 - Present
Sharon Dwyer 1998 - Present
Larry Remmenga 2005 - Present
Sam Atherton 2006 - Present

Advisory Board Members

Roger Staley 1982 - 1983
Mike Dunnaway 1983 - 1990

The name of the organization was changed in 1966 to the Kansas Rural Water Association to reflect an already growing membership by small towns. Also that year, Congress appropriated grants to supplement the loans so that more people could be served by the new water systems. The Kansas rural water law was used as a model in Nebraska and Oklahoma. KRWA's first annual meetings were held in Iola. I attended one of those meetings; it was held in the Iola High School. There were three exhibits: the Kansas State Board of Health, Midwest Tank of Pittsburg, Kan. and KRWA. In the period 1967-1972, Kansas received federal water grants in excess of \$4 million. KRWA held board meetings and an annual meeting. There was no staff. The board monitored legislation and networked with FmHA – the only lender available to new utilities that had no credit history.

Helping deal with funding crisis

In 1973, OPEC was formed, touching off soaring costs of PVC pipe, copper and brass. President Nixon imposed wage and price controls. The Administration impounded funds for rural water districts, suggesting that states needed to take that responsibility. Intense lobbying by KRWA and others paid off to resolve a stalemate between the Kansas Legislature and Governor Docking over proposed supplemental funding for rural water districts. Legislation was passed and the Governor signed legislation that provided \$1 million annually. From 1973 to 1981, the State of Kansas would provide \$7 million in grants to new RWDs. In 1973, KRWA pushed for a reduction of the local contribution; Senator Leslie Droge of Seneca introduced the measure that was passed and signed into law.

Safe Drinking Water Act drives new regs

While Kansas water systems had always been chlorinated and tested,

debates about water quality and public health resulted in passage by Congress of sweeping requirements concerning water quality. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was passed to provide uniform standards for drinking water across the nation. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would develop rules and regulations. The SDWA began to enforce mandated enhancements on public water systems. The debate began:

How were systems supposed to learn about and comply with a myriad of new regulations while continuing to also own and operate their own utilities? KRWA leadership recognized the impending problem, as did others. In October 1976, the KRWA board voted in support of sending director T. J. Dickerson to Oklahoma City to meet with six other states to form a new association. That meeting resulted in the organization of the National Rural Water Association (NRWA).

Within weeks of formation, the NRWA lobbied Congress for \$1 million to provide training and technical assistance for water systems. In Kansas, KRWA sponsored meetings where water systems and the Kansas Department of Health & Environment discussed the changes that were coming, including an "operator certification program." By the end of 1976, more than 225 rural water districts had been incorporated in Kansas. KRWA membership broke the 100-member barrier. The Association began publishing a newsletter; *The Kansas Lifeline* debuted.

KRWA formalized a training program for water systems thanks to Congress' appropriation to NRWA. Marshall Tatum of Fontana, Kan. was employed as Training Director and an office was established in his basement. Tatum held that position



until 1983. A total of 751 people attended 11 workshops in 1977. KRWA also recognized the growing risk of legal liabilities for water system governing bodies. In 1979, KRWA endorsed the creation of a Safety Dividend Group through Employers Mutual Companies. Today, EMC insures nearly 225 RWDs and has a similar program for municipalities sponsored through the League of Kansas Municipalities. In 1978, KRWA published the first of its handbooks – *The Organization and Development of Rural Water Districts in Kansas*. The 48-page book was aimed at guiding new and would be water districts through the process. Interest was strong. As an example, one workshop in Lawrence was attended by 45 systems. In 1980, National Rural Water provided a contract of \$50,000 annually to employ a Circuit Rider who would work on-site helping systems with operational and financial issues. Bob Ewan worked enthusiastically with rural water districts and cities, FmHA officials and state agencies as KRWA's Circuit Rider until 1986.

The financial roller coaster

KRWA's voice for water systems has always been strong, and respected. In March 1981, KRWA hand delivered a letter to the Governor and 50 legislators, urging the state to make matching funds available for 32 communities and RWDs in southeast Kansas that suffered from continued severe water supply problems. The letter requested \$650,000 from the state. The traditional FmHA interest rate also was allowed to float with market rates, peaking in 1983 at nearly 13%! KRWA held meetings in Topeka and across Kansas to discuss alternative methods of financing. Training attendance in 1982 was 970; *The Lifeline* magazine grew to 28 pages.

Marshall Tatum resigned from KRWA service in 1983. I was hired

from a field of 49 applicants. The office was moved to Seneca. Linda Wheeler was employed as Secretary. Attendance at training sessions in 1983 increased 40% over 1982. A decision was made to

instead suggested 3 cents per thousand gallons sold, thus avoiding an inequitable cost to systems with high debt loads – and higher rates. The KRWA proposal was adopted and it continues to be

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hold the annual conference in the new Holiday Inn at Lawrence in March 1984.

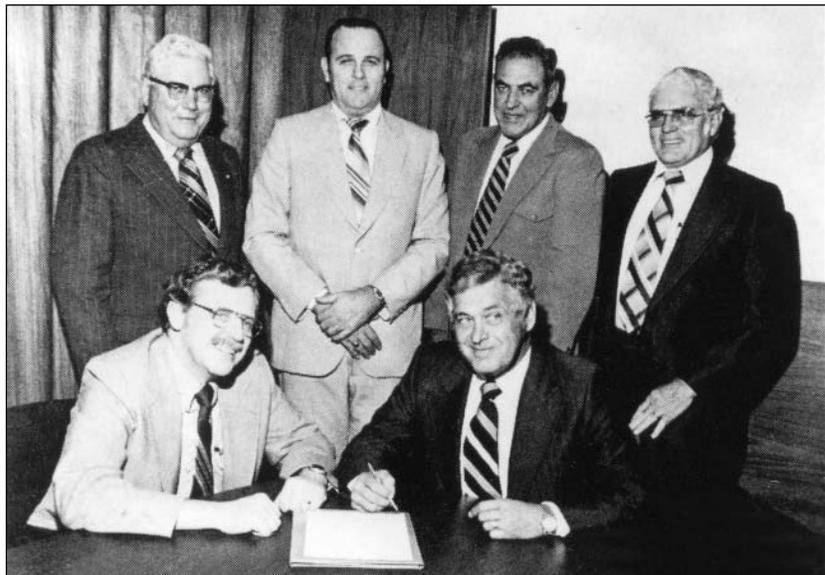
The Kansas Water Plan was also proposed in 1984. More than 3000 people attended 29 public meetings to discuss the Plan. The Water Plan would not become law until 1989. It was KRWA that lobbied legislators to establish an equitable manner of funding for the Plan. Originally proposed at 3% of all water sold at retail, KRWA

the basis for funding the Kansas Water Plan. Training attendance at KRWA-sponsored sessions reached 1,698; KRWA had 111 Associate Members.

In 1986, Carol Steinlage joined KRWA staff as secretary; she served the Association capably until moving to Topeka in 2004.

The Discount Purchase Program

Undoubtedly one of the high water marks in 'rural water history' was the Discount Purchase



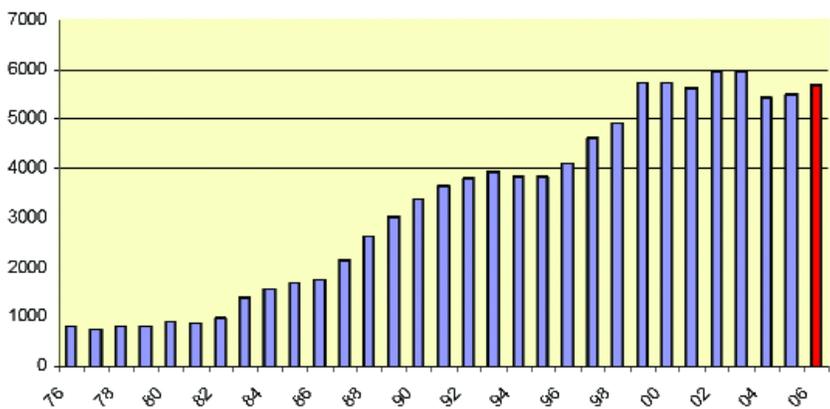
In 1978, EPA contracted with National Rural Water to provide training sessions and on-site assistance to small water systems to help them comply with the new SDWA regulations. This photo shows (seated) Vic Keim, EPA national director for the Safe Drinking Water Act; Marvin Scherler, NRWA President; T. J. Dickerson, NRWA Secretary; Ernest Faucett, NRWA V-Pres.; J. A. Younts, NRWA Treasurer; R. K. Johnson, NRWA Exec. Secretary. KRWA was one of seven charter members of the National Association in 1976.

Program of 1986 – 88. Congress created the program as it set out to meet the Reagan Administration goals of reducing the federal debt. The FmHA water and wastewater loan portfolio was to be offered for

loans to RWDs and two cities through loans negotiated with Co-Bank. The buy-down yielded savings of \$8.93 million to the KRWFA borrowers. Banks also made loans and some revenue bonds were issued

water use accounting. Robert Blume also worked as KRWA consultant, conducting training on electrical safety and troubleshooting and analyzing electrical systems for efficiency. The program uncovered

Attendees at KRWA sponsored training sessions 1976-December 2006: 101,899 people



KRWA introduced the use of computers to many small cities and rural water districts in the late 80s and early 90s. Merle Windler, Thoroughbred Systems, Topeka, conducted the classes with equipment that at the time was not only valuable but a security worry. A van load of computers in a hotel parking lot was quite a target. Where to park a van with \$50,000 of computers in it was always a concern.

sale. KRWA was the first to ask for political support from the Kansas Congressional delegation to allow water systems to purchase their loans at the discount vs. having the portfolio sold on Wall Street. Congressional pressure would eventually encourage FmHA to allow RWDs and cities to purchase their own loans. Nationally, FmHA sold thousands of loans to an independent financial institution on Wall Street. However, in 1987, with the ability to purchase their own loans, 32 RWDs and one wastewater system did so at a discount of approximately \$2.6 million. In 1988, in order to facilitate discussions and provide funding options to systems, KRWA endorsed the creation of the Kansas Rural Water Finance Authority (KRWFA). The Authority held numerous information meetings to review the Discount Purchase Program – and helped systems analyze their options. That year, 85 FmHA borrowers purchased their loans. The Authority financed 14

by others. KRWA’s legislative request of obtaining the right for local systems to purchase their loans to gain the savings paid off big time.

In 1988 and 1989, extreme drought conditions plagued most of Kansas. KRWA organized a series of water conservation workshops in conjunction with the Kansas Water Office and KDHE. In 1989, more than 300 people attended those sessions from 56 cities and 76 RWDs.

In 1989, Dallas Post, Phillipsburg, was employed by KRWA as Circuit Rider. KRWA also negotiated a contract with the Kansas Corporation Commission to reduce water loss and conduct operations’ reviews of electrical systems for cities and RWDs. Doyle Reissig and Bill Goheen joined KRWA’s growing staff under this program, focusing efforts on reducing unaccounted for water loss. Staff members at the Kansas Water Office and Division of Water Resources helped educate systems about the importance of accurate

inefficient pumps, problem equipment and safety concerns. Many systems received direct refunds from their power suppliers for inaccurate demand charges or incorrect billings. Funding through KCC was provided for two years. In 1992, the program was transferred to the Kansas Water Office with funding through the State Water Plan.

Annual conference moves to Salina in 1989

Having outgrown the Lawrence Holiday Inn, the annual KRWA conference moved to the Salina Bi-Centennial Center in 1989. That year, 1,138 people attended the conference with 104 exhibits. Training sessions drew a record attendance of 3,376 people. KRWA introduced a new logo, moving away from the venerable windmill to the adaptation of a ‘progressive water drop.’ The logo and letterhead has stood the test of time, and continues to be used in 2007. Doug Guenther of Oakley, Kan. joined KRWA’s staff.

In 1991, KRWA spent considerable time and resources as KRWA challenged the Internal Revenue Service over attempts to have certain RWDs pay FICA and FUTA taxes on employees and also another IRS ruling that prohibited RWDs in Kansas from issuing tax-exempt financing. KRWA shared expenses with Coffey RWD 2 to send Gary Hanson of Stumbo, Hanson & Hendricks, LLP, Topeka, to meet with the IRS in Washington. Back in Kansas, KRWA requested introduction of legislation to amend state law that would remove the concern on which IRS had based their earlier, unfavorable ruling. No longer would RWDs need to file Form 990s or any other federal tax return. The issuance of tax-exempt debt was granted through the amending legislation.

In 1992, KRWA relocated the annual conference to Century II Convention Center in Wichita. The conference had simply outgrown the Bi-Center in Salina. More than

to slow the impact of SDWA regulations. Legislation (S 2900) was introduced to suspend additional compliance. Senator Dole listed letters from 143 water systems in Kansas and KRWA in

503 regulations were new terms added to the KRWA's glossary of assistance. Electrical reviews continued to gain in popularity. As part of the State Water Plan contract for on-site assistance, KRWA

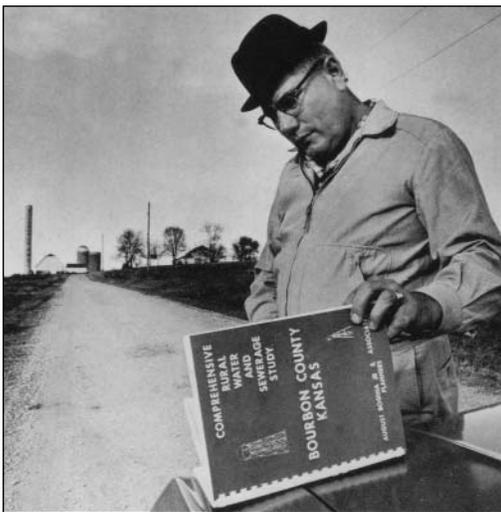


The Lawrence Holiday Inn was all new in 1984; the conference was held there for four years before moving to Salina.

the federal register. This legislation was the first step to refine and make more reasonable the requirements of the SDWA. Amendments were ultimately passed in 1996, again thanks to strong leadership by Congressman Jim Slattery from Kansas. In recognition of leak detection work by KRWA, the Kansas Water Office published a report showing the average water loss following KRWA assistance dropped from 28% in 1989 to 21% in 1991. Also in 1992, the Kansas Legislature added to the complications of administering state sales tax by imposing a 2.5% state tax, plus any city and county tax, on new construction. KRWA began working for repeal or at a minimum, clarification of sales taxes on purchases by public water systems.

In 1993, Greg Duryea joined KRWA staff, while Rick Duncan, formerly Operations' Supt. at Hiawatha, helped KRWA embark on a new program to assist wastewater systems. Smoke testing, lift stations, lagoon problems and

identified incorrect demand charges, incorrect sales tax charges, and eliminating "built-in inefficiencies" to help water systems reduce costs by \$475,000 annually from July 1, 1989 to May 15, 1993. In June and July, it rained, and rained, and rained – resulting in the great floods of '93. Cities and rural water districts in northeast Kansas were hardest hit – Leavenworth Water Dept., BPU Kansas City, Elwood, and RWDs in Nemaha and Marshall and also Mitchell and Ellsworth counties suffered major losses of pipelines. In late summer of 1993, KRWA sponsored 11 training sessions for Phase II/V regulations, attracting 905 people from 425 cities and RWDs. The sessions provided information how to "composite" sampling to reduce testing costs. Ultimately the cost determined by KDHE would be \$1,388,783 to monitor for Phase II/V, compared to EPA's base cost estimate of \$5.4 million for Kansas systems. This savings came because of "Rural Water's" efforts to have small systems contact Congress that in



This late 1960s photo of T. J. Dickerson showing Kansas' first comprehensive rural water plan. Numerous such "county plans" were presented as 'concepts' to help local citizens envision expanded rural water services.

1,300 people from 179 rural water systems and 150 cities converged on Century II. Legislatively, KRWA joined other NRWA affiliates to try

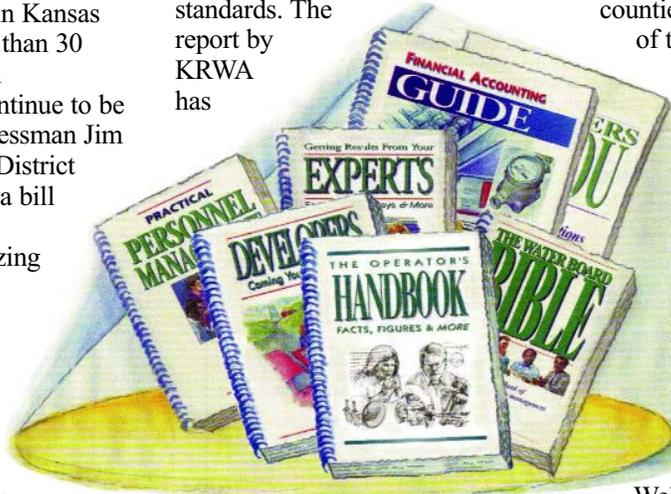
turn forced regulatory changes to allow reduced monitoring.

KRWA introduced the “*Water Board Bible*” – a 95-page handbook authored by Ellen Miller and myself. This handbook would be followed by six additional handbooks that have been purchased by systems in Kansas and for resale by more than 30 other state and national organizations. They continue to be sold by KRWA. Congressman Jim Slattery of Kansas 2nd District introduced HR 3392 – a bill that would be critical legislation in reauthorizing the SDWA.

In July 1994, Bill Shroyer, formerly Supervisor at Sabetha, joined KRWA staff as Wastewater Tech. Rick Duncan moved to the position of Training Director and I assumed the newly created position of General Manager for KRWA. KRWA sent board members and staff to Washington to lobby Congress to support HR 3392 introduced the prior year. A total of 17 additional co-sponsors were gained in three days, including then Congressman Roberts from Kansas. Jon Steele, former Superintendent at Nickerson, joined KRWA staff as Circuit Rider.

The 1995 Kansas Legislative Session was a success for rural water districts. The Legislature passed and Governor Graves signed HB 2087 into law. The bill provided for the Kansas Dept. of Transportation (KDOT) to reimburse rural water districts for certain expenses related to relocating water lines that cross state highway projects. Training attendance at KRWA sponsored sessions increased to 3,837. Membership ranks in KRWA continued to increase with 292 rural water systems, 261 cities and 221 Associate Members. A record 1,506

attended the annual conference. KRWA made national headlines with the results of a study that KDHE conducted showing that out of 80 samples, 15% of the bottle water in the test contained cancer-causing chemicals in amounts that exceeded federal standards. The report by KRWA has



KRWA developed the Water Board Bible series with the first printed in 1993. These practical handbooks remain popular in Kansas; KRWA has tailored the books for more than 30 other organizations across the U.S.

been cited numerous times in national and regional publications. Fred Baumert, previously the operator for Pawnee County, Neb. RWD 1, joined KRWA as Technical Assistant. KRWA filed as a ‘friend of the court’ in an annexation dispute between Johnson Cons. RWD 6 and the City of De Soto, with the RWD prevailing in Appellate Court.

With a sigh of relief, 1996 brought the reauthorizing of the SDWA – eliminating such onerous features as “finding 25 new contaminants to test every three years.” The year also saw KRWA supporting Trego RWD 2’s application for water rights. The construction of the district had been delayed because county commissioners refused to grant easements to cross county roads as they held that the RWD did not have authority to transfer water

outside of the county. During presentation of arguments in the suit, an attorney retained by the county’s liability insurance suggested that the Trego County RWD could install load-out points at the county boundaries and then truck water to users in neighboring counties. KRWA filed as a ‘friend of the court’ in the case that was resolved in the District’s favor. KRWA also provided direct assistance to the development of a new RWD in Washington County, which resulted in 50% of the area of the district (Little Blue NRD South) in Nebraska and 50% of the project (Washington RWD 3) in Kansas. In late summer of 1996, KRWA launched a new Well Head Protection program;

Jerry McNamar, Medicine Lodge, was hired as Tech. Bill Goheen returned to KRWA as Program Manager.

1997 was a busy year. Water systems would be required to provide the new water quality report, the Consumer Confidence Report. Surface Water Quality Standards would also be reviewed. But longer term, the focus was on working with KDHE and the Kansas Development Finance Authority to find ways to help small and rural water systems access the new Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund. With KDHE and KDFA’s leadership, Kansas developed a unique program involving a partnership with the Kansas Rural Water Finance Authority to provide assistance to the program and oversight on the non-rated borrowers or small towns needing reporting assistance. The result was a loan program where the smallest city or any RWD pays the same interest rate as the largest municipality in the state. The City of McLouth received the first loan

through the program. KRWA lobbied for the Kansas Legislature to transfer \$1 million each year for the next five years to the Fund – allowing the state to leverage an additional \$20 million in new loans. Dan Clemens joined KRWA's staff



Carol Steinlage served capably as administrative assistant from 1986 to 2004.

as Program Manager. KRWA nominated the small town of Bern, Kansas and surrounding Nemaha RWD 1 for a national demonstration project involving water use

efficiency of horizontal axis washing machines. The Dept. of Energy and Maytag Corporation conducted the study that put Bern and Kansas on the map and set the standards for front load machines in the industry.

KDHE contracted with KRWA to provide assistance to systems with funding through a set-aside in the State Revolving Loan Fund.



Governor Mike Hayden receives a "I love Rural Water" bumper sticker at the 1990 conference in Salina from KRWA President Dennis Schwartz.

1998 brought changes in staff with Mike Lytle as Technical Assistant and Scott Roberson assumed the position of Water Protection Tech.

In 1999, Bob Kirby and Steve Richter joined KRWA staff as Technical Assistants, as did Tommy DeSpain from Linwood. Later in the year, Charlie Schwindamann would be employed as Wastewater Tech. The Annual Conference in

Wichita drew a record 1,937 people from 256 cities and 160 RWDs. KRWA recognized Al Hermsen, nationally known trainer in cross connection and backflow prevention, with the Conger Award. Well known in Kansas for workshop and conference sessions, hundreds of attendees learned about cross connection control since Al first started training at KRWA workshops in 1989. Representative Jerry Moran spoke at the annual conference, urging local self-help. The Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund had obligated more than \$80 million to cities and RWDs. KRWA constructed a new office and shop one mile west of Seneca on Hwy 36. Gary Armentrout joined KRWA staff.

In 2000, KDHE and stakeholders including KRWA completed a new strategy for Capacity Development – a slogan for technical, managerial and financial capacity. What did stakeholders recommend? The Kansas strategy included a survey every three years to help state agencies create benchmarks for systems, a suggestion that all systems submit Water Use Reports and that all systems have a water conservation plan – and ways to improve board/council management of water issues.

KRWA launched a new program to help communities with water rights issues. Douglas S. Helmke, L.G., joined KRWA's staff; he previously worked at the Division of Water Resources for 11 years in water rights' transfers. The debate continued on sales tax clarification. KRWA and members beseeched the Kansas Legislature to find a simpler way. If public water systems needed to support the state, then a more user-friendly method needed to be used than the unduly complicated application of sales tax. Legislation was requested by KRWA to streamline RWD boundary issues; HB 2234 was passed. The Kansas Department of

Commerce introduced the first KAN STEP project in Kansas – a new water system for the City of Formoso. KRWA donated time to help the local community volunteers complete the project. Linda Osterhaus began work as office assistant.

In 2001, KRWA employed Lonnie Boller, Horton, and Doug Langhofer of Russell as additional Technical Assistants. NRWA contracted to provide an additional Circuit Rider to Kansas. Gary Armentrout and I participated in a 5-member team at National Rural Water to design what would later become SEMS – a widely used software to complete "Vulnerability Assessments." The annual conference in Wichita drew another near record crowd of 2,015. Lt. Governor Gary Sherrer spoke at the awards banquet and complimented KRWA's donation of service to the KAN STEP project in Formoso. He then announced that a new 5-year contract had been finalized between the Dept. of Commerce and KRWA to provide inspection services and technical assistance to KAN STEP projects. And clarification of sales taxes was finally realized. On May 7, 2001, after nearly a decade of KRWA's pressing the issue, Governor Graves signed SB 332. This legislation would allow water systems to choose between paying sales tax on purchases or paying 3 cents per thousand to the Clean Drinking Water Fee. By October 1, more than 800 systems decided to pay the fee vs. sales tax. The Kansas Corporation Commission invited KRWA to assume a new GPS mapping project with the goal of providing improved mapping technologies for water systems; a staff of three would be hired: David Porter, Lloyd Kirkpatrick and Kathy Nadeau. Gene Morgenthaler, Lawrence, replaced Scott Roberson as Source Water Tech. Austin Madison joined KRWA as KAN STEP Tech.

The year 2002 started off with a huge ice storm hitting east-central and southeast Kansas. Numerous public water systems were caught off guard. The Dept. of Commerce continued to expand the KAN STEP program, funding fire stations and community centers. Shane Holthaus, Seneca and Steve Duryea, Baileyville, were employed to help. Maytag said “Thank You” to Bern and Nemaha RWD 1, chartering two 737’s to take 263 people from the northeast Kansas community to Washington for a 3-day trip to accept an award from the Dept. of Energy and tour national landmarks. Surface water systems prepared for the new Disinfection Byproducts Rule. KRWA was given a full audit by IRS – with no

problems other than four 1099’s that should have been issued to suppliers on the construction of the new office in 1999.

In 2003, Public Wholesale Water Supply District 4 won the

Great American Water Taste Test in Washington. Classification of streams in Kansas, TMDLs and arguments associated with the Clean Water Act consumed time by the Legislature, regulatory agencies,



KRWA Staff left to right: **Insets** - Jesse Knight, Mark Thomas; **Seated** - Doug Guenther, Greg Duryea, Laurie Strathman, Pete Koenig, Doug Helmke; **Standing** - Elmer Ronnebaum, Bert Zerr, Pat McCool, Gary Armentrout, Dan Knupp, Jim Jackson, Jon Steele, Bob Kirby, Lonnie Boller, Charlie Schwindamann, Mike Fisher and Shane Holthaus.

interest groups and public wastewater systems. KRWA, in cooperation with the Kansas Water Office and KDHE, worked to update the Kansas rural water district statewide mapping project. The project was originally developed in 1994. EPA required water systems serving 3,300 or greater population to conduct vulnerability assessments in response to anti-terrorism measures. KRWA provided training sessions and assistance. The SEMS program was used by nearly all systems in Kansas. Pete Koenig, Baileyville, joined KRWA’s staff to help with



KRWA 2007 Board of Directors, left to right: **Seated** - Vice President Pat Shaffer, President Dennis Schwartz; **Standing** - Sam Atherton, Secretary Mike Mayberry, Larry Remmenga, Treasurer Sharon Dwyer and Darrell Schlabach.

KAN STEP and mapping. Also in 2003, KDHE chose KRWA to develop a new board/council training program. It would be named “KanCap” – for Kansas and Capacity.



KRWA has been active legislatively in Topeka and Washington in support of public water supply systems. KRWA President Dennis Schwartz, Senator Sam Brownback and KRWA General Manager Elmer Ronnebaum are pictured above following discussions about Rural Development USDA loan and grant funds and other drinking water programs in 2006.

In early 2004, Jim Jackson joined KRWA’s staff as Technical Assistant. Matt Steele joined KRWA under a new contract funded by USDA to help communities develop Source Water Protection plans. KDHE awarded a 6-year contract to KRWA to provide On-Site Emergency Assistance and new operator training. Pat McCool, P.E., formerly Northeast KDHE District Engineer, joined KRWA’s staff as part-time consultant. Long-time administrative assistant Carol Steinlage resigned her position with KRWA to relocate to the Topeka vicinity to be closer to family. In July, Laurie Strathman was employed as Administrative Assistant; she previously worked 25 years in a local bank. In November 2004, Dan Knupp joined the KRWA staff as communications team member. Stephen Thompson and Lowell Lamer joined KRWA staff to provide GPS training and

building of maps. Randy Johnson was employed by KRWA as Training Director. Dan Byers, Seneca, came directly from K-State and began working at KRWA in GPS data collection. KRWA was reviewed by the Dept. of Labor, resulting in new classifications for some staff members.

In 2005, KRWA addressed concerns by some water systems over territorial issues. A panel discussion at the annual conference drew large audiences from both cities and RWDs. Senator Pat Roberts was guest speaker at the conference, commending local water representatives and KRWA for their services to their communities and Kansas. Total conference attendance was 2,156. Delbert Zerr, P.E., formerly North-Central KDHE District Engineer, joined KRWA staff as part-time consultant. KDHE put total cost estimates of compliance with the various SDWA regs at \$61 million. The Rural Water Finance Authority, KDHE, KRWA and Ranson Financial Consultants, LLC, entered into agreements to continue to provide support to the Kansas Public Water Supply Loan Fund and financial capacity of public water systems.

The 2006 Kansas Legislative session saw the introduction of legislation that would have radically modified the release of land from RWDs. KRWA opposed that legislation and worked into the final days of the Session with key legislators to postpone consideration.

The new board/council training program KanCap gained many attendees at sessions across the state. Two new staff members, Jesse Knight and Mark Thomas, joined KRWA’s mapping program. The KAN STEP program had 16 projects under contract or in progress with 32 completed. KRWA ended the year having provided training sessions attended by 5,682 operators, managers, administrative staffs and boards/councils.

What’s the future hold?

Issues that define good public service by public water systems have always been essential to the day-to-day work of boards, councils, staffs and agencies. KRWA’s mission, “To provide education, technical assistance and leadership to public water and wastewater utilities to enhance the public health and to sustain Kansas’ communities” presents opportunities and needs. Partnerships with agencies and coalitions with other organizations are essential so that KRWA can continue to contribute positively in local, regional, and national networks. The future for small and rural communities and the capacity of their public water systems will continue to be inextricably linked. KRWA is committed to providing necessary on-site assistance and training for staffs and members of governing bodies and to continue to work with legislative groups to ensure that the citizens of Kansas have access to improved public water systems. Local systems and KRWA, working in partnership, will make it happen. Remember, *You are KRWA!*