

KRWA pledges continuance of service

When I attended my first KRWA conference in 1982, little did I realize that 25 years later I would be serving as President of your association in 2007. I look forward to continuing the partnership with fellow board members, association members and associate members in carrying out the mission of KRWA by providing services that Kansas water and wastewater systems rely on.

I am writing this article on the heels of the horrible disaster in Greensburg. I am very proud to be associated with a great group of KRWA employees who have responded to the needs of the people in this Kansas town. Our hearts go out to everyone who was affected by this tragic act of nature. KRWA staff have provided

invaluable service in restoring water and wastewater utilities. In concert with the Kansas Municipal Energy Association, the emergency response for Greensburg's utilities was provided with typical "Kan-do" resolve and efficiency.

KRWA staff have worked alongside volunteer utility workers in all disciplines from communities across the state as the devastated city utilities were restored to provide service as needed to the temporary housing, hospital, courthouse and headquarters areas.

KRWA has created a fundraising appeal that has seen local donations from individuals and communities as well as

donations from outside Kansas. Thanks to all those who have contributed; as of June 1, the donations are at about \$50,000.

A start in the business

My career in rural water began in 1981 when I was offered the "bookkeeping" position after the current district bookkeeper wanted

Technology, growth, opportunity

I had helped the district from its formation in 1974 by securing easements – not always the most glamorous job – but a great way to get to know the future patrons of the district and learn where water lines and meters would be. Little did I know how this would

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to retire for the second time, first from banking, then from helping the district collect water payments. I was glad to have been offered a job that I could do at home while caring for our two children who were three and four at the time.

help me in later years. As bookkeeper my only job was to take care of recording water payments that were sent to the bank. Recording 425 payments each month by handwriting them on individual patron ledger sheets



Sharon Dwyer
KRWA President



Sharon Dwyer, Douglas RWD 5 Business Manager, Bruce Smith, Douglas RWD 3 Manager, and board members Carrie Fangman, RWD 5 and Dan Hanney, RWD 3, work on the KanCap exam that finishes an evening's training. Board and staff from the two RWDs took the KanCap training during 2006.

did not seem like such a big job but after a few months I knew there had to be a better way. Our manager at the time suggested I attend the upcoming KRWA conference in Topeka. It was there that I learned about the McBee bookkeeping system, a system widely used in dentist and doctor offices. I quickly switched to that system and used it until 1984 when I was approached by a good friend, Eldon Flory, original owner of Jayhawk Software, who was interested in writing a computer billing program for rural water districts. Of course, the rest is history. Eldon was an Associate Member of KRWA. KRWA also embarked on programs to introduce computers to cities and RWDs across the state. I recall General Manager Elmer Ronnebaum setting up training sessions at Baker University, and various other junior colleges, in high schools and in hotels. That effort was supported by other associate members, notably Thoroughbred Computer. The effort they put in to haul a dozen or more PCs, CRT monitors and printers to different training sessions helped many people see that computers were not just "Pac-Man" game machines. Handwriting was out, computers were in.

My job eventually turned into a full time job as business manager with duties that covered far more

than keeping track of water payments. The office consisting of one file cabinet, a table and a chair was moved from my house to a small office notched out of the district's storage building. Our district eventually outgrew that office and in 2002 we built a new spacious office and shop. Many of you will read this and see your own systems changing and growing just as Douglas County RWD 5 has.

Utilize your KRWA

During this time of growth and change I always knew I could contact KRWA for any advice needed. The training sessions and the conference were of great value to me. We are never too old to learn and the KRWA conference and training sessions are at our fingertips to help expand knowledge on a great variety of topics that are helpful to the management of our businesses.

Throughout the year in between training sessions and the conference, KRWA staff members are always available to assist. If a system problem or a question arises, contact KRWA. If an answer isn't obvious, KRWA staff can nearly always provide an immediate referral to someone who can get that answer.

Associate members include a vast group of professional consultants, legal and accounting firms, manufacturers, parts and equipment suppliers and many

other businesses that work directly or indirectly with our Kansas cities and water systems. Associate member contact names are available on the KRWA Web site at www.krwa.net. Don't miss the conference to meet many Associates in EXPO Hall.

I am very excited about the opportunity for systems to turn to KRWA for GPS mapping. Having worked with maps for 26 years in our own system, I know how essential they are to operating a rural water or municipal water system. Our district office receives calls daily that involve our referring to the system maps. If a system needs to improve a mapping system or if maps are old, out of date or not even available, give KRWA a call to find out how new technology will help you.

Another exciting training tool that is available through your association is the KDHE KanCap board/council training. Douglas RWD 5 and a neighboring district held three training sessions in the summer of 2006. It was a very positive experience for all the board members plus we had a good time learning together. There is something there for both old and new board and council members.

Remember, KRWA is your association and help is just a phone call away.

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