

## **Association News and Updates – Spring 2008**

Clancy Dempsey, Executive Director

The NeRWA Annual Conference was held March 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> in Columbus. Despite heavy snow in the panhandle that prevented some from attending, we had a great turnout. We received a lot of feedback from attendees during and after the conference. I am happy to report that the comments were 99.9% positive; with quite a few people expressing it was the best one yet! We will work hard to make it even better next year. As always, feel free to share your ideas and opinions with us.

Quite a few people mentioned that they enjoyed the food and meals at the conference. Layne Western sponsored steaks on Monday evening and I hope you had the chance to stop by their booth and say thanks. HD Supply sponsored the Monday evening social hour and many thanks to them. Numerous exhibitors made donations to offset conference expenses – Bartlett and West, Municipal Pipe Services, Sargent Drilling, Utility Service Co., Maguire Iron, Miller and Associates, Mongan Painting, and Lincoln Winwater Works Co. The generosity of these exhibitors helps NeRWA to keep the conference more affordable for small systems.

There were 57 conference sessions to choose from with topics good for water, wastewater and backflow CEU's. Hopefully you found some new subjects to enjoy and had the chance to refresh you memory about familiar topics too. Many thanks to all of the speakers who shared their knowledge with us. I want to offer a special thanks to the Department of Health and Human Services, who had close to 20 staff participating in conference presentations. On Tuesday evening, Operator of the Year Awards were presented to Craig Potter, City of Valentine, and Dennis Hoback of Cass County Rural Water #1. Congratulations to Craig and Dennis for this accomplishment! The winner of the Water Contest was announced as the Village of Trenton, and a plaque was presented to Joe Cole, Utility Superintendent. Trenton will now provide a water sample for the National Best Tasting Water Contest on April 22<sup>nd</sup> to be held in Washington, DC. Congratulations to Trenton and best of luck in the National Contest!

During the conference, the New World Inn presented the NeRWA board of directors a proposal to keep the conference in Columbus for three more years. We have accepted their proposal and look forward to next year's conference, which will be held March 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of 2009. We hope that you will join us!

### Future NeRWA Training and Events

We have scheduled some one-day classes that are in addition those listed in the training coalition calendar you received at the beginning of 2008. For instance, we added eight "Rule Manager Workshops" to the training schedule. These workshops are designed to give operators an opportunity to learn more about

Lead and Copper, Public Notification and CCR's, Coliform, and Disinfection By-Products. A workshop has been scheduled for each Public Water Supply Field Area. The first of these was held in January at the NeRWA office in Wahoo. Afterwards, several operators expressed that the class was very worthwhile. I hope that you will be able to join us for the workshop in your area. A brochure will be sent out several weeks in advance of each class. Be sure to visit the NeRWA website for a complete listing of our classes and events.

Another training idea we are exploring is the possibility of conducting one-day computer based training sessions for operators. Computer based records and data are much easier to preserve and share with others, including rural water field staff, the health department, and the new generation of operators we are beginning to welcome to the industry as baby boomers retire. Many operators who plan to retire in the next few years possess a wealth of information that was gained through years of experience. I hope that you will take the time to make this information available for the next guy or gal, and make their job as operator a little easier, by creating a system of computer based records. As you can attest, they will have their hands full as new operators, and any advantage you can give them will benefit your entire community.

With the Spring Conference wrapped up, we now look ahead to the Fall Conference in Gering (September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>) and the Utility Expo in Fremont. I want to mention that the Expo has been moved to October 1<sup>st</sup> this year (instead of July). It will still be held in Fremont at Christensen Field. The reason for the move is simple; we are trying to escape the blistering summer heat. I hope that Mother Nature cooperates and grants us a beautiful fall day for some hands-on learning and live technology demonstrations at the Utility Expo. Keep watch in our next magazine for more complete details and agendas of these events.

Thanks for your time.

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