

# Ode to the Unknown Public Employee

By Mike Lucas, Wastewater Technician

One of the benefits of this job with the Nebraska Rural water Association is the opportunity to meet and get to know so many dedicated and talented public employees. These are men and women who take ownership and responsibility for each and every issue that the public may have. From the clerk to the lineman to the garbage collector, many are subject to being called 365 days a year and 24 hours a day, often without time and a half compensation or comparability in pay and seldom receiving any credit but frequently receiving more than their share of the blame.

Untold numbers of public employees have worked endless hours dealing with the recent snow, rain and flooding across the state of Nebraska unselfishly sacrificing sleep, meals and quality family time for the public good. They have done this even at their own personal risk and health. I have nothing but respect for each and every one of them. They are often rewarded with complaints, blame and the very real opportunity for a career change every election year through no fault of their own. And then the communities wonder why they can't keep help or recruit new young employees. Why would they?

These public employees are utilizing the equipment available to them, frequently minimal training and their best judgement to address each and every citizen's personal crisis. We owe them all a **"Heartfelt Thank You!"** Given the opportunity, I personally will go to bat for all of you.