

## EXERCISE! Who Needs It? by Pat Petersen, Training Specialist

As we grow older, we all have either heard or learned the “hard way” about the importance of exercise. A simple exercise plan can not only keep the aches and pains to a minimum but may benefit our bodies in a time of emergency. This is not only true for our bodies but for a water distribution system as well. What I am referring to is a “Valve Exercise Plan”.

During the past couple of months Source Water Specialist Mike Stanzel and myself have exercised over 150 valves with our hydraulic valve exerciser. If a system has newer valves, and an exercise plan, this may not seem like a lot. But considering that most distribution systems and valves are much older than the hands that turn the valve wrench, this machine can save you time and energy with the turn of an ignition key and the pressing of a start button on a keyboard.



When or if your community decides to have the NeRWA come and exercise your water valves we only ask a few things. First, do you know where all of the valves are? If you need help finding valves we (NeRWA) would be more than willing to help. When we get to your town we want to plan an efficient route to each valve so we can get as many done in

a single day as we can. Are the valve boxes clean? This is important whether you are going to exercise a valve or not. Several things can be used to clean a valve box. Vacuum trucks, certain digging tools, and even a hose hooked to a fire hydrant will work but the best tool I have seen to clean them out is a simple “Shop Vac” vacuum. I recently visited the Village of Hershey and I asked their Utilities Superintendent Ronnie how he kept the valve boxes so clean. He pointed to the shop vac in the back of his pickup. The beauty of this tool is the fact that it will remove the water too!

Spring and fall seem to be the best time for valve exercising. Water usage will be at a normal rate and will eliminate the possibility of disrupting service at peak times. If you or your community are interested in having the Nebraska Rural Water Association assist you with exercising your valves feel free to call the office or look for the sign-up sheet at the Annual and Western Conference.