

## Same Time, NEW PLACE!

By Pat Petersen, Training Specialist

The Nebraska Rural Water Association will host its Annual Conference March 16, 17 and 18, 2015. The conference will have a new look this year. The Younes Conference Center in Kearney, Nebraska will be the home of the conference for the next five years. The Heartland Events Center in Grand Island, Nebraska was home to the past three conferences and was a fantastic venue with a great support crew when it came to planning a conference. I must say, I learned an awful lot from their staff, especially Dianne Willey, on what it really takes to plan a conference of this size. With that, I say, "Thank You."

Many of the water operators throughout the state attend the NeRWA one day training sessions that we provide throughout the state. You all are asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the course so we can see what we need to improve on when holding these sessions. We also ask that operators complete an evaluation at the end of the annual conference. One observation by the operators that seemed to repeat itself on the evaluation form was the fact that there was no lodging real close to the events center. This observation made a big impact on where the conference would be held. The Younes Conference Center is directly connected to two motels, the Fairfield Inn and Suites and the Comfort Inn. Three other motels, The Wingate Inn, The Hampton Inn and the Holiday Inn, are located within walking distance and complete the *campus*. Upon arrival, operators, board members and anyone else who attends the conference may not have to move their vehicle until it is time to go home!

Traditions are traditions, so the Regulatory Update will once again kick off the conference on Monday afternoon. For the first time in many years, Jack Daniel will not give the update. Jack is enjoying retirement after 46 ½ years of service. Following the regulatory update will be an exclusive look at the Pilger, Nebraska tornado. This session will include a panel discussion with first responders and others who assisted with this emergency. At our final session on Monday, Bill Podraza will provide water operators with some tips on how to address your board or council in a professional way. Supper and possibly a "Vegas Night" will close out Monday evening's festivities.

Tuesday, March 17, will be a day filled with learning for water operators, wastewater operators, and well-drillers. Classes will begin at 9AM and conclude at 5:45PM. HD Supply Waterworks will sponsor a Social Hour for all of those in attendance. The annual banquet with awards will begin at 6:45PM and be followed by 2 hours of entertainment and fun. This year's entertainment will be provided by "176 Keys Fun Pianos". This should be an evening of food and fun, so please plan on attending. Remember, this entertainment will be provided within walking distance of the five motels that surround the conference center so come on over!

The Nebraska Rural Water Association will hold its annual board meeting during the operator breakfast on Wednesday morning from 7:30AM-8:30AM. Wednesday's training sessions will begin at 8:30AM and conclude at 2PM.

A total of 14 water operator CEU's have been applied for, along with 14 well-drillers' hours, 12.5 wastewater hours and 5 backflow hours. The Nebraska Rural Water Association looks forward to seeing all of you at our annual conference. We hope that you have the chance to learn and share with other operators at our 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference; "LEARNING AND SHARING: The Water Experience."