

Recertification Time

By Pat Petersen, Training and Technical Assistance

It's time to start thinking spring: mowing, painting, cleaning up the yard and a little thing we like to call the Nebraska Rural Water Association's Annual Conference! This year's conference is set for Monday, March 11 through Wednesday March 13, 2019, once again at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney, Nebraska. This year is a recertification year for all water operator license holders so plan on attending to get any needed hours.

On past evaluations I have heard that operators would like to see some new things. This year we hope to provide some new ideas and concepts in the water and wastewater field. With that being said, we will still have some of the traditional presentations such as DHHS Regulatory and agency update to kick the conference off. Other traditional presentations will be agency updates from the USDA/Rural Development and also NeWARN. These presentations always provide vital information and resource opportunities for communities and operators.

Round table discussions seem to be a good way to kick off the full day of classes on Tuesday. These open discussions can help with certain issues or questions you may have or lead you to the right vendor in the exhibit hall to help with any headaches you may incur in your water or wastewater system. Water tanks, meters, back-up generation and regulation changes with the Nebraska 811 are some of some the flavors you will see on Tuesday, but, let me tell you about some of the new things!

Cybersecurity has become an issue when it comes to water systems. We will have a cybersecurity attack that actually happened here in Nebraska on Tuesday morning. It really can and does happen anywhere! Health benefits, a social media crash course, ice pigging, and how to stay safe in certain environments are a few more topics operators can learn about.

One change we hope to have this year is an earlier start to the breakfast on Wednesday morning so more operators can attend the annual board meeting that follows. Classes will still be scheduled to start at 8:30 but should give operators a little more time to enjoy their breakfast. After the early start classes will conclude at 2PM. Lift station maintenance, infrastructure resiliency, flexible drop pipe for your well, and antennas on your water tower are just a few of the things you might want to listen in on. There will also be a quick session on board training to wrap up the conference.

So be sure to mark your calendars for March 11-13, 2019! If you need 2 credit hours or all 10 plan on attending the NeRWA Annual Conference. Remember, it is a recertification year.

Finally, it is always great to see the operators that we don't normally see on a regular basis! You are the people that make our jobs great! Did I forget to mention that it will also be a very fun time!! See you in Kearney!