

# Western Conference Time

BY Pat Petersen, Training Specialist

It's time to start thinking about heading west - heading west to Gering for the Nebraska Rural Water Association's Western Conference. The conference will be held September 16, 17, and 18 at the Gering Civic Center. The Western Conference will once again mix fun and relaxation with a chance to learn new things and gather much needed CEU's to renew your water operator licenses.

Tuesday's Pre-conference will be set to the tone of "Safety Issues in the Workplace." Safety topics to be covered will be "Work Zone Safety," "Extreme Weather Safety," "Personal Protective Equipment" and "Trench Safety Refresher." The presenter for these four sessions will be Bob Hessler with Safetyline Consultants. "Components of Electrical Safety" will conclude the Pre-conference. Rob Pierce with the League of Nebraska Municipalities will deliver this message. Following the Pre-Conference there will be a golf tournament at the Riverview Golf and Country Club. This is set to begin at 2:30 and conclude around 6 PM. If you are interested in golfing talk to Randy Hellbusch and he will get you signed up.

Wednesday morning should start with a "bang" and a "rumble". The bang will be the sound of the annual trap shoot to be held at the Mitchell Valley Trap Club. This is scheduled to begin between 8 and 8:30 AM and conclude around noon. Talk to Russ Topp if you would like to shoot. The rumble will be the sound of the annual poker run to leave the Gering Civic Center between 7:30 and 8 AM and conclude at noon. Talk to Doug Woodbeck if you would like to join the ride.

After all of the fun Wednesday morning, operators will have the opportunity to listen to the Administrator of the Drinking Water Program, Jack Daniel, give a regulatory update. Following Jack, there will be a brief roundtable in regards to the unforgiving weather the State of Nebraska has endured during the summer of 2014. As stated, this will be a **brief** (1 hour) session but will set the table for new and more in-depth training and preparation pertaining to weather disasters at the Annual Conference to be held in March. Bill Podraza will finish the day with an outstanding presentation on "How to Handle Stress in the Work Place." A social hour, banquet, and operator awards presentation will cap the busy day on Wednesday.

Of course, after the wonderful breakfast that is served at 6:30 AM, Thursday will be the meat and potatoes of the conference. Water, Backflow, Well Drillers, and Waste Water hours will be obtainable throughout the day. Hours will be based on the sessions you choose. Some of the sessions operators can attend will be: Tank Maintenance and Management, Small Systems Round Table, Nebraska 811, the Effects of the Lead-Free Rule, and, as always, the Backflow

Challenge. A full agenda will be posted on our [nerwa.org](http://nerwa.org) website soon. Sessions will conclude at 3:30 PM on Thursday.

If you have never attended the Western Conference and you have the resources to do so, please try to make it to Gering. It is a fantastic mix of fun and learning! See you out west!