

NeRWA' s New Training Specialist

By Pat Petersen, Training Specialist

Rules, Rules, Rules! Just when you think you have them all figured out they change again! So, I decided I wanted to help others follow the “rules” and joined the Nebraska Rural Water Association to help train water operators about the many rules we face in our profession. Not only will we learn about the rules, but several training classes throughout the year will focus on things such as emergency chlorination, proper sampling techniques, capacity development, emergency planning, and many more topics throughout the state of Nebraska.

Now that I have that out of the way, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Patrick Petersen and I have been named the Nebraska Rural Water Association's newest team member; The Training Specialist. I have been married to my beautiful wife, Nicole, for 15 years and we have two wonderful children. Ellie our daughter is 13 and Sam our son is 8. They both have amazing talents in the classroom, on the hardwood floor, the ball fields, and even marching down mainstreet playing a musical instrument. If you need to find the Petersens during the summer months you will usually find us at the ball park. I will be in the bleachers eating popcorn while my wife is coaching third base.

Before joining NeRWA, I worked for the city of Yutan for 21 years, the last 7 as the Utilities Superintendent. I am proud to say that during my years of service I accomplished many things for the city of Yutan and its citizens, but felt that the time was right for this next step in my life. During my career at Yutan there were many times I was in a pinch needing water lines located, leak detection done, and rate studies done to set our water rates and there was always one organization I could call on. That organization is the Nebraska Rural Water Association. After using the NeRWA on several occasions, it really hit me that I would love to become a part of this group. So, when opportunity knocked, I knew it was time to move on.

Throughout this first week on the job I have been made to feel right at home. Thank you to Barney for all of the hands-on help, Salli and Carol for all of your office help, Randy and Russ for lunch on Monday, Doug and Mike Lucas' friendly welcoming handshake, and Mike Stanzel's supportive e-mail when I was caught scratching my head wondering what I should do next. I also want to thank the Nebraska Rural Water Board for lunch and giving me the opportunity to introduce myself at the October Board meeting. A special thanks to Randy for his confidence in my ability which really meant a lot!

My first two classes that I was in charge of were in Axtell and North Platte. The topics discussed were chlorine residual testing, emergency response, sampling techniques, cross-connection programs, and budgeting. The classes were very well attended. Axtell had 26 participants and North Platte had 17. It is great to see this many operators, state field representatives, DHHS staff and NeRWA staff at these continuing education opportunities.

Finally, as I continue my new journey with the Nebraska Rural Water Association I look forward to meeting as many water operators as I possibly can. This may be a lofty goal but I really hope to achieve it through training courses, conferences, and visits to your systems to discuss any

water or training issues you may be having. Thanks again for all the warm welcomes and I hope to see you all soon!!