

# NeWARN Update

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

A meeting of the NeWARN steering committee was held on December 4, 2007, at the Nebraska State Office Building in North Platte. Following is an abbreviation of the minutes of that meeting. At the previous meeting in Kearney, it was decided that to geographically represent the state, an individual from each area of HHS field service would be appointed to serve on the steering committee. It was confirmed that all members previously nominated would be able and willing to serve. The steering committee members are as follows:

AWWA	Eric Melcher	City of Aurora
NeRWA	Randy Hellbusch	
WEF	Steve Crisler	City of Lincoln
LNM	Rob Pierce	
DHHS-PHS	Rich Koenig	
DEQ	Jackie Stumpff	
MAP	Harold Reynolds	
NEMA	Earl Imler	
Area 1	Ken Swanson	City of Auburn
Area 2	Larry Andreason	City of Fremont
Area 3	Dennis Watts	City of Norfolk
Area 4	Jim Green	Village of McCool Junction
Area 5	Robert Smith	City of Seward
Area 6	Bruce Long	Village of Ewing
Area 7	Mike Lucas	City of Broken Bow
Area 8	Steve Boeselager	City of Chadron

Steering Committee Leadership was elected as follows:

Chair Person: Steve Boeselager (Chadron)  
Vice Chair: Steve Crisler (Lincoln)  
Secretary: Rich Koenig (HHS)  
Treasurer: Rob Pierce (LoNM)

The next item of business was the task of developing a draft NeWARN mutual aid agreement that would be acceptable to all size water & wastewater systems statewide. A subcommittee was assigned the task of developing a draft agreement. Members of the sub-committee are as follows:

Chair Person: Lash Chaffin (LoMN)

Dennis Watts (Norfolk)  
Randy Hellbusch (NeRWA)  
Jim Green (McCool Junction)  
Eric Melcher (Aurora)

This committee was also given the responsibility of developing a Mission Statement. Rich Koenig, (HHS), Jackie Stumpff (DEQ), and Clancy Dempsey (NeRWA) were delegated the responsibility of developing a formal support document to show support from various organizations.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding current WARN websites being used by other states and the possible development of a NeWARN Website. Many ideas were discussed about the endless possibilities of what could be included on such a website that would be beneficial to water and wastewater systems. Some of the possibilities included system inventory, workforce, rate structure, chat room for questions & answers, etc. Lash Chaffin volunteered to research Website costs and possible funding sources.

All in attendance agreed that both long and short term funding sources would be needed. Rich Koenig will develop a draft letter requesting short term funding (mileage, meals, lodging etc.) for Steering Committee members. Lash Chaffin volunteered to research potential long term funding needs and possible sources. Chairman Steve Boeselager will be attending the Warn Chairs Forum Meeting in Denver, Colorado, January 17 and 18, 2008, if there are no conflicts in his schedule.

The next steering committee meeting will be held Tuesday, February 5, 2008, at the same location.

A statewide mutual aid agreement could prove to be very beneficial to all water and wastewater systems. Nebraska section AWWA is to be commended on their efforts to get this project off the ground here in our state. I am sure you will be hearing much more about NeWARN in the very near future. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact one of the Steering Committee members.