

NeWARN; Nebraska Water & Wastewater Agency Response Network

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

The Nebraska Rural Water Association is committed to helping all water and wastewater systems in any way we are able. There are, however, steps systems can take to help themselves. One of the best ways a system can help itself is to join NeWARN. NeWARN, for any of you who may have not yet heard, is a statewide network of utilities committed to assisting each other in times of need. It is a great tool to provide a method whereby water/wastewater utilities that have sustained damages from natural or manmade events could obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials and other associated services, as necessary, from other water/wastewater utilities. The objective is to provide rapid, short-term deployment of emergency services to restore the critical operations of the effected utility.

A pre-established agreement among a network of utilities can complement and enhance local capabilities to prepare for and respond to a broad range of threats, both natural and man-made. The establishment of an intrastate mutual aid and assistance network is a core principle of the National Preparedness Goal developed by the Department of Homeland Security.

Formalizing the existing capability to provide mutual aid and assistance provides the water/wastewater sector with a degree of resiliency against natural or manmade disasters to ensure continuity of services to our customers.

To date, approximately 200 systems have signed the formal agreement to join NeWARN. Is your system one of them? If not, I encourage you to get your board or council to approve and sign the agreement as soon as possible and get on board. The agreement can be found by clicking on the NeWARN logo at nerwa.org or give us a call at 1-800-842-8039 and we will send you one. **THERE IS NO COST OR OBLIGATION!** You can also log on to newarn.org or contact one of the following representatives:

Eric Melcher

NEWARN Contact

emelcher@cityofaurora.org

P: 402-631-9607

F: 402-694-4043

Dennis Watts

NEWARN Alternate Contact

dwatts@ci.norfolk.ne.us

P: 402-844-2210

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Sooner or later, we all need a little extra help from our neighbors. If you would like to have someone address your board or council about the benefits and merits of NeWARN, let us know.