

Vulnerability Assessments

By Scott Finke, Circuit Rider

Driving down the road gives a person time to think about what to write for their next magazine article. Going out to the west and northwest part of the state, it is amazing to see how beautiful Nebraska is from the farm ground to the sandhills. The trips become a great adventure when I am able to visit new operators and do Vulnerability Assessments.

These assessments are done to see the amount of security you have on your water or wastewater systems. A vulnerability assessment is the process of defining, identifying, classifying and prioritizing vulnerabilities in computer systems, applications and network infrastructures. Vulnerability assessments also provide the organization doing the assessment with the necessary knowledge, awareness, and risk backgrounds to understand and react to the threats to the environment.

A vulnerability assessment process is intended to identify threats and the risks they pose. They typically involve the use of automated testing tools, such as network security scanners, whose results are listed in a vulnerability assessment report. Organizations of any size, or even individuals who face an increased risk of cyberattacks, can benefit from some form of vulnerability assessment, but large cities and other types of organizations that are subject to ongoing attacks will benefit most from vulnerability analysis.

Because security vulnerabilities can enable hackers to access IT systems and applications, it is essential for villages and cities to identify and remediate weaknesses before they can be exploited. A comprehensive vulnerability assessment, along with a management program, can help villages and cities improve the security of their systems.

The assessments are due every three years, so if you have a USDA loan on your water or wastewater system you can do them yourself or I can come out to see you and do a vulnerability assessment on your system. As this article goes to print, I will probably be done this year with the assessments and will pick them back up next winter. Looking forward to seeing everybody at the spring conference. If you need anything please contact me at (402-607-2249) or call the NeRWA office and we will get you taken care of.