

Nebraska Good Water News

ISSUE 2/2024



Nebraska Rural Water Association

ALL CONFERENCE CERTIFICATES

After our annual and fall conferences, you or your system will be *emailed* your certificate (with hours) – *Certificates are not emailed until the conference is paid for.*

If you want your certificate emailed directly to your email instead of your system (or clerk's) email – you have to note that on your registration.

We have had many people with hour discrepancies after the final hours had already been sent to NDEE or DEQ.

(Below is the note that comes with the emailed certificates)

PLEASE NOTE: ALL EARNED HOURS ARE NOW LISTED ON YOUR CERTIFICATE, NOT JUST WHAT YOU ARE LICENSED FOR!

Attached is your certificate from the ANNUAL/FALL conference.

Please check the spelling and the hours *immediately*.

If you do not think the hours listed are correct, email or call our office *immediately* at 402-443-5216. It is *very important* to make any changes before the hours are submitted to the NDEE and DEQ.

Once they are submitted, we cannot guarantee that any changes will be made.

The list of hours will not be submitted to NDEE or DEQ until ***all payments*** have been received. Sometimes that can be 2-3 months.

Thank you- NeRWA



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Nebraska Good Water News

Issue 2/2024

“Keeping Our Water Safe”

Board of Directors

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“Nebraska Good Water News” is a quarterly publication of the NEBRASKA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION, 3390 Ponderosa, Wahoo, Nebraska 68066. Phone (402) 443-5216 or FAX (402) 443-5274. Copies are mailed to all member rural and municipal water operators, Federal and State Legislators, associates and individual members.

The NEBRASKA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION is dedicated to the improvement and assistance of all public water systems in the State of Nebraska.

NOTICE: Nebraska Rural Water Association does not endorse any particular product or company in this publication. Membership and advertising should not be taken as an endorsement.

On the cover:

Oakland, Nebraska, water tower. The water tower is 108 years old!

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2024 TRAINING CLASSES

Wastewater Training

May 22	Chadron
July 24	Kearney
August 21	Bridgeport
October 23	Aurora
November 20	Duncan
December 18	Wahoo

Backflow Training

WATCH OUR WEBSITE:
MORE CLASSES TO COME!



SIGN UP FOR CLASSES
VIA OUR WEBSITE:
www.nerwa.org

Water Operator Training

May 22	Macy
June 18	Sutton
July 10	Chadron
July 11	Valentine
August 14	Atkinson
October 16	McCook
November 20	Mullen
December 10	Loup City

Backflow Certification Training

WATCH OUR WEBSITE:
MORE CERTIFICATION
CLASSES TO COME!

Trench Safety Training

August 7 Wahoo

Confined Space Training
August 8 Wahoo

FALL CONFERENCE
Gering - Gering Convention Center
October 1-3, 2024

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CALENDAR NOTE

NeRWA 2024 Calendars are now available!



Calendars will be handed out at NeRWA training classes and our Annual Conference. If you would like to have one mailed to you, please contact the office at (402) 443-5216



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NeWRA 2024 Conference Evaluation

NeRWA Kearney Conference • March 11-13, 2024

1. Which best describes your position?

a. Operator/Manager	208
b. Administrative	2
c. Board Member	6
d. Plumber	0
e. Lawn Service	0
f. State/Federal Rep.	1
g. Clerk	0
h. Other	4

- Learning what other operators are dealing with in their community.
- Samantha & Amy.
- Greg Bouc & Pat Petersen.
- Being part of the NeRWA family for 3 days.
- Being refreshed.
- Fun activities.
- Prizes.

2. Why did you attend the NeRWA conference?

a. The training classes	32
b. The prizes/entertainment	1
c. The Vendors	7
d. Chance to meet with operators	11
e. All of the above	89

4. Things you would like to see changed.

- More Backflow hours.
- End Conference on Wednesday at 12.
- More classes that give you both WW & Water hours.
- Retirement speech.
- In-depth classes on plumbing, parts, how to do taps, hydrant rebuilds.
- Basic electric grid class.
- Add more info/classes that pertain to basic water samplers.
- ALL INSTRUCTORS WEAR MICROPHONES!
- Say Grace before meals.
- Would like to see more interactive training/classes.
- Class on emergency situations.
- Make some of the classes more hands on.
- 2 day Conference.
- Shorter classes.
- Closer to Omaha.
- Microphones to be worn and to be louder.
- I would make the 8 a.m. start time on Tuesday a permanent change.
- More Game Night.
- All classes give WW & W hours no matter the subject matter.
- Cheaper rooms.
- The Conference would last longer.
- More door prizes.
- More space in class or repeat of popular classes.
- No 401K talk.
- Lower the price.
- I came into the room a few minutes late and the scanner was shut off and no one was there to help. I stayed but I won't get credit for being there.
- Able to opt out of banquet meal to save the city money. For those that are from close by.
- Backflow hours on one day.
- A lot of classes crammed in.
- Retirement Plan class.
- Have each Vendor present for 10-15 about their product and services offered.
- More variety on training topics.

3. Favorite thing about the Conference and why?

- Q & A.
- Seeing NeRWA staff.
- Meet with other operators throughout the state.
- The people.
- Training classes.
- Vendor interaction - able to obtain more information.
- CEU's.
- Connection and interaction with Vendors.
- Meeting new people.
- Different classes they offer.
- The food.
- Education.
- Vendors.
- Hearing from other operators.
- Learning.
- Great presenters.
- Relevant speakers on current topics and concerns.
- Continuing Ed hours and visiting with NeRWA staff.
- Hopefully lunch.
- Location.
- Lots of choices of classes.
- Chance to get many hours at once.
- Feedback.
- Breaks between classes.
- Round Table.
- Get away from work.
- Style of classes.
- Not working.
- Networking.
- Seeing old friends.
- How well we are taken care of by staff.
- Backflow classes.

- Be on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
- More credit hours, less time.
- Put more Backflow hours with different classes.
- Condense it into a two-day Conference.
- More information for first-time attendees. How to pick classes and what I should expect.

5. Entertainment Ideas

- a. Band 22
- b. Game Night 43
- c. Comedian (Geechy Guy) 49
- d. Hypnotist 17
- e. Other 5
(Pitch Tourney, Fun Night, DJ, Nothing and Poker)

Additional Comments:

- Thanks for another great Conference.
- Keep up the good work.
- Add a survey question to the application about how many years of service NE operator has. NeRWA can show how many years of service is at the Conference.
- Great Conference as always. Thank you for your work.
- The NeRWA Annual Conference is well organized. and well attended. The facility is great, and the food and service is excellent.

- Greg Brekel got a 6 for knowledge and a 1 for presentation.
- I appreciate NeRWA holding this Conference. Very educational.
- Thanks, NeRWA for putting on a terrific Conference!
- Excellent Conference, speakers, vendors, stagg and accommodations! So appreciated.
- Great Conference.
- Great every year.
- Overall good. Do have a comedian.
- Great location.
- Greg Bouc was one of the best speakers I've heard in a long time!
- NeRWA does a great job.
- NeRWA does a wonderful job from top to bottom. I don't know what I would do without NeRWA in my everyday life.
- Great Conference.
- The ladies at the registration counter do an OUTSTANDING JOB!
- Keep up the great work.
- The food was unreal!
- Turn up the volume on presenter's mic's, us old dicks can't hear.
- Registration girls were very helpful.

Congratulations!

The NeRWA winners for the *Mike Lucas Memorial Scholarship* for the 2024-2025 school year are:

(1) Andrew Brinkmann – Ponca Public School

Andrew is the son of Steven Brinkmann, Utilities Supervisor from the city of Ponca.

(2) Corynn Corbin – Mullen Public Schools

Corynn is the daughter of Tony Corbin, Utility Superintendent from the village of Mullen.

Alternates:

(A) Mercedes Brooks – Boyd County High School

Mercedes is the daughter of Shanna Brooks, Clerk from the village of Butte.

(B) Haley Johnson – North Bend Central School

Haley is the daughter of Thomas Johnson, Utility Superintendent from the Village of Prague.



Pictured: Steve Brinkmann and Tony Corbin, fathers of the 2024 Mike Lucas Memorial Scholarship winners, with Marci, Mike Lucas's wife and Jo, Mikes sister.



WASTEWATER MIXING IN LAGOONS

By Buck Buckley, NeRWA Wastewater Technician

We travel the state working with wastewater operators of lagoons and a variety of treatment plants. The operators all have the same goal, to provide clean and safe discharges back into the environment. The discharges are done via our streams, rivers, land applications and through evaporation.

No matter how we treat our wastewater we are looking for the best end result. There are over 400 community lagoons in our state. Some lagoons are built for full retention while others are designed to discharge back into the environment.


Either way lagoons have a limited life expectancy. In time sludge builds up and they lose their capacity for treatment. Eventually they will need to be cleaned out and that's not cheap. So, we look at other ways to prolong the life of the lagoon. We can add a mechanical aeration, but that comes at a higher expense for electricity, maintenance, management and space. There are more greener ways to help your lagoons. The use of solar or wind powered circulators/mixers is an option that utilizes mother nature to be the driving power source. You can't get any greener than that. Circulators are placed in the lagoons at the most optimal location and tethered off by ropes or cables fixed to both banks. I have seen more wind powered circulators in Nebraska, I guess because wind is our greatest free resource. Nebraska's average wind speed is a little over 10 MPH, although it can get higher.

The circulators are capable of moving large amounts of water from the bottom of the lagoon to the surface. This exposes more of the water to natural aeration helping to increase the dissolved oxygen supply. The low turbulent mixing improves the biological process. They help with odor control by oxidizing the gases before they are released into the atmosphere. The circulators improve sludge digestion by drawing the oxygen rich water down to the sludge. This forces the anaerobic bacteria deeper into sludge to help stabilize the blanket. They assist in algae control by controlling the food source and creating a more uniform distribution. The circulators help prevent short circuiting and bulking by distributing the loads equally throughout the lagoon. They help keep the lagoons open for longer periods throughout the cold season. By keeping movement in the lagoon, it prevents stagnant water conditions and thick algae from limiting solar penetration. The surface renewal allows the gases like ammonia, nitrates and total nitrogen to escape into the atmosphere. The exposure to sunlight and oxygen helps to kill off all types of bacteria including the disease carrying bacteria. All of this helps you meet your discharging limits and adds to the life of the lagoon. This is done with minimal maintenance and cost to the community.

So, if you have a new lagoon or an older lagoon you may want to invest in some kind of circulator/mixer to get the most optimal treatment and extend the life of your lagoon.


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BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

By David Schroeter, Source Water Specialist

As we head into the Spring and Summer months, I would like to thank all those that came to our annual March conference in Kearney. Pat and the NeRWA Board and staff do an excellent job putting this event on. Hopefully we all came away with something we can use in our daily function as the local “town guy or gal”. Conferences and training opportunities are the best place to get candid help on that problem you’ve been having or answers to questions that have been bugging you for a while. The vendors in the exhibit hall, the speakers from the regulatory agencies, classroom presentations, round tables, and just breaking bread together at the dinner table are a great way to meet with others in your industry and ask questions as we all are working toward a common goal. So, I guess attending the Annual NeRWA conference in the spring at Kearney and possibly the Fall Conference at Gering can be considered a “Best Management Practice” for you and the way you operate your town. I have been attending since 2010 and always look forward to the next one.

Moving forward, I wanted to cover what are some examples of “Best Management Practices”, or BMP’s, in the drinking water world. BMP’s are methods or techniques found to be the most effective and practical means of achieving an objective such as preventing water quality impacts or reducing pesticide usage. When we talk about source water, we are referring to the water pumped up from the ground or captured from a flowing surface water source. Although we generally have a good supply or quantity, the quality unfortunately can sometimes be compromised by contaminants or unwanted components like Nitrates, Atrazine, or now Pfas. Once these contaminants show up in our test results it can be difficult to remove or lessen them so a plan to do certain things now may help to keep these items out of the water later. All municipal wells in the State of Nebraska fall within a Wellhead Protection Area determined by the state. A map has been drawn and a computer-generated time of travel threshold drawn showing location of the wells. These WHPA’s generally include surrounding farmland that can greatly influence the quality of our groundwater. What may seem like a small geographic

area can have a large impact on the water we pump out of the ground, therefore it is imperative to protect and preserve it. It has to be a cooperative effort between the landowners and municipal officials in order for the benefits to be realized.

Examples of some of the Best Management Practices may include: cover crops, filter strips, buffer zones, and grassed waterways to reduce runoff that minimizes sediment and pesticide transport. Other techniques include nutrient management, such as application rates and timing;

“...we all know most contaminants are caused by human activity and the things we do and the things we don’t do directly affect the water we drink.”

crop rotation to break pest cycles resulting in reducing pesticide use; irrigation water management to reduce runoff that minimizes pesticide transport; proper well decommissioning; and

managing livestock waste. In-town practices may include removing old underground and above ground storage tanks, properly abandoning old septic tanks, decommissioning old wells, and maintaining chemical storage facilities such as around a local ag cooperative.

We know there are five ways to prevent nitrates from entering Nebraska’s groundwater. They are to avoid over watering, avoid over fertilizing, use cover crops, decommission old wells, and maintain septic systems. By now we all know most contaminants are caused by human activity and the things we do and the things we don’t do directly affect the water we drink. Hopefully we can all do our part to balance things out so our farmer friends can still make a profit and we get the benefit of good, clean, safe drinking water.

If you have participated in the State Drinking Water PFAS Testing program and have not received your results, contact:

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WHAT A GREAT THREE DAYS

By Pat Petersen, Training and Technical Assistance Specialist

Have you ever had one of those days where you want to sit down, put your feet up and just smile? That is exactly what I did on March 13, at 6 p.m. when I walked into my home after three days of a great Nebraska Rural Water Association Conference. This was a good one! New faces, experienced faces, and most importantly, faces of the men and women who operate the water a wastewater systems in the great State of Nebraska. I consider these operators the “glue” that keeps many communities not only going, but thriving as well! I could just feel it in the air, it was going to be a great three days.

Monday morning March 11, the day after losing an hour of sleep due to “springing ahead” came very fast. Our most important task is to get the exhibit hall ready for all of the wonderful vendors. This year we were expecting 58 and I

think we may had added a few more before the end of the week. Roses For You is our pipe and drape company that puts that all together. Andy and his crew are amazing and slap that hall together in no time. Thank you to Roses for You for doing such a great job!

Exhibitors were ready to set up at 10 a.m. and were ready to go before the first session began at 1 p.m. The exhibitors do a great job engaging with the operators throughout the three days. Your support of the Nebraska Rural Water Association is greatly appreciated! I always try my hardest to speak with every vendor as the conference goes on. If I missed anyone this year, I apologize and will be sure to welcome you and thank you at next year’s conference.

After a beautiful Star-Spangled Banner, sung by Kylie Wagner, we were ready to get things started. Our board President Tom Goulette welcomed a full house to the conference and was followed by NDEE Drinking Water Administrator Laura Johnson, who gave the operators a much-needed update on what’s to come. Fred Schellpepper with Sundance Investments presented some ways communities can entice new operators to stick around with some great benefit packages. Kelley Messenger with the USDA/RD gave a quick update on their programs and Katie Pekarek with UNL finished the day with a wonderful presentation about the everlasting problem of nitrates in Nebraska’s drinking water.

Monday evening is always a fun time for the operators. After a great supper, operators converge on the Big Apple Bowling Center for an evening of fun. This “Fun Night” has been a great addition to the conference. Thanks to the sponsors, Miller and Associates, JEO, HOA, Sargent Drilling, and Nebraska Rural Water, this tradition will continue as far as we can see into the future!

Tuesday started an hour earlier this year and I think it worked out great. This was a suggestion from last year’s evaluations, to start earlier on Tuesday. By starting earlier, we were able to end a little sooner so we could begin to celebrate the operators at the banquet. Before the banquet, operators had a chance to enhance their knowledge all day long. Water Tank



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Maintenance, New Control Technology, Cybersecurity, Hydrants, and the complexity of operating an actual Rural Water System were just a few of the several presentations throughout the day. A quick social hour sponsored by Core and Main followed a very busy day of learning.

At the Tuesday lunch we had a very special guest speak to our operators. John O'Connell, the National Rural Water Associations President took the stage and explained how the leaders at the National office keep all of us going. We were so honored to have John with us. He resides in New York and took three days out of his busy work schedule to hang with us! Thank you, John!

The awards banquet is a great place to unwind and celebrate all of those who continue to thrive in the water world. This year the NDEE gave its Operator of the Year Award to Billy Zoucha from the Village of Monroe. Congrats Billy! Nebraska Rural Water also gives an award to an operator that is "doing it right", The Russ Topp Award. This year, James Dresch from the Village of Primrose was the recipient. James works his tail off for the Village for a very small price. Great Job James!

Every year at the conference there is a contest held to see who has the best tasting water in Nebraska. This year's winner was one that has been in this position before. After the dust settled, the City of Loup City came out on top and their water will be entered in the Great American Water Taste Test in Washington D.C. in February. Congratulations to the City of Loup City and Water Operator Kevin Holcomb.

After the wonderful meal and awards we tried something a little different this year. Cornhole boards, decks of cards, an awesome video and music selection (Put together by our Source Water Specialist, Dave Schroeter) and an open bar kept the operators busy for the next two and a half hours. Lots of laughs, smiles, competitive card games, and cornhole smack talk took over the ballroom. Prizes donated by Johnson Service, Barco, and Core and Main; along with five \$100 prizes from the Nebraska Rural Water Association kept the place full and "hoppin"! It was a great evening. We hope to follow this format for next year's conference as well! A huge thank you goes out to Ross Blackledge, the water operator for the Village of Denton. He graciously volunteered the village's cornhole boards for the fun event. Thank you, Ross and Village of Denton.

Wednesday started with the operator breakfast and annual meeting. Ken Bloomquist with the Wau-Col Water Project was chosen to fill the vacant spot on the operating board. Welcome aboard Ken!

Following the board meeting, classes resumed as usual. Four hours of continuing education were available for operators. At lunch we raffled off all of the fantastic gifts given by the Nebraska Rural Water Association. Thank you for all of your support by purchasing tickets.

To all the vendors, exhibitors, presenters that spent those three days with us and most importantly the operators, on behalf of the Nebraska Rural Water Association, we thank you! Without you these conferences would not shine like they do.



A huge thank you to the Nebraska Rural Water Association Operating Board for giving us the tools it takes to put together a conference like this. Your trust in all of us is greatly appreciated and you should always know you can count on us for whatever you may need.

Finally, to our team at the Nebraska Rural Water Association. Amy and Samantha, thank you for being that "foot to the rear" when it gets close to crunch time. Your hard work you do behind the scenes makes my job

much less stressful, Thanks! Randy, Mike, Buck, Dave, Scott, Adam, Todd and Herb, thank you for all the things you do! Whether it be carrying everything into the conference center, scanning in operators, running the best tasting water contest, putting together videos, gathering up cornhole boards or pulling the trailer to and from the conference, it does not go unnoticed, thank you!

This year's conference was a little quieter in the classroom. I mean that in a sad way. The NDEE lost a great field rep and Nebraska Rural Water and operators lost an amazing teacher with the passing of Rich Koenig. All of the other field reps stepped in to cover several of the backflow presentations, also thanks to Herb Scott, NeRWA, and Doug Passmore for giving backflow presentations.

It was a great conference! I hope next year's is even better! Oh, and like March 13th, when I arrived home, sat down and just smiled, it's now April 7 and yes, I'm still smiling! Have a great summer!



LEAK DETECTION AND LEAK LOCATING WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider

These past few months I have been busy with requests for leak detection and leak locating. So it only seems appropriate to write about the difference and the importance of the two.

First of all let's see if I can explain the difference. Generally, what we describe as "Leak Locating" is when I get called to help pinpoint a leak that has found its way to the surface and is either coming up in an area that is not coinciding with the water main or the crew has dug up the area where water was bubbling up and found that the water is coming from elsewhere. In situations like these we usually can use our correlator to pinpoint the leak. Although our equipment is new and modern our success rate of pinpointing the exact location is about 90%. Nothing is fool proof, but I can generally get you within a couple feet of the leak and there have been several times I have located within a couple inches. The main benefit of this is you can save a lot of time and money not having to rip out excess concrete, driveways, sidewalks, etc. The exception to this rule is if you have plastic mains, chances are we won't be able to locate the leak as plastic water mains will not carry sound.

Leak detection is performed when an operator will call us when there is unexplained water loss. For systems with water meters the monthly billing should be compared to the amount the wells pumped and if it is more than a 15% loss chances are good you have a waterline leaking somewhere. It's the same scenario if you don't have meters. If the well is pumping more and more compared to weeks, and months and even years past, chances are good there is a leak.

I have heard countless times from operators "We don't have a leak; it would be bubbling up if we did." This is the BIGGEST misconception I face. I have found numerous

leaks that have not surfaced even a drop of water, and you should see the look on the operators face when I tell them there is a leak.

So where's the water going? This is always their next question. On several leaks we found there were vacant lots where the house had been torn down years before. At the time the house was demolished the water had been disconnected at the curb stop and the old galvanized line to the main is still live. In the old days, water and sewer were generally laid in the same trench and the old clay or Orangeburg sewer pipe had deteriorated enough to let the seeping water in and flow right down the drain. In other cases, we have found several fire hydrants that will be spraying water out the weep holes, due to a faulty valve seat. This can occur in very old hydrants as well as new hydrants.

In Closing, if you think you might have a leak or you would like your town of village surveyed, please give me a call. You might be surprised what we may find.

NOTE:
The office and field staff will be at In-Service Training out-of-state from Monday, June 3rd - Friday, June 7th.

NeRWA Fall Conference
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October 1-3, 2024

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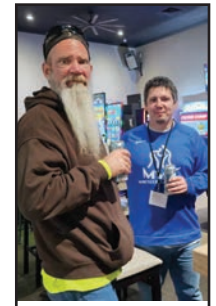
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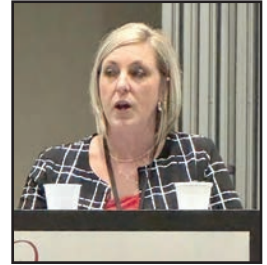


NeRWA would like to say **THANK YOU** to Ross Blackledge for donating his cornhole games for our banquet!



Annual Conference 2024

MORE PHOTOS
ON PAGE 15





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Nebraska Rural Water Association Annual Conference 2024

Cont'd From Page 13





PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

By Todd Flinn, EPA Wastewater Specialist

Preventative maintenance is one of the most common things forgotten in a city or any kind of maintenance job in America. People get busy doing other tasks at their jobs, and they forget to do those daily or yearly preventative maintenance projects. It is common for multiple interruptions or other needs to come up everyday, so it is understandable that routine or preventive maintenance list items get overlooked.

However, forgetting to do those preventative maintenance tasks could cost thousands of dollars and result in hours of down time. There are so many things that happen that could have been prevented by just doing those daily or yearly checks. An example, which might put a perspective on



What is Preventative Maintenance? Meaning, Examples, Advantages

Preventative maintenance (PM) is a proactive maintenance strategy for optimal equipment health & uptime, ensuring maintenance is scheduled before failures.

things, involves a town sewer system. A town has not done maintenance or updates with its sewer system for years, and all of a sudden, the manhole in the middle of Main Street collapses. Having someone come in once a year to inspect the sewer system and flush it out could have prevented the manhole from collapsing. If that maintenance step had been taken, it would have been known that the manhole was weak and falling apart. The repair would have been a minimal expense in comparison to having to spend thousands of dollars for a much bigger repair project. In addition, the repair caused down time on the street to fix the problems, which may lead to frustrated patrons. Another example that I can think of is not exercising valves yearly on a city water system. Consider this...there is a water main break downstream near a subdivision. When the city maintenance worker goes to shut the main off, and the valve is locked up. This leads to another issue—the main cannot be shut off. This results in thousands of gallons going into a residential area with no way to stop it. Nebraska Rural Water Association is set up with a trailer that can be taken to any Nebraska town, city, or village and assist in exercising valves and figuring out what valves may need to be replaced before a situation like this occurs.

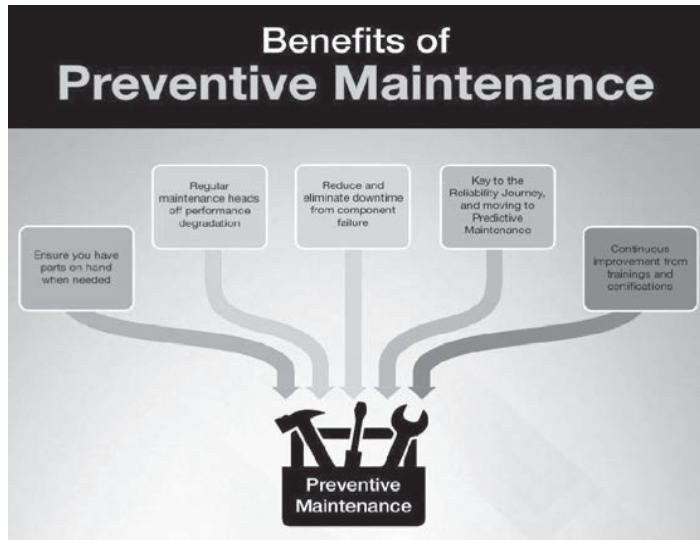
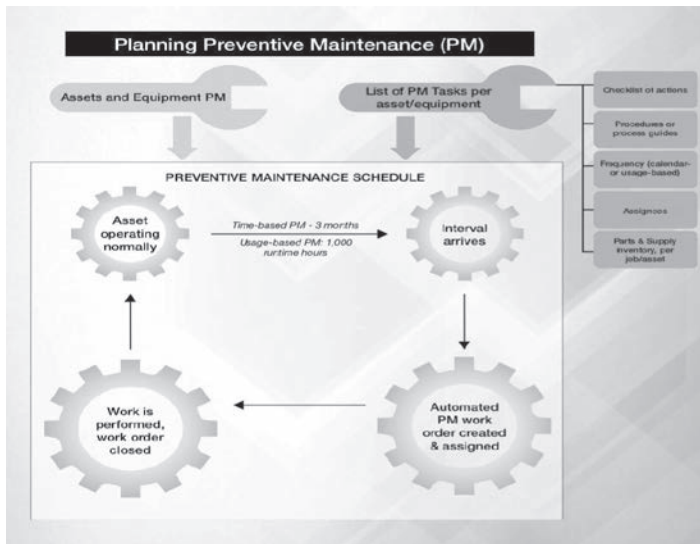
I was recently talking with a firefighter who told me that they had a few fire hydrants in town that do not work properly or

REACTIVE MAINTENANCE	PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE	PREDICTIVE MAINTENANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Downtime has already occurred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Before equipment failure has occurred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintenance performed at the right time, not before/after.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Less planning, less manpower; more resources, more downtime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Planning works best combined with a CMMS solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fewer spare parts used, as they're only replaced when needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Not for production-critical assets/equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elongate asset lifespan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Doesn't tie maintenance to calendar or usage, but wear and tear.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High impact of downtime on profit margin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased productivity, production, & profits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prepares maintenance for IIoT / Industry 4.0 technology.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Less safe for workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Much safer for workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Turns maintenance into a business value driver.

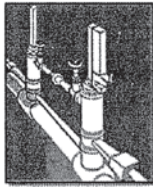
not turn on efficiently. Exercising fire hydrants on a regular basis to flush lines is also important as well as making sure that the fire hydrants are working properly. In the case of a fire, it would be devastating if a fire truck needed water, and they spent extra time hooking up to a fire hydrant that is not working properly to extinguish the fire.

I would recommend scheduling yearly, monthly, weekly, or daily maintenance sheets to help keep those maintenance tasks in mind and complete them on a regular basis. This could be a simple clipboard with a few sheets of paper with preventive maintenance timelines to help track and ensure their completion.

The Nebraska Rural Water Association is here to assist you with these projects. If there are any needs regarding water or sewer including daily, weekly, monthly and/or yearly maintenance, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of us. We would be happy to get a plan together to come help and prevent these problems and keep those necessary maintenance needs handled. We are here to help!



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 GRANT, NEBRASKA 69140-0614


March 12, 2024


Nebraska Rural Water Association
 3390 Ponderosa Drive
 Wahoo, NE 68066

Dear NeRWA,

On behalf of the City of Grant I would like to thank Randy Hellbusch for his help with our water rate study. The work that Nebraska Rural Water Association does, in particular Randy, is invaluable and this donation is just a small token of our appreciation. We always look forward to working with all of the staff at Nebraska Rural Water and thank all parties involved for their continued support.

Please accept the enclosed \$1,000.00 donation.

Sincerely,

 Edward Dunn
 City Superintendent
 City of Grant
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 grantmgr@grantnebraska.com

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February 14, 2024

Nebraska Rural Water Association
 3390 Ponderosa Dr.
 Wahoo, NE 68066

Dear NRWA:

The City Council and employees thank you for your assistance and consulting on our water and sewer systems during 2024, especially the help received on water line leak pinpointing. Please accept the enclosed \$350 donation in appreciation of the help provided to the City of Osceola.

Your support, knowledge, and advice are invaluable to us!

Sincerely,

 Jay Colson
 Utility/Street Superintendent

Dustin Augustin
 Council President

Renee Johansen
 City Clerk/ Treasurer

Donald Graff
 Mayor

Craig Johnson
 Charles Hays
 Jerry Miller
 Council Members

I am truly honored to have received the Russ Toyp award at the Ne RWA conference in Kearney. I have great memories of Russ and I will cherish the "do it right, or don't do it at all" award. I was totally surprised and I will see you next year!

To Randy and NeRWA

Thank you very much.

Jim Duesel

Thank You

"It is NOT about the compensation - it's about helping people in need... and simply doing the right thing!" Jim Duesel

1-17-24
 Adam Gorman, Mike Stanzel + Charles Buckley

On behalf of the Village of Jansen, I would like to express my gratitude for all the assistance we received in our effort to regain compliance for water and wastewater reporting.

I am also grateful for the continued support from these folks at Newia!

Sincerely,
 Carol Ellis, Chairman

THANK YOU

On behalf of the Mike Lucas family I would like to thank the Board of directors for Nebraska Rural Water for honoring Mike in such a perfect way by offering scholarships in honor of Mike! He would have been so proud since that was his heart! His passion as well! Also, thank you for the hospitality! The meals, the overnight stay and being so welcoming and kind!

I thank you for honoring Mike with a scholarship in his name from Rural Water. He so enjoyed working for your organization and believed in it strongly. He would say these young recipients are the future. I had such a nice time in Kearney and enjoyed visiting with each of you - and catching up. Thank you for your hospitality, the meals and the overnight stay.

Warmly,
 Marcy Lucas



DON'T FORGET ABOUT WHAT LIES BENEATH

By Adam German, NeRWA Wastewater Technician

Winter is over. Put your snowplows and snow shovels away. Spring is officially here. That means you all get a nice break right? Unfortunately, we all know that's not the case. It's go-time. The ball parks are getting busy. Coaches and board members want the water turned on and the toilets flushing. But you know Nebraska weather, it could still freeze, leaving you with broken pipes to fix. The grass is growing, the mowers need blades sharpened and oil changed. The weeds are popping up, it's time to get the sprayer ready and stock up on roundup and 2,4-D. It won't be long and people will be swatting mosquitos. That means it's also time to get the mosquito sprayer fired up and calibrated. Grass will need to be planted and fertilized. Thunderstorms, hail, and tornados will undoubtedly harass some of you in the upcoming days, weeks, or months. The generators are going to need a good inspection.

Wells need tested, the tower needs overflowed, and the hydrants need flushed. Dealing with all the little gifts spring gives you, it gets really easy to forget about your sewer system. That could be a huge mistake.

Your lagoon won't let you forget about it this time of year. It will be in the process of turning over. That can cause a bit of a stink. The nasty stuff that's been sitting on the bottom will make its way up to the top and rear its ugly head bringing an odor with it that would make your grandfather blush. You can be somewhat proactive to keep the odor on the downlow throughout the year by keeping weeds and trees down to allow the wind to work its magic. If Karen starts complaining about the smell and you need to correct the problem in a short time you can treat the lagoon water with a couple pounds of ammonium or sodium nitrate per day until the stink disappears.

During the winter months water usage is usually at its minimum. The low flow appliances are good at conserving water but that leaves your sewer mains without that extra push to keep things moving the direction they need to go. You may have a monster hiding underneath your streets just

waiting to dam things up and create a back-up into some poor customers basement. That call will undoubtedly hit your phone at 4:30 Friday afternoon just as you popped the top to your favorite beverage. It is becoming more and more important to start a sewer maintenance program. Especially out there in the "insurance" world. Inspect your sewer mains in your town. Convince your board to hold off on purchasing those new obstacles for dogs to pee on in the dog park and invest in having at least 1/3 of your town televised annually. The NeRWA does offer sewer camera work but does not have the equipment or the manpower to complete your entire system. However, if you have a trouble spot or two that you are concerned about feel free to give us a call. We will gladly come out and take a look.



Not everyone has the luxury of having their own sewer jetter but

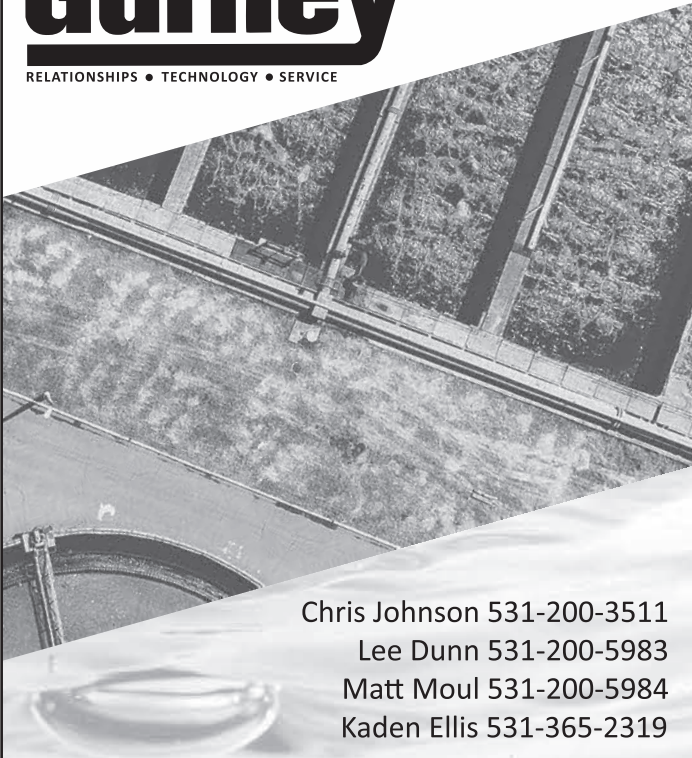
sewer jetting is another important part of maintaining your sewer mains and preventing any problems that may be in their beginning stages. Having a company that can come in and not only televise, but do a little jetting while there can save all kinds of headaches. Nobody likes a sewer back-up. Not the homeowner and certainly not the operator.

Throw some degreaser down those fun-loving lift stations. Clean the floats. Get it good and greased. Check the pumps. You know the drill. While you are conducting a sewer maintenance program be certain to record what you observed. Write it down. Even if it is something as simple as removing a manhole cover and just taking a peek down below. Having proof that you were vigilant keeping your system maintained will help you out tremendously if a disaster happens and those attorney's start chatting with each other.

What a great conference! That was a lot of fun. Pat knocked it out of the park again. I would like to thank everyone involved for the special "gift" I received. I look forward to seeing you and thanking you in person soon. Stay safe out there.

Gurney

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Word Search and Word Scramble

PROPERTIES OF WATER

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.



- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|
| ACIDITY | DENSITY | MELTING | SPECIFIC HEAT |
| ADHESION | EVAPORATION | ODORLESS | SUBLIMATION |
| BOILING POINT | FREEZING POINT | OXYGEN | SURFACE TENSION |
| BUOYANCY | HEXAGONAL | POLARITY | SUSPENSION |
| CAPILLARY ACTION | HYDROGEN | SALINITY | TASTELESS |
| COHESION | LATENT HEAT | SOLUTE | TRANSPARENT |
| COLLOID | LAYERING | SOLUTION | |
| CONDENSATION | LIQUID | SOLVENT | |

Rural Water Supply Operation

1. RALUR _____
2. ERWAT _____
3. PYPLSU _____
4. OAIRTPENO _____
5. OALNUD _____
6. DOSHMET _____
7. REAYL GNUIMP _____
8. ETAWR HUTSETL _____
9. UMSPP _____
10. BLPUIC _____
11. CESNE _____
12. REIF _____
13. LFLI SITE _____
14. RRTSTPANO _____
15. EVUMLO _____

ANSWERS TO BOTH PUZZLES ON PAGE 22

FALL CONFERENCE TIME

It is time to be thinking about heading west to Gering for the NeRWA's Fall Conference! The conference will be held October 1-3, 2024 at the Gering Civic Center. It will once again be a mix of fun and relaxation with a chance to learn new things and gather much needed CEUs to renew your operator licenses.

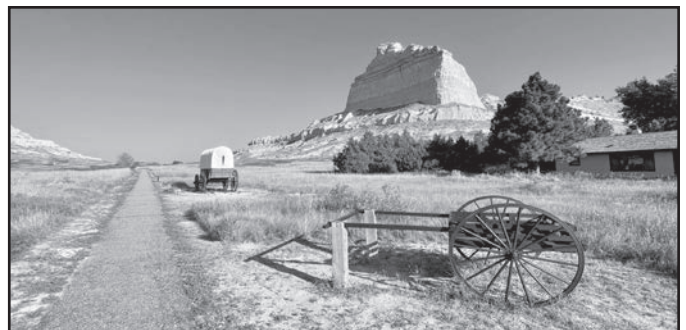
There will be a preconference on Tuesday. Following the preconference is a golf tournament at the Riverview Golf and Country Club. This is set to begin at 2:30 and conclude around 6:00. This year the regular sessions will start on Wednesday morning. A social hour, banquet and operator award presentation will complete Wednesday's events.

Thursday will consist of morning sessions and conclude at noon.

More detailed information will be in the next issue of the magazine and also in a special conference emailing. Please get your email addresses to us by emailing amy@nerwa.org, if you have not

been receiving our emails.

If you have never attended the fall conference and you have the resources to do, please try to make it to Gering. We hope to see you out west!





WAGE SURVEY

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

NeRWA inserted a wage survey in the registration packets at our recent annual conferences in Gering and in Kearney. We strive to keep the data as anonymous as possible. The following is a breakdown of the results according to water system population. We will do the same procedure at our

western conference in Gering this fall and combine the results to get a better geographic picture of the entire State. Our last survey was conducted in 2022 and it is good to see that wages in the water/wastewater industry have risen slightly since then.

0-200 population average has gone from \$18.44/hr. to \$20.30/hr.
 200-400 population average has gone from \$20.42/hr. to \$24.69/hr.
 400-600 population average has gone from \$21.48/hr. to \$26.49/hr.
 600-800 population average has gone from \$20.74/hr. to \$25.77/hr.
 800-1000 population average has gone from \$20.65/hr. to \$28.06/hr.
 1000-2000 population average has gone from \$20.25/hr. to \$26.93/hr.
 2000+ population average has gone from \$25.64/hr. to \$31.77/hr.
 The following are the results showing age, yrs. of service and wages.

Wage Survey 800-1000 pop.

8 surveys

	age	Yrs. svc	Hrly wage	No			
				Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3
				0	8	6	2
High	67	37	\$33.50				
Low	27	1	\$22.25				
AVE	50	19	\$28.06				

Wage Survey 0-200 pop.

20 surveys (7 part time, 13 fulltime)

	age	Yrs. svc	Hrly wage	No				
				Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2
				14	6	17	3	0
High	73	49	\$30.50					
Low	33	1	\$9.00					
AVE	58	17	\$20.30					

Wage Survey 1000-2000 pop.

19 surveys

	age	Yrs. svc	Hrly wage	No				
				Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2
				0	19	13	5	1
High	68	39	\$35.50					
Low	38	1	\$22.00					
AVE	54	12.5	\$26.93					

Wage Survey 200-400 pop.

33 surveys (2 part time, 31 fulltime)

	age	Yrs. svc	Hrly wage	No				
				Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2
				14	19	28	4	1
High	67	40	\$32.50					
Low	28	1	\$6.25					
AVE	54.8	10	\$24.69					

Wage Survey 2000+ pop.

23 surveys

	age	Yrs. svc	Hrly wage	No				
				Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2
				0	22	10	8	5
High	65	45	\$40.50					
Low	31	2	\$20.00					
AVE	49	17	\$31.77					

Wage Survey 400-600 pop.

17 surveys

	age	Yrs. svc	Hrly wage	No				
				Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2
				4	13	14	1	2
High	66	27	\$33.52					
Low	31	2	\$18.08					
AVE	53	17	\$26.49					

Wage Survey 600-800 pop.

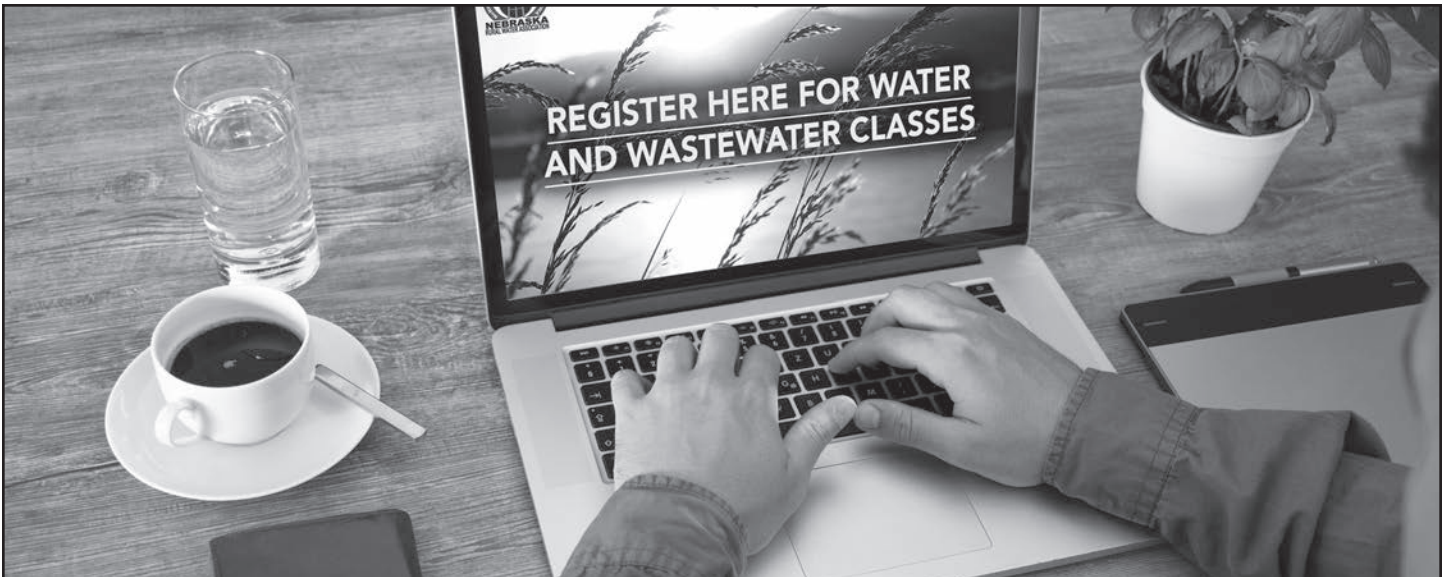
10 surveys

	age	Yrs. svc	Hrly wage	No			
				Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3
				14	6	17	3
High	60	35	\$31.00				
Low	31	3	\$21.15				
AVE	49	14	\$25.77				

Word Search and Word Scramble answers

Q	N	S	P	D	G	G	I	L	N	C	R	J	Z	N	J	F	P	T	M	D	R	
A	O	B	Y	C	R	S	J	V	J	X	R	K	T	X	O	N	C	X	U	N	T	
O	G	K	E	B	X	S	T	R	S	E	I	J	Y	I	K	Y	B	E	U	N		
Q	S	O	E	A	X	F	E	H	G	Z	E	K	O	T	F	M	P	O	G	O	Z	
T	N	E	R	A	P	S	N	A	R	T	Z	H	A	N	A	S	E	H	O	B		
R	E	H	J	C	I	P	V	W	T	G	P	P	B	X	D	F	L	R	L	O		
M	T	E	S	D	E	Q	Y	R	H	N	L	F	N	Z	N	F	D	X	S			
V	E	A	Q	D	T	L	Z	O	C	K	G	P	D	E	X	V	X	N	J	S		
J	C	E	G	B	N	T	O	M	A	G	P	R	L	W	D	E	D	H	H	G	E	
P	A	H	D	D	W	H	E	X	A	G	N	A	L	N	S	E	E	P	U	S	L	
A	F	T	N	E	V	L	O	S	B	H	R	F	O	X	X	D	O	Z	E	E		
D	R	N	H	X	D	N	E	D	O	N	D	Y	S	C	M	S	I	C	V	T		
H	U	E	N	T	B	E	S	U	P	O	T	S	A	N	M	K	I	R	N	W	A	S
E	S	T	B	D	C	R	V	L	W	A	C	I	D	I	T	Y	T	I	P	A		
S	U	A	U	B	P	O	T	O	L	G	A	T	U	G	D	Y	G	W	G	O	T	
Z	L	O	J	G	S	B	I	O	S	S	I	N	T	U	B	G	S	R	Y			
O	M	F	Y	I	E	L	N	P	J	C	D	D	O	J	A	Z	A	G	B	M	A	X
M	E	O	A	H	O	D	C	X	H	B	I	N	R	M	X	W	A	P	G	T	K	
U	L	T	N	S	K	Q	V	S	E	C	I	F	I	C	H	E	A	T	D	G		
Y	D	C	P	H	R	G	F	R	S	Q	V	Y	C	Y	T	I	N	A	L	O	P	
H	C	Y	K	A	K	O	S	O	L	N	T	E	C	O	H	E	S	O	N	Y		
D	N	S	A	L	I	N	I	T	Y	S	F	S	Z	H	W	N	Y	P	L	N	B	V
O	G	S	U	B	L	I	M	A	T	I	O	N	W	P	D	Z	B	P	J	F	S	G

- Rural
- Water
- Supply
- Operation
- Unload
- Methods
- Relay Pumping
- Water Shuttle
- Pumps
- Public
- Scene
- Fire
- Fill Site
- Transport
- Volume



GUIDELINES FOR CONTINUING ED HOURS

This article addresses training for water and wastewater classes and both conferences.

All water and backflow licenses need to be renewed by December 31. A wastewater license is renewed 2 years after the date your license was issued. **NeRWA offers water and wastewater classes at no charge.**

The hours required for renewal for each license are listed below:

1. Water – 2-year renewal period requiring 10 continuing ed hours. The end of the renewal period is always December 31 of odd numbered years. An easy tip is to get 5 hours per year. Start early in the year to get your hours. **THE LAST 3 MONTHS OF THE RENEWAL YEAR GET VERY BUSY.** Register early! We have people trying to register for classes in October thru December close to the date of the class. November and December classes are usually full 2 to 3 months before the classes.
2. Wastewater – A 2-year renewal period with 20 continuing ed hours.
3. Backflow (Grade 6) – 2-year renewal period requiring 10 continuing ed hours. The end of the renewal period is always December 31 of odd numbered years. An easy tip is to get 5 hours per year. Backflow hours can be obtained at our annual conference in March and the fall conference in Gering. They both offer at least 5 backflow hours.

When you attend any class, you get a certificate. Keep that certificate in a place where you can easily find it. Sometimes you will have to send a certificate to the state department as proof of attendance. If you lose the first certificate, you can request a second one. After that, each certificate will cost \$20.

Flyers for all training classes (unless they are full way in advance) are emailed to all our members. The classes are listed in our quarterly magazine which is also mailed to our members. This calendar is available on our website also. A tip for all operators – bookmark our website or save it in your favorites. This way you can keep updated on class dates, addresses, and the agenda. Agendas are posted about a month before the class. Cancellations, and if a class is full, will also be noted there.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PAY ONLINE (backflow classes)

Click the Pay Here link. Then click the Send link. At this screen, enter amount and what the payment is for. Follow instructions for payment or call the office for assistance.

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ATTENTION...

We are running low on pictures of water towers. Send us your tower!!!

We are putting the water towers of Nebraska on our cover and are featuring a different tower on each issue.

We have only used up a fraction of the towers in the state.

Let us add your name to our list. Either send a photo to our office or email a picture to amy@nerwa.org.



Nebraska Good Water News

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Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa Street
Wahoo, NE 68066

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