

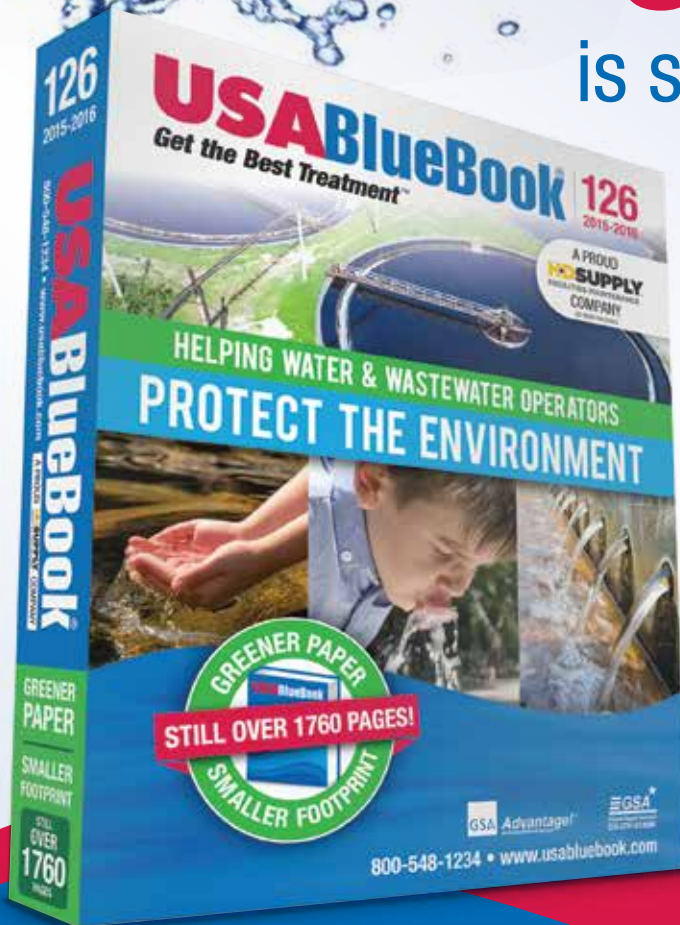
Issue 2/2015

Nebraska Rural Water Association



NEBRASKA GOOD WATER NEWS

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Nebraska Good Water News

Issue 2/2015

“Keeping Our Water Safe”

Board of Directors

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On the cover:

Pawnee City Water Tower.

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“Nebraska Good Water News” is a quarterly publication of the NEBRASKA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION, 3390 Ponderosa, Wahoo, Nebraska 68066. Phone 1-800-842-8039 or (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.

How'd We Do and Letters From...

VILLAGE OF ARNOLD

P.O. BOX 70
ARNOLD, NE 69120
308-848-2228
FAX: 308-848-4743
E-MAIL: arnoldvillage@gpcom.net

March 11, 2015

Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa Street
Wahoo, NE 68006

The Village of Arnold would like to thank the Nebraska Rural Water Association for all the services that you have provided to the Village over the years. Recently, Randy Hellbusch conducted a sewer rate study for Arnold. Thank you Randy! Enclosed is a \$300.00 donation to the Nebraska Rural Water Association.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lamberty
Patricia Lamberty
Village Clerk

April 17, 2015

Dear Nebraska Rural Water Association,

I would like to thank the NE Rural Water Association for having chosen me as the recipient of the 2015 Scholarship Award Program. The scholarship amount of \$500.00 will be used towards books fall semester as I am quickly realizing how expensive required books are for each class!

I would also like to make mention that since I submitted my application to NERWA, the water fountain project I was involved in (as mentioned in my application) has been awarded \$10,000.00 from UNL to update and/or replace new water fountains throughout campus. I had no idea the type of impact my research project would have generated, but the improvements will make a big difference to those who use these water fountains on a daily basis.

Again, I would like to thank NERWA for selecting me as a scholarship recipient.

Sincerely,

Bryce Byman

Bryce Byman
13644 Seward Circle
Omaha, NE 68154

Thomas J. Luettel
Chairperson

Village of Gresham
310 Elm Street, P.O. Box 164
Gresham, Nebraska 68367
(402) 735-7385
FAX (402) 735-7385
villageofgresham310@windstream.net
Office Hours
Monday - Wednesday
8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Linda L. Eschenweck
Village Clerk



February 9, 2015

Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa Street
Wahoo, NE 68066

Dear NE Rural Water Association:

Enclosed please find a donation to your equipment fund from the Village of Gresham. The support and assistance that you provide to small communities such as ours is truly appreciated. It was especially important this past year with a new maintenance man/water operator coming on board.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we just want to say "Thank you"!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Eschenweck".

Linda L. Eschenweck
Village Clerk

Village of Allen

100 East 2nd Street - PO Box 99
Allen, NE 68710
Phone 402-635-2444 - Fax # 402-635-2523

February 11, 2015

Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa Drive
Wahoo, NE 68066

Dear NeRWA:

Please except this donation for all you have done for the Village of Allen. We really appreciate all of your help and good service. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Village of Allen, NE

2015 TRAINING

Grade 6 Backflow Prevention Cross-Connection Control Course - 5 Day

October 12-16 Wahoo

Wastewater Certification Course

June 2-5	Wahoo
August 25-28	Wahoo
October 27-30	Wahoo

Water Operator Training

May 20	Cairo
May 21	Geneva
June 24	Sutton
July 14	Chadron
July 15	Valentine
August 18	Atkinson
August 19	Emerson
October 20	McCook
October 21	Franklin
November 18	Mullen
December 15	Loup City
December 16	Utica

Wastewater Training

May 5	Omaha
May 14	Holdrege
June 25	Chadron
July 9	Burwell
August 6	Wahoo
September 3	Wayne
October 15	Imperial
November 10	Neligh
December 10	Ainsworth

Backflow Continuing Education Training

May 12	Ogallala
May 13	Curtis
September 23	McCool Junction
September 24	Ord
October 21	South Sioux City
October 22	O'Neill
November 19	Wahoo
December 8	Mitchell
December 9	Imperial
December 10	Cambridge
December 16	Wahoo

August 12 Trenching & Shoring Wahoo

August 13 Confined Space Entry Wahoo

Fall Western Conference

Sept. 15-17
Gering Civic Center
Gering, Nebraska

THIS IS RENEWAL YEAR FOR ALL GRADES 1-4 AND 6 LICENSES. SOME CLASSES HAVE SIZE LIMITS AND WILL FILL UP QUICKLY AS THE YEAR END GETS CLOSER. DON'T FORGET TO PRE-REGISTER FOR THE CLASSES YOU NEED.



Never Assume Anything

By Mike Stanzel, Source Water Specialist

I was recently contacted by a small Nebraska town that was experiencing coliform violations and also suspected they had a leak. They had recently just completed an Administrative Order for 6 months of chlorination due to coliform violations, and were concerned when recent samples came back positive.

The repeat samples taken at the well were negative so it was pretty safe to say that the problem probably was in their distribution system. The well pumps directly into the Stand Pipe with no taps in between, so we started there. The operator told me that a tank company had been out 11 months ago to clean and also install a new roof and a new vent cap and screen, as well. He showed me the paperwork to prove it. Although I did not doubt him, I was however concerned that the company that did this work was from out of state and one I had never heard of before in my 17 years of experience.

I asked him when the last time was that he overflowed his tank and he stated maybe a week prior to taking his routine sample. Fortunately his overflow pipe had a wire window type screen affixed to the end which we removed and much to his surprise it was full of dead flies. You could imagine the puzzled look on his face.

We cleaned the screen and I instructed him to turn the well on by hand and overflow the tower again to see what we would get. He stated that this would take 90 min so I said, "Perfect, let's go see if you have a water leak, as well."


Well, being a small town and having kept good production records, it was apparent that they were losing approximately 20,000 gpd and it didn't take long to hear it. There was an

abandoned school building which was still connected to a 2 inch line and the line had split during the winter months.

Now back to the Storage Tank! The tank was overflowing for an estimated 15 min., so we shut down the well and pulled the screen and found another handful of dead flies along with a few live ones. Yes, I know, GROSS. Now I was certain we had a problem on top of the tank. I instructed him to call the tank company right away and proceeded home.

Later that evening I received a phone call from the operator. They had the local well contractor climb up the tank to investigate and found that the vent cap and screen had been compromised most likely from faulty workmanship or being incorrectly installed.

So never assume just because something was supposedly repaired that it still can't be a problem.



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NDEQ's AWIN Program for Evaluating Infrastructure

By Mike Lucas, Wastewater Technician

I recently participated in a meeting with Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) personnel to discuss their AWIN program. We had a very informative meeting regarding the goals of the program, how it worked, and what the future of the program was expected to be. I believe that the program could potentially save small systems a considerable amount of capital construction dollars.

The NDEQ provided me a fact sheet which I am sharing with you in this article. Also, please remember to complete and return your "Needs Survey" annually.

A New NDEQ Program: AWIN

What is AWIN? For the past two years, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) has been working on a new program called the Assessing Wastewater Infrastructure Needs (AWIN) program. It is a free database of information based off of demographic data collected on Nebraska communities. Data, such as population, median household income, unemployment, housing vacancies, median age, etc., is used to evaluate current social and economic conditions and uses that information to estimate fu-

ture population growth and conditions for the community. A sustainability risk rating to help evaluate the community's future is created from the information gathered.

The goal of AWIN is to use current information to estimate future conditions in Nebraska communities to develop sustainable projects and minimize financial burdens for struggling communities. It was initially created to assist struggling communities better afford, maintain, operate, and plan current and future wastewater infrastructure projects. However, the data collected goes beyond just wastewater and can be used for any future planning for a community.

How AWIN Works

Demographic information was collected using census data over several years. That data was then used to create a sustainability model using numerous parameters and review of other state growth potential models. The number generated indicates a community's sustainability risk for future growth and development based on a twenty year time frame. It is then translated into an AWIN score and put into one of three risk categories; low risk, moderate risk, and high risk communities.

Communities' sustainability rankings can be described as follows:

AWIN Sustainability Risk	Prediction (based on available information, estimated for a future 20 year timeframe)
Low	Stable or possible growth; low risk of failing to manage resources for continued stability or growth
Moderate	Slow to no growth, possible loss of population; may begin to struggle to maintain infrastructure; future residents may be impacted
High	Declining or great potential for declining population; high risk of failure to manage resources; future sustainability at great risk

For example, the pretend town of Berrytown has a population of 174 which has dropped by 28 people since 2000. The school was folded into a county wide district and closed. The town's major employer, the wire factory, closed in 2001. They are 75 miles from a city of 12,000 population, too far for most people to commute to work. The wastewater lagoons need rehabilitation and discharge 150 days each year, not meeting their discharge permit limits a quarter of the time. Their AWIN ranking is 22, a high sustainability Risk, meaning they are at high risk for further loss of popu-

lation and the inability to upgrade their wastewater lagoons. Because of Berrytown's situation and high AWIN risk ranking, NDEQ worked with the town and their consulting engineer to solve the wastewater situation in an affordable and sustainable manner. The traditional solution of 20 acres for three new lagoons was reduced to one 8-acre lagoon with summer pumping to a big gun irrigation system. Berrytown saved \$237,000, could afford the solution, and has not overbuilt their wastewater system for the future.

Continued on page 7

Where Can You Find AWIN Data and How Much Does It Cost?

AWIN data is free and can be found at the NDEQ’s website at <http://deq.ne.gov>. Simply click the “Water” tab, then select the drop down menu for “Financial Assistance” and select “AWIN: Assessing Wastewater Infrastructure Needs”. To find a community, click the “AWIN Sustainability Risk List and Individual Community Datasheets” and search for the desired community.


How NDEQ Will Use AWIN Information:

NDEQ will use estimates to allocate and schedule resources to affordably protect the environment and public health, while working toward total compliance for all communities based on model forecasts.


Information obtained from the AWIN program is used to enhance the state’s Intended Use Plan, support design/engineering modifications and alternative treatment methods, and aid in determining compliance schedules for NDEQ



Continued on page 8



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requirements. Prioritization of NDPEs implementation schedules are determined by community needs, environmental impacts, and the predicted growth and stability of a community in the future, as indicated by AWIN.

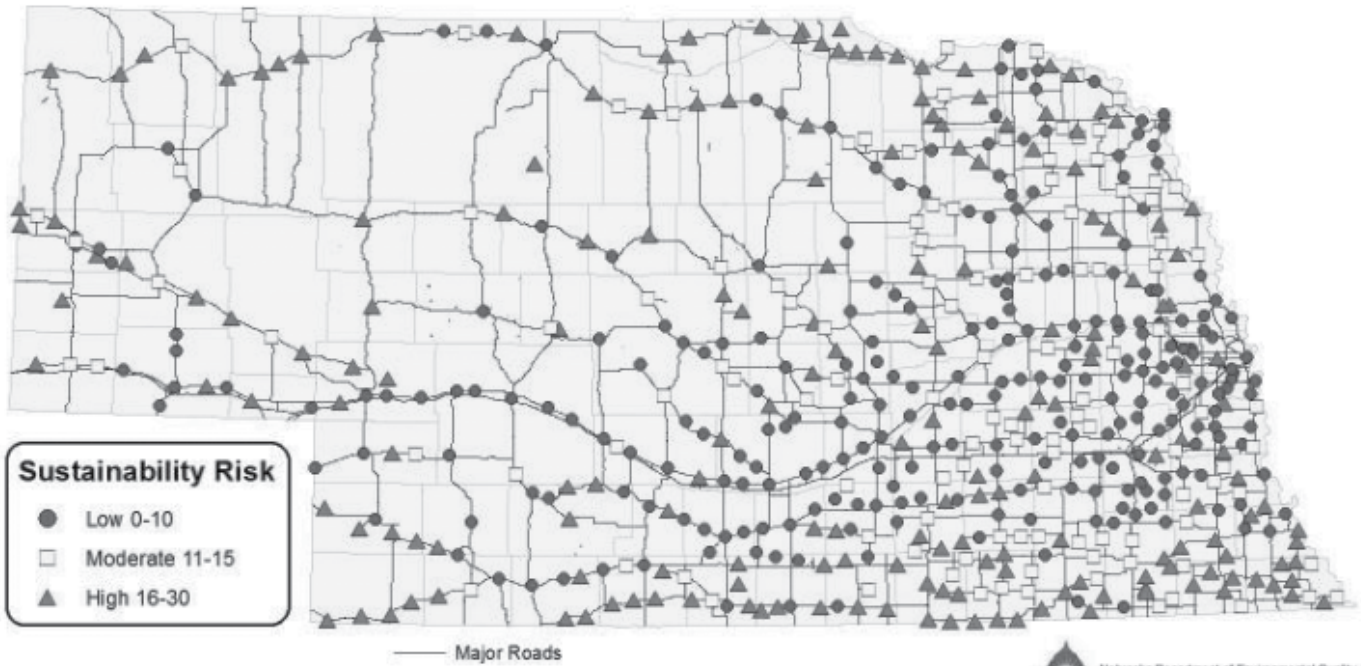
Communities will be brought into the best compliance possible, for the least cost that can be managed, based on predictions made using the AWIN tool.

Questions and Additional Information:

If you have any questions regarding the AWIN program, please contact:

NDEQ - AWIN
1200 N St., Suite 400
P.O. Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922
Email: ndeq.awin@nebraska.gov
Phone: (402) 471-2186

AWIN Sustainability Model
State of Nebraska



Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
January 28, 2014

SOURCE: 2010 US CENSUS AND 2008-2012 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY
TOWNS WITHOUT CENSUS DATA WERE EXCLUDED

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Preventative Well Maintenance

By Russ Topp, Circuit Rider

Once again it is winter time here in Nebraska. As I write this article the ground outside is covered in snow, and the weather man says we may get another storm this weekend. I guess we can use the moisture. I'm sure most of you are already getting sick of plowing it, and it's still early. In the past I have written articles about getting caught up on paper work when the weather is bad. That's still a good idea. You just never know when that state guy might show up. Preventative maintenance is something else that can be done in the winter when you're not pushing snow or scooping walks.

Several of the municipal water well drillers offer an annual well maintenance program for a very reasonable price. I guess it keeps their technicians busy in the winter months when drilling slows down. In my opinion, this is a very valuable service. After the maintenance has been done they send you a report on their findings. I would highly recommend sharing this report with the village board. The technicians check things like wire to water efficiency. They can tell if

the motor and pump are operating efficiently. This alone is very important information. There is no reason to be spending more on electricity than necessary. Unless you have the proper equipment this would be difficult to calculate. If the motor or pump is starting to go out, you definitely want to be saving some money back for that. They also check the accuracy of the master meter. This is important when figuring water loss. I have been to several systems that thought they had a high water loss, and after looking at the well maintenance report, we discovered the master meter was not accurate. Some have been off as much as 20 percent. Draw downs are performed and tracked with this service. Over a period of years they will let you know if the screens are starting to plug. Acidizing the well screen may be necessary, especially if you have an iron and manganese problem. This service also includes things like changing the oil on the motor of a line shaft turbine well. They will also give you a heads up if the line shaft bearings are starting to where.

What does all this add up to? Preventative well maintenance; it gives the system time to budget for a major repair. More importantly if repairs are needed you can schedule for a shut down. Many systems can't afford to shut down a large capacity well in the middle of August. Just as well get that well operating at peak performance for next summer this winter.



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Starting with this issue, one copy will be sent to each member system to the attention of the operator.

Due to increasing costs, we are thinking about publishing the quarterly magazine electronically. If you would like to receive it this way, send your email address to our office at salli@nerwa.org.

If you don't send us an email address, we will continue to mail a copy to you.

Western Conference Time

It's time to start thinking about heading west to Gering for the Nebraska Rural Water Association's Western Conference. The conference will be held September 15-17 at the Gering Civic Center. The Western Conference will once again mix fun and relaxation with a chance to learn new things and gather much needed CEU's to renew your operator licenses.

There will be a pre-conference on Tuesday. Following the pre-conference there will be a golf tournament at the Riverview Golf and Country Club. This is set to begin at 2:30 and conclude around 6 pm. Wednesday morning will start with the bang of the annual trap shoot to be held at the Mitchell Valley Trap Club. This is scheduled to begin between 8 and 8:30 am and conclude around noon. After that, sessions will start. A social hour, banquet, and operator awards presentation will complete Wednesday. There will be a breakfast that is served at 6:30 am. Thursday will be a full day of sessions.

More detailed information will be in the next issue of the magazine and also in a special conference mailing. If you have never attended the Western Conference and you have the resources to do so, please try to make it to Gering. It is a fantastic mix of fun and learning! See you out west!

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CONFERENCE



CE PICTURES





2015 Conference Flashback

By Pat Petersen, Training Specialist

When planning a conference there are so many variables that can come into play. Will they like the presentations? Are the participants comfortable? Is the venue big enough? Will they like the food? It's not a real easy task to plan a conference and then change sites after three years which adds another challenge. The best way to gauge how we did is to look at the evaluations you filled out and turned in at the end of the conference. According to the evaluations, our first year at the Younes Conference Center was a success. Thanks to all of you who made it a success; vendors, operators, administrators, board members, presenters, NeRWA Staff/Board and finally the Younes Conference Center Staff. Each and every one of you played an important role in the success of the conference.

The tradition of the Regulatory Update stayed in place this year although there was one major change. Howard Isaacs gave the presentation to a large audience of operators, clerks, administrators and board members. Jack Daniel had given this presentation for as long as I can remember! Howard did a fantastic job and one of the comments that I was told directly was, "That session alone was worth the price of registration." WAY TO GO HOWARD! Looks like I might have a spot for you at the fall conference.

Following Howard was the panel discussion about the devastating Pilger tornados. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Field Rep. for Area 3, Rich Koenig, along with operators and first responders to the tornado showed before and after photos and held an open discussion about that tragic day. This discussion could have easily surpassed the hour and a half it was allotted. The point driven home by this session was the importance of Emergency Planning.

The final presentation of the general session was given by Bill Podraza with Miller and Associates. Bill's presentation offered operators and employees tips on how to approach and present information to their boards and councils. Sometimes an operator may need to be more tactful when it comes to delivering information to their board and this session covered that.

The Monday evening festivities included a wonderful meal, The Chuckwagon Buffet, followed by a Vegas style fun night. Black Jack, Chuck-A-Luck, and Craps were just a few of the games of choice offered. The game night would not be possible without a core of sponsors who

generously donated to this event. The game night sponsors were: JEO Consulting Engineers, HOA Solutions, Sargent Drilling, Engineering America, Engineered Systems and the Nebraska Rural Water Association. In my eyes, once again the game night was well received and was a success. Thanks again, sponsors! Let's do it again next year!

When Tuesday of the conference rolls around, it's time to put on our thinking caps and get ready to learn. The day consisted of 6 hours of breakout sessions giving operators several options for obtaining continuing education hours. Well Decommissioning, Sample Sites and Assessments, Utility Technology, and Round Table discussions were just a few of the sessions operators could attend. The small system round table seemed to be a crowd favorite. With that being said, we may have to have another round table later in the day at next year's conference.

After a quick social hour in the exhibit hall sponsored by HD Supply Waterworks, attendees made their way to the Diamond Ballroom for the Awards Banquet and entertainment. The meal was the "Grand Buffet" that included several choices and varieties of food for all to choose from. At the completion of the meal, Andy Kahle was introduced as the new Field Services Manager for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in the Office of Drinking Water and Environmental Health. Andy introduced the State of Nebraska's Water Operator of the Year, Mr. Tony Corbin with the Village of Mullen. Tony is an outstanding operator and is very deserving of the award. Congratulations, Tony!!

The entertainment was provided by "176 Keys, Fun Pianos". There was some singing, dancing and a whole lot of fun to finish off Tuesday. I hope everyone enjoyed the show!

Wednesday's tradition of the Annual Operator Breakfast and Annual NeRWA Board meeting started bright and early, 7:30 AM to be exact. Operators enjoyed a fantastic breakfast and then participated in the meeting which included the installation of a new member. Tom Grovijohn and Larry Wennekamp retained their seats on the board and George Wagner of Hooper will fill the vacancy created by Dale Miller. Congratulations to the winners.

Training sessions resumed at 8:30 AM on Wednesday and concluded after lunch at 2:00 PM. During lunch the drawing for the raffle prizes was held. Once again, there were some

continued on page 15

fantastic items to be raffled off. Tara Vaida with USDA/RD won the “Husker” log. The tandem of Tim Bolling and Sid Lewis with the City of Central City each won a TV. Tim Pickinpaugh, City of Wakefield, won the power washer. Brett Rahe, Village of Dewitt, won the 255 piece tool set. Mike Stieren, City of Scribner, won the Kindle Fire. Kelly Bridgmon, Village of Cook, won the Craftsman power tool set. Brook Andersen, City of Wisner, took home the air compressor. The \$500 cash went to Alan Romine with the City of Falls City. For completing his evaluation Victor Paltz with the Village of St. Helena won the other 255 piece tool set. On behalf of NeRWA I would like to thank all of you who purchased raffle tickets.


At the beginning of this article I mentioned the importance of the evaluations. This is our written report card on how we did at the conference. I know I spoke with several operators and vendors who felt that this was the place we need to be for our conference. The evaluations reflected that opinion, too. With that being said, I hope to make the Younes Conference Center the NeRWA’s home during one week each March.


The Younes Center staff is very friendly and accommodating and made my job much less stressful. Thank You!

Finally, I need to take this time to personally thank the NeRWA Board for always offering to help out in any way

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they can. Although I try not to find a task for you, I know each and every one of you is willing to help out. Thank You!

Salli, Barney, Carol, Mike Stanzel, Mike Lucas, Randy, and Russ, this conference would not be as big as it is if it wasn’t for the solid foundation you have laid and knowing how to provide a quality learning experience that water operators deserve when attending this conference. You guys/gals are the best!

I’m sure most of you noticed that Carol Jasa our office secretary was not in attendance at the conference. I feel bad that she couldn’t experience this conference but am relieved to say she is back to work. Matter of fact, she will take this article and proofread it before it hits the press. We missed you at the conference Carol.

As successful as the 2015 conference was, I guess, we’ll just have to have next year’s conference at the Younes Center in Kearney. It might even be bigger and better!

SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS

NeRWA Kearney Conference
March 16-18, 2015

Congratulations to Victor Paltz of St. Helena! He won the Craftsman Mechanic Toolset from the evaluation drawing. A total of 160 people turned in their evaluations and had a chance to win.

NeRWA appreciates getting your feedback. The area that the majority of the people who responded liked the most was the venue as a whole. Specific likes included the class sessions, the meals, learning new information, the vendors, the speakers, the proximity of the motels, and the opportunity to visit with other people. Thank you for your valuable input. We have a few bugs to work out, but all in all the conference was a success. The conference will be at this venue for the next three years. Next year’s dates are March 20 through March 23. We hope to see all of you back.

TOTAL EVALUATIONS RECEIVED – 160

QUESTION #1 – Please circle which best describes your position:

a. Operator/Manager	131
b. Administrative	4
c. Board Member	4
d. Plumber.	1
e. Lawn Service	1
f. State/Federal Rep.	3
g. Clerk	2
h. Other: (no explanation)	1
Backup Operator	3

continued on page 17

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- Operator/Manager and Board member – 3
- Operator/Manager and Lawn Service – 1
- Backup Operator and Board Member-1

QUESTION # 2 – Why do you attend the NeRWA conference?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| a. The training classes | 46 |
| b. The prizes/entertainment | 1 |
| c. The vendors | 10 |
| d. Chance to meet with operators | 25 |
| e. All of the above | 95 |

QUESTION #3 – Things you liked and why?

- Good variety of topics.
- All.
- Classes were informative and facilities were clean and close to rooms.
- This was my first time. I enjoy all of the classes, the meals were great, the rooms and motel were very good.
- It was a very good conference.
- Best conference I have attended in 10 years! Facility-Great-comfort, lodging, sound, all good.
- All good sessions. Very good food. Lots of room.
- Liked everything, but maybe more backflow hours.
- Everything nice. Location.
- Food was great and plentiful. Enjoyed the classes. Not one speaker bored me to sleep.
- Nice venue-nice chairs/tables. Easy to stay attentive and take note. Everything nice and close together. Speakers-informative presentations-good refreshers!
- Acoustics and YouTube was good.
- Location is better than Columbus or Grand Island. It is more centrally located in the state. Presenters were very good. Motels are good. Meals are great. Vendors are very informative and should consider giving mini-presentations for which CEH may be given.
- Good location.
- Small system round table-excellent! Location-Perfect! Noon lunch was great and served very efficiently.
- The closeness of motels and large training rooms.
- Everything was great!
- Awesome facility. Very good topics and

- presenters.
- Great job. I appreciate all your hard work.
- This is something all operators should attend.
- The one stop shop. Everything in one place.
- The training classes. Meet other operators and old friends.
- All in one area.
- Howard gives good classes.
- The facilities are very good. Good vendors.
- Food was great, training interesting. Nice being at one location.
- Good job.
- Training sessions. Can see new productions with vendors. Meals were good.
- Conference was very good. Much better.
- Conference was really good. A lot better.
- More room and great food.
- Trench safety-current and updated. Banquet-no speaker just awards-short and sweet.
- I like that the conference is closer to home this time. The vendors were great, as was the food and everything else.
- The vendors and information.
- Variety of class topics.
- Food
- The whole venue was great. It was much better than GI or Columbus.
- Great location.
- Very good.
- Meals were all great. Nice to have motels close. Training was great.
- It was all good.
- Great training sessions, meals, and vendors.
- Food. People that work the conference.
- Everything! Food is great.
- Presentations.
- The Pilger story was great. Everybody can relate to that.
- I thought this conference was the best I have been to in 15 years. Bigger place, nicer place, great hotel, and great city.
- Everything was great.
- Really liked the convention center.
- Location, area, hotel, and classes.
- Choice of sessions makes for a great conference.
- Rich Koenig courses.
- Meeting rooms easy to find, food, info.
- Comfortable chairs and tables. Could hear speakers well. Nice facility.
- Each place where the conference is held has tried to accommodate NeRWA and attendees.
- Facilities were very good and convenient. Good meals. Close proximity to motels.
- Training sessions, vendors, motels.

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- Classes and meals.
- Everything.
- Many hotels within walking distance, bigger classrooms, nicer facility.
- New location.
- The room-not so tight.
- Everything was good.
- Best food I've had at a conference.
- Vendors to catch up with all new equipment and answers on purchased equipment.
- Location. Motels, facility, content, people, vendors.
- Motels in walking distance. Food.
- Everything. You nailed it!
- Wide variety of topics. Later start times.
- Meals, vendors, trainers, speakers.
- Good school. Classes explained well.
- Good vendors and great training.
- Everything very good.
- Best training sessions, speakers in 20 years. The meals, entertainment, and motel was all good.
- Best accommodations ever. Great facility.
- Overall everything was very good.
- Very informational.
- Good to speak with vendors, because some don't have salesmen who come to my area. Great location.
- The conference was good. Nice facility, food and entertainment. Seems more people attended. The staff did an excellent job hosting the event.
- All was good.
- Venue was excellent. All the people involved with the center were very nice and always willing to help. Food was great.
- Location is excellent.
- All.
- Facility was great. Great food and loved having lodging attached.
- Close to home.
- Everything above grade.
- Pilger tornado was interesting. Small systems round table. Brian Gongal and Bill Podraza were good speakers.
- Everything was in one location without overcrowding. Good food.
- No driving!
- Everything was great.
- The food and venue are a lot better than Grand Island.
- Kearney is a good choice. Better venue.
- Everything was great.
- The location and subject matter of classes.
- Classes were very informative and speakers were great.
- Regulatory update keeps operators up on rules and

- changes. Pilger aftermath-it could happen to any town.
- Everything was very nice, from conference center, to meals and speakers.
- Great-All.
- The training was excellent. The facility was very nice and the meals were good.
- Really liked having tables to sit at during the sessions.
- Location, food, motel availability close by. The training sessions and meeting atmosphere were good.
- Comfortable seating. Plenty of breaks keeps you moving around. Good food, knowledge, speakers, and atmosphere.
- Great classes and presenters as well as location and facility.
- I always enjoy coming to see the water group and learning everything, even though I am not an operator. The entertainment was great.
- Awesome place to host the event.
- All-very organized - a lot of learning. Awesome conference.
- Entertainment was the best, involving everyone. Best food.
- Nice motels-convenient. Food very good.
- Adequate room sizes. Good food and material covered.
- The location! Central Nebraska—need to keep it here. The facilities are better than anywhere we have been. Tables in all classrooms are great.
- Food was great. Excellent location.
- Food, location, conference center.
- Hotels are close. Large meeting rooms with tables. Rich Koenig's presentation.
- Some sessions, vendors, meals, closeness of motels.
- Good selection of topics.
- Meals and rooms were excellent. Top notch instructors.
- Very good speakers.
- Good chairs, food, motels.
- Excellent facility. Meals were great.
- I have attended many conferences over the years. This was probably the best of everything!
- Great topic with needed information. Meals were top notch.
- Good conference, food, and entertainment.
- Fabulous venue, motel, and convention center. Like the entertainment.
- Motel was nice, as was conference, food, everything.
- Very good location for the conference. Good topics for each session. There was plenty of

continued on page 19

room for the many vendors. The speakers were knowledgeable. Meals and motels were great.

- Meals, sessions, motels were all great. It was nice to have everything in one place.
- The venue was great. The attendance was great. The round table was very informational.
- Meals/vendors good.
- The conference building was great.
- Everything was very good! The venue and conference was great.

QUESTION # 4 – Things you disliked and why?

- Wished it were in Grand Island.
- N/A (Many of these types of responses)
- Vendors-I have enough pens, need better giveaways. Just because I am here, doesn't mean I am authorized to purchase items. Get vendors for heavy equipment---Cat, Bobcat, Yamaha, John Deere, etc.
- First day- 1 ½ hour session.
- Length of sessions-rooms too cold.
- I disliked the fact that there are only five backflow CEU's available.
- Not enough Pepsi machines.
- Game night.
- Some of these guys still think they need to disrupt the classes by talking to their buddy the entire time the featured speaker is talking.
- Some speakers assumed you knew all the terminology.
- Some classes not so great, but hard to find new stuff.
- Meals.
- Thought the entertainment was poor.
- Some of the speakers were hard to hear.
- I realize this is a new location and there are bugs to work out. Finding classrooms was a problem-not clearly marked on agenda/classrooms. Classrooms did not always have water. Three times I noticed the men's rooms were closed for cleaning during break. Some of the classrooms were still overcrowded with no place to sit.
- Didn't like speaker coughing in the microphone.
- Distance of drive, compared to years before.
- Why don't we get to trap shoot or golf, like the western conference?
- Not enough chairs to sit on during the first meeting.
- Long line for meals, but fed very rapidly. Long distance to drive. Some speakers needed a microphone.
- Need to be away from my jobsite, yet the time is required by "agencies" we work with.
- Would have liked to start earlier on Tuesday and

not run so late.

- Need a few more tables with seating.
- Unable to attend breakouts at same time as other sessions that I was interested in. Don't have conference right after daylight savings time.
- Sound needs work. First day of class you could hear cracking in the speakers. Need to check into that.
- Need more vendor prizes.
- No hands-on classes to take.

QUESTION # 5 – Any suggestions for future conferences?

- None (Many had no response)
- Keep going forward.
- Keep it in Kearney. (Many responded)
- If possible, reconfigure the rooms so all four sessions would be on one side.
- Little more classes for waste water credits.
- More meter install suggestions, round table.
- More current events on water industry.
- Keep it up!
- Keep it going. Great job!
- Keep up the good work.
- Maybe about two more backflow classes.
- Keep up to date.
- Are presenters or material available online after conference?
- More information and classes for board members.
- Hands-on presentations.
- We were still overcrowded with no place to sit.
- More talks, like the Pilger tornado. Maybe floods.
- Maybe too diverse on classes. Some kind of repeat-I know that is hard to do.
- Continue getting a good variety of topics and speakers. (Twice)
- Move the conference around the state every few years.
- More training sessions to choose from.
- Try for some different classes.
- Hands on dismantling of large backflow device. Demonstration-proper procedure and replacement of all replacement parts.
- Would like to know more about sulfates and removal.
- Provide more opportunities for backflow CEU's.
- The session on field lab/rep's Q&A should be general session-It affects every operator.
- I really liked the hands on we did in GI.
- More presentations from DEQ. The board needs to get us a better deal on room rates.
- 2 all day sessions.

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- Start classes earlier than 9:00. During the welcome speech, explain the events of the day, where raffle tickets go, and where meals are.
- Make all classes have W-WW hours available so we can take the classes we need, not just get hours.
- More time between NeRWA annual meeting and 1st class.
- May want to look at electrical items.
- Could there be computers to check emails?
- Move it back to Grand Island.

- This is the best. Keep it here.
- Very good. Cabela's is here.
- Was very nice just to walk to room.
- I think it was good. Good motels, great food, and a good location.
- Fantastic. Good job.
- Excellent.
- Location was good.
- The best. Keep it here. Perfect. I didn't hear any complaints.
- The location is configured well. The conference area is nicer than Grand Island and it is good to have the hotels/motels close by. It's a little further to drive to, but more centrally located for others to attend.
- I think this facility was great. Would hope the next year conference would be here.
- Great move.
- All right.
- Good conference area.
- I like Kearney the best.
- About as good as you will find. Keep it.
- Great location.
- Best ever.
- Great. No carry over between rooms on topics.
- Location is fine.
- Don't leave!
- Great place.
- It was a good move.
- Center of state. Very nice.
- Central location for the whole state.
- I really like it and hope NeRWA stays here.
- It is great!
- Never made it to other locations but Kearney seems to be great, very similar to Gering, just a bigger crowd.
- Too far for me! Facilities nice though. Not all exhibit space used-do we need that much room?
- Nice conference!
- I think it's a good central location, no matter where you are in Nebraska.
- Wish it were in Columbus.
- Great.
- The location works great in Kearney. Like you say, easy access to motels, eats, and keeps the operators close.
- This place is great.
- Did not like the extra drive time.
- Love the location.
- Worked well-once you get on I-80. Location not a deterrent-definitely more central with lots of motels.
- This is the best.
- Ok.

After moving the conference...How do you feel about this location?

- Great! (Several responded this)
- Perfect location.
- Blah. Well it was ok I just liked Grand Island.
- This location is the perfect solution for growing pains.
- Great location.
- I liked it a lot.
- Really liked this setup.
- Nice establishment. Great staff.
- Best location so far.
- Really good move.
- It was a nice place to have it.
- Kearney is best.
- This is the best location.
- Great job.
- Like location, hotels, conference center-all close and lots of room.
- Good move. But, a long way to drive.
- Top notch and it's centrally located in the state.
- Great! Like I said, keep it here!
- Keep it here. The food has been absolutely great!
- Absolutely perfect.
- Good, keep it here.
- Awesome. I don't have to drive or walk to my room and it's another hour closer to home.
- Love it.
- Fantastic.
- Awesome with a capital "A".
- Perfect for now.
- Good location.
- Great venue, thanks.
- I like it a lot. Best location.
- Perfect!
- Best conference I have been to! Kearney is it.
- Great place.
- Keep it in Kearney.
- Love it!
- Good.
- Good location.
- Very good facility.
- It's wonderful and was time for this.

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- Kearney is the best of the three.
- Kearney is a great place to have this conference.
- This is good (Kearney)
- Great move. Really like onsite motels.
- Awesome-Don't change it.
- Very nice.
- This is a very good location. I had to travel ½ hour longer-4 hours total.
- Great location and facilities.
- Nice.
- Great.
- Great location.
- Best of the three.
- Great choice!!
- I attended the conference in Columbus for years. It was small, old, and dirty. I didn't get to go to GI, but Kearney puts Columbus to shame. Also, so nice to have rooms close. I like this even more than Gering.
- It's great.
- One of the best things that could happen.
- Nice! Closer to the west. Centralized.
- Best location. Keep it in Kearney.
- This location is by far the best of the three. Stay here.
- Okay.
- 100% satisfied.
- Kearney is the best location.
- Please stay here.
- Location is ideal. Roomy!
- Good location and nice meeting rooms.
- This is the perfect place. Even to bring the family we stayed in the Holiday Inn with a water park!
- Good.
- This is great.
- Good location.
- Keep it here. Best move ever.
- It works the best of all the locations mentioned.
- Great!!!
- Should stay in Kearney.
- I like the Kearney site.
- Great.
- Great location. Lots of room, motels, restaurants. Good meeting room size.
- Even though it is further from home, I feel this is the best place to hold this conference at this time.
- Excellent location-central Nebraska.
- Keep it here!
- Kearney is a good location. New and clean and large enough rooms for the people.
- This is a great location. There are very nice meeting rooms and display area.
- Great.
- Very good. Will attend more in future with more of the crew.

- It's a very good location.
- You nailed it! Great job!!
- Like it.
- Great size and onsite motel is nice. Best yet!
- I like this one best of all.
- This is a great location and venue. I hope to come back here for many years.

We received only a few evaluations from the exhibitors:

1. Love it! It is centrally located to get some western towns also. Everyone talks about being able to be safe and get back to motel rooms.
2. Great!!!
3. Excellent!!! Love that it's sooo organized and on schedule. You guys are the best!
4. Kearney was a great venue for the conference. I would like to see it back here again.
5. I would like to see the exhibit hall condensed to two days. The Wednesday could be eliminated.
6. This is the best venue by far – many attendees commented on the convenience.
7. This facility works well.
8. Our view is that is unreasonably burdensome for us vendors to spend 3 days at a single rural water conference.
9. The coffee/refreshment availability at this conference was the worst of any conference I have attended.



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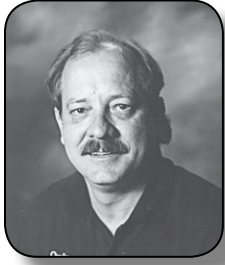
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Is Your Water System Prepared for Drought Conditions?

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

If you have been paying attention to the weather experts, many are saying that parts of Nebraska may be headed for another dry year. Regardless of what actually happens it is always best to be prepared. If your water system has not yet done so it may be a good time to set some parameters for if a drought does happen to occur. It is always a good idea to have baselines or triggers set so that the public knows at what point restrictions or conservation practices will take place. This way it isn't just because the water operator or someone thinks it is a good idea. Below is a good example of some ways to determine if and when it is time to declare a water watch or a water warning. If you would like some assistance in writing a drought ordinance or conservation plan give us a call at NeRWA. We would be happy to assist.

Declaration of a Water Watch, Warning or Emergency.

A water watch, warning or emergency shall be in effect whenever the water superintendent finds that conditions indicate the probability of a drought or some other condition causing a major water supply shortage is rising. The water superintendent shall be empowered to declare that a water watch, warning or emergency exists and shall take steps to inform the public and ask for reductions in water use. Such watch, warning or emergency shall be deemed to continue until it is declared to have ended. Declaring the existence and end of a water watch, warning or emergency shall be effective upon posting notice at the Village's designated areas.

A. Declaring a Water Watch:

Triggers. This stage is triggered by any one of the following conditions:

1. Groundwater levels have fallen ___ feet below the normal seasonal level.
2. Pumping lowers water levels to within ___ feet of the top of the well screens.
3. Demand for one day is in excess of _____ gallons per day.
4. Drought conditions exist.

(Other triggers could be days over a certain temperature, wells run over a set number of hours/day, inability to maintain adequate storage.)

Goals

The goals of this stage are to heighten awareness of the public on water conditions and to maintain the integrity of the water supply system.

Education Actions

The Village will make occasional news releases or post notices.

B. Declaring a Water Warning:

Triggers. This stage is triggered by any of the following conditions:

1. Groundwater levels have fallen ___ feet below the normal seasonal level.
2. Pumping lowers water levels to within ___ feet of the top of the well screens.
3. Demand for one day is in excess of _____ gallons per day.
4. Loss of water tower and or well.

Goals

The goals of this stage are to reduce peak demands by 20% and to reduce overall weekly consumption by 10%.

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This is Odd

By Barney Whatley, Backflow Trainer

Although I am sure everyone is aware of this, and I do not need to tell you this, but I am going to do it anyway. 2015 is an odd-numbered year, and all water operator licenses will expire on December 31st. That means you will need 10 hours of approved continuing education in order to renew your license. I highly recommend that everyone look through their records to see how many hours you currently have, and how many you will need to get by the end of the year. By checking now you can avoid the fun of chasing classes across the state in December to get your needed hours.

If you go to the Credentialing website to look up your hours, you will be disappointed to find that they are no longer posted there. Mike Wentink, the NDHHS Training and Certification Officer, is working to tabulate hours for operators and post them online for review, but as of the writing of this article, this has not yet been accomplished. We as water operators have been spoiled in the past by having someone track our hours for us, but it really is our responsibility to keep our own training records. It is my understanding that all training conducted by a member of the Training Coalition comes with a certificate of attendance being presented to all attendees. This certificate is your proof of attendance, and may have to be sent in to Credentialing with your renewal form to verify your CEU hours.

NeRWA keeps a record of all the classes we sponsor, and we will supply, on request, duplicate attendance certificates for those classes. However, we will limit that to one replacement certificate for each class. It is understandable that an operator might misplace one certificate of attendance for a class, but there is no excuse for losing two of them. Additional certificates will come at some cost. If you attended training put on by other providers, you will need to contact them to determine their policy on replacement certificates.

If you are required to send certificates to credentialing with your renewal form, I highly recommend that you send a copy of the certificate, and not the original. It is my opinion that there is a machine in the mail room of the state office building that has the ability to sniff out an original document, and that once it has done so it devours it without leaving any trace. Copies of documents seem to have little or no difficulty in sneaking past this machine and you will still have the original in case the machine mistakes your copy for an original.


Again, remember that this is an odd-numbered year and attempt to get your needed hours for renewal of your license


in a timely manner. Find a safe place to keep a file folder with your certificates of attendance in it so you will be able to easily locate them if it becomes necessary to send a copy of them in for your renewal. Check your renewal notice as soon as you get it so you can determine if you need to make copies of attendance certificates to be submitted with the renewal form.

While you have renewal on your mind, you could also endeavor to start early in getting your CEUs for the next licensing period. Classes early in the even-numbered year are usually not as crowded as those at the end of the odd-numbered year. Just saying!!

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