

Issue 2/2016

Nebraska Rural Water Association

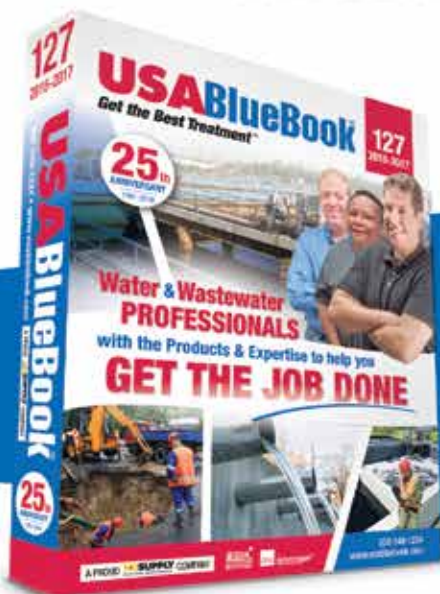


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Nebraska Good Water News

Issue 2/2016

“Keeping Our Water Safe”

Board of Directors

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Website: www.nerwa.org

On the cover:

City of Hickman's 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.

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4/15/16

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

Dear Board of Directors and Staff,

At the 2016 Annual Conference, I was presented with (I might add under duress) the 2016 Friend of Rural Water Award.

Over the years I have met many new and inexperienced water operators, most who are initially overwhelmed at the complexity and responsibility of this position. I always try to share three suggestions:

- Your municipality is probably a member of Nebraska Rural Water, so if you have problems or need information, do not hesitate to contact them. The Circuit Riders and Training staff are all specialists in operational procedures, leak detection, rate studies, etc.; and their ability, expertise and willingness to help is unparalleled.
- NE HHS is not your enemy, but your friend. The Field Inspectors at one time were all water operators and know the challenges you face.
- Within a 50 mile radius, you have a number of experienced operators that at one time faced the same problems you may have. Get to know them as they can be a huge resource.

I was honored and surprised to have the privilege of receiving this award as I was only trying to do my job to the best of my ability. Thank you Rural Water Staff and Board, the Nebraska Field Inspectors and especially the Utilities Superintendents and Water Operators of Nebraska, you are all truly the best.

Sincerely,

Maguire Iron, Inc.

Richard Frankforter
Field Rep.

Village of Diller

Box 157
Diller, NE 68342

January 14, 2015

Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa Street
Wahoo NE 68066

Dear Sirs,

Please find enclosed a check in the amount of \$100 for dues for the Village of Diller. We are also enclosing an additional check for \$100 for a donation to the Nebraska Rural Water Association.

It was noted at our Village Board Meeting of January 11, 2016 that the Rural Water Association has been helpful with any water/sewer project that we have had in the past. Not only were you prompt in answering questions, but also provided equipment and personnel to assist with these projects when needed.

Thank you for your service in 2015, and we look forward to working with you again in 2016.

Sincerely,

Leatha Christ
Village Clerk

Cuming County Rural Water District

Sharlene F. Clatanoff, Manager

Phone 402-528-3405
Box 181
Beemer, Nebraska 68716

January 29, 2016

Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa Drive
Wahoo, NE 68068

Dear Ne RWA Staff,

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$100.00 for the association's equipment fund.

A special "Thank You" to Randy for the rate study done and other various problem solving he has done for the district. The district employees and board appreciate these services available to the District.

Sincerely,


Sharlene F. Clatanoff
Manager

Village of Paxton

108 North Oak
PO Box 338
Paxton NE 69155
308-239-2376

Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa St
Wahoo NE 68066

February 29, 2016

Dear NeRWA Staff,

The Village of Paxton would like to thank you all for the continued support in managing our water and waste water systems. There is always a friendly voice at the other end of a panic phone call ready to answer our questions or someone prepared to swing by Paxton to check out the situation. Your services are APPRECIATED!!

You will find the pre-registration form and payment for the upcoming Annual Conference in this envelop; these training opportunities are highly regarded by the attendees!

Also, enclosed is a donation check as a small token of our thanks!

Sincerely,


Lori Gamet
Paxton Village Clerk



VILLAGE OF HARRISON

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Email: villageofha@qwestoffice.net

February 9, 2016

Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa Drive
Wahoo, NE. 68006

Dear Nebraska Rural Water Association,

The Village Board of Trustees, Utilities Superintendent, and Clerk would like to take this opportunity to thank the NeRWA staff for all the assistance given the Village with various water related issues this past year. Please accept the enclosed donation to your equipment fund in appreciation of all the valuable services your very knowledgeable staff provides.

Sincerely,
Village of Harrison
Board of Trustees & Employees

Enclosure



April 14, 2016

NEBRASKA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
3390 PONDEROSA DRIVE
WAHOO, NE 68066

The City of Syracuse would like to extend a big "THANK YOU" to Nebraska Rural Water Association for the many services you provide to the communities in Nebraska. A special thank you to Randy Hellbusch for the doing the review of our water and sewer rates and to Mike Lucas for assisting Syracuse Utilities on numerous occasions and using the sewer camera to locate our problem.

In appreciation for your great service, please apply the enclosed check to the Equipment Fund.

Sincerely,

Kelly Farmer
Kelly Farmer
City Clerk

VILLAGE OF DORCHESTER

701 Washington Ave., PO Box 287 | Dorchester, NE 68343
Phone: 402-946-3201 | Fax: 402-946-3571 | dorchester@diodecom.net



April 12, 2016

Nebraska Rural Water Association
3390 Ponderosa Drive
Wahoo, NE 68066

Dear NeRWA staff,

The Village of Dorchester Board of Trustees and employees would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Nebraska Rural Water Association for the many services you provide to our community. Your organization is always willing to share your knowledge and provides prompt service so that our utilities continue to run smoothly.

Your ongoing efforts to manage and promote safe, clean water for the citizens of Nebraska are commended. Please accept our donation of \$500.00 to continue in your cause.

Sincerely,
Gloria J Riley
Gloria J Riley,
Village Clerk - Treasurer



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October 17-21	Wahoo

Wastewater Certification Course

June 7-10	Wahoo
August 23-26	Wahoo
November 15-18	Wahoo

Wastewater Training

April 7	Aurora
May 4	Omaha
June 16	Wahoo
July 21	McCook
August 11	Ogallala
September 7	O'Neill
October 6	Ord
November 3	Omaha
December 8	Laurel

Water Operator Training

April 6	Ogallala
May 17	Pawnee City
June 15	Sutton
July 13	Chadron
August 9	Bancroft
October 5	Chappell
November 9	Lindy
December 14	Red Cloud

Backflow Continuing Education Training

April 19	Cairo
April 20	Wymore
April 26	Wahoo
May 10	Valentine
September 20	McCool Junction
September 21	Ord
October 25	South Sioux City
October 26	Atkinson
November 22	Wahoo
December 13	Mitchell
December 14	Ogallala
December 15	Cambridge

Fall Western Conference

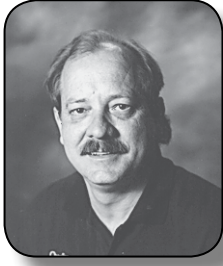
Sept. 27-29

Gering Civic Center
Gering, Nebraska

August 3 Trenching & Shoring Wahoo

August 4 Confined Space Entry Wahoo

Above are the training sessions for 2016. All of our training is also listed on our website, www.nerwa.org. As an operator, one of the easiest things you can do is to **BOOKMARK** our website. Then whenever you need to look for classes with recertification hours for water, backflow and wastewater, or to be certified in backflow or wastewater, you can just go directly to our site. There is a link where you can click on the training sessions. The information is usually available about 30 days before the class. There is another link where you can register for a class. If you register online for any training, it will automatically send you a confirmation if you include your email address. After you register there will be a place where you can choose to be billed or pay right away. You will need to log into PayPal, and then use your own credit card.



Drought Preparedness

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

As I am writing this article, I look out the window and I see the tree branches are bent over, another windy day. It seems as though we have had more than our fair share of wind so far this spring. What we haven't had is our share of rain. Driving through the state I notice farmers frantically working the fields. It is hard to determine what they are actually doing because most often all you see is a huge dust cloud. In many instances, you can't even see the implement or the tractor pulling it. Hopefully relief will come, but all we can do on that front is hope and pray.

What we can do as water operators is prepare. Does your water system have a good drought response ordinance? I know many systems developed a plan a few years back when we were experiencing periods of drought. If you have developed a drought ordinance, have you kept it updated? Have any of your system capacity issues changed? Are your water usage needs still the same as when the ordinance was written? If not, it may be a good idea to do some alterations. If you haven't developed a drought ordinance, there is no time like the present to get started.

The best method is to use benchmarks: i.e.:

Stage 1 - Water Watch Triggers: Groundwater level has fallen 5 feet or Daily Demand 800,000 gals.

Stage 1 - Goals: Heighten public awareness

Stage 1 - Education Actions: Make occasional news releases to local media

Stage 1 - Actions: Request public to curtail outdoor water use

Stage 2 - Water Warning Triggers: Groundwater level has fallen 10 feet or Daily Demand 1,000,000 gals.

Stage 2 - Goals: Reduce daily consumption 20%

Stage 2 - Education Actions: Increase news releases to media describing present conditions

Stage 2 - Actions: Implement mandatory limits on outdoor water use

Stage 3 - Water Emergency Triggers: Groundwater levels have fallen 20 feet or Daily Demand 1,500,000 gals.

Stage 3 - Goals: Reduce daily consumption 50%


Stage 3 - Education Actions: Make daily news releases, hold public meeting to inform citizens of the status


Stage 3 - Actions: Ban all outdoor water use

The above is just a generic example using hypothetical figures. It is important to know your system and understand at what point the situation becomes critical. If you would like assistance in developing or revising your drought ordinance, give us at NeRWA a call. We would be glad to assist you.

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James A. Brown, water production manager, Newton County, Georgia



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Curtis Rooth, foreman, Sewer Dept., Cromwell, Connecticut

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2016 Annual Conference - A Success!

By Pat Petersen, Training/Technical Assistance Specialist

Once again the Nebraska Rural Water Association celebrated the largest training assembly for Nebraska water, wastewater, Grade 6, and well driller license holders with their annual conference. The conference was held March 21-23, 2016 in Kearney, Nebraska at the Younes Conference Center. The conference was a complete success due to the hard work of the Nebraska Rural Water Association staff and board, the generosity of the vendors and exhibitors, the Younes Center staff and the large number of operators who actually attended the conference.

The conference began with the annual regulatory update on Monday afternoon presented to a very large crowd. Andy Kahle, Field Services Manager for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, gave this address. Andy had to take the place of Administrator Howard Isaacs who had to be in Washington, D.C. on the dates of the conference. Other presenters during the Monday General Session included Rich Koenig, Field Rep. for the NDHHS, Bill Podraza, Miller and Associates and Marty Norton, Denise Brosius-Meeks, and Jim Wehrer with USDA/Rural Development.

Following Monday's training sessions was a quick meal and a bus ride to the Big Apple Bowling Center for a night of entertainment and fun. JEO Consulting Engineers spearheaded the event which was a tremendous success. Teaming up with JEO to help with the "Fun Night" was Sargent Drilling, HOA Solutions, Miller and Associates and the Nebraska Rural Water Association. Those who did attend were treated to free drinks, bowling, miniature golf and many other fun things that the Big Apple has to offer. After talking with the operators and vendors who attended this event, I think this could become a great part of our annual conference.

Tuesday was a day packed full of learning. Operators could choose from a variety of different sessions including trench safety, metering technology, well controls and many other items that pertain to the water operator trade. Always remember I am open to suggestions for conference training sessions so if there is something you would like to see at the conference, feel free to call the office or e-mail me.

When the day of learning came to an end it was time to get

ready for the awards banquet. HD Supply sponsored a quick social hour giving everyone a chance to wind down from the busy day. After the wonderful banquet meal (every meal at the Younes Center is wonderful), it was time to recognize some of the great operators in Nebraska. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services recognized three operators this year. The first operator recognized was Elvin Vavra with the Village of Homer. The next two operators recognized were the husband and wife duo of Rene and Joy Nelson with Urban Utilities Inc. All three operators were very deserving of these awards and were very proud to be recognized.

The Annual Best Tasting Water Contest was held during lunch on Tuesday. The winner of this contest was also recognized at the banquet. Adam German with the Village of Cortland took home the top prize honors. Congratulations, Adam! Hopefully Cortland's water becomes Nebraska's second national champion.

This year the Nebraska Rural Water Association handed out its "Friend of Rural Water" Award. Richard "Dick" Frankforter with MaGuire Iron was this year's recipient. Dick has been a fantastic supporter of rural water and has also spoken at several one day training sessions. He provided the primer and paint for our water tower that highlights the Nebraska Rural Water Association office property. Thanks, Dick, and congratulations!

The final award of the evening was a new award. As most of you know, the Nebraska Rural Water Association lost Circuit Rider Russell Topp in December. Russ was known by most operators or communities throughout Nebraska and was very well respected as a technical assistance provider. For those who knew Russ he had a few favorite sayings that he would use when providing assistance. One of those sayings was "if you're going to do it, do it right." So with that, the Nebraska Rural Water Association created the "Russ Topp, Doing It Right Award." Everyone who attended the banquet was honored with the presence of Russ' wife Karen who told a wonderful story about Russell. After Karen told her story, Circuit Rider Randy Hellbusch presented the first annual Russ Topp award to Alan Krupicka. Alan is the designated operator of five systems and was very deserving

continued on page 9

of the award. There are many great water operators in the state of Nebraska. Hopefully they will see the importance of this award and continue to “do it right” and strive to win it!

After the awards banquet, attendees were treated to a few drinks and some fantastic music by the Chad Lee Band. It just seemed to be a great way to end a day full of learning, awards and even a few tears. The Chad Lee Band kept the attendees singing, dancing and just relaxing. We hope to have them back again!!

When Wednesday morning rolled around, it was time for the annual breakfast and business meeting. As soon as the meeting concluded, it was time for the training sessions to begin. Many operators were thinking they may have to leave a little early due to a potentially hazardous winter storm that was bearing down on western and central Nebraska. Although some operators did have to leave early, over 200 were still in the seats for the Governor of Nebraska, Pete Ricketts, to address the crowd. Governor Ricketts addressed the crowd with his emphasis on the importance of the responsibilities water operators have. Getting to meet Governor Ricketts was a tremendous honor for all of us at the Nebraska Rural Water Association, but it also showed

he does care about who we are and what we all do as water operators. Thank you, Governor Ricketts.

Wednesday’s lunch concluded with the raffle drawings. Some of the big winners were Dave Hansmeyer from Firth, Gary Beckler from Grant, Corban Helmandollar from Fort Calhoun, Don Christen from Burwell, Adam Darbro from Aurora, Alan Potter from Ewing and John Schutte from Nelson. There were some very nice prizes to be won and I hope all the winners enjoy them. Most of all, thank you for purchasing the raffle tickets, it helps a lot with the conference.

Finally, as I look back at the 2016 conference, I feel it was the best one that I have had the honor of being a part of. Operators came by the hundreds, the Younes Center is second to none, the Younes Center staff is amazing, but most of all it takes a team to make a conference like this successful! The teamwork of the Nebraska Rural Water Association board and staff, Salli, Carol, Amy, Mike Lucas, Mike Stanzel, Barney, Randy and Doug, played the most important part in making this great conference happen! Thank you to all of you!

Now let’s get ready for 2017.

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2016 NeRWA



A Conference





Valve Exercising

By Doug Buresh, Source Water Specialist

Along with my duties with source water protection, I've been asked to coordinate the usage of our valve exerciser machine. Thanks to donations to our equipment fund from you, our members, Nebraska Rural Water was able to purchase a new Wach valve exerciser in 2012. Why exercise valves? AWWA Publication M-44 recommends every valve should be operated through a full close and open cycle on a regular schedule to clear the operating stem and wedge guides of naturally occurring encrustation or other debris.

Ever try closing a valve that hasn't been operated in X number of years? It will most likely not close completely. Because there is not a lot of redundancy relating to gate valves in the distribution system, this means the poor sap down in the ditch trying to repair a leaking water main on the coldest day of the year is going to be miserable. And that poor, wet, miserably cold sap is often you, the operator.

We recommend all water systems have a program to routinely exercise their valves so they are in good operating order when you need them. In addition, Title 179 rules for the operation and maintenance of community and non-transient non-community public water systems require we maintain all mechanical equipment in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. This includes gate valves.

Many systems exercise their valves by hand and that is perfectly acceptable. The main advantage of using a machine to exercise valves is the machine does the hard work. None of us are getting younger and as much as we hate to admit it, some, including me, are making our way down from the top of the hill. A hard turning valve can often be loosened up just by working the stem up and down. Again, this can be accomplished by hand, but the machine can do it much faster and not be worn out for the next valve. I've spent as long as thirty minutes exercising one valve to loosen it up so it works easier. So long as I see any progress, I'll keep at it. A six-inch valve can be completely opened and shut somewhere around thirty times in a half hour with the machine. It takes much longer to accomplish that by hand, so we can save a system valuable time. Another advantage is that our machine records an accurate turn count in tenths of a turn. This can be useful as a reference point to be sure a valve is completely shut.

Our machine is regulated by a computerized controller that goes through a protocol to exercise a valve. It limits the amount of torque applied and records the turn count. The machine is capable of exerting 750 pounds of torque. We keep it set at 150 pounds for exercising valves. I will not go any higher than that without the water operator's permission to minimize the chance of breaking the valve. To be sure the valve is cleared of any debris, I like to see the same turn count on the controller three consecutive times. This usually takes ten or more rotations.

We require the water operator or other system representative sign a waiver that the system understands it is possible for damage to occur during the course of valve exercising and that the system agrees to hold NeRWA, its Board of Directors, officers, employees and representatives harmless from any and all liability relating to the valve exercising process including but not limited to damages to valves, piping, hydrants or any other equipment or property. We have broken a handful of two-inch valves and a few four-inch valves with our machine, so it can happen. The four-inchers were fairly new and we believe may have been defective. We



no longer recommend using our machine to exercise two-inch valves.

I'm often asked how many valves we can exercise in a day. I've done as many as sixty and as few as twelve in a full day. It depends a great deal on the location and condition of the valves and valve boxes. We ask that a system have at least one person accompany the machine operator while exercising the valves to locate and open the valve boxes. If the box has mud, dirt or other obstructions in it, we cannot exercise the valve until it is cleaned out. If we have to wait for a valve box to get cleaned, it only takes longer to complete the job. We ask that you check your valves before our arrival to locate, open and clean, if necessary, all the valves you want us to exercise. If you can get a valve wrench on the stem, we should also be able to get ours on it.

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A few exceptions would be if the valve is more than seven foot deep or we are not able to park the machine within twelve feet of the valve.

A few tips for maintaining valves: Do not leave a gate valve opened all the way, unless required to keep it from leaking. It should be left one-half to one turn from the top to keep the operating stem from rusting in place. Shop-Vacs work well to remove dirt, mud or water from valve boxes. I've also seen operators use augers, clam-shell cleaners, trash pick-up tools, vacuum trucks, fire trucks and even valve wrenches to clean out valve boxes. Finally, most waterworks suppliers sell polyethylene mud plugs to keep dirt and other debris out of valve boxes. Mud plugs are inexpensive, have a handle molded into the top and can be easily cut to fit any valve box. At \$5 to \$10 apiece, they are a cheap method of keeping your problem valve boxes clean and accessible for when you need to shut a valve.

I keep a record of valve location in a notebook, right or left-hand close, number of turns, the maximum pounds of torque used on each valve and if the valve leaked while exercising it or if it had any other problem such as standing water. When we are finished with the project, you can photocopy my records or I can e-mail them to you or drop them in

the mail. We do not charge our members for exercising valves, but we ask that they provide ethanol-free gasoline for the machine and make a \$7.50 per valve donation to our equipment fund.

Contact me at 402-480-4196 if you would like us to exercise your valves. As of April 14th, there are twenty-eight systems on our waiting list.

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WATER TOWER SPECIALISTS





E-coli and Unprepared

By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider

As one of the Circuit Riders for the Nebraska Rural Water Association, I have worked with a lot of water operators throughout the state. We offer technical assistance in numerous ways. Often there are requests from operators to stop by when we are in the area. Then there are requests from operators that are in panic mode. Normally it is late in the week, they go to the clerk's office to get their mail and you guessed it, a letter from the Department of Health and Human Services informing them that they have a positive coliform sample. This letter is usually accompanied with a box of initial repeat samples. That's when we get the panic call. Usually our response is, "Do you have a chlorinator?"

The Department of Health and Human Services requires every water system to have a chlorinator available within 24 hours. As you all know Nebraska Rural Water has several chlorinators available that we loan out as needed. Also, if you are using more than one well, you need a chlorinator in each well house.

Recently I assisted a system that owned two pumps, however they were not ready to use. The system tested positive for E-coli and needed to start disinfection immediately. However when I arrived, I discovered that they were not prepared at all. Their two pumps were currently installed at the town's swimming pool. One was for some acid and one for chlorine.

The next problem was that when the pool was shut down the pumps were not flushed out properly and all the tubing and suction and injection lines were rotten. Also, they had no spare parts on hand. Fortunately I carry a kit containing new tubing, injectors, pump tubes, suction filters and even spare chlorinators. So with a little time spent refurbishing the pumps, we were able to start disinfecting in a few hours.

Here is a check list that may be helpful to you to ensure you are ready for disinfection, should the problem arise.

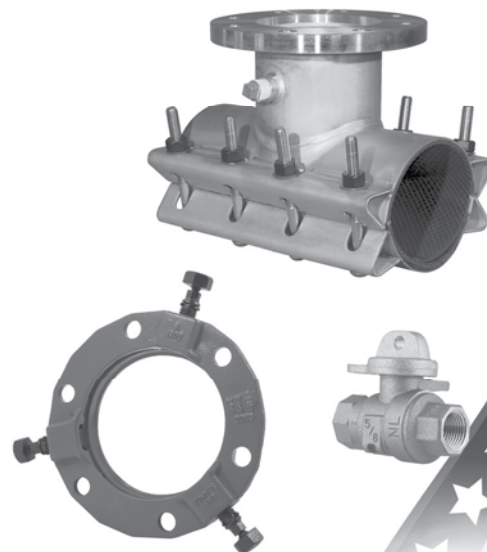
1. You will need a pump that is properly sized for your well. Having a pump too big or too small will not meet your needs. This is determined by how many gallons your wells pump.
2. All your well houses are required to have a dedicated outlet for power. Meaning the plug is only hot when the well is running.

3. You will need a good, clean bucket with a lid for chlorine.
4. You need to make sure you have a good injection point in your well's piping.
5. You need to make sure you have a good colorimeter to test for chlorine residual.
6. You also need to make sure you have reagents for Free Chlorine that are NOT expired.
7. You also should be prepared to go out and flush fire hydrants to ensure good chlorinated water is getting through your system and at a strong enough dose.

If you would like assistance in making sure you have all the proper equipment to disinfect in an emergency, please feel free to give me a call at 402-672-9084.

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Proactive Planning

By Barney Whatley, Capacity Development Specialist

As regulations continue to become stricter and more difficult to comply with, it would be a smart move for systems to try to get ahead of the game rather than waiting for the other shoe to fall. There are several steps systems can take that will assist them in remaining in compliance with current and upcoming regulations. It is important to keep up-to-date on the changing world of regulations in order to plan on the steps you can take before they go into effect. Systems can also do a self-review to determine if there are practices or conditions which might put them at a higher risk when new regulations are proposed. Also, working with your field representative is always a step in the right direction for remaining in compliance with current and upcoming regulations.

The Department of Health makes every effort to inform water systems and operators of changes in the regulations that are on the horizon. The “Regulatory Update” sessions at both the Annual Conference and the Western Conference of the Nebraska Rural Water Association cover both current regulations as well as those which are being proposed on both the state and national level. The state also notifies systems when there are changes in Title 179, the regulations which govern the operation of public water systems. In order to try to reduce the amount of paper that is being used, the state no longer automatically sends paper copies of new and updated chapters in Title 179, but they do notify systems of the changes and advise where they can be downloaded and printed by the system, if they want paper copies. Our web page, <http://www.nerwa.org> has a link to the state web site where the most currently updated copy of Title 179 is located. If you click on the link “NE Public Water Supply” in the right hand column of our main page, it will take you to the web page where any or all of the chapters of Title 179 can be downloaded and/or printed.

Another proactive step a system can take is to complete a technical, managerial and financial assessment of the system to discover where potential problem areas might be. NeRWA is willing to assist in completing these assessments, particularly in the managerial and financial areas. This information would be for the use of the system in determining if there are practices that could be changed in order to assist the system to run more like a business, thus increasing the capacity of the system to continue operating

on a positive footing into the future. These assessments take about an hour to complete, and if the system wants, NeRWA personnel will attend a board or council meeting to present the results to the governing body. If the assessment is completed at the request of the system, the system can adopt or ignore recommendations made as a result of the assessment. Call the office at (800) 842-8039 or myself at (402) 480-4297 if you are interested in having an assessment of your system completed.

Communicating with the system’s field representative is also a good way to remain in compliance with current regulations and discover what steps might need to be taken to comply with future regulations. Although the Department of Health is a regulatory agency, the field representatives are still willing to work with systems to help them avoid getting out of compliance. As long as the system and the operator are honest with the field representative and are making a good faith effort to improve the way in which the system is run, the field representatives will work with you to accomplish that goal.

Waiting for new regulations to be written and then trying to get back into compliance when you receive a violation for breaching them is a time consuming and costly method of learning what the new regulations are. The cost for required public notices alone can run into more money than a prudent system would like to spend on something that can easily be avoided. Taking a proactive approach to regulations will keep the system in compliance and will help to guarantee the ability of the system to provide safe drinking water to its customers well into the future.

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Summary of Evaluations

NeRWA Kearney Conference
March 21-23, 2016

TOTAL EVALUATIONS RECEIVED – 165

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

a. Operator/Manager	148
b. Administrative	2
c. Board Member	0
d. Plumber.	1
e. Lawn Service	0
f. State/Federal Rep.	3
g. Clerk	1
h. Other: (no explanation)	0
Boiler Operator	1
Engineer	1
Utilities Supervisor	1
Wife	1
Chemist	1

Double positions:

Operator/Manager, Board Member and Admin. -- 1

Operator/Manager and Clerk and Admin. -- 1

Operator/Manager, Plumber and Board member -- 1

Operator/Manager, Plumber and Lawn Service -- 1

Backup Operator and Board Member -- 1

Operator and Plumber -- 1

- There were more programs on success stories and/or examples of communities-not so much on products or vendors.
- Interesting topics/good slide shows
- Facility very good-training sessions better than the past
- I like the location. You can walk and never drive anywhere.
- Time span of classes and breaks.
- Variety of training classes
- Friendliness of presenters and their knowledge
- Good classes, roundtable
- Overall pretty good
- I enjoyed everything. There were really good speakers and everything is well organized.
- All of the classes were very good.
- Talking to other operators and seeing that they have the same problems and hearing their solutions.
- Useful classes that help educate with newer products.
- Nice conference center
- Fun night was better than usual
- Good location/great food/fun night was fun
- Food, venue, speakers
- Wide selection of training class options
- The conference is great.
- Variety and relevancy
- All good
- Every session I took was excellent. Good job!
- Location, education, info. From vendors, fun night
- Great classroom material discussed/great meals
- It's all in one area.
- Topics
- Everything was great.
- The meals very good/not cheap-hotels were so close-vendor selection
- Lodging, vendors, meals, most speakers
- Awesome facilities and amazing food
- Conference center is nice. Food is wonderful-beverages and entertainment were very good. Classes are informative.
- Great conference-good food-good staff
- Visiting with vendors and other operators. It's a chance to learn about better ways to operate.
- Facility is great/classes are good/vendors are good/speakers are good/NeRWA staff is tremendous! Good job!
- The location. It all seemed to work well.
- The training was very helpful, with great topics.
- More roundtable discussions
- The motels were close by. I enjoyed the speakers, and classrooms with tables. Kearney is far better than Columbus or Grand Island.
- Younes Center is nice and clean, with plenty of coffee and great food.
- Venue was great and food was good
- Good meals, classes, and rooms
- Meals were excellent, speakers were very good, and the venue was great. This conference was very well done.
- Classes offered/vendors were interested in my problems
- Seeing old friends, training, and the location.
- Everything
- Conference facilities had adequate room for all attendees. There was valuable information given at the sessions. It was nice to visit with the vendors and to see some of the new products.

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

a. The training classes	57
b. The prizes/entertainment	2
c. The vendors	22
d. Chance to meet with operators	29
e. All of the above	108

QUESTION #3 – Things you liked and why?

- Great location and classes
- Very nice
- Lots of good, useful information
- Bill Podraza is a very good speaker
- Nice one stop shop
- Really enjoyed the backflow classes-you can still learn some thing new. Also enjoyed "facility solutions" class.
- Meals were great. Brian Gongol was an excellent speaker.
- Location, venue, and classes very good
- Was all good
- Great conference as always
- Location, food, informative classes
- The closeness of the venue and hotels is great.
- Getting your hours is a big plus. Rich and all the rural water people are great.
- Classes were helpful/informative/learning new processes
- Love the center
- Meals, presenters, classes, facilities
- The whole conference/getting to meet DHHS staff and other operators
- Very nice facility/spacious
- Venue is very good/clean/contained. Training was valuable.
- All speakers are very knowledgeable.
- Very informative classes
- Variety of training topics, roundtable discussions, the Russ Top award
- Venue is wonderful/sessions were helpful
- Vendors were very helpful and explained their products well.
- Brian Gongol was excellent.
- Location
- Good meals, classes, venue

- The venue is excellent and the food is great. There is a good variety of vendors and sessions.
- Convention center-friendly people/information from speakers
- Everything excellent
- Location, vendors, classes, and food
- Class info. Was great
- Roundtables
- Fun night was awesome
- Variety of topics/Kearney is the perfect location
- Variety of subjects in classes/nice facility.
- This was a very good conference
- Food, training, facility
- The shuttle to and from the Big Apple was a good idea
- Everything was great
- The NeRWA does an excellent job putting on the conference. It is well attended by operators and vendors. Vendor sponsorship of events and activities is a good idea. The Younes Center is to be commended for hosting the event. The facility is very good, staff and service top notch and the food is excellent.
- Everything awesome
- Great speaker/sessions. Good number of vendors.
- Regulation Updates
- Total System Efficiency
- Free beer
- Good speakers and a lot of good information
- Different training
- Well organized-plenty of hours for all professions
- Chairs/food
- I liked everything about the conference.
- Prizes were different this year.
- Speakers did very good
- Good training sessions
- Facility was very nice and roomy. The chairs were comfortable. Good food and speakers.
- Meeting other operators and discussing similar issues
- The presenters were very professional and informative. The vendors had new and updated equipment. Great food and prizes.
- It was a great event and location.
- Venue
- Being able to go to presentations
- Food was good
- I really enjoyed Katie Miller's presentation.
- Food and most presentations
- The venue was excellent
- Everything is always good.
- Good variety of topics discussed-good meals-great prizes
- Talking to vendors/training classes.
- Liked having hotel attached to conference center.
- Great venue! Excellent food!
- Everything was nice-motel, center, vendors, etc.
- Great!
- Loud and clear speakers/usable topics/social staff and great food
- The training sessions are informative. The motel is close and clean and the meals are very good.
- Nice venue-meals are excellent-knowledgeable speakers
- Kearney is a great place to have the conference. The food was great.
- Class topics were a good reminder how dangerous our jobs can be and how little things can make it safer.
- Food and classes
- The speakers were on point!
- Loved everything about this venue
- Very informative
- Rich Koenig, Rob Pierce, and Katie Miller's classes were all good.
- Hotels, food, classes
- The topics were informative and the food was good.
- The speakers were excellent. The scheduling went well. I appreciate the sponsorship from the vendors.
- Training-different info.
- Good speakers
- I liked the safety training, because at this time, my community does not have these programs.
- Well done. Thank you!
- Good variety of topics discussed/meals were excellent/ Tuesday entertainment was a nice change.
- I liked the Tuesday night entertainment and the food.
- Classes were short and informative
- Good topics
- The conference center is nice, lots of room. I liked getting to meet and talk with other operators.
- All the classes were good and on target-food was excellent
- The sessions given by Rich Koenig were the best.
- Training classes were very informational.
- I like that there were many choices of classes. The speakers do a good job of being informative and answering questions.
- Interesting training-well run
- The wide variety of topics covered in classes
- The venue is great/plenty of space in the classrooms.
- Location is great.
- N/A (Many of these types of responses)
- Class sizes are too big
- Shorter breaks
- ½ hour breaks get too long-to get backflow hours, you get stuck in the same stuff all day.
- I thought the breaks were too long.
- No girls at the dance
- Some of the event staff were rude.
- The room was cold on Monday.
- Need to change some of the classes.
- Rich Koenig topics are very much the same, but backflow is that way.
- Did I miss the cookies the 2nd day?
- Liked poker night better than the fun center
- Nothing
- Late start. Last session too late.
- Wind blew every day.
- No bargains when buying multiple raffle tickets
- Big Apple-if you did not bowl, there was nothing to do.
- Some instructors. Did not learn anything. Some instructors assumed all operators were familiar with forms, like CCR's.
- Nowhere to sit during lunch
- The 811 class is a repeat every year.
- Truly hard to find any faults.
- It would be nice if the board members would spread out and sit with other people.
- The morning headache
- Breaks were too long
- No grace was said before meals-Barney always did a great job.
- Need some new classes
- More options for sessions
- The taste of Kearney's water
- Cleaning of restrooms at break time
- Wrong time of year. Too busy.
- Same classes every year
- Some of the classes had nothing to do with my job.
- Wish we had more backflow classes
- Product programs were not really relevant to our system.
- Distance to travel
- Hard to get in raffles
- Disliked having two sessions I wanted to attend, occurring at the same time.
- Would like to be done with sessions by 5pm
- At times, some rooms were too cold.
- Consider backflow classes on both days.
- Depending on where you are from, the trip is too long.

- No hands-on
- More backflow hours
- Table space limited for lunch


QUESTION # 5 – Any suggestions for future conferences?

- None (Many had no response)
- Comedians
- Hands on classes/country music entertainment
- Would like to see a little more “chemistry of applications” processes.
- Keep it up!
- Keep it going, great job!
- Keep up the good work.
- Sessions for clerks
- More than one small system roundtable
- Wednesday-Friday conference
- Always looking for more specialized classes.
- Proper water sampling class/new operator crash course class
- Start earlier in the morning
- Hands-on classes
- More roundtable discussions
- The Chad Lee band should return
- No music-most guys prefer to have their wives with them for dancing
- Fun night at the fun center-recommend doing it again
- More backflow hour options
- Don’t change anything
- Comedians are enjoyable
- A few sessions of real life crisis situations that fellow operators have dealt with-tornados, floods, etc.
- Activated sludge for waste water
- Continue to change it up
- Take suggestions on ways to get more people involved in the water and waste water industry. Have an open discussion on courses or training opportunities to speed up the process of working up through the ranks.
- Classroom demonstrations need to be done so everyone can see.
- Comedian or ventriloquist again
- Maybe a comedian or magician
- More operator and board member roundtables
- More real-life topic scenarios with photos and presentations
- RP Smith comedian poet from Broken Bow
- The Big Apple was fun
- I would like to see something different with the backflow hours-there are classes I would like to attend, but I have to attend the backflow classes instead, for the hours.
- Teach classes to justify giving credit hours. Better vendors-offer a “boot truck” to purchase footwear at a discounted price.
- No-all classes were informational!
- Nailed it this year
- Early quit times
- Tank maintenance
- Hands-on class on water main repair
- Discuss resources that are available, especially for new operators, just learning.
- Bands (entertainment) go over well
- Safety classes

QUESTION # 6 – Any additional comments?

- Smaller systems do not have their own training or teachers. We rely heavily on these classes to teach us. Thank you.
- This conference was a good reminder of many topics.
- Thank you. Very well done again.
- Good conference
- Keep up the great work!

- The Younes conference center is a very nice place to have the conference.
- NeRWA did a great job. Keep it up.
- Overall it was a good conference
- Round table could be longer with a break in the middle.
- My first year at the conference-there is a lot to learn if you listen. I got a lot out of the training classes.
- Thank you for all you do for the communities!
- Burgers were burnt-roast beef was bloody and tough-overall not the best conference.
- Keep up the good work.
- Thanks NeRWA
- Great conference
- Great job NeRWA staff
- Thanks for putting on the conference each year. It is informative and one of the best ways to obtain continuing education hours.
- The food and the staff were terrific.
- Would like to see RWD bookkeepers receive an award or be recognized.
- Thanks for another great conference.
- Don’t clean restrooms when classes are over.
- Good event
- NeRWA always does a fantastic job. I always have a very good time here.
- Overall a very good conference
- Could do small systems roundtable for a couple hours. It is the best session.
- Great show
- Very good conference. Pat should be commended. He and the staff do a great job.
- Very well done-very organized



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NPDES; National Pollution Discharge Elimination System

By Mike Lucas, Wastewater Technician

Across the state we have many new operators, so in this article I wanted to visit about your National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. This is your permit to discharge to the waters of the state from your treatment facility. It regulates the maximum contaminant levels (mcl), generally in mg/l, allowed in your final effluent and also the limits on the stream loading, generally in kg/d.

Many times I've found that the designated operator of the system does not have a current copy of the permit. It is fine to have a copy filed at the Clerk's office but the operator should certainly have access to one and be familiar with it. The permit not only defines the limits but also the sampling procedures. Is it a grab sample or a 24 hour composite sample? Some samples are required on an annual basis such as an annual influent sample which is most often required to be a 24 hour composite sample. Others are a once in the life of the permit sample such as toxicity. Controlled discharges from lagoons usually call for at least 2 grab samples. While reviewing one system's permit I did find an exception to that however. Their permit called for a 24 hour composite sample on their lagoon discharge. It was thought to have been an oversight by the permit writer but you are governed by that official permit.

As the designated operator you need to know that when your permit is being renewed the system will receive a draft permit and that you will have an opportunity to review it and to make comments. Be sure that you do that. There is a rule that does not allow a less stringent limit than was previously allowed on your permit. Think about it. Give credit to the NDEQ for their notification of changes to the

permit. That wasn't always the case.

There are almost always changes to the limits, such as ammonia and what additional testing is required certainly now with nutrient issues. Your lab needs to be notified by your system of any additional required testing. Some laboratory results are "report only" on your discharge monitoring report (DMR) and some have limits. Don't just assume that nothing has changed because, in fact, it probably has changed.

As the certified operator, the citizen owners of your system have invested heavily in your training and I sincerely hope that your valuable, knowledgeable voice is heard by the decision makers.

WESTERN CONFERENCE TIME

It is time to start thinking about heading west to Gering for the NeRWA's Fall Conference. The conference will be held September 27-29 at the Gering Civic Center. The fall conference will once again mix fun and relaxation with a chance to learn new things and gather much needed CEUs to renew your operator licenses.

There will be a pre-conference on Tuesday. Following the pre-conference is the 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 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 award presentation will complete Wednesday. There will be a complimentary breakfast served at 6:30 am Thursday followed by a full day of training 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 fall conference and you have the resources to do so, please try to make it to Gering. It is a mix of fun and learning. See you out west!

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Rural Water District Manager

Rural Water District No. 1, Lancaster County, Nebraska is accepting applications for the position of District Manager. Experience should include, but is not limited to, operation of a public water system, supervision of employees, preparation of budgets and reports, general knowledge of business administration and computer skills. Other skills should include an understanding of repairs and maintenance, responding to emergencies and working with the Board of Directors, the public and outside agencies. You will be required to obtain a Nebraska Grade 3 Water Operator's License. Candidates may obtain an application at the District Office located at 310 Fir Street, Bennet, NE, or from our website at www.lrwd1.com. You may also submit a Resume with Application to: Rural Water District No. 1, Attention: Kipp Haight, Chairman. PO Box 98, Bennet, NE 68317. Applications may be submitted to the office or by mail, must be received or postmarked no later than June 1, 2016. *RWD No. 1 is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*

2016 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

By Salli Kemerling, Office Manager

The Nebraska Rural Water Association will be publishing a new membership directory that will be available January 2017.

The directory will contain the same information as in the past. If you have any ideas of other things you would like to see in the directory, please let me know.

The mailing for the membership directory updates will be sent out in November with a return time of two weeks. The material for the directory needs to be at the publishers by December 1. So if you have any changes in information up until December 1, please send them to me. The information for the directory comes from the membership renewal forms that you send in to us on or before the month it is due. If I do not receive any changes, the information in the directory will be exactly as it appears on the renewal form that we presently have on file.

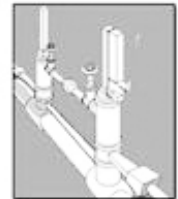
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Thank you.



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