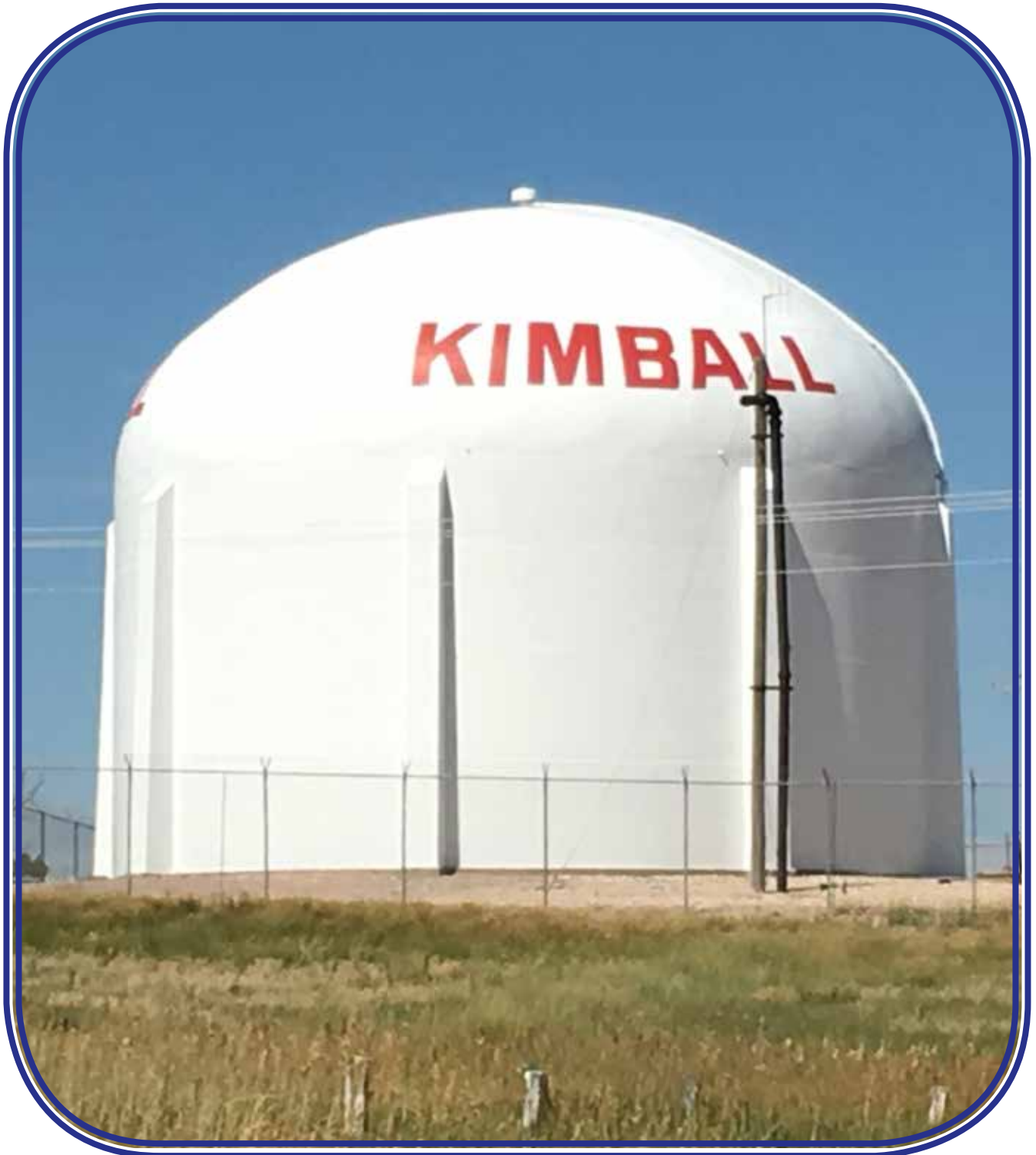
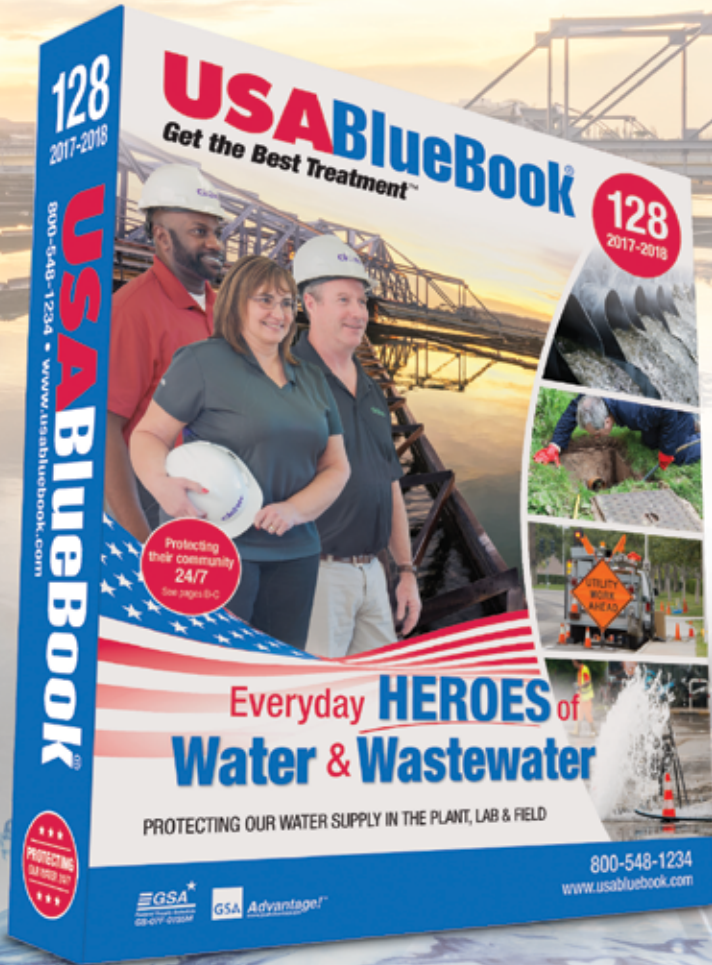


Issue 2/2018

# Nebraska Rural Water Association



## NEBRASKA GOOD WATER NEWS



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# Nebraska Good Water News

# Issue 2/2018

*“Keeping Our Water Safe”*

*Board of Directors*

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### **On the cover:**

The Kimball Water Tower.

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*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.*

# 2018 TRAINING

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

April 9-13	Wahoo
October 15-19	Wahoo

## Wastewater Certification Course

August 14-17	Wahoo - Mechanical
November 27-30	Wahoo- Mechanical

## Wastewater Training

April 26	Omaha
May 8	Bridgeport
June 28	Ogallala
July 10	Neligh
August 7	Auburn
September 27	Wahoo
October 4	Omaha
November 14	Columbus
December 12	Aurora

## Water Operator Training

April 10	Bridgeport
May 16	Osmond
June 13	Sutton
July 10	Chadron
July 11	Valentine
August 7	Ord
October 16	Eustis
November 15	Wahoo
December 19	Red Cloud

## Backflow Continuing Education Training

April 17	Cairo
April 19	Falls City
April 25	Wahoo
May 9	Valentine
September 26	McCool Junction
September 27	Ord
October 23	South Sioux City
October 25	Atkinson
November 8	Wahoo
December 11	Mitchell
December 12	Ogallala
December 13	Cambridge
December 18	Wahoo

## **Fall Western Conference**

**Sept. 11-13**  
Gering Civic Center  
Gering, Nebraska

**August 22** Trenching & Shoring Wahoo

**August 23** Confined Space Entry Wahoo

Registrations for **all fee-based** 1-day training classes and multiple day training courses will need to be made online, mailed or faxed to our office.

We will not be taking phone registrations for **fee-based** training.



## Be Alert / Be Aware

By Mike Lucas, Wastewater Technician

Regular routine inspections of your collection system can be very enlightening. I would recommend both visual, opening manholes and inspecting the flow and, at times, composite or grab sampling. All inspections should be well documented.

I know that it's hard to believe, but it is true that people will flush just about everything even here in Nebraska. Some of these improper discharges can be harmful to your treatment process (compliance), to public health and to you personally. "As an operator you are responsible to protect your collection system as you see fit." That was once relayed to me by an E.P.A. attorney.

Be suspicious. Periodic influent analysis may help answer treatment process issues. As a "been there and done that" operator and now in this position I have been made aware of increasing harmful discharges into the public sanitary sewer collection systems. Many of us have seen used oil in the waste stream. I've witnessed the evidence of large volumes of paint suspected to be from commercial painting operations. Extremely high BOD discharges have been sampled. Extreme discharge pH ranges suspected to have come from manufacturers have also been recorded.

These types of toxic discharges can and do kill treatment plant processes resulting in long recovery times pretty much indiscriminate to treatment types. Even small rural community lagoons are not exempt. When well documented evidence is collected, your best support may come through Village/City ordinances, your state regulatory agency and occasionally law enforcement.

One of my cohorts in a neighboring state said that the frequency of illegal meth lab discharges into the state's collection systems had increased so much that he had developed a recipe for bringing their plants back to life. He warned that it could even contaminate your multimillion dollar plant.

One alert operator relayed to me that the turtles in his small rural community non-discharging lagoons had suddenly all died. He had his suspicions and reported it to law enforcement. Reportedly after a police raid at a

location in his community, a meth lab was exposed and shut down.

### Yes, even in Nebraska!

You might be interested in an educational brochure/handout on "Protect Your Sewer, Protect Your Environment." They are \$0.20 a piece if NeRWA prints them and mails them to you, \$0.15 a piece if you pick them up at the NeRWA office or they are free if you go to [nerwa.org](http://nerwa.org) and click on "news and downloads page" and print the handout yourself.

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March 23, 2018

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## **NRWA Applauds Congress' Funding Increase for Rural Water Infrastructure**

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) commends the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for providing increases in federal water infrastructure funding for Rural America.

“This is a very significant action from Congress with increased attention and investments to address the unmet water infrastructure needs in Rural America,” stated Sam Wade, CEO of NRWA.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (HR 1625) included \$560,263,000 for USDA's Rural Utilities Service Water and Waste Disposal Program Account, and, to further enhance rural water infrastructure, the appropriators included an additional \$500,000,000 for direct rural water and waste disposal loans and grants to remain available until expended. This federal program is the only water infrastructure account specifically targeted to rural populations.

Congress also provided USDA the flexibility to use this funding to increase the direct loan level to support billions in loan authority. These low-interest loans are coupled with a 40-year term to make water rates affordable for low-income residents and communities.

There are approximately 52,000 community water supplies in the United States, and 92% serve populations of 10,000 or less. The NRWA and its 49 state association affiliates provide compliance training and technical assistance to approximately 100,000 rural and small system personnel annually to address the numerous federally-mandated drinking and clean water rules and regulations.

America enjoys the safest water supply in the world due to the small water and waste water system personnel that work every minute of every day to protect and maintain the integrity of the nation's most important resource.

“Communities that have been waiting for available affordable resources to address deferred upgrades or enhancements will now be able to move forward,” stated Wade.

NRWA looks forward to working in close consultation with USDA and other industry partners to make wise use of these additional funds and address Rural America's water infrastructure needs.

The National Rural Water Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to training, supporting, and promoting the water and wastewater professionals that serve small communities across the United States. The mission of NRWA is to strengthen State Associations.

NRWA provides training and technical assistance through 49 affiliated State Rural Water Associations, that currently have over 31,000 utility system members. Last year, State Rural Water Association staff delivered over 75,000 on-site technical assistance visits and 150,000 hours of training to more than 37,000 utilities. Rural Water training and technical assistance covers every aspect of operating, managing and financing water and wastewater utilities.

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## Who is Going to Take My Place?

*By Ken Halvorsen, Source Water Specialist*

I believe we can all agree we had a really good Spring Conference at Kearney in March. Pat does an excellent job putting all the pieces together so that no one realizes how much work it takes. I, also, appreciate that we get real meals with real place settings.

Back to my point, it seems all of the sideline discussions I had with folks at the conference ended the same way most of them have the past few years. The main point of the conversation being, "I plan to retire in a few years and who is going to take my place?" Granted, it is not the operator's problem who their system replaces them with, but the majority have pride in their system because of all the time and work they've put into it.

Another concern is, "They won't find anybody to do this for the pay I get." This is probably the greatest obstacle in replacing retiring operators. Quite often the system's options are hiring someone retired who will work part time or hiring two people that will work part time. Systems start by paying lower wages because their operator is not going to quit. He has lived in the community all his life and is not going anywhere. This leads us to the next problem. These systems have not needed to budget for higher wages. Budgeting for higher wages could be difficult due to income issues.

Possibly a larger problem is finding a candidate who is willing to be on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This appears to be a greater issue than that of wages. As we know, having SCADA monitoring and cell phones capable of monitoring the entire system has made that part of the position less restrictive, but it is still part of the job.

Finally, in my travels around the state, I have had a number of conversations with operators who tell me their boards or supervisors do not understand how difficult it will be to find a competent and reliable replacement. One operator I have met makes it a point to pick up cigarette butts off the street. Folks could eat dinner off the floor of his treatment plant. It sounds like his board does not appreciate everything he does. They feel if he leaves, it

would be easy to find someone to take his place. Really?

It may sound like I am preaching to the choir. Just maybe this will be left on the board table, and then someone might accidentally read it.

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# NeRWA Scholarship

We received many scholarship applications this year. As usual there are some very talented students out there. However, we can only pick two winners and two alternates. They are:

- (1) Megan Christen  
Daughter of Robin Christen,  
Clerk from the Village of Anselmo
- (2) Kia Liermann  
Daughter of Jaimy Liermann,  
Office Manager from Cuming County RWD

Alternates:

- (3) Justin Voorman  
Son of Lee Voorman,  
Director of Operations from Hastings Utilities
- (4) Tara Mueller  
Daughter of John Mueller,  
Utility Superintendent from the Village of Exeter

# HELP WANTED

The City of Tekamah is accepting applications for Water Operator Class I. State certification Grade IV and Sewer Grade I must be obtained within 6 months of hire. Pay rate \$16.00 - \$21.00/hour depending on experience and qualifications. Drug test required. Applicants must be at least 18 years old and hold a valid Nebraska driver's license. Application and job description may be requested at: City Office, 1315 K. Street, Tekamah, NE 68061 or [tekwater2@tekamah.net](mailto:tekwater2@tekamah.net). Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Equal opportunity employer.

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## Review Your Surveys

By Barney Whatley, Capacity Development Specialist

When I go to assist a system with their response to the deficiencies noted on their sanitary survey, I assist them in looking at each deficiency and determining a date by which it will be corrected. One of the things that seems to be overlooked in the response is the additional steps that need to be taken with some of the deficiencies in addition to correcting them as written. The biggest one that seems to come back and haunt operators is getting the cross connection control surveys distributed and then returned. Often the clerk will send out the surveys and note which ones are returned. The surveys are then placed in a file so they can be inspected by the field representative when he returns to the system.

Getting cross connection control surveys returned to the system is only the beginning in the process of insuring that the system does not have unprotected cross connections which could result in a backflow incident. The water operator or someone else who is knowledgeable in what constitutes a cross connection should review all of the surveys to determine if the answers given might indicate the presence of an unprotected cross connection. If there is a question raised by the survey, the premises in question should be inspected to determine if there is an unprotected cross connection present. Operators also need to keep in mind that the average customer may not have enough knowledge concerning cross connections to accurately determine if there is one present. Making the survey form simple and easy to understand can help the customer in accurately filling it out.

If a customer indicates that they have a cross connection that is protected, whether by a testable backflow preventer or other means, the operator should inspect the premises to determine what type of protection is there and whether it is adequate for the hazard that exists. Water softeners are one situation where the home owner may think it is protected with an air gap, when it only has an air break or nothing at all protecting it. Inspecting a certain percentage of these each year can help to insure they are properly protected and that the system will not be subject to contamination.

Non-testable backflow devices, such as atmospheric

vacuum breakers and hose bib vacuum breakers should be inspected by the home owner at least annually to determine that they are still functioning and that they have not been removed or altered so as to keep them from being effective. Atmospheric vacuum breakers should also be checked to be sure that they are not subjected to back pressure under any circumstances and that they do not have valves downstream of the device. They are also not to be under pressure for more than 12 hours in any 24 hour period.

Testable backflow preventers must be tested annually, with the test results given to the water system within 30 days of the test. This does not apply to lawn sprinkling systems unless the water system requires the testing. Sending the test results to the water system is not the responsibility of the property owner, but rather it is the responsibility of the backflow tester. Systems need to be sure that anyone approved to test assemblies protecting their system are aware that they need to send the test report to the system within 30 days of the test.

Remember, getting the survey forms back from your customers is just the first step in protecting your water system from a possible backflow incident.

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March 23, 2018

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## **Statement from the National Rural Water Association on the Retirement of Senator Thad Cochran**

Duncan, Okla. – Today, Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi was praised by his Senate colleagues for his long, devoted service to this nation. Senator Cochran had previously announced his retirement from the United States Senate that will be effective April 1, 2018.

Senator Cochran honorably served Mississippi in the United States Senate and the House of Representatives for 46 years. Throughout that period, he held many leadership posts including serving as the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Senate Agriculture Committee. Throughout his entire life, in his posts as an Eagle Scout, Naval Officer, or Statesman, Thad Cochran always stepped up to serve others.

On the Senate floor, many of his colleagues gave their final public tributes. Some of the resounding remarks and repeated descriptions included describing him as the quiet persuader, gentile southerner, the man with unquestionable honor and integrity and the man that was always true to his word.

Let us reflect on the character and decency of this fine man. His dignity and moral fiber are the qualities that this nation longs for in its leaders and are the same virtues we attempt to instill in our children.

Throughout his public service, he was and continues to be a champion for rural America. His work and vision have benefited the quality of life for millions of rural Americans even though most will not know his name nor the positions he held, or even how they benefitted. No man has ever practiced the art of politics and public policy to benefit so many others without regard for personal recognition than Senator Thad Cochran.

As a national organization we can testify that thousands of rural communities and millions of individuals across this nation now have access to safe, clean and affordable water directly from his efforts for 46 years.

In a time when many Americans have doubts and low opinions of Congress, let us hope that more elected officials now and in the future, will follow the example that Senator Thad Cochran practiced each day in his service to this nation. The National Rural Water Association and this entire nation owes a tremendous debt of gratitude for his service. Senator Cochran has fought the good fight, he has finished the course, he has kept the faith.

The National Rural Water Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to training, supporting, and promoting the water and wastewater professionals that serve small communities across the United States. The mission of NRWA is to strengthen State Associations.

NRWA provides training and technical assistance through 49 affiliated State Rural Water Associations, that currently have over 31,000 utility system members. Last year, State Rural Water Association staff delivered over 75,000 on-site technical assistance visits and 150,000 hours of training to more than 37,000 utilities. Rural Water training and technical assistance covers every aspect of operating, managing and financing water and wastewater utilities.

## 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 11-13 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!

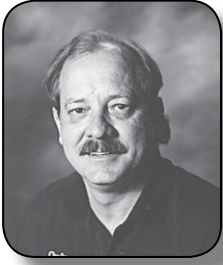


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# Valve Exercising Time

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

Well, old man winter is having a hard time letting go this year. The NeRWA crew is anxious to get out and get some of the outdoor work requests completed. A big part of that is the valve exercising machine. We have gotten a start on systems on the list.

Staffing and time restraints do somewhat limit our ability to dedicate someone to do the valve exercising full time. Having said that, valve exercising is a big priority for us. If you are on the list, we will be contacting you in advance to be sure that all valve boxes are cleaned and the valves are accessible. We can get through approximately 50 valves a day or more if this has been done and everything goes well.



We have several systems on the list that have had their valves exercised in the past couple of years. Our main priority at this point is to assist systems

that have not used the valve exerciser in the past or that have not used it for several years.

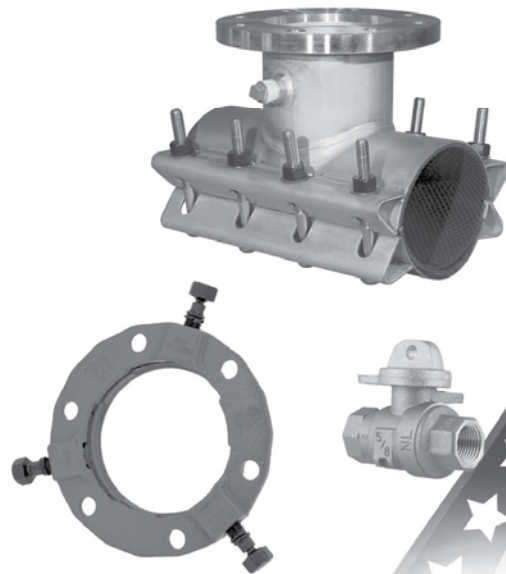
If you have not taken advantage of the valve exercising machine, I encourage you to get on board and give us a call. The machine can give you a lot of information on the condition of your valves. It will tell exactly how

many turns it takes to close the valve. We have had several incidences where the system thought they knew the size of the main, but found out that it is either larger or smaller than they thought. The exerciser also shows the maximum amount of torque needed to operate the valve. Often times we find valves that cannot be turned by hand. After exercising them, they operated with ease. Another aspect of valve exercising is that we have found valves in systems that are actually closed or only partially open and no one knows it.

If valve exercising is something that you think would benefit your water system, or for that matter, sewer system, let us know. We would be happy to bring the machine out and make your life easier.

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## 40th Celebration

*By Pat Petersen, Training Specialist*

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Forty years of Nebraska Rural Water Conferences! Think how much knowledge has been passed on during all of those events! What a fantastic organization! It's a privilege for me to be a part of it and be able to put together one of the largest training events for water operators throughout the state. The faces may have changed at the conference but the support structure of the vendors, operators and communities still shines as bright as the first conference. Here are some of the highlights of the big 4-0!

Monday, March 12, at 7 AM is when it all began. Roses for You was putting up the vendor booths and the rest of us were unloading and organizing our trailer full of conference goodies. Before we knew it the Pledge of Allegiance was spoken and we were on our way! As usual, the Regulation Update presented by Monitoring and Compliance Manager, Becky Schuerman, kicked things off and was followed by Dr. Bill Podraza. Bill has been a part of many Nebraska Rural Water conferences and always received "rave" reviews for his presentations. This year Bill chose to speak about the topic of "millennials." His presentation was excellent and little did he know that at lunch on Tuesday he would be given the "Friend of Rural Water Award," for his many years of volunteering, sponsoring and exhibiting at so many conferences. Bill plans to retire this year so on behalf of the Nebraska Rural Water Association, I thank you. Best of luck with your retirement! Just remember, I will always have a spot for you if you feel like you would like to present!!

Rich Koenig finished off our busy Monday with a presentation, Planning for Change/Change in Planning? This presentation has been well received because it can open your mind a little bit and help us prepare for any roadblocks that may suddenly appear in our path. As always, Rich did a great job and also helped me out when one of my scheduled presenters was unable to attend. Thanks, Rich!

After our Monday night meal, the Annual Fun Night was held at the Big Apple Fun Center. JEO spearheaded the event with the help of HOA, Sargent Drilling, Miller and Associates and the NeRWA. This event continues

to grow and be very successful! Thank you to all of those who took the time to create such a fun event! The operators really seem to enjoy it!

Tuesday's training sessions began with several choices of roundtable discussions. The roundtable discussions seem to be a good way to "break the ice" and to get the long day of training moving in the right direction. Throughout Tuesday, a variety of speakers took the stage. Some of the new presentations included Licensed vs. Unlicensed SCADA Systems, Level Measurement Challenges, Lift Station Buyer's Guide and Health Benefits for Operators. There were a couple other new presenters on the agenda but due to unforeseen circumstances, they were unable to attend and present. Hopefully they can try again next year. I'm always looking for new faces and topics!

On the subject of topics, if there is anything you would like to see addressed at our conference or one day training sessions, feel free to contact me. Your input is greatly appreciated. According to our evaluations, some operators were asking about new backflow topics and possibly putting them in different time slots. We will see what we can do!

At the conclusion of the Tuesday afternoon classes, operators were treated to a social hour sponsored by Core and Main. The social hour was held in the exhibit hall so operators and vendors could talk about the day.

Following the social hour, it was time for the evening meal and banquet. The banquet meal was delicious and consisted of prime rib, shrimp and all the fixin's! Following the meal it was time for the awards ceremony. The Department of Health and Human Services delivered the first award. Reece Jensen with the City of Sargent was honored with "Operator of the Year" award. Field Rep. Doug Woodbeck filled in for Tony Martinez to deliver the award. Keep up the good work, Reece!

Every year at the annual conference there is the "Nebraska's Best Tasting Drinking Water" contest. This year the winner was the City of Clay Center. Kevin Thompson accepted the award for the city. Kevin explained to the crowd about the week he had prior to

*Continued on page 17*

the conference including two water main breaks and the installation of new pipe because of it. Kevin was very grateful and happy to have won the award. Thank you to the judges of the contest! The judges were Rita Shea, Cope Clark, Ken Deason, and Anthony Fitzgerald.

The final award of the evening was the award given to an operator that “does things right” or as we like to call it, the “Russ Topp Award.” For those of you who knew Russ, you knew his motto, “If you’re going to do it, do it right.” This year Nebraska Rural Water honored Mr. Paul Benitz as the winner of the award. Paul has been with Richardson County Rural Water District #2 since its creation. Paul was very deserving of this award and was a very gracious recipient! Great job, Paul, and I hope you enjoy your retirement. After the awards ceremony drinks and snacks were served along with some great music performed by the Chad Lee Band. Chad and Keith sure know how to keep a crowd smiling.

Wednesday morning started out with a wonderful breakfast and the annual meeting in the Crystal Ballroom. The Nebraska Rural Water Association’s President and Board of Trustees which consists of President Tom Goulette and board members Greg Bouc, Larry Wennekamp, Tom Grovijohn, Dennis Hoback, George Wagner and Jordon Bang will remain intact for another year. This board continues to be very supportive of its members and staff and keeps this association standing on “solid” ground!

A quick four hours of learning followed the breakfast on Wednesday. Some of the presentations on Wednesday included Nitrates in our Drinking Water, Health Benefits for Operators, Well Maintenance Plans and two hours of the Operator Quiz and Review. The Quiz and Review has become an instrumental part of our one day training sessions and we thought it would be a good refresher for operators attending the conference. Ralph Naber, Dave Jundt and Bob Byrkit are the DHHS Field Reps that took the time to quiz the contestants. Thanks guys!

Of course, what would the final day of the conference be without the naming of the raffle prize winners? What would a 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference be without a table full of awesome prizes to raffle away? A 50 inch HDTV, a Samsung Sound bar, a Bose Wave radio, a portable generator and a stainless steel smoker are just a few of the many prizes. Some of the winners included: Kevin Finnegan, Elvin Vavra, Roger Anderson, Kenny Shaw, Dave Tweedie, Bernie Stych and Jerry Thompson.

So there you have it. Number 40 is in the books! The conference went very smoothly except for the computer that decided it had presented enough late Tuesday afternoon! Thank you, Mary Boden, for being patient and


fighting through our technical problems. The Nebraska Rural Water conferences are a fun thing to put together and attend. These conferences would not be possible without the support of the many vendors that exhibit, operators that attend and, of course, the Rural Water staff. Salli, Amy, Carol and Barney, thanks for putting the entire conference in boxes, and Mike, Mike, Randy, and Ken, thanks for unloading the trailer full of boxes. The Nebraska Rural Water Association team put together one heck of a 40<sup>th</sup> annual conference!


Might as well start planning 41.....

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## Not Your Average Main Break

*By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider*

On a late Monday afternoon in January my phone rings and I see it's from an operator who I work with on a regular basis. I answer, "Hey, what's up buddy?" And his reply is, "I'm just standing here watching water gush from underneath the highway." I reply, "Be there first thing in the morning." Little did I know that I would be spending the next three days on what's otherwise known as the "water main break from hell."

I arrived on Tuesday morning. In the previous 24 hours his wells had pumped approximately 740,000 gallons more than normal putting the break at about 500 GPM. We then studied the map and began attempting to isolate the leak. This is where we started running into problem after problem.



Almost every valve we shut needed to be located under the snow and ice. We had to chisel and torch the ice and rust just to get the lids off. Some valves were under gravel roads that needed to be thawed and dug out as well. Needless to say, at the end of the day, we had closed 14 valves and still had full pressure at the leak site, so we called it a day.

We were back at it Wednesday morning. After reviewing



the map we started closing more valves running into the same issues. 12 more valves, 26 in all were closed and we still had 500 GPM gushing from under the highway. Then the decision was made to call in the reinforcements, a large construction company from a neighboring town. Equipment was starting to arrive by 5

p.m. Wednesday evening and that was a sight for sore eyes.



By Thursday morning they had brought in a track hoe, dump trucks, loader back hoe, a trailer full of tools and

*Continued on page 19*

equipment and, most of all, MANPOWER. The NE Roads Dept. brought in barricades and detour signs as the highway needed to be shut down and rerouted. It was time to get busy.



Concrete was removed and excavating was started all while full pressure was still on the main. Three gas-powered trash pumps were used to keep up with the flow until the main was exposed enough to put a repair sleeve on. Finally by 5 p.m. Thursday, the leak was repaired.

But that's not the end of it. Friday morning it broke again two feet from the previous break, and it also broke again on Monday across the road.

By the time it was said and done they had installed two new line stops and 55 feet of new pipe excavated clear across the highway and replaced all the concrete. If I was to guess the total cost of this break, it's probably \$40,000 - \$50,000. This can definitely cause a financial burden to any size town.

How can this be prevented? It can't! All I can suggest is to keep good maintenance records. Keep track of where your breaks are occurring. If they are in the same area, prioritize them and try to get them scheduled for replacement. I can't stress enough that you have got to keep your town boards informed on the quality and condition of your water system.

## Information for the Next Rate Study

Watch for a request for information for the next rate study. The last study was done in 2016-2017. Now it is time to update that information. Please take a little time to give us your system's information and return it in the envelope provided. Your help is really appreciated because the more systems that participate the more useful the study will be.

Also, NeRWA members that provide information will get their first rate study free and non-members that provide information will get their rate study at a reduced rate of \$25.00 along with NeRWA members that didn't contribute. Otherwise, non-members that didn't contribute will pay \$250.00 and businesses will pay \$500.00.



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# Summary of Evaluations

## NeRWA Kearney Conference March 12-14, 2018

### TOTAL EVALUATIONS RECEIVED – 134

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

a. Operator/Manager	122
b. Administrative	0
c. Board Member	4
d. Plumber.	0
e. Lawn Service	0
f. State/Federal Rep.	2
g. Clerk	1
h. Other:	5
- Utilities Director	
- Engineer	
- Maintenance	
- Water Well Monitoring Tech.	
- Spouse	

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

a.	42
b.	0
c.	9
d.	17
e.	91

QUESTION #3 – Things you liked and why?

- Everything- Always learning
- Nice variety of training sessions and good turnout of vendors
- Training sessions good-lots of good info.
- Session are not too long-good location-great meals
- Variety of subjects and knowledge of presenters
- Training classes-new and informative-good food
- Location-rooms close to the conference center
- Getting all hours in one place-meals
- Training topics
- Everything this year was great-good job
- The schedule-breaks to stretch your legs out
- Trainings-talking with other operators-vendors
- 10 steps to 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce class
- Training
- Everything was good and flowed nicely
- Venue is awesome-good learning experience
- Food, classes-gets better every year
- Everything was good
- Good location and facility
- Regulatory update-Mr. Podraza-Excellent small systems round table-USDA update
- Well planned out conference-good food-vendors-sessions
- Plenty of room for classes-meals very filling-very good speakers-meeting/talking with other operators
- Classes always good
- It is all good-learning new things
- Enjoyed all speakers
- Meeting old friends-meals
- Training and vendors-being able to talk one on one with them
- Food is always great-location-training topics
- Trainings
- Getting all water and wastewater hours at one conference
- Talking with vendors
- Speakers- meals-hotel is 5 star
- Conference center-amazing food-good speakers-great hotels-variety of vendors
- Meeting other operators
- Laid back
- Venue-meals-Bill Podraza
- Good sessions/topics-very good meals-entertainment
- Coming to this conference since 1986: this has been very good on all aspects
- Bill Podraza is a very good speaker-small systems roundtable-conference center & staff
- Everything
- Training sessions were easy to understand-Trainers always willing to answer questions-Free gifts from NeRWA
- Meeting with other operators-entertainment-food-winning prizes-location
- Training sessions-meals
- Very eloquent speakers/experienced in their fields
- Everything was great
- All of it

*continued on next page*

- Great facility-hotel attached to center
- Vendors-product development-shared experience
- Training-vendors-meals
- All of the training classes-always something new and refreshers
- Training sessions were very informative-meals are excellent
- Great venue-food-accessibility
- League lawyer very informative
- Everything good
- Liked it all-close to home-easy accessibility
- Excellent opening speaker-very interesting
- Good topics for training sessions-great food-entertainment
- Ran smoothly-topics
- Vendors
- The food was great!
- Good speakers-food-music
- All great
- Good
- Meals always good-classes good
- Whole conference is very good
- Training
- Great location-meals were very good-a lot of vendors-new vendors
- Venue is great-everything is put together nicely
- Great speakers on a variety of different subjects-classes helpful & entertaining
- Lots of helpful information and knowledgeable speakers
- Good training sessions
- Really good topics this year
- Meals were awesome again-fun night-prizes-vendors
- All
- Great meals-could hear well in classes-NeRWA was organized
- Vendors-classes-topics-great opportunity to get info.
- Topics and social hours to meet others
- Location was amazing-amazing food, classes-instructors were entertaining and informative
- I liked everything-Pat and his crew put on a good conference
- Entertainment-food-vendors-sessions
- Very enlightening conference-session are very informative-the entertainment after each day was fun
- Everything!-Great speakers-food-entertainment
- Great place to have a conference-classes were very good-covered good topics
- All of it was good-everything in one place-good food
- The Younes Center is great-sessions were informative
- Everything was excellent
- Fun night-meeting new friends-round table: you learn most in there
- Food & facility great
- Classes educational and fun
- Classes didn't start too early
- Wonderful place to have a conference
- Meals were amazing (as a vegetarian I usually leave these things hungry-not here!)-Training classes were diverse
- Vendors-food-variety of classes
- Very well put together-classes were just right with time
- Whole conference was great
- Training classes for the most part were good-speakers were entertaining
- Can't pick just one thing-it was great
- Very nice venue-good amount of break times
- New vendors-good atmosphere
- Venue location is excellent-good food-good selection of vendors-good variety of topics-speakers very knowledgeable
- Top of the line meals-great drinks
- Interesting topics that help with the big picture
- Monday night activities-free drinks!-meetings educational
- The time with vendors is great
- It was all great
- Speakers were informative
- New regulations-training for a better system
- Speakers-meals-friends
- The facility is excellent-staff at facility do a good job-food is very good-various training sessions
- Thank you to the staff of NeRWA for another good job on putting on the conference-Big thank you to Pat Petersen for all he does-also thank you to the women who work the event
- Lash session
- Rooms-food-topics
- Always well organized-good information to all levels of operators
- All classes
- Sessions are not too long-good speakers-vendors are well laid out-meals excellent
- Classes well presented-very good meals-Comfort Inn
- New speakers
- The conference was great and very informative
- Learning that most everyone has the same issue: equipment, customers, governing body etc.

*continued on next page*

#### QUESTION #4 – Things you disliked and why?

- When classes are called “What’s New,” with one speaker it is always advertising for them
- None
- I know there are a limited number of topics, but it gets boring, hearing the same thing from the same speaker, year after year.
- No problems
- Gabbing people in the audience during speaker presentations
- None-good conference
- Why would anyone dislike coming?
- Some sessions a little light on material or could have been more relevant
- The water taste
- Some classes boring
- Nothing-liked it all
- Not enough seating during a session-it was corrected part way through
- Repeat sessions from last year
- Did not dislike any aspect of the conference
- Some classes too long
- Nothing I can think of
- What happened to game night?
- Same topics year to year
- Nothing
- Vendors not showing up
- Registration was lost
- Classes are getting repetitive year after year-I will look elsewhere for CEU hours
- Not a lot of vendor variety
- The water was bad-couldn’t drink it
- Smaller variety of topics covered this year-breakfast was advertised as 7:30-8:30, they stopped serving at 8:00, that was disappointing
- Can’t think of any
- Choosing different rooms when I wanted to take multiple sessions in the same hour
- Sessions same year after year-sessions with new regulations should have handouts so we can have a copy
- A few classes were a little too technical
- Daylight Savings made for early mornings
- Should have Barney say Grace at each meal, not just the banquet
- People’s cell phones constantly ringing during class
- One hour between last class and meal on Tuesday is not necessary
- Cold weather
- Backflow Knowledge class not informative
- Hate to see Bill P. and Howard I. retire, but good for them
- No dislikes

- No problems here
- I missed the prayer before eating
- Some trainers just read PowerPoint (although not typical)
- A few computer problems, but Pat was on it!- Don’t like presenters just reading script (Ad lib!)
- Early start
- Need to change up the classes
- Breaks between classes on day one were 30 minutes, should only be 15 minutes
- Monday meal
- Unable to get all 12 CEUs for well driller certification
- The brisket
- Change fun night from Monday
- My first conference: I liked it but felt uninformed on how things worked
- Crowded backflow room
- Monotone speakers-hard to stay awake
- Need better room rates-meals disorganized
- Crowded training sessions
- Taking the time to get away to be here and learn
- Same classes year after year
- The drive here gets a little long
- Supper served so late

#### QUESTION #5 – Any Suggestions of topics or entertainment for future conferences?

- More sessions for clerks
- Keep up the good work
- Hypnotist
- More backflow
- Raising funds and grant writing for projects
- More backflow hours
- Keep it in Kearney
- Vegas night
- Dueling pianos
- More field situations/pics/hands on
- Maybe a session on multitasking due to all the duties of an operator. Maybe a presentation to help people when they present to board members
- Have more talks like Lash Chaffin’s-Chris Miller’s class was great
- More wastewater/lagoon operation
- Vegas night
- Whatever Pat comes up with is good
- Stand-up comedy
- More options for backflow hours
- Topic: handling small town politics
- Keep it up
- More topics on industrial wastewater
- Disconnect fees roundtable

*continued on next page*



- More drink tickets for fun night
- Dealing with Generation X
- Poker or casino night
- Classes for safety procedures
- Hands on training and interactive sessions
- Session from a well driller would be interesting
- Magician or comedy
- Magician
- “How to get started from scratch” – for new people who are brand new and don’t know how to get started
- Hands on work-vendor demonstrations
- A few more backflow classes
- Soda machine
- Continue the range of topics
- Have more giveaways during the day
- More backflow hours
- Mechanical plant classes
- More classes for new operators
- Some classes could be presented more than one time for some who want to take 2 classes at the same time
- I like the vendors as trainers-they know their products well. All registration ladies, trainers, vendors, NeRWA, DHHS reps were very cordial and happy. In a world full of turmoil; it is refreshing! Really good conference!
- Pat does an amazing job!
- Your hard work and dedication makes the conference such a great experience. Applause to all of you for your hard work.
- All staff in the venue does great!
- Job well done, NeRWA! Tell folks to mute their phones during classes.
- Stay in Kearney
- Good times & good food!
- Excited to see what next year brings
- Good conference, great job!
- Thanks for another great conference
- This was my first trip to a conference-it was well presented and informative
- Ask for letters of support do not come soon enough for board to give permission before you, NeRWA, want then to be returned. (Need more notice)
- Thanks for putting on the annual conference. It is one of the best opportunities to get training, meet vendors, and network with other operators.
- One of the best since I’ve attended the conference
- Thanks to NeRWA staff and board members-A valuable resource!
- Great conference-thank you all!

Additional Comments:

- For those who drive to conference every day, it would be nice if supper were started earlier
- Keep up the good work. Thank you for all you do!
- Keep up the good work
- Great conference! No complaints!

Nebraska Rural Water Association

I want to thank the Rural Water Association for the Russ Topp Doing It Right award.

I will always remember Russ and his dedicated service to the Nebraska Rural Water Association.

It has been said that men depart from this earthly life and their works follow them.

May God bless the Nebraska Rural Water Association and the Russ Topp Family.



Paul Benitz  
Rural Water District #2  
Richardson County



# Nebraska Good Water News

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