

Issue 4/2013

# Nebraska Rural Water Association

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# Nebraska Good Water News

Issue 4/2013

*“Keeping Our Water Safe”*

*Board of Directors*

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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.*

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### **On the cover:**

The Maxwell tower was built in 1981. It is approximately 165 feet tall. It was repainted by Maguire Iron in 2006.

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# How'd We Do and Letters From...

## City of Sargent



106 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
P.O. Box 40  
Sargent NE 68874-0040  
Phone (308) 527-4200  
Fax (308) 527-3745  
Nebraska Relay System  
TDD (800) 833-7352  
cityofsargent@nctc.net

August 10, 2013

Nebraska Rural Water Association  
390 Ponderosa Street  
Wahoo, NE 68066

The City of Sargent would like to say a Big Thank You for all that you do. We appreciate Rural Water helping us when we have problems with sewer and water lines.

Thank you so much for helping us pressurizing the lines at the swimming pool. The materials, resources, and support that you provide us are wonderful.

Please accept the enclosed donation.

Sincerely

*Mike Criss*

Mike Criss  
Utility Superintendent

Dear NERWA,

Thank you so much for selecting me as your scholarship winner! I truly appreciate it and I will make sure that I put this money to good use. It will probably help me buy my books this year plus some of my tuition. Once again thank you very much.

*-Nathan Weatherly*

Nebraska Rural Water Staff and Board of Directors -

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in your Fall Conference in Gering. You put on a very professional, successful conference - Congrats!

I also sincerely appreciate your fantastic hospitality! I am glad

I had the opportunity to get to know you all better and look forward to the future opportunities we may have to work together.

Thanks again!  
Happy fall!

Katie Miller  
Environmental Finance Center

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# VILLAGE OF BELLWOOD

P.O. Box 188

Bellwood, NE 68624

Phone: Utilities Superintendent 402.538.4025  
Village Clerk 402.538.4026

August 12, 2013

NeRWA  
3390 Ponderosa Street  
Wahoo, Ne. 68066

To Whom It May Concern,

Once again the Village of Bellwood has utilized the services of the NRWA. In my 20 + years of employment with the Village, your organization has helped me personally and the Village numerous times. We would like to thank all of the staff members especially Randy and Russ whom we have had numerous opportunities to work with in the last several years.

Without this program, the Village would be forced to find other companies that could provide the same service for a fee which in turn would make the cost of the water and sewer fees higher for the citizens of Bellwood. As we all know, increasing costs are causing a hardship for all of Nebraska and we must continue to work together to find a feasible solution to any of the issues that may arise for this great State and the Village of Bellwood.

Please accept this small token of appreciation to go toward your equipment fund; something that we find very helpful, knowing that the special equipment that you have is just a phone call away if needed.

Sincerely,

Brian Wilson  
Utility Superintendent  
On Behalf of the Bellwood Village Board

## Good News on the Lead Front:

Doug Woodbeck, Field Services & Training Supervisor  
DHHS DPH Public Drinking Water Program

When the U. S. Congress passed the "Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act", a lot of commotion was created because public water systems that use meters for billing believed that they would not be able to repair and reuse meters that were already in existence. Wording in various documents would tend to lead one to this assumption. This situation has been monitored by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health because of these concerns.

In a fairly recent conversation with the USEPA, the Department has learned that, based on USEPA's interpretation of the Act, if a PWS removes an existing in-service water meter and repairs it with no-lead parts, that meter may be re-installed either in the same location, or in another location. The keys to the re-installation of a repaired meter being that it is an appurtenance that was already "in service" prior to the implementation of the Act and the repairs were accomplished with parts that meet the new definition of "lead free". The intent of the Act is to prevent the introduction of "new" pipe, fittings, etc. into drinking water service that doesn't meet the new definition of "lead free". Because the repaired meter is not "new", it may be repaired and re-installed.

USEPA will be coming out with this guidance in writing. As soon as the Department receives this written guidance it will be communicated to all affected PWS. In the meantime, if you have any questions in this regard, please contact Steve Drda (402-471-1008) or Doug Woodbeck (402-471-0521) with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Public Drinking Water Program.

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# Sustainability

*By John C. Padalino, Administrator  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service*

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Sustainable water and wastewater infrastructure is a critical foundation of economic development, but in uncertain economic times it is even more critical. Rural economic activity depends on sustainable infrastructure, making it the first rung on the ladder of opportunity for rural and economically challenged communities. Without basic infrastructure such as rural water systems that provide safe, dependable, and efficient wastewater and drinking water services, there would be no support for the economic activities that are necessary for continued success and growth as a nation. The work carried out by rural Americans stands as the backbone to the strength of our nation.

USDA Rural Development and the EPA have joined forces to provide resources to our nation's small and rural communities' water and wastewater systems to increase levels of sustainability. Both USDA and EPA have worked closely with rural and small systems, with input from rural operators and managers, to develop flexible, user friendly tools to help rural and small system managers and operators ensure their communities are strong, safe and sustainable. USDA and EPA are rolling out the two new tools that are designed specifically for rural and small water and wastewater system operators and managers.

The first tool is "Rural and Small Systems Guidebook to Sustainable Utility Management". This Guidebook takes small systems through a series of steps to assess their current operations based on ten key management areas developed using best practices. The Guidebook allows rural and small systems assess their strengths and priorities for improvement, which will lead to an action plan to address those priorities and challenges. The Guidebook also contains an extensive inventory of other utility management tools to help rural and small systems.

The second tool is called "Workshop in a Box". The Workshop contains a series of materials and instructions to help both small systems and technical assistance providers market and conduct workshops on their own

based on the Guidebook. These materials can be used either in a group setting with several systems, or on-site with a team of individuals from a single system.

With more sustainable water and wastewater systems in rural communities, the rungs on the ladder of opportunity will become closer together and afford those communities greater environmental protection and economic opportunities.

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### Water Operator Training

January 14	Newcastle
January 23	Fairbury
February 12	Falls City
April 16	Kimball
April 17	Imperial
May 13	Plainview
May 14	Ord
May 20	Wahoo
June 6	Sutton
July 15	Chadron
July 16	Valentine
August 13	Bancroft
August 14	Albion
August 19	Wahoo
October 21	Chappell
October 22	Eustis
November 18	Alliance
November 19	Mullen
December 16	Red Cloud
December 18	Firth

### Wastewater Training

January 8	Ainsworth
February 12	Alliance
March 12	Curtis
April 23	Auburn
May 14	Omaha
June 4	Fairbury
July 29	O'Neill
August 13	West Point
September 10	Loup City
October 15	Newman Grove
November 13	Wayne
December 10	Wahoo

### Backflow Continuing Education Training

January 7	Chadron
January 8	Valentine
February 11	Nebraska City
February 13	Norfolk-Nucor Steel
April 15	Hastings
April 17	Wymore
May 14	Sidney
May 15	North Platte
September 9	York
September 11	Ord
October 14	South Sioux City
October 16	Atkinson
November 13	Wahoo
December 9	Mitchell
December 10	Imperial
December 11	Cambridge
December 17	Wahoo

# 2014 TRAINING

### **Annual Conference**

**March 17-19**

Heartland Event Center  
Grand Island, Nebraska

### **Fall Western Conference**

**Sept. 16-18**

Gering Civic Center  
Gering, Nebraska

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

January 13-17	Wahoo
April 28-May 2	Wahoo
October 20-24	Wahoo

### **Wastewater Certification Course**

January 28-31	Wahoo
April 8-11	Wahoo
June 10-13	Wahoo
August 26-29	Wahoo
October 28-31	Wahoo

<b>September 24</b>	Trenching & Shoring	Wahoo
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<b>September 25</b>	Confined Space Entry	Wahoo
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## And the Rush is On!!

*By Barney Whatley, Backflow Trainer*

Once again as the year draws to a close, we trainers are noticing a large influx of attendees at our training sessions. I am sure this is just due to an elevated interest in gaining knowledge and not to the fact that some of us have put off getting our required Continuing Education Units (CEUs) until the last minute. Classes are full for us at NeRWA, and I would venture to guess that other trainers have full classes as well. Although the training does not get better as the year progresses (or worse either, I hope), one of the disadvantages of these later classes is overcrowding in classrooms and less one-on-one interaction between the instructors and the students. And even though it is technically okay to attend two identical training sessions within a short period of time to get the required CEUs, this practice defeats the purpose of continuing education, which is to gain new and better knowledge related to your chosen profession.

The 2014 Training Coalition Calendar will be out soon, and almost all of the training that will be offered in 2014 for water, backflow and wastewater operators will be on that calendar. It would be a great idea for every operator in the state to look over this calendar when it arrives and choose several training sessions near them to attend in the upcoming year. Since the agendas have not been determined when the calendar is published, you won't know the subject matter of the sessions right away. By choosing several (2 or 3) sessions within a reasonable traveling distance of where you live, this will give you the opportunity to determine whether the subject matter of the earliest class is of interest to you, or if you would like to wait on one of the later classes and see what they have to offer. Choosing several possible sessions will also give you alternatives in case bad weather causes you to miss a class or the class is canceled.

From a backflow perspective, there is only so much material related to the subject that can be presented in a classroom setting. Hands-on is always requested, but hauling backflow test benches, test kits, spare parts, tables, hoses, etc. is inconvenient to say the least, and all of those things need to be protected from freezing

in the winter months. Assembling and disassembling the test benches is also very hard on them, and keeping repair parts on hand to keep the benches operating and passing tests is expensive. I have hauled the benches before, and taking 6 or 7 test benches and 8 or 9 test kits into your motel room at night and then loading them up again in the morning to go to the next class is a hassle.

I guess my point here is that you do have 2 years to get 10 hours of continuing education, and by getting at least one class out of the way the first year, it will keep you from possibly attending 2 identical classes towards the end of the second year. It is especially bad for us trainers now that all water related licenses expire at the same time. This means that now there are 3 times more licenses expiring on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the odd numbered years than there used to be. Please do yourself and us trainers a favor and try to plan your continuing education so you can attend different classes at different times, which will take the end of the year load off the trainers and assist you in getting updated on a more regular basis on changes in regulations, new equipment and maintenance techniques used in the field, regardless if you are in water, backflow or wastewater.



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# ATTENTION OPERATORS...

As you all know by now, the term of the water, backflow and well driller licenses is now two years and 10 CEUs are required for renewal. Make sure you have received the required number of hours. You can find out your total hours on the NDHHS website. Go to our website, [www.nerwa.org](http://www.nerwa.org), and on the right side under Informational Links, go to the HHS Licensing link.

If you have any questions regarding hours, you can call the Department of Health or the NeRWA office.



## TRAINING FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2013

### Water Operator Training

November 20	Mullen
December 5	Wahoo
December 17	Central City

### Wastewater Training

November 13	Valentine
December 10	Wahoo

### Backflow Continuing

### Education Training

November 19	Wahoo (FULL)
November 20	Wahoo
December 10	Mitchell
December 11	Imperial
December 12	Cambridge
December 18	Wahoo



# Dangers of Confined Spaces

*By Mike Lucas, Wastewater Technician*

I know what you are a thinking; here we go with yet another session on confined space safety. Following the tragic loss of one of our fellow Nebraska public servants in the line of duty I have received numerous calls regarding gas monitors and enclosed space entry safety policies. I personally know of three other near misses and reportedly a couple of other deaths involving confined spaces in Nebraska in this year alone.

This year in my one-day wastewater training classes I have addressed the dangers of hydrogen sulfide and confined spaces. So for those of you who have already heard some of this I don't apologize, consider it a refresher course.

We should all have a **formal and enforced** safety program for confined spaces.

It should include at a minimum:

- What are the confined spaces?
- What steps are to be taken prior to any entry, including testing, lock out/tag out and documentation?
- What retrieval and testing equipment is required to be on site, such as harness, lifeline, tripod and lifting equipment?
- Who is qualified to enter and who is also qualified to be the observer/assistant?

Testing should always be required prior to entry. Four gas monitors are available for +/- \$1,000.00. Ask yourself, "What is a life worth?" You should have strong internal pumps and a long hose allowing for remote testing. You should monitor for oxygen deficiencies <19.5%, hydrogen sulfide, carbon monoxide and combustible gases (LEL). Explosive gases can include gasoline, propane, hydrogen sulfide and oxygen enrichment of 23.5% or more. These monitors should be kept charged and need to be regularly calibrated. You should continuously monitor for changing conditions within that confined space when it is occupied. **Always believe the monitor if the alarm goes off indicating a hazardous environment.** If flammable, toxic or oxygen deficient conditions are determined to be present your plan should indicate

what steps are to be taken. The plan should include what steps the trained assistant is to take if there is an emergency. In some numbers that I saw, 1100 cases of confined space deaths were reported in one year with 25% of them being rescuers and onlookers.

Let's talk about hydrogen sulfide gas which is always a hazard in wastewater systems.

Hydrogen Sulfide Gas:

- Colorless
- Rotten egg odor @ low concentrations. 1/2 of the population can smell it as low as 8 ppb in air, >90% can smell it @ 50 ppb, at higher concentrations generally above 150 ppm it deadens the sense of smell (facultative fatigue).
- Slightly heavier than air
- Has been found to migrate into surface soils and ground water
- Results from bacterial breakdown of organic matter in the absence of oxygen
- Can move quickly over a great distance
- Occurs in sewer line low spots, long force mains especially with low flow and frozen over lagoons
- Combined with water it becomes hydro sulfuric acid (very corrosive)
- 300-400 ppm = health hazard
- 750 ppm < 7 minutes = unconsciousness
- 1000 ppm = one breath - unconscious, 2 breaths - death

As operators we must inform the decision makers of the dangers that we are exposed to. I will help you in any way that I can. We also must remember that they can provide us all of the training and safety equipment necessary but it is our responsibility to utilize it each day personally and to see that our fellow workers do the same. One person's carelessness can endanger the lives of others. None of us have a job worth dying for.

**Please decide to be safe.**



## Winter Is Right Around The Corner

*By Russ Topp, Circuit Rider*

I wasn't sure summer would ever end this year. With the hot weather throughout this summer you might think you would never see cold weather again. You know what they say about Nebraska, if you don't like the weather just hang around a few days. You guessed it, cold weather is just around the corner and by the time you read this article, it may have already arrived. Once again it's time to batten down the hatches for winter.

There are a few things to keep in mind before the cold weather arrives. Well houses are always a concern. Be sure to check those heaters to make sure they are functioning properly. It's not a bad idea to have two sources of heat. In some well houses you may be using heat lamps as a supplemental heat source. If you use two different sources of heat, I would recommend wiring them into two different electrical circuits. If for some reason a fuse or breaker is tripped on one circuit, the other circuit will hopefully keep the pipes from freezing until your morning rounds. If you are lucky enough to have a SCADA system that alerts you when the temperature drops in the well house make sure it is functioning properly.

Now that you have your well houses nice and warm every mouse in the county will try to take up residence there for the winter. Remember if you have a rodent problem, use glue traps or snap traps. Stay away from mouse poison. Mouse poison or any kind of unapproved chemicals are a bad idea in or around wells. If you know where the little critters are getting into the well house, use some steel wool to plug their holes. Mice won't chew through steel wool.

Remember those old fire hydrants that didn't want to drain back this fall when you conducted your biannual main flushing? Be sure to check them to see if they are still full of water. You can use a large nut on the end of a light chain to drop down the barrel of the hydrant to determine if they are holding water. If they are, you will want to siphon or pump them dry before they freeze up. Most structure fires happen in the coldest

weather. Make sure your hydrants are functioning properly or bag them if they are not.

Check those main valve boxes that like to fill with gravel, water or both. Try to get them flushed out before cold weather. Styrofoam valve box plugs are inexpensive and seem to work well to keep gravel out of the boxes.

Remember the water tower you were trying to keep full last summer? You will probably need to operate it differently this winter. You may want to move your low water setting lower to achieve a longer fill cycle. This will allow the well to run longer and pump more warm water into the tower to help prevent ice build up.

Winter is also a good time to catch up on that dreaded paper work that there is never time for in the summer. In between pushing snow, salting streets, scooping sidewalks, thawing pipes, fixing water main breaks, trying to start equipment in sub zero weather, you will have plenty of time to send out the cross connection control surveys for the tenth time, update your emergency plan, prepare your 2 and 10 year plan, write an operation and maintenance manual and send in your Bacti sample site plan and emergency contact list.

If you need help cleaning up your records this winter let me know I would be happy to help.

**Gurney**  
Bert Gurney & Associates Inc.

**Chris Johnson**  
**Jeff Hubby**  
**Greg Wymore**

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Omaha, NE 68137

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(402) 553-5879 Fax

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Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

**(319) 550-6697**  
(319) 550-6919 Fax

# FALL CONFERENCE



# ICE HIGHLIGHTS



# SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS

Fall Conference  
Sept. 17-19, 2013  
Gering, Nebraska

TOTAL OVERALL EVALUATIONS RECEIVED: 27

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

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| a. Operator/Manager                                | 20 |
| b. Administrative                                  | 1  |
| c. Board Member                                    | 2  |
| d. Plumber   | 1  |
| e. Lawn Service                                    | 0  |
| f. State/Federal Rep                               | 0  |
| g. Clerk   | 1  |
| h. Other:  |    |
| Owner – backflow testing & repair/sprinkler repair | 1  |
| Backup Operator                                    | 1  |
| Alternate Operator                                 | 1  |

Note: the clerk was also an operator/manager.

QUESTION # 2 – Generally speaking, this conference: (circle all that apply)

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| a. Helped me by refreshing my memory.         | 24 |
| b. Helped me by providing needed information. | 23 |
| c. Was not interesting and/or wasted my time  | 0  |
| No Answer                                     | 1  |

QUESTION # 3 – What did you like most about the conference?

- (Pre-Conference) The speaker was very professional & informative.
- Very informative sessions. Many new ones this year.
- Speakers were good and facilities were excellent.
- Most was good.
- Good location – informative presenters.
- Everything!! (2 of this response.)
- In Scottsbluff.
- Vendor knowledge and the information about products are good and informational.
- I enjoyed all of the workshops I attended.
- Some good speakers.
- All the interaction & different opinions.
- Good topics & information. Network with others.
- Excellent location.
- The classes I attended were good.
- Facility is really great for western conference.
- Pledge of allegiance good start.
- Needed wastewater hours.
- The tracking of attendance to class, meals, speakers of the classes, vendors.
- The presentations were very informative.
- Beer.

QUESTION #4 – Was there anything that you did not like about the conference?

- None (or no). (12 of this response.)
- Timing was good but went a little long on Thursday.
- Too many breaks.
- No handouts in shoring & trenching class.
- Ran out of beer.

QUESTION #5 – Were the topics in the agenda well covered?

- |     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 27 |
| No  | 0  |

QUESTION #6 – Were you able to participate in discussions or issues relevant to your job?

- |             |    |
|-------------|----|
| Yes         | 26 |
| No          | 0  |
| No response | 1  |

QUESTION #7 – Did you like the overhead projections?

- |     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 27 |
| No  | 0  |

QUESTION #8 – Were the handout materials satisfactory?

- |             |    |
|-------------|----|
| Yes         | 24 |
| No          | 2  |
| No response | 1  |

COMMENTS ABOUT ANY OTHER ISSUES:

- Good Pre-Conference.
- Not all the seminars had handouts.
- Would have liked more handouts or notes on some presentations. I took my own but need an outline with important facts.
- I would have liked to have a printed copy of the test questions for future review.
- I am very disappointed that NeRWA was not awarded the contract by the State of NE. I feel you have an excellent staff and you do a great job.
- Not enough handouts.
- Some of staff (or all) should be commended for going out of their way to schedule the golf and trap shoot. Makes conference more fun than just work. Good vendor setup. Talked with several and use contacts for parts & info. \* Keep up the prayer before meals and startup. The ones that don't like it need it the most!
- Another great conference – Thanks!

Which sessions did you like best on each day?

Preconference:

- All sessions were informative.
- Katie Miller made it very interesting and had lots of information about asset management. Good pre-conference to start with. Enjoyed golf outing also. Fun with the guys.
- Only came to the pre-conference but enjoyed the conversations & interaction.
- Good for some of the group participation on other input on situations.
- All.
- Katie Miller was very good. Long-term funding – tracking assets good.
- Overall session was informative.
- Life cycle costing.

Wednesday:

- DHHS Regulatory Update 5
- Regulations update is important leading discussions for 2<sup>nd</sup> day. Banquet nice. 1
- Jack Daniel was very good this year. 1
- Level of Service 1
- Outstanding Operator 1
- All good. 2
- Overall good demonstrations. 1
- All attended. 1
- Overall sessions were informative, refreshed my memory and provided new information. 1
- Source water protection. 1

Thursday:

- Water Quality Issues. 4
- Manufacturers' Perspective on Low Lead Rule. 4
- Changing Pumping Styles. 1
- Round Table. 3
- Basic Water Operator Math. 1
- They were all good. 2
- Went to morning classes. Had to be back by evening in N. Platte so missed part of day. Good schedule and classes. Lots of choices. Normally have to go to all backflow but could get to other classes. 1
- DMR Q & A 2
- Lagoon Basics 1
- Diggers' Hotline Update 4
- Trench & Excavation Safety 3
- Line Tapping 1
- Good, Bad & Ugly Installations 2
- Cross-Connection/Backflow Regulatory Review 2
- Backflow Exercise 2
- Elements of a Cross-Connection Control Program 3
- How to Figure Rates with a Rate Study. 2
- Advances in Instrumentation for Water Analysis 2
- Backflow 1
- Backflow Challenge 1
- All attended 1
- Overall sessions were informative, refreshed my memory and provided new information. 1

PRE-CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS

Asset Management Workshop

TOTAL EVALUATIONS RECEIVED – 37

Please take a few moments to provide feedback on this session and the facilitator.

1. The workshop content was helpful in broadening and improving my knowledge/skills.
  - a. Strongly agree 14
  - b. Agree 22
  - c. Not sure 1
  - d. Disagree 0
  - e. Strongly disagree 0
2. The workshop met my expectations.
  - a. Strongly agree 10
  - b. Agree 24
  - c. Not sure 3
  - d. Disagree 0
  - e. Strongly disagree 0
3. The facilitator and speakers were well organized.
  - a. Strongly agree 26
  - b. Agree 11
  - c. Not Sure 0
  - d. Disagree 0
  - e. Strongly disagree 0
4. The facilitator and speakers communicated clearly.
  - a. Strongly agree 26
  - b. Agree 10
  - c. Not sure 1
  - d. Disagree 0
  - e. Strongly disagree 0
5. The facilitator and speakers created a comfortable and positive tone for the workshop.
  - a. Strongly agree 23
  - b. Agree 14
  - c. Not sure 0
  - d. Disagree 0
  - e. Strongly disagree 0
6. The length of the sessions and discussions were well balanced.
  - a. Strongly agree 17
  - b. Agree 20
  - c. Not sure 0
  - d. Disagree 0
  - e. Strongly disagree 0

What was the most beneficial part of this workshop?

1. No parts that were not beneficial.
2. Working with and meeting other people.
3. The asset listing concept.
4. Class was very good start to finish.
5. Getting me started thinking about the value of asset management.

*continued on page 14*

6. Critical asset discussion.
7. Awareness of the need to do asset management.
8. All new?
9. It showed me the importance of good asset management.
10. Knowledge of presenter.
11. All of information shared was very beneficial.
12. Worksheets.
13. Explaining value of asset management.
14. All.
15. Q and A.
16. Critically of assets.
17. Using worksheets, talking to other systems to compare and learn.
18. Increased knowledge.
19. Workshop group participation was good.
20. Lots of information.
21. Learning about assets.
22. Round table or group sessions.
23. Info.
24. All of it. Spreadsheets.
25. Made me realize how it is important to look at all the assets.
26. Learning where to get started and what tools to use.
27. Working with others.

What was the least beneficial part of this workshop?

1. All good.
2. None. (8 of this response.)
3. Prioritizing.
4. Nothing to add.
5. Probably listening to other video speakers.
6. ?

What topics would you like to learn more about?

1. Mapping and listing of assets.
2. Unsure.
3. Long term funding.
4. More examples of worksheets and forms for facts
5. All – This was a first for me.
6. All information is always very helpful.
7. Implementation steps or process of inventory especially.
8. Level of service.
9. All. (2 of this response.)
10. Resources available.
11. All topics.
12. Generic spreadsheets to help get started.

Any additional comments or suggestions?

1. It was all good!
2. Overall the workshop was very good & provided valuable info.
3. Excellent presentation.
4. Very helpful. Easy to understand & (hopefully) implement.
5. Enjoyed the ideas.

What is your overall rating of this session?

- |              |    |
|--------------|----|
| 1. Excellent | 12 |
| 2. Very Good | 22 |
| 3. Good      | 3  |
| 4. Fair      | 0  |
| 5. Poor      | 0  |

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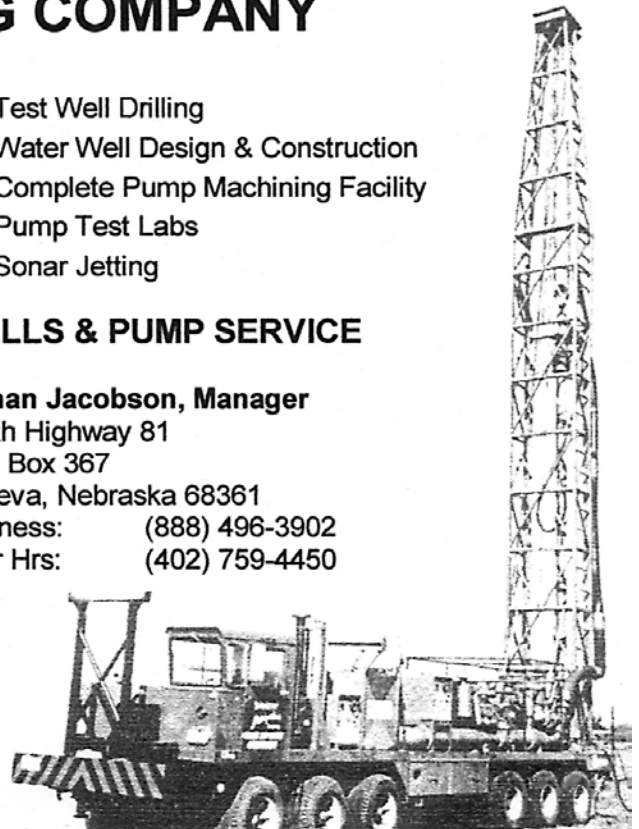
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## MUNICIPAL & INDUSTRIAL DIVISION







## Western Conference Reflections

By Pat Petersen, Training Specialist

With the long, hot, summer days behind us and the colors of fall appearing, it was once again time for the Nebraska Rural Water Association staff and board members to head west. It was fall (Western) conference time. As an operator in the eastern half of the state I never attended the fall conference. It just seemed so far away! So, not only was this my first fall conference to attend, I, also, had the honor of planning it!

Monday, September 16th we all arrived at the Gering Civic Center to get things ready for a busy week. The pre-conference was scheduled for Tuesday morning. Katie Miller, Program Manager with the Environmental Finance Center at Wichita State University was our featured speaker. The pre-conference consisted of five critical components of asset management. The components consisted of: 1. The current state of assets, 2. Level of service, 3. Critical assets, 4. Life cycle costing and 5. Long term funding strategies tied in with the implementation of asset management. Katie did a fantastic job with her presentation. Several classroom discussions were held and created a great learning environment for all operators who attended.

At the conclusion of the pre-conference the operators and staff headed for the Riverview Golf Course. The beautiful weather brought close to 40 participants and several prizes were awarded. Conference exhibitors also sponsored certain holes, offering even more chances for the players to win prizes. The Nebraska Rural Water Association would like to thank all of those who participated and those who contributed. It was a fantastic time!

On Wednesday morning, operators had two choices for starting their day: either go to the trap shoot or take their bike for a spin on a poker run. 22 operators and staff chose to shoot and another 15 went riding in the poker run. It was a great morning for both outside events and a good way to get the day started before the conference began at 12:45.

NDHHS Drinking Water and Environmental Health Administrator Jack Daniel kicked the conference off with the regulatory update. Rich Koenig and Kristin Luebbe with NDHHS each gave presentations Wednesday afternoon. Rich's presentation gave us

the "Characteristics of an Outstanding Operator" and Kristin touched on "Emergency Planning". The learning part of the day ended with Ryan Chapman with NDEQ giving us an update on Source Water Protection funding.

Wednesday's classes were followed by a social hour, banquet and awards. Two outstanding operator awards were given out by NDHHS Field Services Manager Doug Woodbeck. The two recipients were Dave Christian with the Harrisburg Water System and Scott Smith with the City of Oshkosh. Congratulations to both of these outstanding operators!

Operators were met with the smell of sausage, eggs, pancakes and hash browns at 6:30 AM on Thursday morning in the Gering Civic Center. The annual

*continued on page 16*

### NeRWA Annual Conference Heartland Event Center Grand Island, Nebraska

**March 17-19, 2014**

**WATCH FOR DETAILS. INFORMATION WILL BE GOING OUT  
IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.**

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breakfast was a great way to start a day full of learning.

Sessions began on Thursday morning at 7:30 AM and concluded at 4:45 PM. Some of the presentations were an update from Digger's Hotline, Small System Round Table, Trenching and Excavation, and of course, a full slate of backflow and cross-connection education. Over the three days 127 people attended the conference and hopefully you all had something to take with you that would help you as an operator, board member, clerk, or any other occupation involved with the drinking water profession.

I want to take this time to give special thanks to Salli and Carol for all of their help getting the booklets and registration items ready; Randy, Russ, and Mike Stanzel for making the golf tournament and trap shoot complete successes; Barney for helping set up the computers and projectors in the classrooms; Mike Lucas for never letting his camera get out of reach and Doug Allen and Jack Satur for organizing the poker run. I also want to thank all of the NeRWA Board members that were able to attend: Gene, Greg, Larry, and Dale. Thanks! Finally, a big thank you goes to the exhibitors and presenters who took the time to be with us. The NeRWA would not be able to do this without your support.



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# Nebraska Rural Water Association

## Annual Conference Pre-Registration

**March 17-19, 2014**  
**Heartland Event Center**  
**Grand Island, Nebraska**

Name (1 person per form) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Water System/Company Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Registration  
 Deadline is  
 March 7, 2014

**License numbers MUST be on this form to receive the correct CEUs.**

**License #: Water:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BF** \_\_\_\_\_ **WW** \_\_\_\_\_ **WD** \_\_\_\_\_

**REGISTRATION INCLUDES TRAINING MATERIALS, MEALS AND BREAKS.** Registration fees on-site will increase by \$50. No registrations after March 12. Monday is free for all utility/rural water board members. Board Members can attend Tuesday and Wednesday for the price of meal tickets. Board members who are also licensed operators need to register as an attendee. IF YOU REPLACE SOMEONE PREREGISTERED ON THE DAY OF THE CONFERENCE, THERE WILL BE A \$25 CHARGE.

I am a Board Member attending Monday (no charge) \_\_\_\_\_

Tues \_\_\_\_\_ Wed \_\_\_\_\_ (Cost of meals only—check meals below)

I am the Voting Delegate \_\_\_\_\_

DAYS ATTENDING	Member	Member after March 7	Non-Member	Non-Member after March 7
FULL CONFERENCE (all meals)	_____ \$375.00	_____ 400.00	_____ \$425.00	_____ \$450.00
MONDAY (evening meal)	_____ \$100.00	_____ 125.00	_____ \$125.00	_____ \$150.00
TUESDAY (lunch & evening meal)	_____ \$175.00	_____ \$200.00	_____ \$200.00	_____ \$225.00
WEDNESDAY (breakfast & lunch)	_____ \$125.00	_____ \$150.00	_____ \$150.00	_____ \$175.00

All meals are included for each registration. Please indicate below if you will be staying for the evening meals. You will not be charged for them if you are registered—it's for a more accurate count. Guests need to purchase a ticket for every meal. The breakfast on Wednesday is complimentary for all registered for the conference.

Extra meal tickets available	Guest Tickets	Cost	Total	Your Meals
Mon evening		\$25	\$	
Tues lunch		\$15	\$	
Tues Banquet		\$30	\$	
Wed lunch		\$15	\$	

Name of guest \_\_\_\_\_

Registration \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tickets \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NeRWA member: Bill \_\_\_\_\_ Payment enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**Non-members—Payment must accompany registration or pay when checking in. Certificates will not be issued until payment is received.**

When making room reservations, mention you are with NeRWA

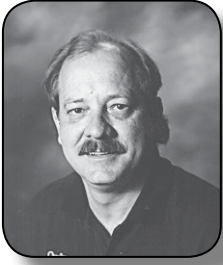
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**CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellations after March 10 will be charged a \$25 processing fee.**

**For NeRWA office use only:** Payment received \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Hours: Water \_\_\_\_\_ BF \_\_\_\_\_ Wastewater \_\_\_\_\_ WD \_\_\_\_\_ Certificate mailed \_\_\_\_\_



# The Biggest Challenges Facing Water Systems

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

I was reading an article recently in a magazine I receive on line about a nationwide survey of water & wastewater utilities concerning the biggest challenges facing the water industry. It wasn't a huge surprise to see that 80% of respondents say they are losing money on the services they provide. I would suggest that here in Nebraska we would fall right in line with that statement.

The public in general takes water for granted and thus has no concept of the cost of providing clean safe water. How to portray the value of clean drinking water to the public is in my opinion the largest obstacle facing public water supplies. If you walk up to a person and just ask what would you do if there was no drinking water, you normally just get a shoulder shrug.

Mention that if there is no clean water you can't brew your morning coffee, or that without ample clean water breweries couldn't produce beer and suddenly you have their attention. It is odd sometimes what it takes to get someone's attention, but that is one of the biggest obstacles we face in the water industry.

Below is a list of the top 13 challenges the nations water systems face according to the survey.

### None of them can be properly addressed without sufficient revenues.

- Condition of water/wastewater infrastructure
- Lack of public appreciation for the value of water
- Funding for capital improvement projects
- Water scarcity/supply
- Replacing a retiring workforce
- Drought potential
- Customer/community relations
- Recovering costs for service/investment – Eighty percent of utilities (water, wastewater, and combined systems) said they were not able to recover the full cost for providing service.
- Government regulations
- Emergency planning and response
- Energy usage/cost
- Climate change
- Utility security

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*The Board of Directors and Staff would like to wish everyone a happy holiday season. We hope you will all be safe and be able to spend time with family and friends.*

*Thank you for all your support this past year.*

*We look forward to working with you all next year.*



# Stepping Into Wellhead Protection

By Mike Stanzel, Source Water Protection Specialist

Nebraska Wellhead Protection is a voluntary program developed to prevent groundwater contamination from entering public water supply wells. Groundwater contamination can cause your drinking water to be unsafe for consumption and your public water wells unusable.

The Wellhead Protection process includes identifying the land surrounding the public water supply wells to be protected, identifying potential sources of ground water contamination within this area, managing the potential contaminant sources, developing emergency and contingency plans for the community water supply and educating and involving the public.

Groundwater can be vulnerable to contamination. Various land use, commercial and industrial activities can affect the quality of groundwater. Landfills, pesticides and fertilizers, above and below ground storage tanks containing gasoline, oil or chemicals, onsite waste and wastewater systems for humans and animals and hazardous waste dump sites are all examples of potential contaminant sources.

Taking action through management can prevent or reduce the risk of a potential contaminant from entering your groundwater supply.


These practices can be implemented in commercial, industrial, urban, and rural settings, Examples include installing buffer strips, practicing crop rotation,

decommissioning abandoned wells, installing water meters and backflow devices, storing and handling commercial and industrial chemicals properly, cleaning up hazardous waste and junk sites, no-till farming, managing nutrient and water applications in rural and urban areas, and adopting wellhead ordinances for your community.

Success cannot be achieved without the support of community leaders, community members and surrounding business and land owners.

These plans will work if everyone is willing to come together and do their part.

Please let me know if you would like assistance in developing or educating your community on wellhead protection.



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