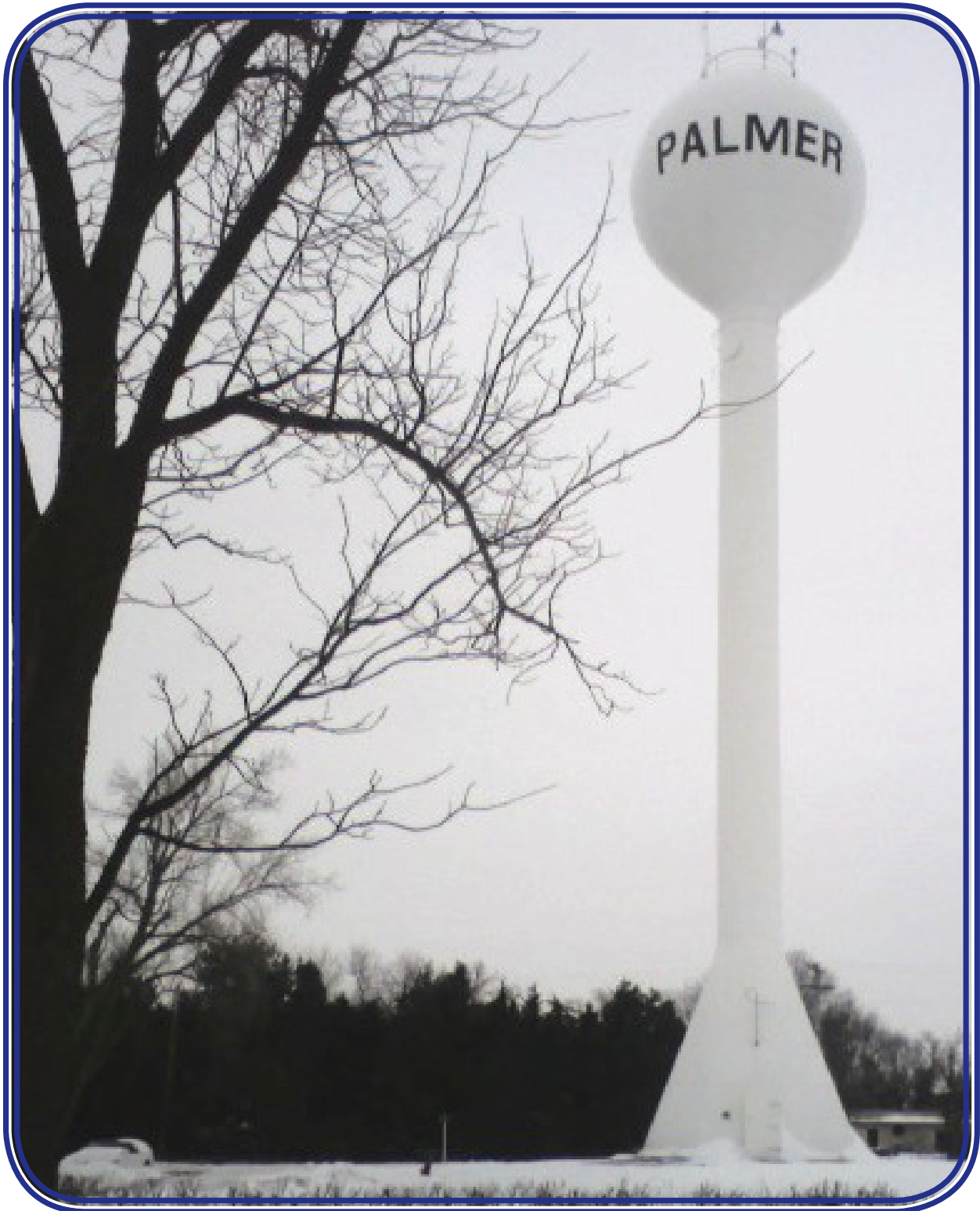
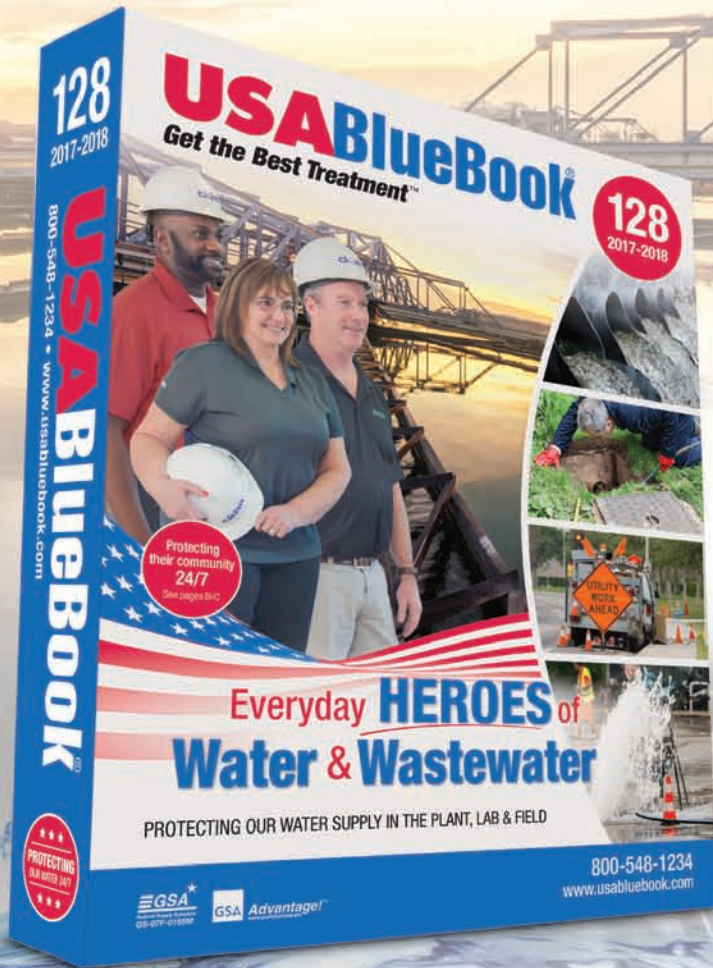


Issue 4/2017

Nebraska Rural Water Association



NEBRASKA GOOD WATER NEWS



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Nebraska Good Water News

Issue 4/2017

“Keeping Our Water Safe”

Board of Directors

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The Palmer Water Tower.

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“Nebraska Good Water News” is a quarterly publication of the NEBRASKA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION, 3390 Ponderosa, Wahoo, Nebraska 68066. Phone 1-800-842-8039 or (402) 443-5216 or FAX (402) 443-5274. Copies are mailed to all member rural and municipal water operators, Federal and State Legislators, associates and individual members.

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

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

2017 TRAINING

Wastewater Training
December 7 Burwell

Water Operator Training
November 15 Mullen
December 5 Auburn
December 20 Wahoo

Backflow Continuing Education Training
December 5 Mitchell
December 6 Ogallala
December 7 Cambridge
December 13 Wahoo (FULL)
December 14 Wahoo (FULL)

Wastewater Certification Course
November 28-29 Wahoo - Lagoon

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.
No phone registrations for **fee-based** training.

**THIS IS RENEWAL YEAR FOR GRADES 1-4 AND GRADE 6 BACKFLOW LICENSES.
10 CEUs ARE REQUIRED TO RENEW YOUR LICENSE.
THESE ARE THE ONLY TRAINING CLASSES WE HAVE AVAILABLE FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR.**

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2018 TRAINING

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

January 8-12	Wahoo
April 9-13	Wahoo
October 15-19	Wahoo

Wastewater Certification Course

February 27- March 2	Wahoo - Mechanical
April 4-5	North Platte - Lagoon
August 14-17	Wahoo - Mechanical
November 27-30	Wahoo- Mechanical

Wastewater Training

January 17	Chadron
February 6	Wayne (SUMW)
February 13	Anselmo
March 27	Wahoo
April 26	Omaha
May 8	Bridgeport
June 28	Ogallala
July 10	Neligh
August 7	Auburn
September 27	Wahoo
October 4	Omaha
November 14	Columbus
<i>(this class may change)</i>	
December 12	Aurora

Water Operator Training

January 17	Firth
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

January 23	Alliance
January 24	Sidney
February 6	Nebraska City
February 8	Stanton
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

Annual Conference

March 12-14

Younes Conference Center
Kearney, Nebraska

Fall Western Conference

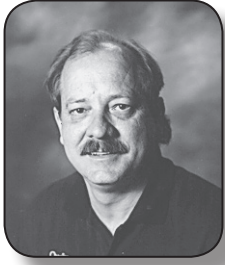
Sept. 11-13

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.



Raising Revenues Without Raising Rates

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

When conducting rate studies, sometimes there are certain practices discovered that if these were properly implemented, a rate increase would possibly not be necessary, or at least not as huge of an increase. One main goal of all water system rates should be to be as fair and equitable to all users as possible. For example, many small systems find it difficult when shut off dates arrive for non-payment. I understand this. I have been there myself. The reality is if a strict shut off policy is not enforced, it is actually unfair to the users that do pay their bill on time. They are the ones paying the wages of the staff that have to spend time on shut offs and reconnects. Another area I often see is that all meters are charged the same monthly fee regardless of meter size. The customers with the larger meter are usually the ones that put the most demand on the system and therefore should pay accordingly. Below are 10 revenue-generating examples to take a look at next time revenue is running short of expenses and a rate increase is being considered.

1. Eliminate the minimum gallons allowed on water and sewer bill. Example \$20/month plus \$2.00/1000. Collect for all water that goes through the meter. This is the most fair and equitable method for all users in billing for water.
2. Eliminate the descending step rate. Example the first 5,000 at \$1.00/1000, next 5,000 at \$.75/1000 and over 10,000 at \$.50/1000. The cost is the same to pump the first gallon as it is to pump the 50,000th gallon. Descending or step rates actually discourage water conservation.
3. Meter all connections and bill for all water consumed. Each user must pay a proportional share of operation, maintenance and replacement cost. City hook-ups should be metered to account for all water pumped.
4. Maintain an on-going meter replacement and testing program. Suggested schedule per AWWA is as follows: 5/8" every 10 years, 3/4" every 8 years, 1" every 7 years, 2" every 5 years, 3" every 4 years, 4" every 2 years, 6" or larger every year.
5. Have a meter charge or service charge based on the size of meter. A user with a 2" meter has the availability of 8X the volume of water compared to a 3/4" meter.
6. Amend water ordinance to adjust rates and fees by resolution.
7. Have adequate reconnection fees.
 - A. Fees should include a high fee for after hours and holiday reconnections.
 - B. If a shut off date has arrived, all who are on that list should pay a reconnect fee once staff has been sent out to conduct shut offs, regardless of whether they run in to pay at the last second. Staff has already allocated time for the effort.
8. Have adequate tap and inspection fees.
9. Have adequate deposit fees.
10. Have an accurate and separate record of revenue and expenditures for the water and sewer systems. Have a rates review by an outside source at least every three years.

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EPA Enforcement Action!

By Mike Lucas, Wastewater Technician

Now that I have your undivided attention, an operator asked that I spread the word that EPA had recently taken enforcement action **in Nebraska** regarding nonreporting of Sanitary Sewer Overflows (aka: SSO's, backups & unscheduled bypasses). I continue to hear from operators that are unaware of the reporting requirements. As a reminder, if an SSO occurs and is determined to have come from the city main, the system has 24 hours to notify their NDEQ compliance officer of the incident and 5 days to report it in writing to the NDEQ office in Lincoln. Downloadable reporting forms are going to be made available on the NeRWA website to assist system operators with a standardized reporting form.

Several communities have been tied up in court in recent years dealing with SSO's. One community had been dealing with litigation for several years before it was finally settled.

No one wins when it takes that long to settle. It only takes upset customers, insurance companies or attorneys making a phone call to add "nonreporting" to your noncompliance violations.

SSO's are invariably going to happen. It's our responsibility to limit the frequency of the occurrences and the damages incurred to the best of our ability. This again highlights the need to follow a formal written maintenance plan with documentation including dates. I would recommend that you visit with your City Attorney and consider a formal policy statement designating who is responsible for service lines including the taps in the main. This should include definitions clarifying what are considered to be service lines and also collection system mains and, ultimately, who is responsible for what in the collection system.

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Nebraska Rural Water Association Annual Conference Pre-Registration

March 12-14, 2018
Younes Conference Center
Kearney, Nebraska

Name (1 person per form) _____
 Water System/Company Name _____
 Billing Address _____
 Certificate Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Attendee's Email _____

Pre-Registration
Deadline is
February 26, 2018

I am the Voting Delegate _____

(Certificates will be emailed if an email address is provided)

License numbers MUST be on this form: Water: _____ BF _____ WW _____ WD _____

REGISTRATION INCLUDES TRAINING MATERIALS, MEALS AND BREAKS. No registrations after March 6. Registration fees after this date and on-site will increase by \$50. 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 and want CEUs need to register as an attendee.

**IF YOU SUBSTITUTE FOR AN ALREADY REGISTERED PERSON AFTER MARCH 1,
THERE WILL BE AN EXTRA \$25 CHARGE**

I am a Board Member attending Monday (no charge) _____
 (Cost of meals only for additional days) Check if attending: Tues _____ Wed _____

DAYS ATTENDING	Member	Member after February 27	Non-Member	Non-Member after February 27
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.

**HOURS WILL NOT BE SUBMITTED UNTIL
PAYMENT IS RECEIVED.**

To Register:
 Online: www.nerwa.org
 (If you register online, DO NOT mail one)
 Fax: 402-443-5274
 Mail: Nebraska Rural Water Association
 3390 Ponderosa Street
 Wahoo, NE 68066
NO PHONE REGISTRATIONS

When making room reservations, mention you are with NeRWA

DATE REGISTRATION RECEIVED: _____

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellations after March 5 and NO SHOWS will be charged a \$25 processing fee.

For NeRWA office use only: Payment received _____ Check # _____

Hours: Water _____ BF _____ Wastewater _____ Certificate mailed _____

**NeRWA Annual Conference
YOUNES CONFERENCE CENTER
Kearney, Nebraska**

March 12-14, 2018

The annual conference is just four months away.
Below are the hotels we will have room blocks in.

We are starting to line up the training sessions and will be sending out the topics in our Technical Action Update in December. The full agenda should be out in January.

If you are interested in registering early, the form is in this magazine.

Kearney Hotels:

Ask for NeRWA room blocks

**Fairfield Inn & Suites (connected to center)
308-236-4200**

**Comfort Inn (connected to center)
308-236-3400**

**Hampton Inn (next door)
308-234-3400**

**Wingate (next door)
308-237-4400**

**Holiday Inn Express (across the highway)
308-234-8100**



Read and Reply

By Barney Whatley, Capacity Development Specialist

As I travel across the state visiting systems that are either out of compliance or very close to it, I have noticed one thing that is a recurring theme: Operators are not reading the entire letter they get from the state. I cannot tell you how many operators read the sanitary survey letter they get until they reach the part that says, “**Significant deficiencies must be corrected within 120 calendar days from the date of this letter;**” and then set the letter aside because they have plenty of time to do this and they are busy at the moment. If they would just read down a couple of more sentences, they would see, **in bold, “DHHS DPH requires the (system) to submit a signed and dated written response to DHHS DPH within 30 calendar days from the date of this letter.”** The written response that is required does not require that the deficiencies be corrected, but does require the system to give a timeline in which they will be corrected. Operators should **always** read the entire letter they receive from the state, including the cover page that is sent.

The written response can be done by using the compliance plan that is attached to the letter itself, or by composing a letter addressing each of the deficiencies noted. It is recommended that the system use the compliance plan provided by inserting the date the deficiency was corrected or the date it will be corrected in the appropriate place on the plan, and then attaching a letter with any explanations that might be needed to the corrective action plan. An example might be that the water tower needs to be inspected. The date it is expected to be completed by should be placed in the plan (May 1, 2018) with an explanation that the tower inspection company has been contacted and advised that they will plan on getting to the system and inspecting the water tower in April of 2018.

The system needs to inform their field representative when the deficiencies have actually been corrected as well. All official communications with the state should be completed in writing, as there is a general consensus when dealing with any governmental entity that if it isn't in writing, it didn't happen. If for some reason a deficiency cannot be corrected by the date that was given in the compliance plan, the system needs to notify the field representative of this and give the reason that it won't be done, such as the water tower company called and cannot be here until June of 2018. Once the system has notified the field representative that a deficiency has been corrected or the date that it will be corrected has changed, this information can be entered

in the Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS), and that can help the system avoid receiving a violation for the deficiency.

The state field representatives will try to contact their systems when the compliance date is approaching so the system can take the necessary action to avoid becoming overdue and out of compliance, but it is the responsibility of the system to take the steps necessary to correct the deficiencies in a timely manner. NeRWA is willing to come to the system and assist in correcting deficiencies, and I might show up unannounced if the system is on the 2% list to see if they need any assistance and to remind them of the upcoming deadline.

The important thing is for the operator or the person who receives the notification from the state read the entire letter to insure they understand what is expected and can get it completed before the deadline that is listed.

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Diane Becker
Communications Director

diane.becker@larmpool.org

For Immediate Release: August 28, 2017
"Geneva kids enjoyed new aquatic facility this summer"



Geneva residents have enjoyed a new \$4 million Aquatic Facility this summer. It opened on Memorial Day with two slides, a splash pad, lily pads, zero depth entry area, a family slide, a diving board and a climbing wall. Though the pool is now closed for the summer, Pool Manager Jenny Glenn said that at times there were 350 people at the pool when in past summers about 50-70 swimmers came to the former outdated pool.

Geneva has been a member of LARM since 2014. LARM is a risk management pool made up of 164 government entities in Nebraska. For more information, contact LARM at 402-742-2604.

Swimmers demonstrate the climbing wall during a swim break at the new Geneva Aquatic Facility in Geneva Nebraska.

Blackbird Hill, Nebraska, is best known as the gravesite of the eponymous Omaha Indian Chief named Blackbird, who was famously buried sitting upright on his most prized horse. But the hill is also home to one of Nebraska's oldest ghost stories. In the late 1800s, a local man discovered that his wife still had feelings for a long-lost lover. Consumed in a fit of jealous rage, he stabbed his wife and then, in a panic, picked up her body, ran to the cliff on Blackbird Hill, and jumped. It's said that if you listen closely on October 17, you can hear a woman screaming near the top of that hill. (This was taken from "THE SCARIEST SPOOK STORIES IN THE 50 STATES.")





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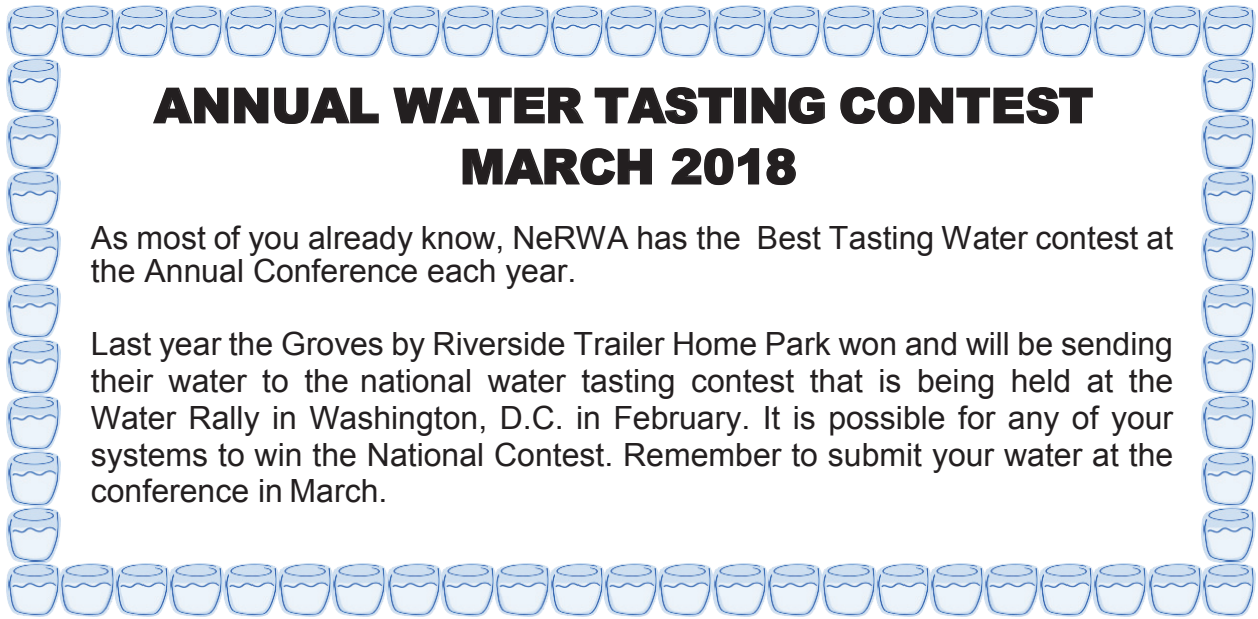
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ANNUAL WATER TASTING CONTEST MARCH 2018

As most of you already know, NeRWA has the Best Tasting Water contest at the Annual Conference each year.

Last year the Groves by Riverside Trailer Home Park won and will be sending their water to the national water tasting contest that is being held at the Water Rally in Washington, D.C. in February. It is possible for any of your systems to win the National Contest. Remember to submit your water at the conference in March.

The water contest is to be held at the Conference in Kearney. A panel of distinguished taste testers will judge all samples. The winner will be announced at the banquet on Tuesday, March 13. The winning system will compete against finalists from the other 49 states in the National Contest at the National Rural Water Association Water Rally in Washington, D.C.

Contest Rules:

1. Must be a member of Nebraska Rural Water Association
2. Sample must be from a Nebraska public water supply system
3. One entry per water system
4. Water must come before any point-of-use treatment
5. Water must come from the distribution system
6. Water should be in clean, unmarked gallon container
7. Entry form must accompany sample

Water must be received by 3:00 pm on Monday, March 12, at the conference registration table.

Water System: _____

Submitted by: _____

If at all possible, please call our office in advance at 800-842-8039 or 402-443-5216 or email to salli@nerwa.org to let us know you are entering. Thank you.

Fall Conference



ce Highlights



What to Flush: The 3 P's- Poop, Pee and (Toilet) Paper

What NOT to Flush: Pretty much everything else

These are some items removed from sewers.

Baby wipes and cleaning wipes.



Clothing and cloth products



Shop rags and paper

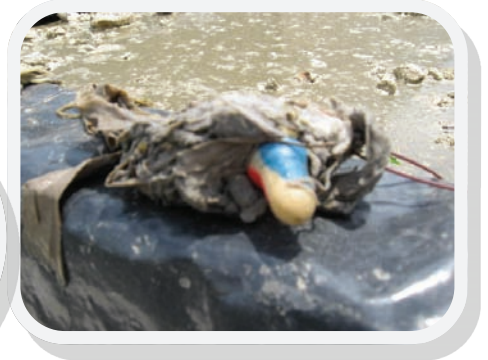


The cord between these two ear plugs is wrapped around rags. Dental floss does the same thing.

Hair nets



Grease in a sewer manhole



A mass of rags and plastics

A section of pipe plugged with grease



**YOUR
CHOICES
MAKE
A
DIFFERENCE!**



Questions? Contact Nebraska Rural Water Association. 800-842-8039. Info@nerwa.org



Protect Your Sewer, Protect Your Environment. Don't Flush That!

Sewers are designed to take our wastewater and carry it safely to a treatment plant. But other items often get flushed and can create problems. We all need to keep things flowing through the sewer. Poop, pee and toilet paper? Okay. Everything else? Put it in the trash!

Here's a quick quiz:

- Do you want to keep raw sewage from backing up into your home?
 - Would you like to keep sewage from bubbling out of the manhole in the street outside?
 - When you flush your toilet, would you rather see the water go down instead of overflowing?
- If you answered yes to any of these, then don't use your toilet as a trash can!

Not convinced? Try this simple test:

- Take a square of toilet paper. Put it in a jar of water and swish it gently with a stick. The toilet paper quickly disintegrates, just as it would in a sewer.
- Now try the same thing with a baby wipe. It doesn't break apart and, in fact, the things are pretty near to indestructible in a sewer system! Try the same thing with a paper towel.
- Remember, just because it goes down when you flush, that doesn't mean it's not going to cause a problem.

Why YOU should care.

Sewer blockages can cause all of these:

- Plugged and overflowing toilets
- Poorly draining sinks and showers
- Raw sewage backing up through your drain
- Manholes overflowing onto the ground or into nearby surface waters.
- Health hazards and nuisance odors.
- Increases in the city's maintenance costs.
- Costly maintenance and repair bills for you!

Even things that are labeled "flushable" can cause problems in the sewer system. Flushable toilet brushes and mop heads? Put them in the trash!

Don't Flush That!:

- * Paper towels
- * Wipes (even "flushable" ones)
- * Cloth or paper rags
- * Plastic items
- * Condoms
- * Feminine hygiene products
- * Diapers
- * Kitty litter
- * Cigarette butts
- * Dental floss
- * Latex gloves
- * Hypodermic needles
- * Facial tissues
- * Grease
- * Gas/oil/solvents
- * Anti-freeze
- * Paints
- * Dirty water from washing cars
- * Sewage from septic tanks
- * Pesticides/herbicides
- * Toys

NEBRASKA RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION 2018

Personal Data

NAME _____
Last First Middle
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Eligible System Employee Data

NAME _____ TITLE _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
MEMBER SYSTEM _____ TELEPHONE _____
RELATIONSHIP TO APPLICANT _____ EMAIL _____

High School Data

SCHOOL NAME _____ GRADUATION DATE _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
YOUR CLASS RANK _____ NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN CLASS _____ YOUR GRADE POINT AVERAGE _____
(Transcript must be submitted with application)

LIST BELOW ANY ACADEMIC AWARDS, MEMBERSHIPS OR OTHER SPECIAL RECOGNITION YOU HAVE RECEIVED DATING BACK TO YOUR SOPHOMORE YEAR.

College/University Data

IS THIS YOUR FIRST YEAR OF HIGHER EDUCATION? YES _____ NO _____ IF NO, CREDIT HOURS COMPLETED _____
NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE _____ COLLEGE GRADE POINT AVERAGE _____
SCHOOL NAME _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
PLEASE INDICATE: _____ 4-YEAR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
_____ 2-YEAR COMMUNITY/JUNIOR COLLEGE
_____ VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL

MAJOR COURSE OF STUDY _____

Priority will be given but not limited to water related studies.

(For those already in college, a first semester transcript or grade report and second semester enrollment must accompany application)

Essay

ON A SEPARATE PAGE IN 250 WORDS OR LESS, WRITE A BRIEF MESSAGE ON YOUR GOALS AS THEY RELATE TO YOUR EDUCATION, CAREER AND FUTURE PLANS

Certification

IN SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION, WE CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IS COMPLETE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE. FALSE INFORMATION WILL RESULT IN THE REVOCATION OF ANY SCHOLARSHIP GRANTED.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

NeRWA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

The Nebraska Rural Water Association is pleased to announce it will be presenting two \$1000 scholarships for higher education purposes for the school year 2018-2019 fall and spring semesters. The scholarship is available to children and stepchildren of member public water system employees. Employees of the Nebraska Rural Water Association Board of Directors and staff are not eligible. Interested persons should complete and submit the application in this mailing. Applications are due March 1, 2018. Please type or print – printing must be legible. Winners of the Scholarships will be announced at the Columbus Conference in March. Send all information to the NeRWA address.

Official Rules

This grant of Five Hundred Dollars (\$1000) will be made to a student to defray the cost of tuition, books, or room and board at an accredited institution of higher learning approved by the Nebraska Rural Water Association (NeRWA). Disbursement of the money will be made upon presentation of winner's college or university invoice as proof of full-time enrollment. The scholarship money will be paid directly to the student, two hundred fifty dollars (\$500) per semester. The scholarship will be awarded to children or stepchildren of member utility system employees. In order to be eligible for scholarship, applicants must complete the application form in its entirety by filling in all blanks. If item is not applicable please place a N/A in the blank. Upon completion return it to the NeRWA Scholarship Committee by the entry deadline, March 1, 2018. All applications will be first screened on the basis of leadership responsibilities in community and school activities as well as grade point average. Applicants will be evaluated on a comparative basis at the sole discretion of the committee. Decisions will be final. Application material and decisions of the committee shall be confidential. Acceptance of scholarship constitutes permission to use recipient's name and/or likeness for purpose of promotion.

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The Trek West

By Pat Petersen, Training Specialist

A lot of people look forward to September because of the fall colors beginning to appear, Husker football and kids going back to school. To me, September means heading west and seeing the operators that I don't get to see too often but wish I could visit more. September 12-14 was the week of the Western Conference in Gering, and once again the support shown by the operators in the panhandle was remarkable!

The format of this year's conference was similar to those in the past. The pre-conference took place on Tuesday and the full conference went from Wednesday afternoon until Thursday afternoon. Over 130 operators filled the halls of the Gering Civic Center along with 25 vendor booths. Something new this year at the pre-conference was a two hour session called the Operator Review. This presentation was put together by Field Reps Ralph Naber, Bob Byrkit and Dave Jundt. It is a question and answer session that provides operators a chance to discuss certain areas of being a water professional. Since we were in the western half of the state, Field Reps Tony Martinez and Doug Woodbeck along with the help of Ralph Naber handled this presentation. This session has become an integral part of the training classes that I provide and has been well-received by the operators, according to the evaluations that are completed at the end of each of the sessions. Heck! Who couldn't use an hour or two just to brush up on things that may have slipped our mind.

Golfers hit the golf course Tuesday afternoon for some fun and prizes. Over 35 teams participated and I would have to say that everyone enjoyed themselves. Some of this year's top golfers were Brett Melson, Randy Rudder, Nick Martin, Derek Olson, Jeff Kettleon, Ronnie Stewart, Steve Kelley, Monte Dakan, Graham Fisher and Ames Hartung. Several vendors chose to sponsor a hole for the golf tourney which allows the NeRWA to provide prizes for most of those who participate.

Wednesday morning started with a rumble and a bang with the annual poker run and trap shoot. 10 riders hit the road around 8 AM and over 20 participated in the trap shoot. 4 hours of learning took place after all of the fun, starting with Drinking Water Administrator Howard Isaacs, followed by

Bill Podraza with Miller and Associates and concluding with Field Rep Rich Koenig with an exceptional presentation on "Planning for Change."

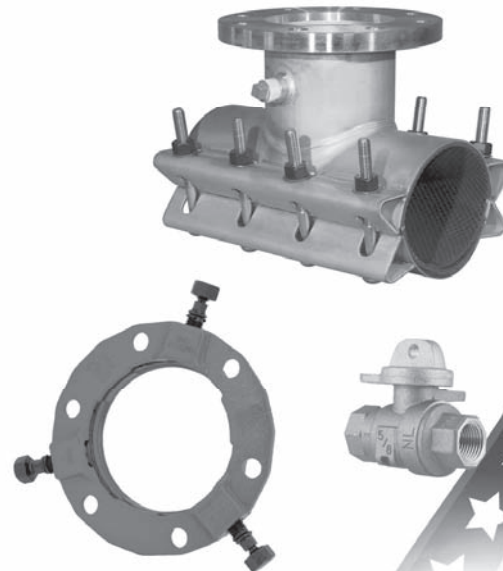
Following Rich's presentation, a Social Hour sponsored by Core and Main (formerly HD Supply) was held, allowing the operators to unwind before a delicious meal and awards. The NeRWA gave away several fun prizes that had an outdoor theme: coolers, flashlights, multi-tools, a fishing pole, and a game camera to name a few. Some of those winners were Gary Eckman, Andrew Stratman, Alan Krupicka, Shawn Anderson and Tommy Case.

Andy Kahle and Doug Woodbeck presented Mr. Ricky

continued on next page

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Dickinson from the Village of Bushnell with the Outstanding Water Operator Award. Ricky does a tremendous job for the Village and is very dedicated to doing a great job. Keep up the good work Ricky, and congratulations!

Thursday started with a fantastic breakfast at the civic center and then an early start to learning. Classes ran from 7:30 AM until 3:30 PM. The classrooms were full all day long and the operators had a wide variety of topics to sit in on. Hopefully they learned something new and helpful, whether it was in the classroom or just from visiting with vendors, operators and even the NeRWA Staff.

One of the fun things about the Western Conference is the all-day suspense an operator may have as they hope to win a door prize. The vendors provide several different items for operators to win. If you are registered to attend the conference, you have a chance to win! This year the generosity of the vendors was amazing once again. Items donated by the vendors were as follows:

Sargent Drilling - 2 pullover wind breakers

Maguire Iron - cooler, gun cleaning kit, gerber knife and

\$100

Elliott Sanitation - Yetti cooler, pullovers, golf balls and hats

Municipal Supply - hats

Municipal Automation - gloves and coffee cups

Johnson Service - Bean Bag Game

Hawkins - hats

Core and Main - fire hydrant cookie jars

Miller and Associates - stainless coffee mugs

With the Western Conference in the books, it's time to look forward to our Annual Conference slated for March 12-14, 2018 in Kearney once again. This year the Nebraska Rural Water Association will be celebrating its 40th conference!! We hope to make this year's conference one of the best experiences for the water and wastewater professionals throughout the State of Nebraska. Stay tuned, it's going to be a good one!

Thank you again to all of those who donated items. The conference would not be as successful if it was not for the vendors and exhibitors taking part in the door prize drawing!

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Summary of Evaluations

NeRWA Gering Conference September 12-14, 2017

TOTAL EVALUATIONS RECEIVED – 50

- | | | | |
|--|----|--|---|
| 1. Which best describes your position? | | | |
| a. operator/manager | 47 | | • Training sessions help us keep updated on changes |
| b. administrative | 1 | | • Food was great, golf, communication with vendors, training classes and speakers |
| c. board member | 0 | | • Classes were very good, information was well presented |
| d. plumber | 1 | | • Very personal-well put together |
| e. lawn service | 0 | | • Beer |
| f. state/federal rep. | 0 | | • I liked the DHHS draw a number-it lead to many different subjects |
| g. clerk | 0 | | • Round-table |
| h. other | 0 | | • Great venue-close to home |
| i. double positions | 1 | | • Venue, location-enjoyed the NDHHS Field Rep Q&A. Golf was a blast |
| 2. Why do you attend the NeRWA conference? | | | • Speakers did a good job, meals good |
| a. The training classes | 10 | | • Western NE |
| b. The vendors | 0 | | • Location |
| c. Chance to meet with other operators | 0 | | |
| d. All of the above | 40 | | |

Things you liked and why?

- I can't attend in the spring, but fall works good
- I liked everything-very interesting
- Very good classes
- Like the wide variety of topics
- A lot of good info
- Pretty good conference
- Everything was well-done
- Finding new things out in the water and waste water business
- Everything is great
- Operator review-learned a lot of new things that do not come up often
- Vendors were great-speakers were amazing-venue was good-all around good training
- Venue is nice and close-good speakers-more of a personal touch
- Informative speakers
- Nice facility-communication with State people
- All of the presenters were good with good information
- Location, sessions, speakers
- Very good accommodations, good food, enjoyed the round-table discussion
- As always everything was great
- Location, meals, golf, trap shoot, etc.

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- Classes are repetitive but good
- Gering is close and convenient-good food-good info and presenters (Rich Koenig & Mary Boden)
- The speakers-good environment
- Networking with other public water personnel-new products from vendors
- The classes and hearing from other operators
- Presenters are good-lots of new info
- Speakers
- The building it was held in
- I enjoy all of the material-vendors have pretty cool products
- Nice refresher of information
- The questions and answers with the group-info. between different operators

Things you disliked and why?

- Sessions that last over an hour are hard to take
- Most topics similar to last year
- Need more hands-on training
- The length of some of the sessions
- Hot outside
- Hard to attend all three days-but it is an advantage to be able to pick and choose what you want to attend.
- Sometimes competitive
- Not much talk about waste water treatment
- The city it was held in
- Length of some of the classes

Any suggestions for future conferences?

- More activities
- Bring operator review back
- NET-DMR, more on chlorine testing residuals
- Reaching the public through web/Facebook or setting up Facebook page for cities
- Keep it in Gering
- Keep the same venue
- Increase talks about WWT
- More hands on
- Recognize more women operators
- More vendors
- Have two testing labs in state (one east/one west)
- Less lighting would make it easier to see the screens

Additional Comments:

- Keep up the good work
- Good job all around-hope the conference keeps going for many years to come

- Civic Center does a great job
- All the speakers were very informative
- Thanks for bringing the conference to western NE
- Thanks

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WAGE SURVEY

These are the results of the wage survey that was held at the annual and fall conferences 2017

Wage Survey Results

NeRWA often gets asked by system decision makers as to what they should be paying water system personnel. We also get questions from water operators to what other operators are earning. NeRWA surveyed attendees at our Annual Conference last March in Kearney and at our Fall Conference in Gering last month. About 140 surveys were filled out and all information was kept generic with no personal information or system names being used. The following is a compilation of the surveys based on system size.

Wage Survey 0-200 pop.									
25 surveys									
	Age	Years Service	Hourly Wage	No Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	
Benefits				14	11	20	3	2	
High	72	40	\$27.50						
Low	35	1	\$10.00						
AVE	54	13.5	\$17.16						
Wage Survey 200-400 pop.									
28 surveys									
	Age	Years Service	Hourly Wage	No Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	
Benefits				9	19	20	3	5	
High	67	32	\$26.00						
Low	28	1	\$12.00						
AVE	49	11.6	\$17.79						
Wage Survey 400-600 pop.									
14 surveys									
	Age	Years Service	Hourly Wage	No Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3		
Benefits				4	10	11	3		
High	57	27	\$23.60						
Low	28	2	\$13.00						
AVE	46	11	\$18.44						
Wage Survey 600-800 pop.									
15 surveys									
	Age	Years Service	Hourly Wage	No Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3		
Benefits				2	13	14	1		
High	60	35	\$27.00						
Low	31	3	\$15.85						
AVE	49	14	\$20.42						
Wage Survey 800-1000 pop.									
20 surveys									
	Age	Years Service	Hourly Wage	No Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3		
Benefits				0	20	14	6		
High	67	37	\$28.80						
Low	27	1	\$13.26						
AVE	50	19	\$20.74						
Wage Survey 1000-2000 pop.									
19 surveys									
	Age	Years Service	Hourly Wage	No Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	
Benefits				0	19	13	5	1	
High	64	39	\$29.00						
Low	31	1	\$14.56						
AVE	48	12.5	\$20.25						
Wage Survey 2000 + pop.									
22 surveys									
	Age	Years Service	Hourly Wage	No Benefits	Benefits	Grade 4	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 1
Benefits				0	22	6	8	6	2
High	65	45	\$41.19						
Low	31	2	\$14.25						
AVE	49	17	\$26.05						



Valve Exercising

By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider

One of NeRWA's most popular and most expensive, yet invaluable, pieces of equipment is our hydraulic valve turning machine. This machine in the five years we have owned it has been across the state, from north to south in numerous towns exercising thousands of water main valves.

Why is it important? Well, every town we work in is facing the same problem and that is aging infrastructure. A lot of your water mains, valves and hydrants are 75 plus years old. And over the years most of these valves have never been turned. A lot of times you may not realize the valves won't operate or function at all until you need to use them for isolation purposes.

Another common problem is the old existing map will show the whereabouts of a valve which the operator is unable to locate. Many valves that have been neglected over the years will get buried 12–18 inches under gravel streets or completely paved over by asphalt or concrete.

Valves were put in place for the purpose of isolating different sections of towns or streets so individual areas can be shut off disrupting service to as few customers as possible. When valves are inoperable or don't hold, inevitably you have to shut down a lot more customers and that can be a major inconvenience, especially if you are affecting schools, businesses, nursing homes, etc.

Some towns will request us to bring the machine if they have one or two valves that will not turn at all or are extremely hard to turn. In a situation like this, we are able to apply up to 350ft lbs. of torque, work it back and forth and most of the time free it up. However this can also break the valve, which is why we will have you sign a release form so NeRWA doesn't go bankrupt paying for valves that needed replacing anyway.

Other towns will have us come and do every valve in their system. If your town was done in the past few years, PLEASE be patient with us!! We are trying to prioritize towns that are in close proximity of each other so we are not running from one end of the state to another, and also ones that have never utilized this service.

If you have signed up for this service please keep in mind

that there is a \$10 per valve required donation for this service. This is a very expensive piece of equipment and the only service we provide that the donation is required. Valves can be \$1,000-\$2,000 to excavate and replace a live main valve insertion that several companies offer can be well over \$4,000 each, so we feel that if we can bring your valve back to life for \$10 that's a pretty sweet deal.

One thing that we also ask you to do prior to our arrival is to FIND all your valve boxes and expose, paint and flag them. We certainly don't know where they are all located and it definitely speeds up the process. Also, you need to make sure the lids are easily removable and the boxes are clear of debris. A lot of guys will go around with a shop vac or air compressor and make sure we can get a wrench on them.



This is generally a two man operation when we do a town. We try to bring at least two guys, that way the operator can tend to their other duties but we would gladly let you tag along and assist us as well.

If you would like to be added to the list or have any questions please feel free to give me a call anytime at 402-672-9084.



Managing Your Wellhead Protection Area

By Ken Halvorsen, Source Water Specialist

Every Nebraska community has a wellhead protection area map and we're all pretty familiar with its purpose: to display the land area that contributes groundwater to a community's drinking water wells. After a community identifies potential contaminants within the wellhead protection area, the next step is to prioritize which contaminants are the most significant and develop a management strategy for protecting groundwater that is also used as drinking water. Management typically falls within two broad categories: regulatory and non-regulatory.

Regulatory management of a wellhead protection area is fairly straight forward. This can include passing ordinances that are protective of groundwater – drinking water, creating zoning to control land uses around and within the wellhead protection area and establishing permit requirements for certain activities, such as drilling a well. These options may or may not be available to every community depending on the community's legal jurisdiction and the location of the community's wells. If a community's wells are not located within its legal jurisdiction non-regulatory management methods become even more important as a city works to protect the source of its drinking water.

Non-regulatory management may be as easy as promoting the programs and services of local agencies to the public. Here are a few examples.


1. Recycling programs can be an important part of wellhead protection. A gallon of used oil can contaminate a million gallons of fresh water. Used oil contains toxic metals, such as lead, arsenic and cadmium so even small amounts of used oil should be recycled. Many used oil recycling programs are administered at the county level or a local auto parts store might accept oil and send it to a recycling facility.
2. Education is also an essential part of wellhead protection management. Newsletters, articles in the local newspaper, water bill inserts, posters and brochures are all excellent ways to reach the public. Some communities have water field days in school or may take students on a field trip to the wellfield and other parts of the water system. This allows students to learn how a water system works.
3. Each of the NRD's offer cost shares for activities that provide benefits to both farmers and communities with wells that could be impacted by farming practices. NRD cost share programs often include deep soil

testing and irrigation water analysis for nitrates. The NRD's vary in the percentage they pay to properly decommission unused or abandoned wells located in a wellhead protection area and the corresponding community.


4. Another noteworthy program is the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). It is administered by the Farm Service Agency and encourages farmers to establish permanent vegetation on land that needs protection from erosion. CRP in a wellhead protection area can help assure the safety of municipal water supplies from fertilizers and pesticides. Land within the wellhead protection area may be eligible for an additional payment above the normal CRP payment.

If you are developing a wellhead protection plan for the first time or revisiting your existing plan, feel free to give me a call if you would like assistance. My number is 402-607-9750.


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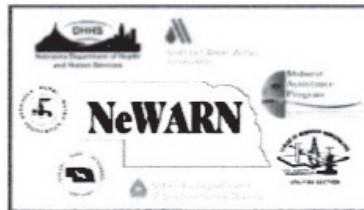


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