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WINTER 2021



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Local members receive national recognition

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Providing resources and a network for Kansas to responsibly manage water

Pedrotti Presented George Warren Fuller Award

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KSAWWA Section Manager

“Little can be said about George Warren Fuller without recalling a thousand and one connections which he has had with sanitary engineering practice in this country and abroad. Amazingly active mentally, he always catalyzed those individuals who were fortunate enough to work with him. An enthusiasm, tempered by seasoned judgment and reinforced by a remarkable technical knowledge, accounting for the fact that his name is identified with almost every important sanitary advance in this country in the last four decades... Many, however, are born at the right time who are either ill-equipped or are lacking in sufficient vision to make the most of that good fortune. In Mr. Fuller’s case, heredity and environmental influence, coupled with remarkable energy, all contributed to the development

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News from the Chair

by Katie Miller, KsAWWA Chair



It's true that operators must maintain a certain number of hours for their respective certifications every couple of years, as required by KDHE. However, it is important that operators are directed and encouraged to

attend trainings and workshops that are beneficial and related to their daily jobs... not just to attend classes that are geographically close in location to “check the box” and receive their hours.

Training is professional development and should be viewed as such. Training sessions from all technical providers in the state are strategically located for attempts at being accessible to all operators and focus on topics that are generally related to common compliance issues. Our state is widely diverse when it comes to source of supply, treatment techniques, and compliance issues. So, while it may be difficult for a utility to encourage the travel of their operational staff to a class outside of their region, it may be necessary to find the training that truly fits their needs. Sending Class IV operators to small systems sessions has never made much sense to me. The “because it's close” mentality needs to change to “because it's the best, even if it is farther.” For our

operators to properly grow, learn, and be challenged, we must support and encourage the necessary trainings that will be most beneficial.

Our workforce is also drastically changing from the 20+ year operators to a new generation of operational staff. New staff members are trying to learn as quickly as possible, so it is essential to interconnect operators with other industry professionals, so they develop and grow their own network of expertise to call upon when they have questions or issues. This networking is typically accomplished at trainings with operators of like systems. This network can ensure that operations and maintenance activities are done correctly versus “this is the way we have always done it here.”

Training is an essential function to any well-managed, sustainable utility, and not just because it's a certification requirement. Please encourage your operational staff to seek out the training they need and not to just “check the box.”

For more information about the KsAWWA training program, please reach out to me or the Operator Training Committee. 📧

Katie Miller, KsAWWA Chair

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Section Manager's Report

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KsAWWA Section Manager

I hardly know where to begin. When they say you can't teach an "old dog" new tricks, I am here to prove everyone wrong. Never in all my professional days have I embraced as many changes as I have in the past 20+ months of my career and rather successfully if I say so myself.

As I wrote this article in December 2020, we had just come through a year of Zoom meetings and a virtual annual meeting, and we weren't sure if 2021 would be any better than 2020. Again, I am here to report KsAWWA came through the major shutdowns of the pandemic with flying colors and because of its resilient members has moved forward taking everything in stride and continuing to provide excellent water to their local customers.

We joined with KWEA and had a very successful in-person joint conference in August–September in Topeka, Kansas. KDHE commended us on the COVID-19 protocols we put into place to keep our attendees safe; we worked around a hotel sale, and the hotel management and staff provided us excellent service considering all its many changes and challenges. It was especially good to see many of the old faces from the two associations and just to be able to move around with some freedom. We learned if a speaker was unable to be at the conference, we could still bring their presentation virtually to our attendees and give the attendees the needed training the speaker had to offer.

With all that being said, we have moved forward and are already preparing for the 2022 joint conference in Topeka, Kansas, to be held Aug. 30–Sept. 1, 2022. There were some exhibit hall changes in 2021, and we are



looking to enhance that experience even more in 2022. The Program Committee has met and is working on developing the topics for papers with the Call for Papers now open. Exhibitors and attendees will be invited to start registering online in January.

So, as I sit here writing to you and listening to Christmas music (yes, I am one of those people), I am especially proud of KsAWWA and its members for their resilience and willingness to work around and through some hardships and never give up but also develop new and better ways of doing things. They are from the state with the motto, "Ad Astra per Aspera" (through the stars through difficulties). May each and every one of you have a blessed holiday season and embrace the new year with gusto!

Merry Christmas and happy new year! 🍷



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Director's Report

by Lester Estelle, KsAWWA Director



My term as has officially started, and I'm excited to provide you my first director's report.

During the past few months AWWA have provided great orientation sessions to include:

- » Review of the Incoming Director's Handbook.
- » "Meet and Greet" the incoming board class of 2024.
- » Review for the governance, council, and committee structure.
- » Review for the board and executive committee functions.
- » Review for the board member responsibilities.
- » Read and review of the bylaws.
- » Complete sponsor assignments for the ACE conference supporters.
- » Virtual attendance at the fall Council Summit, highlights including AWWA president's remarks, Canadian Affairs Rebate Proposal update, Diversity & Inclusion Committee update, future water issues, and afternoon breakout room sessions.

During this process, I was reminded about the many valuable resources available within AWWA. I've always understood this organization to be one of the best, however these sessions solidified my opinion. I encourage you to revisit the AWWA website again. You will find resources that will help you and your utility "build a better world through better water."

The January 2022 board and executive committee meetings are rapidly approaching. The conference will be in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Among other business matters at the Winter Meetings, the national board will elect the next president-elect, director-at-large, and four new vice-presidents.

Key Objectives from AWWA

AWWA's Board of Directors adopted the 2025 Strategic Plan that elevates the global importance of safe water and highlights the water sector's need to strengthen public trust and to advance diversity and inclusion. Each year AWWA adopts a plan (and budget) detailing specific actions to be taken during the year to implement the strategic plan and the metrics to be evaluate progress. The overarching themes for this year's plan are:

AWWA remains financially healthy and carefully manages its budget by maintaining its reserves and gradually increasing revenue and expenditures.

AWWA continues to launch new initiatives to add even more value to membership, strengthens recruitment of new members and encourages current members to renew their memberships.

AWWA continues to promote opportunities for training, serving in local sections and celebrating the accomplishments of its members.

AWWA Strategic Plan

- » Vision: A better world through better water.
- » Mission: Providing solutions to effectively manage water, the world's most vital resource.
- » Core Principles: Protect health, safeguard the environment, strengthen public trust, advance diversity and inclusion, share best practices, inspire innovation, advance access to safe water globally.

Strategic Goals

- » Member engagement and development.
- » Organizational stewardship.
- » Knowledge creation and exchange.
- » Water policy and leadership.

1. AWWA is committed to both the protection of public health and rigorous scientific process.

Accordingly, AWWA is heavily supporting utilities in their efforts to comply with the Lead and Copper Rule; advocating for PFAS to be addressed through improved source water protection, investment in research, and regulatory decisions informed by sound science; and partnering with the USDA to protect source water and safeguard the environment.

2. Water professionals must work to strengthen public trust in water quality and services.

Hence, AWWA is devoting special attention to water affordability, public perceptions of tap water (and ways to improve them), public communications, and community stewardship.

3. Water professionals and services are always essential, and especially during emergencies.

AWWA is providing new and better resources to utilities (including small systems) for workforce training and development; for guidance on best practices for [cybersecurity](#); and for assessing risks and developing risk management and emergency response strategies that meet or exceed the requirements of the American Water Infrastructure Act.

4. AWWA inspires innovation and knowledge-sharing that advances access to safe water globally.

AWWA is growing its online resources (for example, AWWA recently launched [envoi](#), an online platform making AWWA's standards and manuals more readily available to utilities and service providers); is increasingly engaging organizations outside North America; and, as part of its Innovation Initiative, published a new manual ([Guidance for Developing a Water Utility Innovation Program](#)) outlining a step-by-step process for utilities of any size to build a structured, customized innovation program.

5. AWWA is advancing a culture of diversity and inclusion that is reflected in its leadership and member/staff experiences.

AWWA is doing this in various ways: through initiatives focusing on workforce diversity and inclusion, social equity, and ways to improve perception of tap water quality in areas serving minority and low-income customers;

and by providing information and customizable campaign materials to utilities, service providers, and sections to recognize outstanding contributions to water by people differing in background, gender, race, and sexual orientation.

Other Recent AWWA Activities

U.S. President Biden signed into law the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act on Nov. 15, opening a \$55 billion spigot to reauthorize several federal drinking water programs, appropriate expanded funding for water infrastructure and other programs, and commit \$15 billion for lead service line replacement.

AWWA members advocated for the legislation through e-mails and calls to their members of Congress urging action on water infrastructure. The act, which was the subject of intense, bi-partisan negotiations, was passed by the Senate last August and the House of Representatives on Nov. 5.

“Now comes the challenge of implementing the programs in the bill,” said Tommy Holmes, legislative affairs director with the American Water Works Association. “Staff at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is developing guidance and policies for dispersing the funds,” he added. “In addition, a lot of the money will then be distributed through the state revolving loan fund (SRF) program, so each state agency will have to accept and process applications. In other words, money will not immediately flow from Washington.”

AWWA issued a [statement](#) thanking Congress and the president for their support of water infrastructure.

Following is a breakdown of what this means for utilities.

DRINKING WATER AUTHORIZATIONS

Note that authorization is an initial step; the actual release of funds requires appropriations legislation, which is also in this bill, listed after this section.

- » \$75 million for technical assistance and grants for emergencies affecting public water systems, including natural hazards and cybersecurity.
- » \$14.65 billion for the drinking water SRF program for fiscal years 2022–2026.
- » Applicants for loans under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program will only need to provide one credit rating instead of two, as is currently required.

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- » EPA must develop a WIFIA outreach plan for small and rural communities.
- » \$510 million in assistance for small and disadvantaged communities.
- » \$500 million for reducing lead in drinking water by removing lead service lines and other relevant activities, with an emphasis on assisting disadvantaged communities.
- » \$250 million to improve operational sustainability of small water systems.
- » \$250 million for the mid-size and large drinking water system resilience and sustainability program.
- » A needs assessment for a nationwide low-income water bill assistance program.
- » 40 pilot projects to provide financial assistance to low-income water customers.
- » \$200 million for lead testing and remediation in schools.
- » \$50 million for a study assessing emerging technologies that could address cybersecurity and water monitoring issues and a grant program to deploy technologies.

- » \$4 billion to be channeled through the drinking water SRF for emerging contaminants, all in the form of grants or principal forgiveness.
- » \$5 billion to deal with emerging contaminants in economically distressed communities.
- » \$1.126 billion annually in additional funding for the drinking water SRF through FY2026.
- » \$1.6 billion annually in additional funding for the wastewater SRF through FY2026.

CYBERSECURITY

- » EPA and the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) are to identify public water systems, that if degraded or rendered inoperable, would lead to significant impacts on the public's health and safety.
- » EPA and CISA are to develop a technical cybersecurity support plan for public water systems.
- » The two agencies are to submit to Congress a list of public water systems needing technical support.

DRINKING WATER APPROPRIATIONS

- » \$50 million annually for WIFIA programs for FY2022–2026.
- » \$11.713 billion for the drinking water SRF; 49% to be in the form of grants or loans with principal forgiveness; only 10% state match required in FY2022 and FY2023 (the wastewater SRF program got an equal amount).
- » \$15 billion for lead service line replacement, with 49% to be in the form of grants or loans with principal forgiveness; no state match required; \$3 billion annually for FY2022–2026.

BUY AMERICA, BUILD AMERICA

- » Extends “Buy American” requirements to include not only steel and iron products, but also “manufactured products” and “construction materials.”
- » “Produced” in the United States means a product was manufactured in the U.S., and the cost of its components that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the U.S. is greater than 55% of the total cost of the manufactured product.

KsAWWA Local Update

We are excited as the KsAWWA Board of Trustees align and discuss ways to move the AWWA mission forward. Katie Miller, our new chair, has already conducted meetings with great discussions.

In closing, there are a lot of opportunities and hopefully better times coming in 2022. As the new year arrives, I look forward to being able to meet and

visit with many of you virtually or in person at events. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to serve this organization.

Please do not hesitate to share with me your, thoughts, comments, suggestions, questions, and concerns; or contact me for additional information regarding any matter relevant to AWWA or KsAWWA. 🍂



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of a practitioner of outstanding stature. He will be remembered long in the future, as much for his distinctive personal characteristics as for his long list of contributions to sanitary science and practice.”

So wrote Abel Wolman editorially in Municipal Sanitation after Fuller's death June 15, 1934.

I have been told this year's recipient of the George Warren Fuller Award is shy and easily embarrassed. But the different things I have heard about him makes me wonder if that could possibly be true.

He has met Magic Johnson and Carrot Top and sat on the front row of a Celine Dion concert. He lost his shirt in a bowling competition—good deal it wasn't his pants—but after ACE in DC he had to “graft” his favorite pair of pants.

He played defensive end for University of Missouri and made a defensive interception that he carried for a touchdown. Because of that interception and touchdown, he was the Big 8 Defensive Player of the week and was the LAST Big 8 Defensive player of the week before the Big 8 turned into the Big 12. While attending the University of Missouri, he was smitten by a girl from Kansas State University who became his wife.

His father told me that when his son graduated from college, he made him go out into the world and get



KsAWWA 2020–21 Chair Durward Johnson presents the George Warren Fuller Award to Marc Pedrotti

a job and work that job before he would allow him to come into the family business of which he now is president.

He has been a member of AWWA since 2000; he served on the KsAWWA Board of Trustees from 2005 until 2007, was chair-elect in 2008, chair in 2009, and past chair in 2010. He was an active part of organizing the joint annual conference with KWEA.

He and his wife Angie live in Fairway, Kansas, where they raised four children. If you haven't figured out by now the 2021 George Warren Fuller Awardee for KsAWWA is Marc Pedrotti!

Congratulations, Marc! 🎉

Crocker's Industry Dedication Recognized With Operator Meritorious Service Award

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KSAWWA Section Manager

To be eligible for the Operator Meritorious Service Award, the following criteria must be met.

- » Continuous compliance with public health standards in finished water.
- » Consistent and outstanding contribution to plant maintenance thereby prolonging the useful life of equipment.
- » The development of new and/or modified equipment of significant process modifications to provide for a more efficient or effective treatment.
- » Special efforts in the training of treatment plant operators.
- » Special acts not directly related to water treatment but which demonstrate dedication to the public beyond the normal operating responsibilities.
- » Consistent and outstanding contribution to operation and/or maintenance of distribution lines, pump stations, and reservoirs.

This year's recipient of the Operator Meritorious Service Award has been involved in the water treatment field since 2006, and during that time he has spent most of his time as a maintenance supervisor. He not only is responsible for keeping his water treatment plant in good working condition, but he must also keep up with the best work practices for maintaining equipment and deciding



Steve Nirschl accepts the Operator Meritorious Service Award on behalf of Paul Crocker, KCK BPU, from KSAWWA Past Chair Durward Johnson

when a piece of equipment is due to be upgraded or replaced. His duties include scheduling PMs, maintaining spare part inventories, and oversight of the maintenance staff.

He has become a national figure when it comes to maintenance and reliability. He has developed maintenance programs for his water treatment plant that have prolonged equipment through an effective preventative maintenance program. He is recognized by his peers as the go-to person when it come to development and implementation of maintenance management software. He loves technology; his passion has allowed him to master IR scanning, vibration monitoring, and ultrasound. He also loves

presenting on all the things he has learned to help others to care and prolong the life of their equipment.

This year's recipient has held a Kansas Class IV water treatment license since 2006. He has traveled abroad to install equipment to teach communities about clean drinking water and is always willing to come forward when someone needs help with a problem.

This year's recipient is Paul Crocker, Kansas City, Kansas, Board of Public Utilities (KCK BPU). Paul is married to Michelle and has three children and two grandkids. He is active in his church and teaches Sunday School and is a follower of Sporting KC. I am also told his hobby is technology; he was referred to as a "Techie Geek."

Congratulations, Paul Crocker! 🎉



Tasker Bestowed With Richard Porter Service Award for Commitment, Leadership

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KSAWWA Section Manager

The Richard Porter Service Award was established in 2006 in memory of long-time member and Secretary Treasurer Richard Porter. The award is given each year to a section member who has demonstrated support and commitment to the Kansas Section.

This commitment could be represented by the following:

- » An active role in one or more committees;
- » Participation in section conference or training seminars;
- » Demonstration of a friendly and welcoming attitude to new and current members of the section.
- » Serve as an example to others of the role of the section as a leader in providing service and support to others in the industry; and or
- » Promotion of a positive image of the section.

Richard always referred to himself and his close friends and colleagues as doctor. Anyone inducted



KSAWWA Past Chair Durward Johnson presents the Richard Porter Service Award to Martha Tasker, City of Salina

into the Richard Porter Service Award fraternity automatically becomes a doctor.

The 2021 Richard Porter Award goes to Martha Tasker, director of utilities, City of Salina.

Congratulations, Dr. Tasker! 🎉

Selby Honored With John Lechner Award of Excellence for Exemplary Service

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KsAWWA Section Manager

The John Lechner Award of Excellence recognizes a Section Manufacturers/Associates Council member who has demonstrated exemplary service to the drinking water community and to AWWA's mission and goals. The recipient of this section award is automatically eligible for the AWWA award.

The KsAWWA 2021 recipient of the John Lechner Award of Excellence for KsAWWA is Jeff Selby with Letts Van Kirk.

After graduating from Southern Boone County High School in Ashland, Missouri, Selby embarked on a career in Dentistry at Truman State University. It didn't take long for him to recognize that he would make a better engineer than dentist, so he transferred to the University of Missouri-Columbia to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering.

Upon graduation, he began his career at Fairbanks Morse-Pentair, working his way through the ranks from sales engineer to regional sales manager, serving much of the central United States. In 2018, after over 30 years with Fairbanks Morse-Pentair,



KsAWWA Past Chair Durward Johnson presents the John Lechner Award of Excellence to Jeff Selby, Letts Van Kirk

Selby decided to make a career change and currently works for Letts Van Kirk representing dozens of equipment manufacturers.

Selby is most proud of his wife Myra and his sons Jackson (a firefighter for Kansas City, Kansas) and Jonathan (a mechanical engineer with McCarthy).

Congratulations, Jeff! 🎉

Six Recognized With National AWWA Membership Tenure Awards

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KsAWWA Section Manager

AWWA honors significant membership tenure with the following awards. The recognition received builds with years of membership with the association.

Silver Water Drop Award

Eligibility

25 cumulative years of membership.

Award

A certificate and lapel pin mailed directly to the recipient.

Life Member Status

Eligibility

30 cumulative years of membership and at least 65 years of age.

Award

A certificate and lapel pin mailed directly to the recipient, discounted membership dues, and recognition at member's section annual conference.

Gold Water Drop Award

Eligibility

50 cumulative years of membership.

Award

A certificate and lapel pin mailed directly to the recipient, discounted membership dues, and recognition at member's section annual conference.

2021 Award Recipients

At the 2021 annual joint conference, KsAWWA recognized the following individuals.

Silver Water Drop Award

- » Daniel M. Jaksa, Kansas City Board of Public Utilities
- » Stephen W. Waite, Great Plains Institute

Lifetime Award

- » Denis M. Baragary, Sr., Leavenworth Waterworks
- » L. J. Gerard, Gerard Tanks and Steel, Inc.
- » Chester A. Bender, Ponzer-Younquist
- » Allen N. Bolte

Congratulations to all of these members for their diligence and continuing membership in AWWA. 🎉



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City of Garden City Named Recipient of SWAT Outstanding Public Engagement Award

by Anne Blankenbiller, Irrigation Association

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA — The Irrigation Association (IA) has named the City of Garden City, Kansas, as the recipient of the Smart Water Application Technologies 2021 Outstanding Public Engagement Award. This award recognizes a water provider with a successful program focused on public engagement and education on smart, efficient irrigation technologies and practices.

The Customer Water Use Report program works to educate customers about water use at their property and provide tips and information to help them save water inside and outside the home. By merging the city's Geographic Information System data with Automated Metering Infrastructure data, they are able to provide every residential address in the city with customized water-use information specific to their address. Each customer's report compares their usage to the average usage of their neighborhood and the average usage of all water users in the city.

"Congratulations to the City of Garden City for being honored with the Outstanding Public Engagement Award for their Customer Water Use Report program," said Deborah Hamlin, CAE, FASAE, IA CEO. "Their program that merges technologies already used by the city to provide useful information to residents about their water use is a great example of innovative thinking to develop customer engagement and promote efficient irrigation practices."

Since starting the program, Garden City has seen consistent declines in their gallons per capita per day usage. In 2017 when the first report was sent to customers, the gallons per capita per day usage for the city was 182 gallons. In 2020, it was 162 gallons. This report has played a role in conveying the need for water conservation in the community and provided residents with tools to help improve their use of water.

The 2021 Outstanding Public Engagement Award was presented on Oct. 6 during the WaterSmart Innovations Conference and Exposition. Applications for the 2022 SWAT awards opened Nov. 1. For more information about SWAT and these awards, go to <https://www.irrigation.org/SWAT>. 

About the Irrigation Association

The Irrigation Association is the leading membership organization for irrigation companies and professionals. The IA is committed to promoting efficient irrigation and to long-term sustainability of water resources for future generations. The IA works to improve industry proficiency, advocate sound water management and grow demand for water-efficient products and services. For more information, visit <https://www.irrigation.org>.



WaterOne Celebrates New Ozone Facility

by Jerry Koukol, WaterOne

WaterOne celebrated the successful completion of its new ozone treatment facilities with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Sept. 28. The event was attended by WaterOne's board and employees, as well as representatives from Black & Veatch, Garney Construction, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).

"It has been a long road getting here, so I'm glad to be able to celebrate this project," said Board Chair Brenda Cherpitel in her remarks at the event. "The board has established a clear mission for WaterOne: that is to provide a safe, reliable, high quality water supply with exceptional service and value. This new facility hits the mark on each of these statements."

Ozone, a powerful oxidant, is a safe, effective, and natural method for treating water. Following the completion of the facility, ozone is now the primary means of disinfection at WaterOne's Hansen Treatment Plant. The new facility has already continued WaterOne's winning streak of regional and national Best Tasting Water awards. In 2021, WaterOne was declared "America's Best Tasting Drinking Water" in a nation-wide contest sponsored by the National Rural Water Association (NRWA), and was also judged a five-time winner of the "Best Tasting Tap Water" award by the Kansas Section of the American Water Works Association (KsAWWA).

The concept for the facility was originally discussed during a 2003 master plan study, which foresaw



ozone as a potential future enhancement to WaterOne’s treatment process. It was later determined that implementing ozone would lead to significant operational cost savings, reduce WaterOne’s carbon footprint, and be a more effective treatment for pharmaceuticals and emerging contaminants in the source water. Ground was broken on the new facility in 2017, and testing and regulatory approval concluded in 2021.

“A project like this is a major undertaking that requires time, a lot of hard work, and careful planning,” said Director of Production Michelle Wirth. “After four years of construction and testing running simultaneously with the current treatment process, the project was really an all-hands on deck situation for every part of the organization. What a privilege and honor to be able to say that WaterOne is now using ozone as its primary means of disinfection at Hansen Treatment Plant.” 🍂

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Veterans Workforce Spotlight: Jeff Fisher, Unified Gov't of Wyandotte County

by Tonya Bronleewe, Wichita State University Environmental Finance Center

AWWA believes military members are an excellent fit for the water sector because of their technical expertise and experience working nontraditional hours in a regulated environment. KsAWWA has many veteran members and members with family on active duty who are employed at Kansas utilities. This feature aims to highlight a unique perspective on how military backgrounds and careers in the water industry intersect.

A native of Missouri, Jeff Fisher landed in Kansas by way of his career. After serving in the United States Navy from 1990–1994, Fisher started in the environmental consulting industry out of college and then decided to explore public service through local government. Fisher has served three cities, all of which provide water, wastewater, and/or stormwater services.

“Water is essential for life, and wastewater is necessary for the civil society we enjoy,” Fisher said.

As the director of public works for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, Fisher is responsible for the performance of services and programs around wastewater, stormwater, engineering, asset management, facilities, streets, fleet management, and solid waste/recycling.

Fisher’s military experience provided him the opportunity to meet and develop relationships with people of all backgrounds and perspectives. “I learned first-hand how impressive our military folks are and how much many of them sacrifice to protect us,”



Fisher said as he explained that his military service was an experience that gave him a better perspective on a variety of topics.

Although uncomfortable in a leadership role, Fisher enjoys it and takes his position seriously and understands that he is in a position that can influence local government policy and values. He spends considerable time studying leadership principles to develop skills and help grow leaders at all levels.

There are many accomplishments of which Fisher is proud. "I have worked with some excellent people. The people I have had the privilege of working are most important to any successes I have been a part of, and I will always value those relationships and experiences," Fisher said. His proudest accomplishment is that he has been able to protect and serve the country and society through his military service and through his roles as a local government servant for communities in the region.

When not working, Fisher and his wife enjoy the outdoors by spending as much time outside as possible. Fisher met his wife while they both were serving in the Navy. She still serves and as a commander in the United States Public Health Service.

They have two sons that are excellent young men. One served in the United States Marine Corps. They also have two granddaughters with whom they enjoy spending time.

"The one thing that our industry should always do is give the veteran an interview; give the veteran an opportunity in person to demonstrate their attitude and mindset toward life and work." 🍂

Help us find our next Kansas water workforce veteran to spotlight! Email efc@wichita.edu, or complete our [online interview form](#).

NO WATER NO FLOW

 American Water Works Association

#NoWaterNoFlow
#ValueWater



Reducing the Threat of Customer Violence

by Dan Riney, KSAWWA Safety Committee Chair

Unhappy customers who harass and intimidate utility workers, either in a company location or in the field, pose a threat to the utility worker. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), every week an average of 20 workers are murdered and 18,000 are assaulted while at work or on duty. Non-fatal assaults result in millions of lost workdays and cost workers millions of dollars in lost wages.

Utility employees are particularly vulnerable to workplace violence because they deliver services, often alone or in small groups, and may exchange money with the public. The most at-risk workers are the billing service staff, meter readers, and field staff who make house calls to investigate customer complaints or install services. Those responsible for shutting off water services are perhaps the most likely to encounter customer hostility.

A potentially violent customer may catch a utility worker off guard. This is when a cool head and violence-prevention training come into play.

A utility worker who encounters an angry customer at a company facility should never become defensive, confrontational, or patronizing. Instead, talk to the person in a calm, soft voice. This helps them realize the volume of their own voice and may prompt them to respond in kind.



Listen closely to the complaint, smile pleasantly, and treat the customer with respect. Empathize by acknowledging how the person is feeling. “I understand why you are upset,” and “I know this is difficult...”

Ask open-ended questions such as “What happened?” and “What can we do to help?” By getting customers to talk instead of yell, you can break their train of thought and even diffuse their anger. No matter what, report the incident. Especially keep a record of volatile customers so other employees can be better prepared for future encounters.

In the field, all of the above suggestions apply. If the situation becomes uncomfortable, leave the premises, go to a safe place, and call help. If the

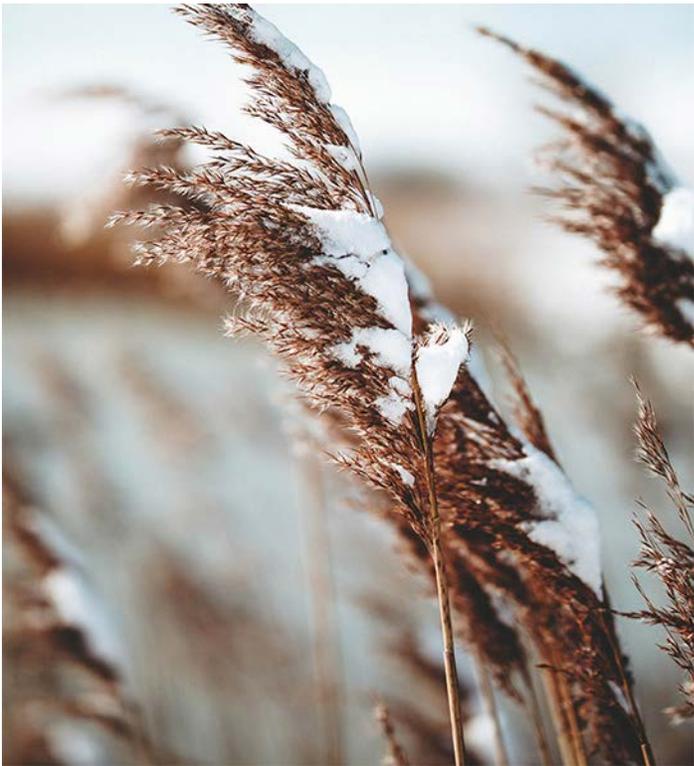
customer shows a weapon or physically threatens the utility worker, the incident needs to be immediately reported to the police as well as to the utility management.

If a situation is potentially dangerous, e.g., if you are shutting off service, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends hiring an employee safety service or request police assistance. OSHA also recommends that employees who carry money should not work alone. Other ways to increase field staff safety include:

- » Equipping field staff with cell phones, handheld alarms, or noise devices.
- » Requiring staff to set check-in times to keep a contact person informed of their location throughout the day.
- » Keeping utility vehicles in good working order to avoid a breakdown in unsafe areas; and
- » Providing drop safes to limit the amount of cash bill collection employees carry.

If a violent incident occurs, the employer should provide the effected employees with emotional support such as crisis intervention and counseling.

A workplace violence prevention program is only as effective as top management is willing to make it. But it is every employee’s responsibility to be aware, act on warning signs, and learn how to deal with threats. 🕒



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WaterOne Expands Its Renewable Energy Profile

by Jerry Koukol, WaterOne

It takes a lot of energy to produce safe, clean drinking water. For water providers, supporting renewable energy can be a meaningful step towards improving sustainability in their operations.

WaterOne recently partnered with Kansas City, Kansas, energy provider Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to purchase power from their solar energy production facility located at the Nearman Creek Power Station in northern Wyandotte County. WaterOne has agreed to license 1,500 panels from the facility by January 2022. The agreement will contribute over 650,000 kWh of solar power annually for WaterOne treatment plants and infrastructure located within the BPU service area.

The solar farm agreement is an impactful addition to WaterOne's energy profile, which includes a diversified blend of traditional and renewable energy sources. WaterOne also began purchasing wind energy through Evergy's Renewables Direct program in 2021, and now up to 60% of the power required to operate WaterOne's pumping stations comes from renewable wind energy.

Renewable power opportunities, along with other strategies and investments for optimizing energy management, are an important part of WaterOne's



The WaterOne Board recently joined staff from BPU for a tour of their Community Solar Farm.

goal of demonstrating environmental stewardship, improving operational resiliency, and maximizing financial benefit for ratepayers.

“We’re proud to collaborate with our regional utility partners in the energy sector, including BPU and Evergy, towards our goal of a more sustainable future,” said WaterOne General Manager Mike Armstrong. 🌿

KsAWWA Awards Two Terry L. McKanna Scholarships to University Students

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KsAWWA Section Manager

KsAWWA presented two \$1,000 Terry L. McKanna scholarships at the 12th Annual KWEA/KsAWWA Joint Conference in Topeka, Kansas, on Aug. 31.

The two scholarship recipients were Sydney Knese, a University of Kansas environmental science student,

and Kathryn Douglass, a Kansas State University civil engineering student.

KsAWWA congratulates both students and looks forward to their futures in the water industry. ↗



WaterOne Declared 2021 Winner in Best Tasting Tap Water Contest at Joint Conference

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KSAWWA Section Manager

The annual water taste test was held on Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021, at the 12th Annual KWEA/KSAWWA Joint Conference in Topeka.

This year's judges were Lester Estelle, WaterOne, KSAWWA Director; Joe Foster, EPEC; Mark Pedrotti, R. E. Pedrotti Company; and Steve Randtke, retired. These judges did their usual smelling, sipping, and swishing to determine which of the five entries was the best of the best in the state of Kansas.

When all was said and done, WaterOne was victorious. WaterOne will get to take their water to ACE22 in San Antonio, Texas, in June 2022 and see if they are the best of the best in the nation.

Congratulations to these water professionals of the WaterOne for doing such a good job of providing not only safe but also excellent tasting water for their patrons. 🍷



Sarah Tuite, Michelle Wirth, and Lester Estelle of WaterOne pose with their Best Tasting Tap Water Award

Operators Race to Assemble Water Meter in Annual Timed Competition

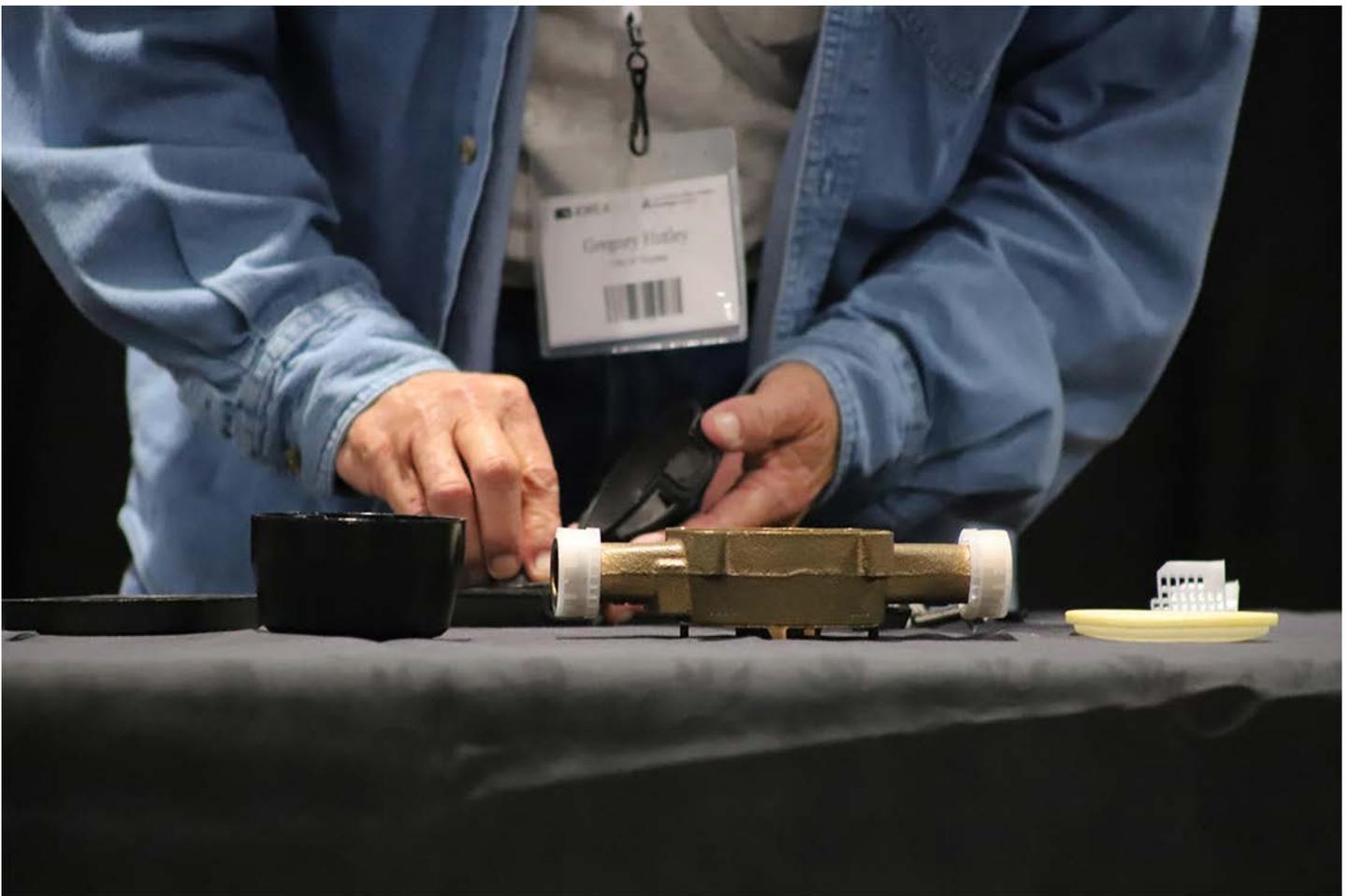
by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KSAWWA Section Manager

The annual Meter Madness contest was held on Wednesday, Sept. 1. John Daugherty, Utility Solutions, always puts together a great competition, and the competitors enjoy trying to outdo each other.

This year there were nine participants from the City of Topeka, WaterOne, and City of Olathe. The top finishers were very close as there was only five seconds separating first-place winner Robin Blanshan,

City of Topeka, with a time of 1:23.8, from second-place winner Nick Wager, City of Topeka, with a time of 1:28.8. Roman Rodriguez III, City of Olathe, took third place with a time of 1:45.8.

Congratulations to all the participants. Start practicing now for the 2022 competition! 🏆



Backhoe Rodeo Competition Tests Skill, Proficiency of Equipment Operators

The annual Backhoe Rodeo Competition was held on Wednesday, Sept. 1. This competition tests the skills and proficiency of equipment operators as they move through a series of obstacles and challenging tasks and are time and judged on their performance.

This year's competition was sponsored by VLP, Topeka, Kansas. 🏆



Backhoe Rodeo Winners from the City of Topeka



Operator's Challenge Competition Returns With Mock Tap Installation

by Jeff Stacy, ADS Pipe Company

After a year off for COVID-19 concerns, operators from across Kansas stepped up to the plate to compete in the third annual Operator's Challenge at the KWEA/KsAWWA Joint Conference in Topeka, Kansas. Each competitor came to show off their skills, compete for their community, and to show their commitment and passion for the wastewater industry.

Each operator and some engineering staff competed in a typical task encountered by operators in the field on collection systems. This year's challenge involved making a mock installation of a tap on PVC pipe using an InsertaTee connection. In year number three, there were 12 participants who competed for prizes ranging from \$25-\$100 in each division. The winner of each division was also awarded with a traveling trophy to put on display at their headquarters and bragging rights for the next year. Big thanks to Advanced Drainage Systems for their sponsorship. Stay tuned for details on the fourth annual competition at the 2022 KWEA/KsAWWA Joint Conference in Topeka. 🍀



Category 2

Between 125 and 500 miles of pipe

- » 1st – Matt Fund, City of Topeka
(fastest time overall, 1:36)
- » 2nd – Tyler Parrish, City of Topeka
- » 3rd – Zach Robertson, City of Topeka

Category 3

Less than 125 miles of pipe

- » 1st – Laura Munro, City of Bonner Springs
- » 2nd – Steve Garcia, City of Bonner Springs

Category 1

Greater than 500 miles of pipe

- » 1st – Sabrina Parker, City of Olathe
- » 2nd – Roman Rodriguez III, City of Olathe
- » 3rd – Ira Speer, City of Olathe

Annual Sporting Clays Competition Raises Money for Water For People

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KSAWWA Section Manager

The annual pre-conference sporting clays competition was held Monday, Aug. 30, at Ravenwood Lodge in Topeka, Kansas, followed with lunch provided by Charlie Wheeler, EPEC. There were a total of 19 shooters for this year's competition. At the end of the day, two shooters were tied and a shoot-off declared the third place winner.

The proceeds from this annual event are donated to Water For People, helping people in developing countries improve their quality of life by supporting the development of locally sustainable drinking water resources, sanitation facilities, and health and hygiene education programs. ↷



2021 Winners: Joe Filby (4th place), Tyler Gray (3rd place), Eric Broce (1st place), Tony Zell (2nd place)

Young Professionals Participate in Joint Conference Events and Exhibits

Contact YP Committee Chair Casey Leaf at cleaf@carollo.com for additional information or to learn more about young professionals meetings and networking events. 🗑️



KWEA and KSAWWA membership and YP booths in the exhibit hall



Yeti cooler winner Jordan Wehmeier, Crossland Heavy Contractors



Young professionals enjoy breakfast with seasoned water industry professionals



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Annual KWEA / KsAWWA Joint Annual Conference

2022

Hotel Topeka at City Center
& Stormont Vail Events Center
Topeka, Kansas
August 30 – September 1

2023

Hyatt Regency
& Century II Convention Center
Wichita, Kansas
August 29–31

AWWA Annual Conference

June 12–15, 2022 San Antonio, TX

June 11–14, 2023 Toronto, Canada

June 10–13, 2024 Anaheim, CA

June 8–11, 2025 Denver, CO

June 21–24, 2026 Washington, D.C.

June 13–16, 2027 San Diego, CA

KsAWWA Annual Meeting

August 30, 2022