

NEBRASKA  
SECTION



spring 2015  
Volume 52, Issue 1



FIND  
OUT

MORE ▶

[awwaneb.org/words](http://awwaneb.org/words)

# Wise Water Words

## this issue

- 1 from the chair
- 2 director's report
- 3 committee reports
- 4 wine for water
- 4 fall conference poker tournament
- 5 a word from the editor
- 6 taking a water message to washington
- 6 2015 legislative preview
- 7 small system operator training
- 8 poster contest results
- 9 nitrates
- 10 membership report
- 11 lincoln wins water - tasting competition
- 12 thanks from water for people
- 13 kevin tobin - 2014 fuller award
- 14 water for people fundraising record
- 14 the passing of a pioneer

# New 2015 Nebraska Section AWWA Officers and Board of Directors

NAME	OFFICE
Doug Woodbeck	Chair
Ben Day	Chair-Elect
Chad Roberts	Vice-Chair
Eric Melcher	Treasurer
Jim Shields	Secretary
Milo Rust	Trustee <i>(term ending November 2015)</i>
Mary Poe	Trustee <i>(term ending November 2016)</i>
David Lathrop	Past Chair and Trustee <i>(term ending November 2015)</i>
Brittany Travers	Trustee <i>(term ending November 2016)</i>
John S. Olsson	Director



Back row (L to R):  
 Milo Rust, Jim Shields,  
 David Lathrop, Brittany  
 Travers, Ben Day, Mary Poe

Front row (L to R):  
 Rick Melcher, Chad  
 Roberts, Doug Woodbeck,  
 John S. Olsson

# From the Chair

*submitted by Doug Woodbeck | Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services*

We just held the first meeting with me as Chairman for the Section and I believe it went fairly well. We adopted the Section budget for 2015. Financially, I believe we are doing very well. Our expenses do not exceed our revenues so we are doing much better than our Federal Government, as far as living within our means. We also adopted the changes to the Section's "Strategic Plan", which the immediate Past-Chair, David Lathrop, worked on so diligently. This revised document is on our webpage for all to see. There were a number of issues discussed and several Ad Hoc committees formed to address a couple of issues. The new ad-hoc committees are "Total Water Solutions" (TWS), Wise Water Words (WWW), and By-Laws.

John S. Olsson, Director for the Section, is the Chairman of the TWS Ad-Hoc Committee. This committee is a collaborative effort aimed at cultivating partnerships that will enhance the Section and the services provided thereby. The Section, along with others organizations that are water-related or have an integral tie with water, will hopefully be brought together to 1) gain a better understanding of the resources that are available to us, 2) provide insight as to how water, energy, and nutrients are interrelated, and 3) identify successful efforts made in the (water) supply cycle. I look forward to seeing what John and the other committee members come up with.

Mary Poe, Trustee for the Section, is the Chairwoman for the WWW Ad Hoc committee. This committee was formed to flesh out whether or not the Section would want to join forces with NWEA to publish a joint newsletter rather than staying by

ourselves in this endeavor. We have been approached by NWEA with this possibility, but there has been some reservation expressed in this regard. There are now efforts by most organizations to move into the paperless age. Like it or not, the world as a whole is moving in that direction. I, however, like to have my hands on the news I receive, as do many others. There is the argument that one may print off the electronic document that you receive and read it at your leisure. This argument is hard, if not impossible, to overcome, especially when you take into account the money savings afforded the organization by going paperless. If you don't have to print it on paper then mail it out, you can save a lot of money, which will hopefully go to other worthwhile causes.

Finally, the By-Laws Ad Hoc Committee will be chaired by Rich Koenig. This committee was formed to address a couple of concerns that were brought up at the annual meeting in Kearney this past fall. Specifically, there are some conflicting parts of the by-laws that need to be brought into a non-conflict state, and we need to have some clarification with regard to the actual number of Trustees on the board and who those seats are or can be filled by. I would like to have these issues decided by the Fall Conference, but I am sure that won't happen, simply because of the steps necessary to affect changes to the by-laws. This committee will also be addressing the issue of whether or not section membership will be a requirement for Committee Chair appointments as well as simple participation on a committee.

## From the Chair (cont.)

As I write this article, the plans are made and the "Wine for Water" event is scheduled. My congratulations to Teresa Konda for setting up this event in such a short time. I truly hope that it proves to be beneficial for the Section, Water For People, and those persons whom this very worthwhile organization works to help. I believe they are doing God's work.

In closing, I would like to encourage all members to be active in your Section's activities. If you want to join a committee,

simply contact the Committee Chair or any of the Board members. We would be glad to get you in touch with the appropriate person to best utilize the skills you bring to the table. Also, if you are interested in holding a position on the Board of Directors, please contact any of the Nominations Committee members. David Lathrop is the Chairman of the Nominations Committee and the members are John S. Olsson, Ben Day, Dennis Watts, and Mike Wentink. Please visit our website to find Committee Chair contact information.

# Director's Report

*submitted by John S. Olsson | Olsson Associates*

Good morning everyone. I'd like to welcome you to the 2014 Nebraska AWWA Fall Conference, which is once again being held at the wonderful Younes Conference Center. I can speak on behalf of the entire board of directors when I say we are excited to get this conference rolling, and the program committee in particular is to be commended for putting together a fine collection of speakers and programs over the next day and a half.

You know, this is an exciting time to be involved in the water industry in the State of Nebraska. We have so much to be thankful for in this great state of ours. We are blessed with an abundance of water and seem to have reasonable policy in place that allows us to successfully manage this important resource. But not every state is as fortunate as we are.

Consider the State of Texas as one example. In an August 12th Associated Press article, it was noted that as drought and industrial demand ravages on, the Ogallala aquifer is depleting at a pace that some fear will exhaust it far more quickly than anticipated. Records examined by the Lubbock Journal show the aquifer has been depleted by about 325 billion gallons every year for at least the past four decades, resulting in a 40 ft. decline in the groundwater levels. And a few counties have plunged by nearly 100 ft. during that same time period. Additionally, Texas Tech indicates that four counties have less than 15 years before groundwater is exhausted.

By contrast, here in Nebraska where about two-thirds of the entire Ogallala aquifer is stored, we have generally maintained our water levels on average. Yes, we've had some ups and downs across the state, but on average we are faring far better than some of our neighbors even though we have the most irrigated acres of any state. Certainly Nebraska is benefiting from our early, aggressive approach to managing groundwater which is the source to so many of our public water systems.

## Director's Report (cont.)

With new leadership taking over the reins at the highest level in our statehouse from Tuesday's election, the timing seems right to think about what our message might be to this group if afforded that opportunity. I know we can speak with authority to the value water brings to the direct consumers...which are generally at the far end the supply line, right before it goes down the pipe under gravity. But do we truly understand the place of drinking water in the overall context of the water supply chain in our state?

Let's be honest...we have competing uses for water. We have the needs within our communities, we have the needs of agriculture which manifests itself to us with irrigation demand, and here more recently we have an energy industry that with the advancements of directional drilling, has created a water intensive process which we now know as fracking. This particular technology is being utilized in areas not too far from here. Significant shale deposits exist in nearby Eastern Colorado. As these are developed it is reasonable to expect that Nebraska will be looked to as a source for water given some of the factors that have previously been stated.

So it seems like there is starting to become, or maybe there already is, some type of nexus that puts energy, agriculture and community water uses together. They are all connected and one leads to the other. As you listen in and/or participate in the sessions today and tomorrow, you might give some thought to how a broader view of water may influence your decision making process or how you want to go about communicating with those we are entrusted to serve.

Last year our Association CEO, David LeFrance had this to say – "Like a river that is constantly transforming, the water profession has changed over the years. Although today's water professional may have an area of focus, we're not so easily identified as just drinking water, wastewater, or reuse professionals. Current challenges force us to take a broader view and recognize the connectedness of each phase of the water cycle. As a result, we understand that at no time does water stop being valuable."

## Committee Reports

### **Public Information Committee**

At the annual conference in November, the committee once again held a water tasting contest where Lincoln Water System was victorious at having the overall best-tasting drinking water. The City of Aurora was voted as the best-tasting in the non-treated category. Another fun children's poster contest was held at the conference. Check out the winning entries!

Drinking Water Week is May 3-9. This year's theme will again be "What do you know about H<sub>2</sub>O?" Governor Ricketts will be signing a proclamation declaring Drinking Water Week in Nebraska.

### **Young Professionals Committee**

The YP committee is working on several events for 2015, including factory tours, WTP tours, a technical presentation and social, the Children's Groundwater Festival, and E-Week at UNL.

The committee is looking for volunteers to organize and coordinate the Fall Conference poker night. The YPs are also looking into organizing a UNO student chapter for AWWA.



# Wine for Water

The Water for People committee is hosting "Wine for Water", an event to raise funds for Water for People.

## Harvest Cafe

16909 Lakeside Hills Plaza, Suite 118  
Omaha, Nebraska

Monday, March 2, 2015

5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

\$45 per person

Admission includes light appetizers

The restaurant is typically closed on Mondays, but they are opening specifically for our event. They will not be open for dinner following the tasting.

Please RSVP by  
February 20, 2015 to:

Teresa Konda  
teresa.konda@hdrinc.com  
402-926-7063

Chris New  
christian\_new@praxair.com  
402-216-2367

# Fall Conference Poker Tournament

*submitted by Brittany Travers | WTG Midwest*

The AWWA Young Professionals committee teamed with the NWEA YP committee to hold the 4th Annual Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament to benefit Water for People. The event was a big success with approximately 56 participants. While the number of participants was down from last year, a large increase in our sponsorships helped us raise \$3,250 -- which is up from last year. Water for People's mission is to provide sustainable access to clean water to 100% of people in 30 states within 9 countries. The money we raised will go to the general fund which works toward that goal. This year, two of the 30 districts will have reached 100% access, which is a true success.

All players received prizes from event sponsors. Cash prizes were given to the top five winners:

- 5th place: Jack Satur (\$25)
- 4th place: Nathan White (\$50)
- 3rd place: Nick Martin (\$100)
- 2nd Place: Ron Sova (\$150)
- 1st place: Larry Stafford (\$200)



The AWWA and NWEA YP Committees would like to thank our partner for this event, Bert Gurney & Associates, who provided refreshments for all participants. We would also like to thank our Gold sponsors (HDR, Electric Pump, Layne Christensen Company, Lincoln Winwater Company, Miller Mechanical Specialties, Vessco and Vulcan Industries) and our Silver sponsors (JEO, WTG Midwest, Beehive Industries, Commonwealth Electric Company, JCI industries, Kirkham Michael & Associates, Mellen & Associates, and Olsson Associates).

# A Word from the Editor

submitted by Brian Gongol | DJ Gongol & Associates

There is much to read in this edition of Wise Water Words, including Doug Woodbeck's thoughts as he gets underway as our section chair and John Olsson's comments to the opening session of the Fall Conference. We have much to hear from the committees, including fundraising successes for Water for People, efforts to educate Federal lawmakers, and plans for a new SDWA training session for small systems coming up in May.

Membership is doing very well, and we can be especially proud of individual members like Kevin Tobin, our 2014 Fuller Award honoree. Our section continues to reach out to the public at large on water issues, from our growing poster contest for children to recognition for the best-tasting water in the state. Please stay tuned to the legislative issues highlighted by our Water Utility Council to monitor the progress of laws and proposals that may affect our industry. Those have and will continue to include matters like nitrates, on which David Lathrop has submitted some observations -- and as we all know, the coming year could bring anything from drought to flooding. We encourage you to use our section resources, including committee support for education and training, our social-media groups on Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as our e-mail distribution list. Membership participation and support are central to everything we do as a section.

With this issue, we are resuming regular printed publication of Wise Water Words. I sincerely appreciate the patience of the board and membership as the Publications Committee has navigated a number of challenges (the most significant, of course, being the unexpected cancellation of our arrangement with the national AWWA office to provide the layout, printing, and distribution of this publication). I would like to personally thank our board liaison Mary Poe for her help navigating these new circumstances and JEO Consulting Group for stepping in to provide much-needed support with graphic design and layout.

As previously discussed, we have shifted to publishing everything for Wise Water Words first on the website at [awwaneb.org/words](http://awwaneb.org/words), with the printed publication to follow. Please check the section website regularly for updates, or follow one of our social-media feeds for periodic updates on new articles and additions. And please encourage your colleagues to subscribe to our e-mail distribution list, even if they're not AWWA members (yet). If you have comments regarding any of our publications work, please send your comments to the committee at [publications@awwaneb.org](mailto:publications@awwaneb.org), or to me personally at [brian@gongol.net](mailto:brian@gongol.net). As always, thank you for your work to deliver safe and sustainable water for Nebraska.



# Taking a Water Message to Washington

The Nebraska Section will send three representatives to the annual AWWA Water Matters fly-in.

Jim Shields (MUD-Omaha), Milo Rust (City of Chadron), and Chad Roberts (City of Norfolk) will go to Washington, DC, on March 18th and 19th to participate. The event started in 2001, when ACE was held in Washington and a rally was staged on the steps of the US Capitol. Starting in 2002, AWWA began coordinating a spring fly-in event to advance water-related legislative issues on Capitol Hill.

The two-day event begins with a morning of briefings and discussions of the water-related issues before Congress, and the afternoon and following morning are set aside for AWWA members to visit their members of Congress for one-on-one engagement.

## 2015 Legislative Preview

*submitted by Jim Shields | MUD*

The Water Utility Council is watching these bills of interest in the 2015 legislative session:

- LB19 (introduced by Senator Bob Krist, referred to Health and Human Services Committee): To change provisions relating to certification of laboratories. Would make it easier for labs other than the State Lab to be certified.
- LB84 (introduced by Senator Al Davis, referred to Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee): To provide for a public body to use telephone conferencing or videoconferencing as prescribed. Open Meetings law amendment.
- LB104 (introduced by Senator Bob Krist, referred to Natural Resources Committee): To change provisions relating to notice of discontinuance of utility service. Allows e-mail notification in certain circumstances.
- LB130 (introduced by Senator Dan Watermeier, referred to Natural Resources Committee): To change provisions relating to funding from the Water Sustainability Fund for projects as prescribed. Probably more NRD related but it was water.
- LB142 (introduced by Senator Ken Schilz, referred to Natural Resources Committee): Creates an Aquatic Invasive Species Program at Game and Parks. For those with river or lake intakes this would include Zebra Mussels.



# Small System Operator Training to Achieve/Maintain Compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act

## Carol Joy Holling Center

27416 Ranch Road in Ashland, Nebraska

May 7, 2015 (Registration begins at 8:30 am)

Seating is limited, so pre-register to guarantee your seat!

### **About the Training**

Your utility faces day-to-day challenges providing reliable, safe drinking water for your customers while avoiding costly violations. The Nebraska Section AWWA is offering a FREE one-day workshop to help your utility learn about compliance with drinking water regulations and steps to avoid costly violations. This workshop is designed for operators of water systems serving less than 10,000 people, and is not intended for regulators, consultants or vendors/manufacturers.

**6.0 continuing education hours will be available for  
Nebraska water operator grades I - IV.**

### **Agenda**

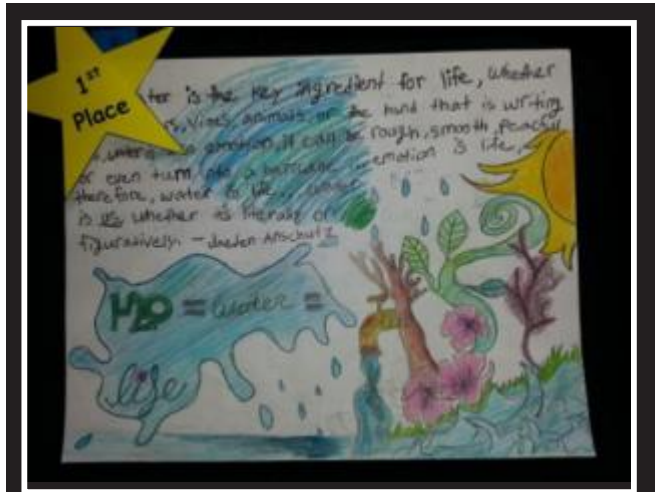
<b>Registration</b>	8:30 am to 8:55 am
<b>Introduction</b> (housekeeping details) <i>David Lathrop, Nebraska DEQ</i>	8:55 am to 9:00 am
<b>Water Treatment - Microbial Contaminants</b> <i>David Lathrop, Nebraska DEQ; John Keith, LWS</i>	9:00 am to 10:30 am
<b>Break</b>	10:30 am to 10:45 am
<b>Disinfection By-Products Reduction and Control</b> <i>Mary Poe, Nebraska DHHS; Mike Wentink, Nebraska DHHS</i>	10:45 am to 12:15 am
<b>Lunch</b> (free - provided by Nebraska Section AWWA)	12:15 pm to 1:15 pm
<b>Distribution System Operation and Maintenance</b> <i>Brian Gongol, DJ Gongol &amp; Associates, Inc.</i>	1:15 pm to 2:45 pm
<b>Break</b>	2:45 pm to 3:00 pm
<b>Regulatory Review – Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR), Lead/ Copper, Groundwater Rule</b> <i>Howard Isaacs, Nebraska DHHS; Sherry Wirth, Nebraska DHHS</i>	3:00 pm to 4:30 pm

### **Directions to the Site**

From I-80 exit 426, turn north onto Hwy 66 and travel toward Ashland. Prior to Ashland, turn east onto Ranch Road. Continue on Ranch Road to the end.

# Poster Contest Results

The Public Information committee would like to recognize the winners of this year's children's poster contest. The theme was "What do you know about H<sub>2</sub>O?"



**Jaeden A.**

Walnut Creek Elementary in Papillion

1st place - \$100 prize



**Khushi S.**

Loveland Elementary in Omaha

2nd place - \$50 prize



**Rachel P.**

Raymond Central Elementary in Valparaiso

3rd place - \$25 prize

*Honorable Mentions*

**Elisa F.** of Whitetail Elementary in Gretna

**Zachariah L.** of Loveland Elementary in Omaha

**Darian W.** of Alice Buffett Magnet School in Omaha

**Cece C.** of Walnut Creek Elementary in Papillion

# Nitrates

submitted by David Lathrop | Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality

Recently, two water systems have come to my attention both having to deal with high nitrates in their source of drinking water.

In both cases, non-point source pollution originating predominantly from agricultural activities have polluted their drinking source water.

In the first case, the City of Hastings has been collaborating with the two local Natural Resource Districts (NRDs) in its area to encourage best agricultural practices such as fertilizer application training, deep soil samples, scheduled irrigation, and reporting to reduce nitrate contamination.

While these strategies are making improvements, the lag time from the travel from the nitrate application sites to the Hastings drinking source water wells is long. Furthermore, reversing the nitrate concentrations is a slow process. As a last resort, Hastings has embarked on a bold and innovative treatment system that will pump groundwater out of the aquifer, remove the nitrates and pump it back into the aquifer upstream of the city's drinking-water wells. The project which is to be built in phases is expected to cost over \$45 million and will benefit 25,000 residents and businesses of Hastings, and possibly outlying communities. The first phase construction is planned for completion in the summer of 2015.

By contrast, much of the source water for Des Moines (Iowa) comes from the Raccoon River, which is fed by aquifer water and storm water runoff into the river. If nitrate level trends in the river do not reverse, the Des Moines Water Works will need to invest

\$80 to \$100 million into its drinking water treatment process.

An Iowa Commission was formed to make recommendations to address the nitrate problem in the city's drinking source water. In May 2013, the Commission created a strategy of voluntary compliance with no monitoring requirements. Fast forward to now, and nitrate concentrations in the Raccoon River continue to increase. With the health of 500,000 population to protect, the water works' governing board voted on January 8th to sue three northwest Iowa counties for their role in creating non-point-source pollution.

Fortunately, most of the best practices to reduce nitrate contamination are also the best business practices for adding to the bottom line of agricultural operations. However, there are no short-term fixes for reducing nitrate contamination. Nature has to take its course. On the other hand, the long term outlook is good, especially if communities and ag producers work together. In both cases, the nitrate contamination problem will be "fixed". It just a matter of when the fix will be started, where the fix will be done, who does the fixing and who does the paying.

# Membership Report

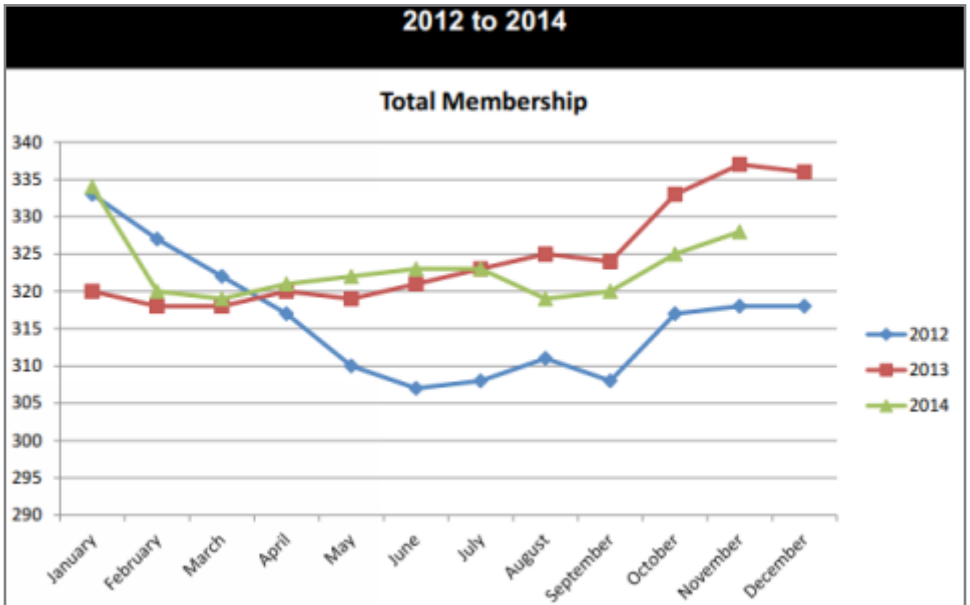
submitted by Marc Rosso | JEO Consulting Group, Inc.

Hello fellow AWWA members! In this edition of Wise Water Words we wanted to take the opportunity to discuss what membership in AWWA means and let you know how the Nebraska Section is doing.

AWWA offers many benefits to its members. Members receive publications such as the AWWA Journal, Mainstream, and Opflow, and special rates when ordering standards, handbooks, and manuals. Reduced fees for attendance at numerous workshops and seminars are available to members. One of the most important benefits is that your membership in AWWA also makes you a member of the Nebraska Section. Members receive our publication, Wise Water Words, and Section mailings and announcements for meetings, workshops, and other activities. The updated member directory is available on our website. As with any organization, the vitality of ours is dependent upon the continued support and active participation by its members. Please review the various committees found on our website and consider getting involved as a chair or member. The network of professionals is a key aspect to our business.

When we look at the below graphic showing 2012-2014 membership we can see that the Section is relatively stable in overall numbers. In the larger peaks and valleys we can see the time frames where students come and go and the occasional retirement of members.

The second graphic shows the trend of modest growth since 2012. The Nebraska Section has always enjoyed a membership group that is loyal and does not vary widely like some other Sections. We think this can be attributed to the many activities the Nebraska Section has and the



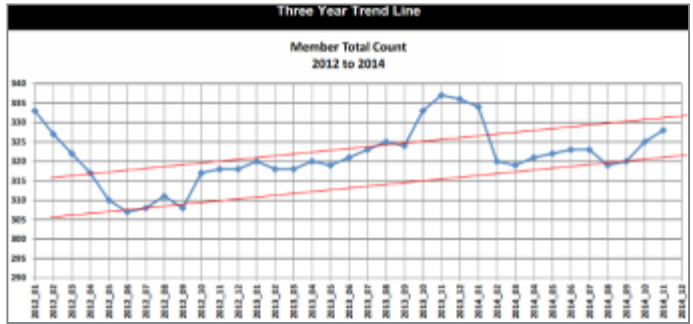
## Membership Report (cont.)

The second graphic shows the trend of modest growth since 2012. The Nebraska Section has always enjoyed a membership group that is loyal and does not vary widely like some other Sections.

We think this can be attributed to the many

activities the Nebraska Section has and the close relationships many of us have with each other.

Last, we know that the vitality of our membership is because of members like you. Please take the time to visit with your co-workers or industry friends and recruit a new member today. Thanks for your membership in AWWA. We hope to see you at an upcoming event.



## Lincoln Wins Water - Tasting Competition

The Lincoln Water System emerged as the 2014 winner of our annual water-tasting competition. This is the second win for Lincoln; in their last turn as Nebraska's Best-Tasting Water (in 2009), they placed third in the national competition.

Lincoln dethroned the City of Fremont, who has held the crown for the past four years. Although Lincoln was the overall winner, the City of Aurora was voted the best-tasting in the untreated water category. Samples were submitted by Aurora, Blair, Columbus, Fremont, Kearney, Lincoln, and Norfolk.

Six individuals served on our panel of judges:

- Chris Batt, assistant superintendent of the City of Ogallala Water Department
- Brenda Lennox, National AWWA Vice-President and Customer & Support Services Manager for the Tualatin Valley (Oregon) Water District
- Jack Daniel, administrator of the Nebraska Office of Drinking Water and Environmental Health
- David Lathrop, 2014 Nebraska Section AWWA Chair and environmental engineer at NDEQ
- Vince Kuppig, environmental engineering graduate student at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln
- Allison Speicher, environmental engineering graduate student at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Lincoln will represent Nebraska at this year's national contest in June at ACE in Anaheim.



# Thanks from Water for People

The Nebraska Section AWWA received two thank-you letters from Water for People for donations made in 2014. The text of the most recent letter follows:

January 21, 2015

AWWA NEB  
PO Box 94791  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4791

Dear AWWA NEB:

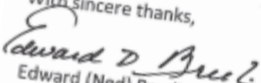
Thank you for your contribution of \$2,402.36 to help Water For People end the cycle of water and sanitation poverty for good. In partnership with generous donors like you, Water For People is working with the families, communities, governments, and small businesses of nine developing countries to plan, finance, build, operate, and maintain local water and sanitation services to last well into the future, without repeated infusions of international aid.

Water For People's driving goal of reaching **Everyone Forever** is gaining momentum, due in large part to the support and enthusiasm of donors like yourself. As you know, Chinda, Honduras and Cuchumuela, Bolivia, now have permanent safe drinking water for 100% of their populations and many other districts are well on their way to the same achievement. Water For People remains committed to full coverage in 30 districts across nine countries by the end of 2018. As our successes gain recognition locally and internationally, **Everyone Forever** is catalyzing an international movement among organizations working in the water sector and among local political leadership, who are demanding basic services for their people.

Rest assured that you have made a wise investment with your gift. Water For People is in the top 1% of US nonprofits who have earned four-stars for ten consecutive years from Charity Navigator, America's leading evaluator for fiscal responsibility in the nonprofit sector.

Please visit our website, [www.waterforpeople.org](http://www.waterforpeople.org), for more information about where and how we work. Your support makes this historic journey to end water and sanitation poverty possible!

With sincere thanks,

  
Edward (Ned) Breslin  
Chief Executive Officer



# Kevin Tobin - 2014 Fuller Award

submitted by Glenn Dostal | ???



This year's Fuller award winner has served nearly 30 years in the water service industry. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from UNL, he joined

a Nebraska utility as a young, ready-to-learn engineer.

Four years later the utility promoted him to assistant to the director of water production and pumping at the state's largest water treatment plant. He served in the role for a year and was promoted to design engineer. Major projects included large pumping stations and reservoir, standby pump improvements, and the conversion of the water system to chloramine disinfectant.

In 1996, he was promoted to director of major water plant projects. He was responsible for overseeing the environmental impact statement and permitting process for the District's third water treatment facility, the Platte West Project, earning him the title "honorary lawyer." He's forgotten more about the American Burying Beetle, Western Prairie Fringed Orchid, Least Terns, Piping Plovers, Pallid Sturgeons, Bald Eagles, sub-irrigation, and private ponds than most of us will ever know.

He then oversaw the five-year design and construction process of the 100-million gallon per day plant. He was named superintendent in 2006, and the facility officially opened in the summer of 2008.

He also has a master's degree in Civil Engineering from UNL, earned his professional engineer certification in 1990 and holds a Water Operator I License with the State of Nebraska. He is certified in FEMA's National Incident Management System.

He is an active member of the Nebraska Section of the American Water Works Association, having served on numerous committee and officer positions, including Section Chair in 2008.

He and his wife Amy have three daughters, Mariah, Hannah, and Katie Jo. The family resides in Tekamah, Nebraska.

He enjoys golf, watching his daughters play softball and baking cheesecakes. This year's winner of the George Warren Fuller award is Kevin Tobin with Metropolitan Utilities District.





## Water for People Fundraising Record

*submitted by Christian New | Praxair*

With the help of you and \$3,350 in proceeds from the Fall Conference Poker Tournament (put on by the Young Professionals committee), our 2014 donation to Water for People is a record \$11,800! This is 38% over last year's total and 4% over our 2012 record. Every year, I become more amazed at you, our water community. It is truly humbling to be associated with such a fine group of men and women in Nebraska's water industry.

### Raffle Results:

- You purchased a record \$2,955 in raffle sales (32% over last year). A record number of you donated prize money to yield another raffle record of \$2,453 for Water for People (68% over last year):
- Chris Miller of Miller and Associates donated 1/2 of his \$400 first prize winnings.
- Eric Obert of JEO donated 1/2 of his \$250 second prize winnings.
- Jim Wathen of CDM Smith donated ALL of his \$100 third prize winnings.
- Brenda Lennox, AWWA Vice President and our honored guest, donated ALL of her \$60 Top Ops prize.
- Mike Parde, of the City of Fremont, donated ALL of his \$20 Ultimate Back Flow Challenge prize.

This was a great team effort which not only included the Water for People committee, but you, the backbone of our water industry!

## The Passing of a Pioneer

*submitted by Mike Wentink | Nebraska DHHS DPH*

Ken Kerri, a pioneer in water operator education, passed away on December 15, 2014. Ken established the Office of Water Programs in the Department of Civil Engineering at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) in 1972 and served as its director until his retirement in 1997. He continued work as a consultant to the Office of Water Programs after retirement, and had taught at the University for nearly 40 years.

The training materials that Ken developed have been in use around the world for the training of many thousands of individuals in the disciplines of water systems operations, wastewater operations, management, and stormwater. The Nebraska DHHS operator training program has utilized these materials for water operator training for over 20 years.

I first personally met Ken some many years ago at a USEPA-sponsored conference and also had the pleasure of sharing a one-hour presentation with him at a conference several years later. We would see each other at various conferences over the years and also talk occasionally by phone and email. What struck me most about Ken was his personable and sincere interest in one's observations, thoughts and ideas. Irrespective of the issue he discussed with him, he eventually drifted to pheasant hunting, one of the many activities he enjoyed until the end.

Although he was an Emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering with awards and professional affiliations too numerous to list, he was a very humble man. Aside from continued work in the Office of Water Programs, during his aged years he also kept very active, riding a bike, hiking in the mountains, and participating in many of the outdoor activities he enjoyed.