

**FULLER AWARD**  
Eric Lee honored

**BEST WATER**  
Cortland repeats win

**NEW DIRECTORY**  
Inside this issue

# WISE WATER WORDS

Volume 53 • Issue 3 • Fall/Winter 2016



# Fall Conference 2016 Photos



# Wise Water Words

## Fall/Winter 2016

### Volume 53, Issue 3



American Water Works Association  
**Nebraska** Section

#### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

"Wise Water Words" is published by the  
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	John Keith
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	Jack Satur

#### ON THE COVER

Finalists from the Children's Poster Contest were displayed in the main lobby at the Fall Conference for review and voting

#### PHOTO CREDITS

DARYL KOTTWITZ: Photo of Eric Lee on page 2, Chad Roberts and Ben Day on page 6, Board of Directors on page 16

MARC ROSSO: Shotgun event photo on page 9

MARY POE: Poster contest entries on page 15

BRIAN GONGOL: All other photos

# Director's Report: Expanding Our Reach in 2017

Dr. Bruce Dvorak  
University of Nebraska - Lincoln  
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Submitted November 20, 2016

We were blessed with unseasonably pleasant weather for the annual Conference in Kearney this fall. As I write this column, the weather has shifted and winter appears to be here. As we approach the New Year, it is a good time to reflect upon the past year and to consider the opportunities that we will have during the next year.

The Nebraska Section held another successful annual conference under the leadership of Chad Roberts, who is the Section Chair for the upcoming year. At the conference, I had the pleasure of getting to know our visiting AWWA dignitary, Kevin Bergschneider, who is a Vice President from the Rocky Mountain Section. Kevin shared many useful ideas with our officers, including ideas related to recruiting new members. On the note of membership, our section continues to be stable at about 355 members, and the national membership has increased to almost 50,800.

The national AWWA organization has obtained U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grants to assist sections with training opportunities. As part of the 2015-2016 grant program, AWWA at the national level collaborated with local AWWA sections to deliver 96 workshops, eLearning course hosting/marketing, and webinar marketing. Under the leadership of John Keith, the Nebraska Section has taken advantage of grant funds to provide

training sessions for small systems.

Nationally, the One AWWA Operator Scholarship is now being offered by 30 sections, including the Nebraska Section. This scholarship is available to any operator to use for a wide range of training opportunities, including college coursework, books, and conferences. The scholarship was first offered this past fall, but no applications were received. I strongly encourage anyone interested in the any form of

**"The One AWWA Operator Scholarship is now being offered by 30 sections, including the Nebraska Section. This scholarship is available to any operator to use for a wide range of training opportunities, including college coursework, books, and conferences."**

education to enhance his/her skills to contact Craig Reinsch, the Nebraska Section scholarship chair, to discuss the possibility of applying for the scholarship.

I want to end this column to highlight a new program, the Community Engineering Corps, being developed by an alliance of AWWA, the American Society of Civil Engineers, and Engineers Without Borders - USA. The alliance

combines the strengths of three organizations to provide technical expertise to under-served communities in the United States and ensure that their infrastructure meets their community's needs. Projects may require civil, mechanical, electrical, and chemical engineers, in addition to hydrogeologists, environmental scientists, and operators. Several AWWA sections have ongoing Community Engineering Corps projects, including ones started in recent months in Alaska, Ohio, and California. The Nebraska Section formed a Community Engineering Corps committee during the business meeting at the Annual Conference.

The Nebraska Section's Community Engineering Corps is now starting the process of identifying the most appropriate projects. These will be for small, high-need communities. One line of discussion was to aim to assist communities that do not have an administrative order for a drinking water problem, but are observing a trend in water quality that may lead to an administrative order. These projects could be aimed at helping these communities identify possible solutions and educate them in how to obtain funds to hire professionals to provide design services. Anyone interested in learning more about the Community Engineering Corps or in suggesting appropriate projects or communities, please contact me.

# Report from the Chair: Let's Talk

Chad Roberts  
City of Norfolk  
Nebraska Section AWWA Chair  
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Submitted November 17, 2016

I am very honored to serve as your Chair of the Nebraska Section AWWA for 2017. It's a privilege to lead an organization that has such outstanding officers and members. I'm confident that your support will lead us to a successful year.

My thanks to Ben Day for his outstanding leadership directing the Nebraska Section last year. Ben is an exemplary professional in all tasks in which he is involved, and his service to our section over the last year was no exception. Every chair seeks to leave the section in better condition than they found it, and Ben rose to that task.

Congratulations to Eric Lee, this year's George Warren Fuller Award recipient. Eric is a credit to our profession and this honor is well-deserved. Our entire industry is full of unsung heroes and people who go about doing important work with public service foremost in mind. In 2017, I hope you will consider nominating a colleague for one of our section awards. Their recognition is up to you!

Please also consider putting someone's name into nomination for a national award as well. Our stereotypical Midwestern modesty sometimes keeps us from doing enough to take credit for the work we do...but it isn't bragging if you're praising someone else! Award nominations not only help to give people good feelings about their own

work, they give us something as an industry to talk about. If you want the public to pay more attention to water issues, you can help start the conversation by putting the name of a friend into nomination for a well-deserved award.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the Fall Conference. We are among the few all-volunteer sections in the AWWA, and our members benefit from the efforts of lots of hard-working people who help to make the Fall Conference better every year. Participation on a section committee (like the Fall Conference planning committee) is one of the best ways to make the most of your AWWA membership, and I encourage you to see the list of committees at [awwaneb.org/committees](http://awwaneb.org/committees) and to find one that's the right fit for you.

We all face many challenges providing safe drinking water to the great people of Nebraska. The Nebraska Section AWWA is your section. We come together to offer educational materials, mentorship, and training. Be sure to use this resources and to communicate your needs to the section officers and committee chairs. We're at our best when we think locally.

I look forward to serving you in the coming year, and thank you in advance for your service to the public.

## Public Info Progress

Mary Poe  
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Nebraska Section AWWA Public Information Chair  
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Submitted November 30, 2016

The Public Information committee has pressed forward in 2016 with our long-term goals of raising public awareness of water-related issues across Nebraska. These were our major efforts over the past year:

- Obtained a proclamation from the governor to recognize Drinking Water Week and organized participation in the proclamation signing ceremony
- Issued press releases to local media around Kearney and to the larger statewide media markets to bring attention to the Fall Conference
- Conducted the annual water-tasting contest at the Fall Conference
- Distributed door prizes and AWWA-related collateral items during the water-tasting contest, including special recognition for the taste testers
- Coordinated a large statewide children's poster contest on a water-related theme
- Displayed finalists from the children's poster contest at the Fall Conference, conducted the balloting, and issued prize checks to the winning entrants

We are also pleased that the committee added a new member this year: Jennifer Thompson of the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission. More members are always welcome! A growing committee will help us do even more to motivate public awareness of drinking water across the state. The Public Information committee is a great committee for new members to join, since no special industry expertise is required – we only need your motivation to help drive new ways to reach more people, more often.

# Outgoing Chair's Valedictory: Look How Far We've Come in 2016

Ben Day  
Olsson Associates  
Nebraska Section AWWA Past Chair  
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Submitted November 23, 2016

I wanted to take a moment to thank everyone for their attendance at the 2016 Fall Conference. It was a great turnout and we had a record number of vendors and many first-time attendees. I hope you all enjoyed the conference; there were many great opportunities for learning, operator training and continuing education, networking, and insights into the latest technologies with our exhibitors. I want to recognize and thank all the exhibitors who showcased their products and services – without exhibitor support, we simply could not put on this conference.

Let me point out a few highlights from 2016:

This year, we were honored to host the AWWA Region IV RMSO (Regional Meeting of Section Officers) in Omaha and we feel it was very successful. It was a great way to meet leaders from other sections, share ideas, and showcase our state and our Section. I truly enjoyed it.

We have started strategizing about how our Section can become involved in the Community Engineering Corps. More to come in 2017 as we form a committee to move this forward.

We have an active ad-hoc committee called Total Water Solutions (TWS), which is working with other organizations including the

Nebraska Water Balance Alliance. In particular, the Water Balance Alliance launched a project that is targeted at effective water conservation and management in agriculture across Nebraska. To carry their vision forward, NWBA has a program designed to link targeted on-farm water management practices to the larger framework of water use, conservation, and management across the state. Part of this effort allowed the board of the Nebraska Section AWWA to offer a letter of support to the Water Balance Alliance towards a Water Sustainability Fund grant application that they submitted the State of Nebraska.

We have held multiple successful Water For People fundraising activities including a wine tasting, golf outing, and shotgun shoot.

Our Education Committee has taken full advantage of the EPA small systems grants for training, hosting multiple workshops throughout the year and we've been able to offer many opportunities to our constituents. These workshops will continue in 2017 through the guidance of our Education Committee, thanks especially to the work of John Keith and Mike Wentink.

A special thanks to our dignitary, AWWA Vice President Kevin Bergschneider. We appreciated his insight into the Association and his

sharing of his experiences and knowledge.

I have served the section for many years through chairing committees and holding various positions on the Board. It has been a great experience that has allowed me to participate in the effort of protecting and conserving our most valuable resource, water. Through the years, the Section has helped me to learn and develop in my skills and career, to network, and to make many great friends along the way. My year of service as Chair of the Nebraska Section AWWA is now over and I appreciate all the support of the other board members, committee members, and the Nebraska Section membership as a whole. Chad Roberts is our new Chair, and I know that Chad will do an excellent job moving the Section forward into 2017.



# Eric Lee of Lincoln Water System Honored with 2016 Fuller Award

Dennis Watts  
City of Norfolk  
Nebraska Section AWWA Fuller Award Committee Chair  
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Submitted November 10, 2016

Eric Lee began his career with the City of Lincoln Water Division in 1990 as the laboratory manager. Eric became a Grade 1 water operator in 2001 and in 2002 Eric was promoted to his current position of Assistant Superintendent of Water Production. In this position, Eric is responsible for overseeing operations of Lincoln's well field, treatment plant, and transmission systems.

Eric is passionate about providing Lincoln's 80,000 customers a safe, high quality and reliable water supply. Eric manages water operations to ensure consistent compliance with regulations while also focusing attention on energy conservation and controlling operating costs. During his tenure, he has lived through the flood of 1997 which had serious impacts to the operation of the plant. Eric also managed the well field water supply during drought events in 2002 and 2012.

Lincoln's two treatment plants have undergone numerous expansions and improvements through the years. These construction projects required Eric to be creative and innovative in operating the facilities to continue safe, reliable service to customers. Eric has been instrumental in implementing new technology and processes including the installation of horizontal collector wells, ozone treatment, and ozone generation with liquid oxygen, well field modeling, biofilm control, filter optimization, and NPDES compliance.

Eric has served the Nebraska Section AWWA in several capacities, including as chair of the association in 2014. He has been active in numerous committees and conferences through

the years and recently participated on the Nebraska Top Ops team in Chicago this year. Eric has been involved in several Water Research Foundation projects, most recently participating in research work related to ozonation.

His work and sharing of knowledge have helped to advance technologies in the water industry by providing education and training to other water professionals.

Eric has a real passion for the water supply profession and enjoys sharing that knowledge with others, especially children and young professionals aspiring to have a career in this same field. Eric has hosted many guests, dignitaries, and elected officials on plant tours providing insight and perspective on the water supply profession. He has long supported Lincoln's Earth Wellness Festival by giving hands-on instruction to children, teachers, and parents regarding water quality and water supply. He has always made a special effort to stay in touch with the professors and the environmental sciences program at his college after graduation and was awarded "honored graduate" by the college for his successful career development post-graduation.

He is also a World War II history buff. This stems from his father being a Pearl Harbor survivor who was stationed on the USS Nevada at the time of the attack. He could tell you just about anything you would ever want to know about the attack and the war that followed. Eric is preserving the memory of those Pearl Harbor Survivors and that fateful day as a member of the National Sons and

Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors and is currently working with other members to form a local Nebraska chapter. Eric has been fortunate to visit the Pearl Harbor Memorial in Hawaii, where he met first hand several of the few remaining survivors, and also the National WWII Memorial in Washington, DC.

Eric enjoys playing the drums in his free time which he has done since his early high school years. He has played in numerous bands over the years, sometimes two at a time, ranging anywhere from current cover bands to rock and roll to original music. His favorite genre is Southern rock.

Pheasant hunting season is Eric's favorite time of the year, which he now spends with his new German shorthair puppy, Rosie. In more recent years he has added spring turkey hunting to his list of hobbies and always enjoys a good day of fishing as well.

Eric enjoys traveling with family and friends, with one of his top vacation destinations being Hawaii. His daughter, Elizabeth, shares this same love for Hawaii and was married there two years ago at a beautiful beachside ceremony.

Eric has a knack for remembering all sorts of interesting facts which makes him one of the best trivia players around. Anyone who dares to play against him usually suffers a loss and of course everyone always wants him to be on their team! He also a great pick for a Top Ops team. Eric's wife, Mary, and mother, June, are in attendance tonight. We congratulate our 2016 Fuller Award honoree, Eric Lee.

# Cortland Wins Best-Tasting Water Again

Mary Poe  
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Nebraska Section AWWA Public Information Chair  
mary.poe@nebraska.gov  
Submitted November 17, 2016

For the second consecutive year, the Village of Cortland has the best-tasting water in Nebraska, as determined by the six judges at the 2016 Fall Conference. Cortland does not chlorinate or otherwise treat the water. They plan to submit a sample in the "Best of the Best" taste test competition at the AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE) in Philadelphia in June.

Although Cortland was the overall winner, the City of Blair was voted the best tasting in the treated water category. This is the first year that Blair has earned that distinction.

Samples were submitted from the public water systems at Aurora, Blair, Cortland, Fremont, and Lincoln.

A panel of six judges were asked to rate the samples on a 1 to 10 scale on each of four characteristics:

Appearance, scent, flavor, and aftertaste. The resulting point totals established the winning rankings.

Thanks to the judges who took the time during the social hour to taste and rate the water samples. The six judges were Kevin Bergschneider of National AWWA and HDR in Denver; Ben Day of Olsson Associates and the outgoing Nebraska Section Chair; Steve Hanna, a UNL grad student in Environmental Engineering; Laura Hardesty of the Cadmus Group; Howard Isaacs, the Nebraska Office of Drinking Water and Environmental Health Administrator; and Dean Muirhead, a Life Support Engineer for Barrios Technology Inc., working with NASA at the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

# Help Needed on Two New Projects

Ben Day  
Olsson Associates  
Nebraska Section AWWA Past Chair  
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Submitted November 23, 2016

Based upon the results of our last Board meeting, the Section needs some folks to volunteer to take on a couple of projects:

1. The Board approved the Community Engineering Corps Committee (COE). We need to start to activate the COE. Committee members thus far include Bruce Dvorak, Marc Rosso, Chad Roberts, Ben Day, and Becky Schuerman. We welcome more members and we need someone to volunteer to be the committee chair.
2. At the last meeting, the Board agreed to support Steve Masters in an initiative with ASCE to develop a scorecard or condition assessment for Nebraska's infrastructure. We need a volunteer or two to contact Steve and assist him with this effort.

Please volunteer – or, if you have someone else in mind, ask them to volunteer and then keep Chad Roberts and the Board informed. You can start by contacting Ben Day at [jday@olssonassociates.com](mailto:jday@olssonassociates.com) or Chad Roberts at [croberts@ci.norfolk.ne.us](mailto:croberts@ci.norfolk.ne.us).





# A 22-Gun Salute to Water for People

Teresa Konda  
HDR  
Nebraska Section AWWA Water for People Chair  
teresa.konda@hdrinc.com  
Submitted November 28, 2016



The Water For People Committee held a shotgun benefit fundraiser on October 14th at the Oak Creek Sporting Club near Brainard, Nebraska. Tim Mundorf served as the event chairman once again.

The shooting clay course included stations that challenged the shooters in natural wooded and open settings, complete with ponds and hills. The participants agreed that

the shotgun benefit provided a great opportunity to enjoy the fall colors on a pleasant afternoon, while raising funds for an important cause.

The committee was pleased to receive support from 11 sponsors and 22 shooters. The event raised over \$2,100 and promoted the valuable work that Water For People performs around the world.

# Ten Systems Recognized for Safety

Rob Pierce  
League of Nebraska Municipalities  
Nebraska Section AWWA Safety Committee Chair  
robp@lonm.org  
Submitted November 23, 2016

The most important part of the job at any utility is staying safe. The Nebraska Section AWWA is pleased to recognize the following operations for their commitment to safety in 2016:

## Certificates of Achievement

- Chadron
- Norfolk Water Division
- York
- Beatrice Board of Public Works
- Grand Island Platte Generating Station

## Certificates of Recognition

- Auburn Board of Public Works
- Lincoln Water System
- Nebraska City Utilities
- Fremont
- Metropolitan Utilities District

Each of these operations was recognized at the 2016 Fall Conference banquet. If you think your utility deserves recognition for safety, please be sure to complete a safety award application and return it to a member of our committee. Forms are found online at [awwaneb.org/committees/safety](http://awwaneb.org/committees/safety).

Get more out of your AWWA membership!

Join a committee of the Nebraska Section.

Visit:

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



# Three UNL Students Awarded \$1,000 Leisen Scholarships

Craig Reinsch  
Olsson Associates  
Nebraska Section AWWA Scholarship Committee Chair  
creinsch@olssonassociates.com  
Submitted November 17, 2016

The Nebraska Section - American Water Works Association established the Colonel Theodore A. Leisen Memorial and Training Endowment Fund in 1993 to encourage water industry professionals to obtain additional training and to encourage graduate and undergraduate students to choose the water industry as their field of work.

Colonel Theodore Alfred Leisen was one of the incorporators of AWWA and served as president from 1917 to 1918. He also chaired several national committees on public health and pollution. Leisen was named general manager of the Metropolitan Utilities District in Omaha in 1923 at the age of 59, and he retired at the age of 74. Leisen returned to Detroit and died in 1944. In 1993, AWWA inducted him into the AWWA National Hall of Fame.

The scholarship committee received 14 applications and decided to award three scholarships of \$1,000 each. Thanks to committee members Larry Andreason, Adam Darbro, Chip Haas, Rod Kirkland, and Mike Koenig.

Lauren Klaasmeyer is currently attending the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, pursuing a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering, with an expected graduation date of May 2019. Her hometown is Burr, Nebraska. Lauren performs community service through church meals, Antelope Creek stream clean-ups, Matt Talbot Kitchen outreach efforts, and science education programming at the Lincoln Children's Museum.

From Lauren's application: "Water

quality is an important issue to me, and will become a greater societal issue in coming years...I am still figuring out what fit would be best for me...[and] I hope to find a company where I believe I am doing good work and making a difference...It would be rewarding to know I was working in a position that allowed me to contribute to solving this problem, whether in a specific community, or on a broader basis, trying to figure out a widespread solution...I am highly considering a water-related career. Good water quality and treatment are important for a smoothly functioning society. By working in such an area, I would feel that I was making a valued contribution to society. I hope to make an impact through various possibilities such as providing useable water, or helping a plant cut back on water use, or more efficiently treating their wastewater."

Noelle Mware is currently attending the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, pursuing a doctorate in civil/environmental engineering, where she is a first-year student. She received her bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from Benedict College (Columbia, SC) in May 2016. She is from Kenya. Noelle serves as a member of UNL Recycle and has been involved in several environmental and clean-up endeavors.

From Noelle's application: "My passion for...enhancing water infrastructure through environmental engineering has been strengthened by the ongoing water contamination issues. My mantra that clean water is essential to everyone drives my pursuit for further studies in environmental engineering so as to

develop a stronger skill set for sustainable methods in contaminant remediation. Born and bred in Kenya, I significantly identify the need for environmental engineers in the water sector as influenced by the inefficiency of clean drinking water. For this reason, I am pursuing a doctorate degree at UNL."

Matthew Thompson is currently attending the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, pursuing a master's degree in environmental engineering, where he is a first-year student. He received his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from UNL in May 2016. His hometown is Elkhorn, Nebraska. Matt's student involvement includes serving as the environmental engineering program representative to the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA), as well as service on the professional development committee.

From Matt's application: "Water is life. Throughout my time in college, I have started to understand what this really meant and have seen a glimpse at how much energy, time, and heat is being poured into the preservation of this resource. These experiences have shaped me to want to pursue a path of wanting to be involved with helping rebuild infrastructure and improve education in the wastewater treatment field. [...] I want to work in the wastewater sector for about 5-10 years...following this I want to return to school to get a Ph.D. with an emphasis in the wastewater treatment field...I am planning on centering my thesis around a wastewater operator training program that can help educate operators how to specifically run their type of plant more effectively in terms of treatment...and energy efficiency."

# New Recruits Help Keep Section Membership Steady

Marc Rosso  
JEO Consulting Group  
Nebraska Section AWWA Membership Committee Chair  
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Submitted November 15, 2016

Fall Conference was very successful with similar attendance to previous years. We had over 80 vendors to fill the exhibit area, which was right at the top of the total for past years. At Fall Conference we recognized our new Life Members, Silver Water Drop honorees, and new members. Congratulations! Recently the Board of Directors budgeted for polo shirts and T-shirts which were given away to members at the Fall Conference. The members seemed to appreciate the gesture and we think this could be a regular thing in coming years.

We continue to track along similar membership numbers for the past few years. As in past years, we have an uptick in membership around Fall Conference and we think membership will finish with about 1% growth and total 353 members. This small growth meets the goal set by AWWA so we are hopeful our speculation is right. We have had significant departures from our organization and the industry due to retirements, so we continue to recruit new members. Special thanks to Rob Pierce who continues to help us promote AWWA at League training events around the state.

In December we will continue the process of contacting new members who joined in the last quarter to engage them and learn about their experiences. This is in an effort to retain their interest and learn more about their needs. We have quite a few new members who have expressed interest in joining committees, so that was exciting to

hear.

Finally, Marc Rosso has again applied to be selected for the national membership committee. He was encouraged to do so by AWWA staff. Selections are made in early 2017 and we are hopeful his submittal is accepted and Nebraska is represented on the national level at AWWA.

## LIFE MEMBERS

Thomas W. Barnes  
John H. Jansen, Jr.

## SILVER WATER DROP

Kent Bienlien  
Mark A. Bowman  
Joel G. Christensen  
Roger L. Coffey  
Jerry Deal  
Glenn H. Dostal  
Robert E. Dreessen  
Bruce I. Dvorak  
Kenneth Ekeler  
William Fish  
Scott L. Keep  
Kenneth J. Kempf  
Chris J. Koenig  
Kevin P. McGill  
Brent L. Moore  
Monte L. Moss  
Gerald Pesek  
James A. Shields  
Dennis J. Smith  
Ron J. Sova  
Marty A. Stange  
Kirk W. Stocker  
Kevin P. Tobin

# Jim Shields Promoted to Vice President at Omaha MUD

Metropolitan Utilities District promoted James Shields to vice-president of Water Operations to succeed Joel Christensen, who plans to retire next year.

Shields has 33 years of service with the District and most recently served as director of Water Production and Pumping. He joined the District in 1983 as an engineer, and was promoted to assistant supervisor of the Florence Water Treatment Plant and System Pumping in 1987, to water supply engineer in 1989 and to director, Water Production and Pumping in 1997.

He received a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and a master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is a registered professional engineer and holds a Nebraska Grade I Water Operator license.

He serves as the Water Utility Council committee chair for the Nebraska Section of the American Water Works Association and is a former secretary and trustee of the Nebraska Section AWWA board. He serves as vice-president of the Fort Calhoun Rural Fire Board and is a former member of the Fort Calhoun City Council and Planning Commission.

He received the Water Industry Service Award from Nebraska Section AWWA in 2012 and the "Outstanding Operator" award from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in 2004.

# Get Your Words Every Wednesday: Sign Up for Weekly Section Emails

Brian Gongol  
DJ Gongol & Associates, Inc.  
Nebraska Section AWWA Publications Committee Chair  
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Submitted December 6, 2016

Once a week, we send out an email called "Wise Water Words Wednesday". It's meant to be your connection to what's happening in the Nebraska Section AWWA in real time.

The weekly email helps us to stay connected as a Section and provides you with a quick, easy-to-scan summary of what's happening, along with links to help you find more information (usually on our website).

"WWW Wednesday" is open to anyone – you don't have to be a member of the Nebraska Section AWWA to receive it. So if you have a friend or colleague who would benefit from the information, please forward it along – or send them to [awwaneb.org/maillinglist](http://awwaneb.org/maillinglist) so they can sign up on their own.

One of our main objectives in distributing the weekly update is to show prospective new members the value in joining our Section, so please help us use it as a recruitment tool.

The e-mail distribution list is also a great resource for utility members, since you can sign up as many employees as you like to receive it at no charge.

We try to respect your inbox, so you are not automatically signed up to join the distribution list when you join AWWA. You do need to sign up for yourself, again by visiting [awwaneb.org/maillinglist](http://awwaneb.org/maillinglist) from any device.

Our concept of publications is "digital-first", which means everything starts with a post on our website. If you have news to share with the Nebraska Section, send an email anytime with the details to [publications@awwaneb.org](mailto:publications@awwaneb.org). We'll get it on the website, follow it up with coverage in "WWW Wednesday", cross-post it to our Facebook ([facebook.com/awwaneb](https://www.facebook.com/awwaneb)) and Twitter (@awwaneb) accounts, and ultimately publish the major items

in the print edition of Wise Water Words.

If you have questions, news to share, or interest in joining the Publications Committee, I'm at your service anytime. The special nature of an all-volunteer section like ours puts extra emphasis on our need to communicate freely and often with one another, and we gladly welcome any and all suggestions that can help us do that more effectively.

## 2016 Top Ops Tournament



# Water's Ten Most Wanted

Brian Gongol  
DJ Gongol & Associates, Inc.  
Nebraska Section AWWA Publications Committee Chair  
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Submitted December 7, 2016

One of the toughest parts of serving the public water sector is in finding ways to get the public to take a sense of ownership in the protection of water quality. As we understand, utilities can only do so much to treat and distribute safe and desirable water.

Much of the work of protecting source water quality begins with steps people can and should take at home. Of course, industrial and agricultural uses can have a huge impact on source water quality. But, for the most part, public water utilities reach a larger number of household customers than anything else. That means we need to take our message directly to them as best we can.

To help you do that, we have assembled ten suggested messages you could take to the public – enough for one a month, with room for you to add a generic message about water conservation in the summer and a holiday greeting in the winter. These are messages you could add to newsletters, bill-stuffers, monthly statements, websites, Facebook pages, or Twitter accounts. If you're more ambitious, you could use these ideas as stepping stones to reach out to local media – newspapers, television stations, and radio stations are all potential allies in the effort to get the public to take notice of water-quality issues.

Due to space limitations, we'll start with the first three in this issue, and expand on it in future issues. The full list can be found online at

[awwaneb.org/words/2016/03/tenmostwanted](http://awwaneb.org/words/2016/03/tenmostwanted).

We'll use a theme here of "Ten Enemies of Good Water Quality", but you can certainly tone it down or change the message to suit your local community.

## PUBLIC ENEMY #1: GEESE

What's the problem? They're obnoxious, obviously. But they also pollute directly into urban ponds.

What's the public doing wrong? The public really doesn't understand the impact of nutrients, and goose droppings provide a highly visible example of the problem of waste and runoff.

What do we want them to change? The public needs to understand the nutrient-pollution relationship. We want people to recognize nutrient-overloaded bodies of water in their own neighborhoods, and then use that understanding to see how nutrient overloading works in the bigger scheme of things.

## PUBLIC ENEMY #2: DOGS AND CATS

What's the problem? America has a huge number of pets (70 million dogs and 74 million cats, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association). Those pets relieve themselves of an enormous volume of waste.

What's the public doing wrong? Plenty of jerks don't clean up after

their pets when they relieve themselves outdoors. Pet waste gets on your shoes, but it also washes into storm drains. Pet waste is highly concentrated, and it contaminates storm sewers, streams, rivers, and creeks.

What do we want them to change? Recognize that domestic pets like Fido and Fluffy aren't "just like" wild rabbits and deer. Household pets eat concentrated food and create concentrated waste. We need them to see that cleaning up after pets and disposing properly of their waste is an important way to protect our water.

## PUBLIC ENEMY #3: TREES

What's the problem? Leaves and yard waste get into storm sewers and create nutrient problems.

What's the public doing wrong? People dump grass clippings in the street and blow leaves into the storm sewers. This organic matter breaks down and adds nutrients to the water.

What do we want them to change? Mulch yard waste back into the soil and collect leaves and yard waste for composting. Save the nutrients for use in gardens and lawns, not our waterways.

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This series to be continued in future issues, or find the complete article at [awwaneb.org/words/2016/03/tenmostwanted](http://awwaneb.org/words/2016/03/tenmostwanted).

# Creative Minds and Hands on Display in Children's Poster Contest

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"Our world's water is in your hands". This advice comes from one of the students who created a poster in the 4th annual Children's Poster Contest, which was conducted by the Public Information Committee in conjunction with the Fall Conference.

The contest was open to all 5th grade students in Nebraska, with nearly 400 entries received from more than 30 schools. We displayed the top 100 posters for conference attendees to review and vote for their favorites. This year's theme, "Your Water - To Know It Is To Love It", was AWWA's national theme for Drinking Water Week in May.

The purpose of the contest is to get the younger generation thinking about water issues early and to have fun while learning about water, our most valuable resource. Some teachers had every student in their class participate, while others made it optional. While sorting through the submitted posters, it was obvious that some teachers had prepared their students by teaching about water-related issues, and had discussed water's importance in everyday life.

The top three poster artists received cash prizes of \$100, \$50, and \$25. The first place prize went to a student at McCook Central Elementary who created a colorful poster depicting the water cycle. Second place went to a student at North American Martyrs School in Lincoln who built a pop-up poster

showing surface water runoff. The poster receiving the third most votes was done by a Dudley Elementary student in Gothenburg whose poster had an actual water bottle cap incorporated into it. There were many great posters, so we also awarded an Honorable Mention to six of the posters, based on the voting results.

Here are some excerpts from the posters, not all of which were on display but still had an important message:

- We must be careful of how we use water. Be resourceful.
- It's your water – to know it and love it, preserve it.
- Don't waste water! Water is our life!
- You can only last 2 days without water, but do not try!
- Life without water is a desert, so save it and let the world be an OCEAN!
- H<sub>2</sub>O helps us grow
- Wasting water makes me cry!
- More than 94% of U.S. drinking water utilities are in full compliance with health-based federal regulations annually
- Conserve water or live on the moon
- Water saves us, so let's save the water.
- It takes 10 liters of water to make one sheet of paper
- Water helps in many different ways. Water is a renewable resource that is important to us.
- Trees use water to give us oxygen
- Animals need water as much as

we do

- Don't wait...Hydrate
- Respect water – we are so very lucky to have so much clean water
- Water, it's a gift from God
- Water is like a baby, you have to care for it
- Did you know that Nebraska gets most of its water from the Ogallala Aquifer? But we can't drink from it right away, we have to clean it or filter it.
- H<sub>2</sub>O actually means hydrogen two, oxygen one - they are the ingredients in a water molecule.
- Here are 3 types water can be: solid, liquid, gas
- Dinosaurs drank the same water we drink today, so we are drinking history. Help save water.
- I wish to be like water, slip through the world, but be beautiful in the sun light.
- Take care of our beautiful water
- Water is life so protect it
- Saving water, saves the world – saving the world, saves water
- Water is good, keep it that way
- I love my water and my water loves me!
- Water is the center of everything, its God's Blessing.
- Keep calm and save water, all day long
- Saving water is saving lives
- Water is good for you so drink it up. If you don't drink it, send it to Africa.

If you would like to get your own community schools involved with the 2017 poster contest, please contact Mary Poe for details.

# Children's Poster Contest Prize Winners



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