

# Solution **H<sub>2</sub>O**

WINTER 2020



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*Providing solutions for Kansas to effectively manage water, the state's most important resource.*

### *Estelle Presented George Warren Fuller Award*

"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 of a practitioner of outstanding stature. He will be remembered long in the future, as much for his distinctive personal characteristics as

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# News from the Chair

by Durward Johnson, KsAWWA Chair

*(These comments were made at the end of the 2020 virtual annual meeting held Sept. 1, 2020, after Durward Johnson was brought on as the 2020-21 Chair of KsAWWA)*

Thank you, Andrew, for your service and leadership this year as our KsAWWA Chair. Thank you, too, for your 30 years of service to the industry. You were challenged this year with keeping us all on track, helping us remain positive, and making sure the Section completed its necessary business, and you had to do that mostly virtually as we were not able to meet in person very often. You also placed a challenge on each of us to accomplish just one more thing for the advancement of the Section, given our area of responsibility. You helped us through many decisions, and perhaps while not all of your goals were able to be met, I plan to lean on you in 2021 not only to revisit goals but to seek guidance from you on how best to lead the Section. Given the 2020 pandemic, I am confident that this past year will be remembered for many years to come, not so much by what was accomplished but more by how we were able to make it through under your leadership.

I listened to a song on the radio this weekend with the first line of the lyrics being, "This year's felt like four seasons of winter." Now maybe some of you enjoy winter, but I'm not someone who does. While maybe the pandemic didn't get into full swing until around March, to me, its negative impact has made me feel like it's been four seasons of winter already, and it's only the start of September. I think we are all ready for

things to turn around and get closer to the normal we once knew.

This year's pandemic has had a negative impact on many of us personally as well as the way some of our businesses operate.

While this year has not turned out as we

all had hoped — canceled ACE, canceled legislative fly-in, canceled many out-of-town meetings, canceled Section conference — our Section was able to save money, maintain our membership, award scholarships, and recognize leaders for their contribution to the AWWA. In fact, as Andrew mentioned in his comments, KsAWWA Director Dr. Steve Randtke is now the Association's vice president for the next year. If you haven't done so already, please congratulate him on that when you get a chance.

For 2021, I want to begin the term by reviewing our Section's strategic plan and have a retreat with the executive team to assure its alignment with the Association's strategic plan. I want us to build our budget around that as well as committee chairs' budget goals. I'd like to see our Section work more closely with KWEA, KMU, and KDHE to establish well-planned webinars for learning and for operator certification credits. I'd like to see an emphasis on



support for the YPs, Diversity, and the new Veterans Workforce Committees in the Section, particularly encouraging those involved to become mentees [a program to facilitate member development for leadership where board members, directors, and committee chairs (mentors) work directly with interested KsAWWA members]. I would encourage anyone interested in getting on the Board to do that.

I plan to continue Andrew's stretch goals. I am asking again that each committee chair and board member ask yourself, "What is one more thing that I can do above my normal responsibilities for the Section to make a difference for AWWA?" Many did step up to that challenge this past year. This year, I'd like to ask each of you, not just board members or committee chairs, but all of you with KsAWWA membership to please get involved and consider identifying just one more thing that you can do over the next year to advance AWWA and our Section. I'd like to remind you all again, too, of our Section's mission statement, which is, "Providing better solutions for Kansas to effectively manage water, the state's most important resource." The Board, committees, and I can only do so much; it takes all of us working together to make an impact in our communities for water, so please get involved. If you don't know what to do but want to do something, please give me a call. If you have questions about the Section or AWWA, please give me or Hank a call.

As our Section closes out the 2020 year and moves into 2021, I am very optimistic about our future as an organization, and I hope you will be also. ☂

Durward Johnson, KsAWWA Chair  
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# Section Manager's Report

by Hank Corcoran Boyer, KsAWWA Section Manager

I am sitting here looking at what I wrote for my report in the Winter 2019 issue of Solution H<sub>2</sub>O, and I see nothing that even resembles what I projected to happen in 2020. Imagine that!

KsAWWA has been busy in 2020 but not in our "normal" way of operation. 2020 started out looking to be a busy, fruitful year, and then something called COVID-19 happened in the United States starting in February, and by March, we were all reeling in this pandemic and wondering what was going to happen. We have had partial to total shutdowns, utilities and others have stopped all travel for their employees, and schools have had to adapt on the fly to a new way of teaching our children. There hasn't been any facet of our lives that hasn't been impacted by this virus. We have learned to be grateful for the things that we have and not put big expectations on many other things.

In mid-May, it became apparent we were not going to be able to hold our usual in-person joint conference with KWEA. This was not an easy decision for either of the associations, but they came together, made the decision to cancel the 2020 conference in Wichita, and start looking toward 2021 in Topeka.

This issue of Solution H<sub>2</sub>O will contain articles from our virtual annual meeting held Sept. 1, 2020, via Zoom. Just let me say your Section Manager has learned a lot of new tricks of the trade this past year,

things that she never dreamed were even possible. KsAWWA did elect new board members, selected individuals for awards, and attempted to keep things as normal as possible.



2020 has brought a lot of us together from across the country to discuss new ideas, business models, and ways of getting the information out to our members, train our operators, etc. ACE20 was canceled due to the pandemic, and ACE21 has already canceled all the hands-on competitions. Every week I am on a virtual call with AWWA and other Sections' staff, and we are all seeing the same things happening throughout the Association.

The KsAWWA Board and committees continue to meet virtually and keep things going in Kansas. Chair DJ Johnson has asked the Board to review the KsAWWA mission statement and strategic plan. He appointed a committee of Tonya Bronleewe, Lester Estelle, Paul Garrett, John Gilroy, Katie Miller, and Leah Morris to work on this with the help of AWWA Section Services Representative Ashley Bruchis.

The 2021 program committee has met several times



and is currently going out for papers for the 2021 conference in Topeka. The joint boards, as well as the program committee, are looking ahead to the 2021 conference and looking to see if something different will still be in place for 2021. None of us has a crystal ball that can project that far out, so we are trying to be ready for whatever might happen between now and then.

The OTC has worked with KDHE and developed a method to continue training for the operators. They have had success with the virtual method of training and have had great attendance. Good job,

OTC! Way to step up to the plate and take care of the operators throughout Kansas. They also have several more scheduled in the upcoming months. Watch the [KsAWWA website](#) for these workshops, as well as your email for more information.

As we move out of the unusual year of 2020 (many will be sharing this with their children and grandchildren in future years) and move into a new year, my prayer is that you and yours stay safe and well. May you all have a happy and prosperous new year, and I also encourage you to be involved in your Section's activities and committees. God's Blessings! 🙏

# Director's Report

by Stephen Randtke, KsAWWA Director



## AWWA and the Coronavirus Pandemic

AWWA's response to the pandemic has continued largely as described in my previous reports.

In-person events and meetings previously scheduled for this fall or during the first half of 2021 continue to be canceled, postponed until later in 2021, or replaced with virtual events. This year's Summer Workshop was replaced with a virtual Leadership Forum and Section Services webinars; the Water Quality Technology Conference (WQTC) and the Water Infrastructure Conference (WIC) scheduled for this fall were canceled; and the Regional Meetings of Section Officers (RMSO) for our region was held virtually Nov. 17.

The Association remains strong financially, but its reserves are not infinite so the Board is carefully stewarding its resources and keeping a close eye on the budget, recognizing that its reserves exist specifically for the purpose of sustaining or expanding its most important activities and initiating new ones, at times such as those we are currently experiencing. Examples include increased online operator training programs and AWWA's first Virtual

Summit, which was held Sept. 23-24 and drew a large audience. Another Virtual Summit, drawing on content that had been planned for WQTC and WIC, has been scheduled for Dec. 8-10 (visit <https://www.awwa.org> for details).

Both AWWA and KsAWWA recognize the importance of in-person meetings and remain hopeful they can resume sometime next year. Experts remain optimistic that many people will have been vaccinated by the third quarter of 2021 and that the pandemic will subside sufficiently for in-person meetings to resume. However, certain distancing requirements are likely to remain in place for some time, and it may be a while before various organizations lift their travel restrictions and restore their travel budgets. Accordingly, AWWA is currently planning to hold ACE21 in a hybrid format, including both in-person and virtual sessions. Similar plans are being made for other AWWA activities during the second half of 2021.

The Association's Government Affairs Office in Washington, D.C. has continued to closely monitor the COVID-19 relief packages put forth in the U.S. Congress, pressing for funding to help low-income customers pay their water bills during the pandemic; funding to help water utilities that have suffered significant revenues losses due to the pandemic, so that they may continue to operate and provide safe water to their constituents; and increased funding for water infrastructure development to help renew our

aging infrastructure while also helping Americans get back to work in well-paying jobs.

AWWA continues to strongly support its scholarship programs and Water For People. Since many fundraising events typically organized by the Association and individual Sections cannot be conducted in the usual manner this year, due to COVID-19, AWWA's Water Equation (WE) program has offered to help sections by organizing an online "WE Bid" event in September for all of AWWA.

## AWWA's 2025 Strategic Plan

In August, the AWWA Board of Directors unanimously approved a [new strategic plan](#) that elevates the global

importance of safe water and highlights the water sector's need to strengthen public trust and advance diversity and inclusion. The 2025 strategic plan builds on the most recent (2016) plan by incorporating current external factors affecting the water sector and strengthening the Association's abilities to meet the sector's needs going forward.

## Diversity & Inclusion

In revising its strategic plan, AWWA made a small but very significant change in one of its stated objectives: "foster a culture of diversity and inclusion" was changed to "advance a culture of diversity and inclusion." The intent is for AWWA, including its Sections, to more actively advance diversity and

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inclusion rather than merely creating a favorable environment for it to happen. In this vein, AWWA recently conducted a webinar for Section leaders: [“Practical Tips for Building a Diversity & Member Inclusion Committee in Your Section.”](#)

AWWA’s Diversity and Member Inclusion Committee (DMIC) recently published a [DMIC How-To-Guide](#), and other resources are available through the [AWWA Diversity Center](#). Diversity and inclusion was also one of the two major themes of the recent RMSO (on Nov. 20), the other being the future of Sections in 2021 and beyond (i.e., in the “new post-pandemic” normal). AWWA’s DMIC is currently focused on two other projects: reviewing and revising AWWA’s Diversity and Nondiscrimination Policy, and updating the DMIC’s strategic plan.

KsAWWA has a diversity committee chaired by Denise Friday, and I encourage you to support her and her committee in whatever way you can. However — and let’s be very clear about this — a committee can help by organizing events, providing ideas, and suggesting helpful actions, but advancing diversity and inclusion is a goal of AWWA that every staff and board member, every section, every committee, and every member can and should contribute to, in a variety of different ways. Diversity is not simply an item to add to our checklist, assign to a committee, and then forget about. In many ways, advancing diversity and inclusion is similar to our goal of providing safe drinking water — we all play different roles and can delegate certain tasks to various committees, but it takes all of us working together to achieve success. Please give some serious thought to how you can help advance diversity and inclusion, as this is a very important matter for both our profession and the greater society we serve.

## Government Affairs

AWWA and its Government Affairs Office have been hard at work on various administrative, legislative, and regulatory matters. It is regular practice for AWWA to reach out to new presidential administrations and congressional leaders. On Nov. 13, AWWA sent a [letter to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden](#) highlighting challenges facing the water sector and putting forth recommendations for investment and actions. In addition, AWWA and partner organizations sent a [letter to U.S. Congressional leaders](#). These letters outlined recommendations and urged actions, including:

- » Passage of COVID-19 relief legislation (described above).
- » Financial assistance for low-income customers struggling to pay water bills.
- » Funding for local water utilities to rebound from lost revenues and invest in critical infrastructure.
- » Caution in implementing broad water service disconnection moratoriums.
- » Full authorized funding in 2021 for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) and the state revolving loan fund (SRF) programs.
- » Protection for drinking water sources.
- » Research on water contaminants.

**PFAS:** AWWA recently released three major per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) guides and reports that are available online to members:

– [Drinking Water Treatment for PFAS Selection Guide](#): This guide provides sound information on PFAS chemistry, proven technologies for PFAS treatment, special considerations when

deploying these technologies in practice, and strategies for selecting treatment and design parameters. It was developed not only to assist systems actively addressing PFAS due to regulatory or non-regulatory drivers, but also to help water professionals better understand the challenges and considerations necessary in implementing these treatment technologies.

– [Source Water Evaluation Guide for PFAS](#):

This guide was developed in collaboration with AWWA volunteers and technical experts and is intended to support water professionals in understanding and characterizing the potential for PFAS occurrence in drinking water supplies.

– [Summary of PFAS Toxicological Research](#):

This summary was developed to provide water professionals with relevant toxicity research for PFAS as well as to characterize the state of that research. This report not only describes the wide-ranging efforts in the United States to better understand PFAS toxicity, but also assessments conducted by states and international agencies. This report also describes the noteworthy research gaps that exist and must to be addressed.

There are additional PFAS-related resources available on [AWWA's PFAS Resource page](#).

**Perchlorate Intervention:** AWWA recently filed in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals to intervene in NRDC versus EPA, where NRDC is challenging EPA's decision to withdraw its positive regulatory

determination for perchlorate. AWWA was granted intervenor status. Filing deadlines have not yet been set.

**Microbial/Disinfection Byproduct Rule:** AWWA volunteer experts were included in the EPA's kickoff meeting for stakeholder outreach on Microbial/Disinfection Byproduct Rule review and potential revision. AWWA will continue to engage the EPA in this process, which is scheduled to lead to proposed regulatory changes by July 2024.

**Source Water Protection:** AWWA has continued advancing conservation title prioritization of source water protection through discussions with NRCS, assistance to Sections on building local engagement, and assistance in developing five Regional Conservation Partnership Program applications (expected to be submitted in November).

**Small Systems Training Grants:** The AWWA Grants team appreciates the continued support of AWWA Sections in the ongoing delivery of USDA-funded small systems workshops. Special thanks to Katie Miller and other KsAWWA members who have been involved in scheduling and delivering these and other workshops in Kansas.

## Closing Comments

Like many, if not most of you, I have attended numerous virtual meetings since the pandemic began, many of them in my capacity as director. I have very much enjoyed these meetings (and have not experienced the "Zoom burnout" others have reported), and I am grateful for the large amount



of travel time they have saved. Nevertheless, I deeply miss seeing people in person and the opportunities to get together socially before and after meetings. None of us knows how long the pandemic will last, but “hope springs eternal,” and I am very much looking forward to seeing all of you in person again sometime soon!

As always, please do not hesitate to share with me your opinions, suggestions, questions, and concerns; to contact me for additional information regarding any matter relevant to AWWA or KsAWWA; or to just call and say hello. ☔

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*continued from page 1*

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.*

This year’s recipient is always quiet, goes about his duties with diligence, and is always ready to assist with anything that might need to be done.

One of the things this year’s recipient is known for is his entertainment with music. We are told he learned as a child to play the guitar by holding it upside down as he watched guitarists on TV mirroring their image.

He not only has entertained KsAWWA with his music, but he has toured throughout the United States and abroad playing his music. He has recorded five studio albums, and he has played alongside such greats as Bill Gaither and Lynda Randle.

This year’s recipient fits the criteria for the George Warren Fuller Award as he has worked for The City of Olathe and is currently working for WaterOne as a process management coordinator.

He has been involved with AWWA since 2006. He served on the Scholarship Committee, Water For People Committee, and Diversity Committee, and he served as chair of KsAWWA in 2016.

Now, if you have not figured out who we are talking about, it is Lester Estelle.

Congratulations, Lester Estelle, 2020 George Warren Fuller Awardee! 🎉

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# Tournade Presented Operator Meritorious Service Award

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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 is classified as a water plant foreman, but because he works for a smaller utility, he leads all of their utility operations, does a lot of the maintenance, and oversees their regulatory compliance. This is no small task in today's complex world of water treatment.



This year's recipient continually seeks ideas for how to better maintain his treatment plant and refine his treatment skills. As part of a small utility that has limited funding for outside vendor support, this year's recipient has led his maintenance team through tearing apart their existing lime feeders, thoroughly cleaning the feeders, troubleshooting the issues, re-assembling them, and returning them to service.

Because he is in a small utility, it requires him to be on-call 24/7 for any time the plant breaks down or when there is a process issue. He embraces that

role with pride, and this small utility is lucky to have someone so passionate about water treatment who responds when issues arise.

This year's recipient is Rusty Tournade with the City of Eudora, Kansas. Along with his duties at Eudora Water Treatment Plant, Rusty is involved in the Northeast Section of the OTC, providing valuable feedback on what operators need to learn. He has hosted a workshop at the Eudora facilities, and he continually

seeks opportunities to grow by completing training, which has included the KU Emerging Leaders Academy.

In his off time, Tournade spends it with his wife, son, and extended families. He enjoys putting together social activities with friends and family. Tournade is always willing to help people, whatever their needs might be.

Congratulations, Rusty Tournade, 2020 Operator Meritorious Award Winner KsAWWA! 🎉



# Epp Recognized with Richard Porter Service Award

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This award was established in 2006 in memory of long-time member Richard Porter.

The award is given to a Section member who has demonstrated support and commitment to the Kansas Section. The commitment could be represented by the following:

- » An active role in one or more committees.
- » By participation in Section conferences or training seminars.
- » By demonstrating a friendly and welcoming attitude to new and current members of the Section.
- » By serving as an example to others of the role of the Section as a leader in providing service and support to others in the water industry.
- » By promoting a positive image of the Section.



This year's recipient of the Richard Porter Section Service Award has been around the industry for many years and has served on several Section committees, including serving on the board as a trustee, chair-elect, chair, and past chair. He also enjoys a good game of golf and entertains his teammates while playing. This year's recipient is Jim Epp with Kansas City Kansas Board of Public Utilities.

Congratulations, Jim Epp 🍷

# Augustyn Presented John Lechner Award of Excellence

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This is an award of excellence to recognize a Section Manufacturers/Associates Council member who has demonstrated exemplary service to the drinking water community and to AWWA's mission and goals. The recipients of the Section award are automatically eligible for the AWWA award.

The 2020 recipient of the John Lechner Award of Excellence for KsAWWA is Joe Augustyn with Ray Lindsey Company.

Augustyn has over 25 years of experience in the water industry; he has been a member of KsAWWA since 2019. He has taken an active part in the Section

conferences as an exhibitor and recently joined the KsAWWA Water Buffalos and took his initiation ride to the mountains of Colorado, covering over 2,400 miles on some very treacherous mountain roads and, against his will, completed the million-dollar highway ride in a rainstorm.

Prior to Augustyn starting his water career, he coached for a while at a junior college in Iowa, where he used his experience as a tight end for the Nebraska Huskers. Augustyn began his water career with JetTech from there, and he worked for Pump and Power from 1998 until 2015 when he was hired by Ray Lindsey Company. 🦧



# O'Malley Honored With Kenneth J. Miller Founders' Award

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The Kenneth J. Miller Founders' Award for outstanding volunteer service to Water for People was established in 2001 by the Water For People Board of Directors to honor outstanding volunteer service to this international humanitarian effort.

The search for a model individual to exemplify the value of volunteer service led immediately to Kenneth J. Miller of Denver, Colorado, one of the founders of Water For People and its first president.

This year, KsAWWA's recipient of this prestigious award goes to Tony O'Malley with Lamp Rynearson. O'Malley has been a member of AWWA since 1981 and has received the AWWA Lifetime Member Award. O'Malley is a dual member in both the Missouri and Kansas Section and has been the Kansas Section Water For People Committee Chair since 2011.

During his time as chair of the Water For People Committee, he has conducted a trap shoot each year at the annual joint conference as well as conducted a silent auction at each annual joint conference. Over those years, O'Malley has collected over \$18,000 to be sent to Water For People to assist the developing world with their water, sanitation, and health needs. ☂



water for people

# AWWA Membership Tenure Awards

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Each year, AWWA gives a variety of membership tenure awards to individuals, including the Silver Water Drop, Life Member, and Gold Water Drop Awards.

The definition of each of these is as follows:

## Silver Water Drop

- » 25 years of cumulative membership

## Life Member Award

- » 30 years or more of cumulative membership and 65 years of age

## Gold Water Drop Award

- » 50 years of cumulative membership

At the KsAWWA Virtual Annual Meeting, the following individuals were awarded the Silver Award for 25 years of membership in AWWA: Durward Johnson, KCK BPU; Kelvin Clay, City of Pratt; Mike Orth, Black and Veatch; and Paul Hsiung, Innovyze.

The following individuals were presented with the Life Member Award: Dale Tapp, WaterOne; Alan Luttrell, EBH Engineers; and Hank Corcoran Boyer, KsAWWA Section Manager.

Congratulations to all the recipients and for their dedication to the industry of safe water. 🍂



# KsAWWA Awards Two Scholarships

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KsAWWA awarded two scholarships at the virtual annual meeting held Sept. 1, 2020. Following are comments from Dr. Stephen J. Randtke, KU Professor Emeritus, when making the recommendations.



## **Greta Olson, Chemical Engineering, University of Kansas**

"I met Greta when she enrolled in my introductory environmental engineering course in the fall of 2019. This course draws students, mostly juniors and seniors, from several different fields of engineering and science and is generally regarded as a relatively rigorous course. I was extremely impressed with Greta's performance. She was the top student in the class, and her scores on the hour exams were the highest I have seen in the past 30 years. In the spring of 2020, she requested special permission to take the graduate-level course I teach on chemical principles of environmental engineering processes. She again turned in a very impressive performance, earning an A and finishing with the second-highest score even though half the class consisted of doctoral students in engineering.

"When the semester ended, I dropped Greta a note inquiring about her interest in the field of environmental engineering and offering her my advice and assistance. She indicated that she was particularly interested in the field of environmental engineering and later dropped by to discuss course selection, career opportunities, and graduate study. I strongly encouraged her to apply for summer internships, to gain practical and/or research experience, and to pursue graduate study when she finishes her B.S. degree. She replied that she was already working part-time in a research lab on campus (under the tutelage of a distinguished professor studying adsorption of PFAS compounds); looking into possible internships for the summer, including one with NOAA; and considering pursuing a Ph. D.

"Greta is an honors student with an extraordinarily strong academic record. She is carrying a 2.99 GPS in chemical Engineering, one of the best and most rigorous undergraduate degree programs at KU. She is also a very well-rounded individual who not only participates in various extracurricular activities but is also an elite athlete with a busy training schedule. I am very favorably impressed by her record of achievement to date, her outstanding capabilities, her easygoing rapport with her fellow student and professors, her eagerness to make the most of the opportunities available to her, and her desire to pursue a career in which she can make a valuable contribution to society."

**Ashley Rothmier, Civil/Environmental Engineering, University of Kansas**

"I first met Ashley when she was assigned to me for advising as an incoming KU freshman majoring in civil engineering with a concentration in environmental engineering. Her initial environmental interests were relatively broad. During her first two summers as a college student, she held transportation-related internships (Missouri Department of Transportation and KU's Transportation Research Center) and earned scholarships funded by the American Public Power Association and the Rocky Mountain Electric League Foundation. In the spring semester of 2020, she took a course taught by Professor Belinda Sturm (Introduction to Environmental Engineering & Science), a course focusing heavily on air and water quality, water and wastewater treatment, and related environmental engineering topics such as converting biosolids to energy. She greatly enjoyed the course, earning a grade of A, and found both the course and Professor Sturm to be very inspiring. She now plans to pursue an environmental engineering career with a strong waterworks focus.



"Ashley is an outstanding student who is maintaining a grade-point average of 3.92 in civil engineering while also actively participating in various technical, professional, and social organizations, including KU's student chapters of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Society of Women Engineers. By virtue of her interests, training, abilities, and work ethic, she is very strongly positioned to contribute to society as a future waterworks professional."

Congratulations to both Ashley and Greta on their scholarships awards, and best of luck to them in their environmental engineering careers. 🍂

# KsAWWA Passing of the Gavel

*(These are the comments of KsAWWA Past Chair Andrew Hansen as he passed the gavel at the virtual annual meeting held Sept. 1, 2020)*

It is time for the passing of the gavel, but before I do, I would like to reflect a little bit on the past year and provide a high-level summary of 2019-20 accomplishments by the Board.

- » First, inspired by Tim Grunhard, our keynote speaker at last year's conference, I challenged the board members and committee chairs to do those little things that move the needle one degree and make water boil.
- » At each of our board meetings, a standard agenda item was for the team to report on things they had done that were "above and beyond" the call of duty. A few highlights include:
  - Bringing potential new members to a board meeting. We saw some new faces at meetings this year.
  - Get YPs involved at the state level by having them attend a KS State Legislative session to better understand the governing process.
  - Working to increase collaboration between AWWA and other organizations such as KMU.
  - Recruitment of additional Water Buffalos.
  - Consolidation of many years of financial records into electronic format, which



allowed access to the data for budgeting purposes.

- Lastly, multiple committees found new and unique ways to collaborate and grow our membership.
- » Personal stretch goals to attend as many events/ functions as possible.
  - Joint Kansas and Missouri Sections event at the Olathe WTP showcasing their current project to replace their lime feed system and implement chlorine dioxide as their primary disinfectant.
  - Best Tasting Water Award to the City of Lawrence at their commission meeting.
  - Another stretch goal was to personally call each new member and welcome them



to the Kansas Section. Regretfully I didn't get to them all, but I was able to reach many of them, which hopefully helps with retention.

- » Committee chairs are the muscle of our operations. Unfortunately, this group was most affected by the pandemic.
- » Our typical means of "recruiting" for the committees are sign-up sheets at the annual conference. Since we did not have a conference, I encourage you to reach out to Hank and DJ and get involved.
- » Dr. Steve Randtke was selected as a vice president of the Association starting July 1, 2020. In addition to creating a positive perception of the Kansas Section at the national level, Dr. Randtke is also a valuable resource for you.
- » Financial health of our Section
  - Decline in our revenue for 2020 (primarily due to not holding the conference)
  - Reduced expenses as we did not attend many of the typical board functions, including ACE, the DC Fly-In, RMSO, and the Summer Workshops.
  - Fiscally strong heading into 2021.

- » Majority of vendors allowed their registration fees to be carried over to 2021. Special Recognition was posted on the website and will also be made public at next year's conference.

## Passing of the Gavel

I am excited to announce DJ Johnson as your next chair. He has been with Board of Public Utilities since 1991 and currently serves as a senior engineer.

- » DJ got "cheated" relative to the cancellation of the conference this year. He, along with Jason Patty from KWEA, had spent a lot of time pulling together the program, securing Gregg Marshall, and really doing a lot of outside the box planning relative to meet and greet and other events.
- » I've known DJ for many years and have worked with him on numerous projects. I have no doubt that he will do a fabulous job leading the Section.

Congratulations to DJ; the Section is in very capable hands for the coming year. ☂

# Comments from Jon Eaton, AWWA Treasurer and Visiting Representative

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*(These are the comments of Jon Eaton, AWWA Treasurer and visiting representative, at the virtual annual meeting held Sept. 1, 2020)*

Thanks so much for offering me a few minutes of your time. And thank you for choosing to be part of this virtual gathering.

I think we all understand why we can't gather in person this week, especially considering AWWA's first core principle is the protection of public health. But I won't hide that I am disappointed we can't be together in Wichita. Even though I'm serving as AWWA's treasurer these days, I know from my experience in Minnesota that the heart of the Association is always at the section level.

I think we're all getting better at these virtual meetings. But if you're like me, there is no true replacement for connecting with one another face-to-face. As I'm talking to you now, I can't read your facial expressions, see your heads nod in agreement, or know who's nodding off. And try as I may, I can't taste Wichita barbecue through a screen from Minnesota.

But that's why I want to truly thank you for being here, for choosing to engage — for opting in. With all the personal and professional challenges introduced

by the pandemic, and with the social unrest we're experiencing in my state and across the country, we might be tempted to just retreat into ourselves and do the minimum to get by. But by staying active in your association, you are not only helping yourself to grow professionally, you are helping all your colleagues.

So I have only two main messages for you today. First, AWWA has the resources you need in today's world, and we're making it easier than ever to access them. And second, AWWA needs you — an engaged you, a passionate you — more than ever.

On the first point, AWWA has some outstanding new online resources for you and your organization. We've partnered with USDA to offer some outstanding training for small systems, and until we're able to meet in large groups again, we're making that training available online. And speaking of online resources, have you checked out AWWA's new video streaming channel? All of the video content that your organization needs to train its employees is quick and easy to access — including the popular WSO operator training and certification series and the Safety-First series. We've also launched envoi, which allows you to find the most up-to-date standards online, ensuring you always have the latest version.

And of course, I hope all of you are registering for the AWWA Virtual Summit held Sept. 23–24. It's going to

be an outstanding program, with lots of choices for different kinds of water professionals.

I could talk a long time about AWWA's new resources and technologies, but I want to close by making a personal request of you. While AWWA has resources you need, AWWA also needs you. We need you to share your experiences with others through articles in the Journal, through presentations at our virtual or physical events, through your engagement as a volunteer at the section and even the Association level.

As treasurer, I can tell you that the Association has seen some significant financial impacts from the COVID pandemic. Thanks to the outstanding foresight of my predecessors, we remain financially healthy but not invincible; we have healthy cash reserves but

not infinite — but without a robust membership, we cannot fulfill our mission into the future. So I want to encourage you — I want to urge you — to renew your membership with the Association through these strange times. More than that, please advocate for AWWA within your own utility or company to assure it renews its organizational membership. Explain to your colleagues what engagement with AWWA has meant to your growth as a water professional and how that has benefited them.

Let's keep AWWA growing, with, as the Wichita State fight song says, "courage and force that will never die." (Yeah, I looked that up).

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments. ☔



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# Veterans Workforce Spotlight: Leah Morris, City of Lawrence

by Leslie Kimble, 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.*

While Leah Morris is not a veteran herself, she has considerable experience with close family serving in the military. Morris is also chair of the KsAWWA Veterans Workforce Committee.

"My grandfather was a brigadier general in the Vietnam War, most of my uncles served, my grandfathers served, so I come from a pretty extensive military lineage," Morris says.

Despite Morris' broad family background in the military, there is one service member who Morris is

particularly proud of, her stepson, Private Richard Morris Jr., who is currently serving in the Marine Corps.

"I'm really proud of the fact that he is dedicating at least four years, if not more, to serving our country," Morris says.

In her job at the Municipal Services & Operations department for City of Lawrence, Morris is a treatment division manager who oversees four treatment plants, two water plants, two wastewater plants, and all supporting facilities, pump stations, and towers. Her background in engineering and graduate education from University of Kansas led her to a career in municipal water.

"I really enjoy getting to manage large-scale capital projects for the city. Currently, we are designing upgrades to the Kansas River Wastewater Treatment Plant to be able to perform phosphorous and nitrogen removal," says Morris.

One aspect of entering the workforce after military service that Morris would like to educate more employers on is to rethink any assumptions that veterans are the same people as before they entered the military.

"Military life is very different than day-to-day civilian life," Morris explains. "Be patient, flexible, cooperative, and really listen to their military

experience, take a moment to understand how it can relate to the job, and you'll see the best characteristics surface, like adaptability, problem-solving and flexibility."

When it comes to helping veterans in Kansas connect with careers in water, Morris says she looks forward to the potential for the newly formed Veterans Workforce Committee and her role as chair.

"It would be great to have a veteran's workforce informative session so that veterans could understand what kind of jobs are available within water treatment and public works," Morris adds. 🍂



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# Getting Ready for Winter Work

by Bob Brower, KSAWWA Safety Committee Chair

Working outside in the winter can be a dirty job, but many of us have to do it. Are you ready for winter work?

Here are some reminders about dressing for the weather and staying strong, healthy, and safe.

Two big concerns of working or simply spending time outdoors in cold weather are frostbite and hypothermia. Both can occur at much higher temperatures than many people realize. For example, exposed skin can start to freeze at just 28 degrees Fahrenheit (-2 degrees Celsius), and deep frostbite can cause blood clots and even gangrene.

Hypothermia is a potentially fatal condition caused by loss of body temperature; even in winter conditions, people might not consider it particularly nasty. Symptoms include fatigue, nausea, confusion, light-headedness, and profuse sweating. Without medical treatment, the victim can lose consciousness and die. Between 1979 and 1995, an average of 723 Americans died each year as the result of hypothermia.

- » Wear the right gloves for the work you are doing. Gloves should have enough insulation to keep you warm and prevent frostbite but be thin enough so you can feel what you are doing if you are manipulating controls or tools. Gloves that are too thick can also make your hands and wrists work too hard trying to hold on to objects, causing repetitive strain injury.



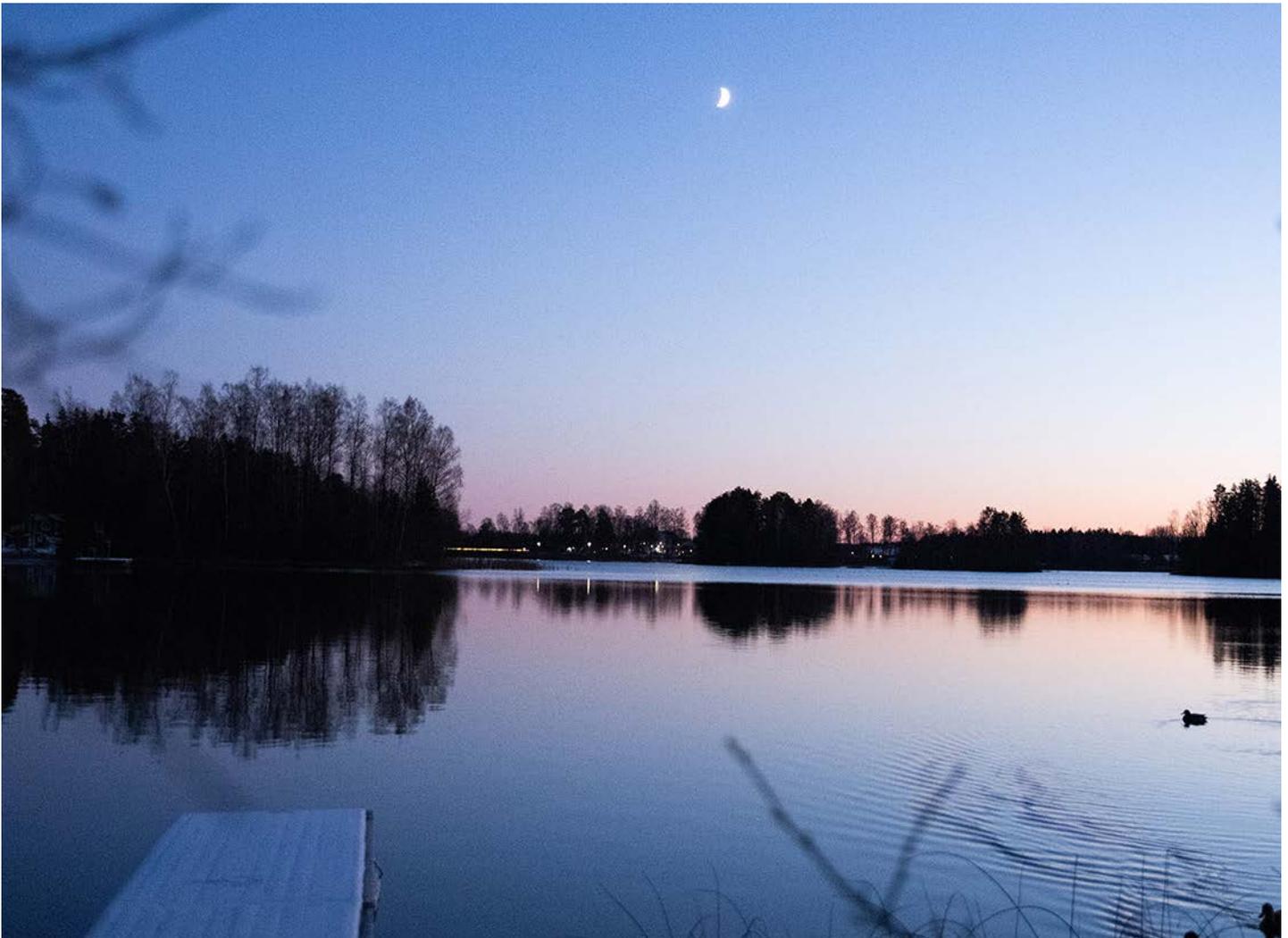
- » Dress in layers of light-weight clothing that keep you warmer than a single layer of heavy clothes. Remove layers as necessary to prevent overheating and perspiring, which can lead to chills or hypothermia later. Remember that wet clothing is 20 times less warm than dry clothing. Wear a hat, and you'll stay much warmer when working in cold conditions as much as half your body heat can go up in steam off the top of a bare head. Protect your ears from frostbite as well by wearing a hat that will cover your ears or use ear muffs.
- » While donning a scarf or muffler might help keep your neck warm in the cold weather, it could also kill you if you work near rotating machinery. Check your winter wardrobe for entanglement hazards such as loose sleeves and dangling drawstrings.
- » Keep your safety eyewear from fogging up in the cold. Investigate anti-fog coatings and wipes to see if these products are appropriate for your

eyewear. If you have to keep taking off your safety eyewear because it fogs up, it isn't protecting you.

- » Look at the soles of your winter footwear. Your shoes or boots should have adequate tread to prevent slips and falls on wet or icy surfaces. For extremely slippery situations, you can attach clogs or cleats to your footwear. Slow down when walking across slippery surfaces, and be especially careful on ladders, platforms, and stairways.
- » Eat winter-weight meals. This does not mean a high-fat diet, but one with enough calories and nutrients to give you the fuel you need. Start with a breakfast of whole grain cereal and toast.

- » Get plenty of rest. Working in the cold and even traveling to and from work in the winter takes lots of energy. Cold weather can strain your heart, even if you aren't overexerting yourself, so be sure to pace yourself when lifting heavy objects or shoveling snow.

Did you know that 70% of deaths during snow or ice storms occur in vehicles? It pays to carry blankets or sleeping bags, matches, candles, a snow shovel and sandbags, a flashlight, and non-perishable food such as cereal bars, in case a winter storm side-lines you in your vehicle. ☔



# Seven Common Accident Causes

by Bob Brower, KSAWWA Safety Committee Chair

Consider this statistic: 80 out of every 100 accidents are the fault of the person involved in the incident. Unsafe acts cause four times as many accidents and injuries as unsafe conditions.

Accidents occur for many reasons. Management can be linked to many incidents, through improper new-hire orientation, task training, or equipment training. Supervisor accountability of in place safety processes can also be linked to incidents.

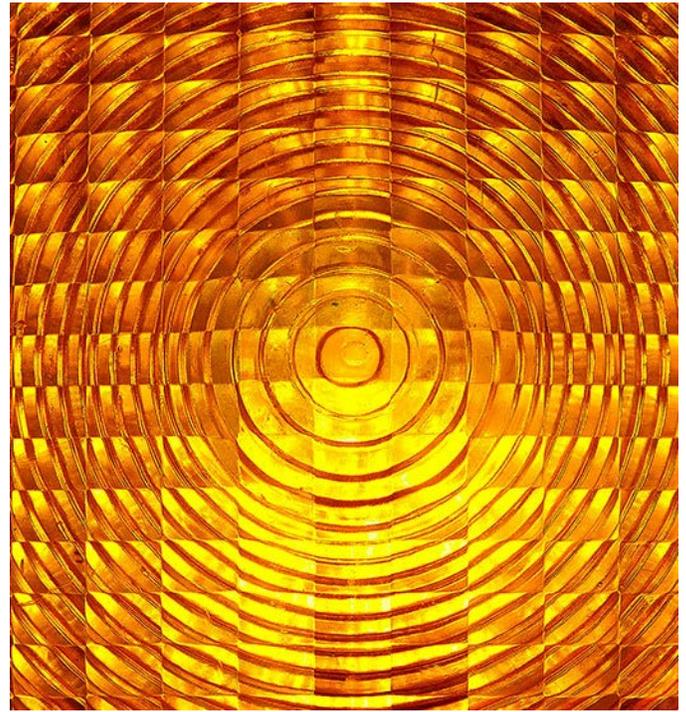
In most industries people tend to look for “things” to blame when an accident happens, because it’s easier than looking for “root causes,” such as those listed below. Consider these underlying accident causes, and ask yourself if you have been guilty of any of these attitudes or behaviors. Were you lucky and got away without injury? Maybe next time your luck may be on vacation.

- » **Taking Shortcuts:** Every day we make decisions we hope will make the job faster and more efficient. But do time savers ever risk your own safety, or that of other crew members? Shortcuts that reduce your safety on the job are not shortcuts, but an increased chance for injury.
- » **Being Overconfident:** Confidence is a good thing. Overconfidence is too much of a good thing. “It’ll never happen to me” is an attitude that can lead to improper procedures, tools, or methods on the job. Any of these can lead to injury.
- » **Starting a Task with Incomplete Instructions:** To do the job safely and right the first time you need complete information. Have you ever been sent to do a job, having been given only a part of the job’s instructions? Don’t be shy about asking for explanations about work procedures and safety precautions. It isn’t dumb to ask questions; it’s dumb not to.
- » **Poor Housekeeping:** When clients, managers or safety professionals walk through your work site, housekeeping is an accurate indicator of everyone’s attitude about quality, production and safety. Poor housekeeping creates hazards of all types. A well-maintained area sets a standard for others to follow. Good housekeeping involves both pride and safety.
- » **Ignoring Safety Procedures:** Purposely failing to observe safety procedures can endanger you and your co-workers. You are being paid to follow the company safety policies—not to make your own rules. Being “casual” about safety can lead to a casualty!
- » **Mental Distractions from Work:** Having a bad day at home and worrying about it at work is a hazardous combination. Dropping your “mental” guard can pull your focus away from safe work procedures. You can also be distracted when you’re busy working and a friend comes by to talk while you are trying to work. Don’t become

a statistic because you took your eyes off the machine “just for a minute.”

» **Failure to Pre-Plan the Work:** There is a lot of talk today about Job Hazard Analysis (JHA). JHA's are an effective way to figure out the smartest ways to work safely and effectively. Being hasty in starting a task, or not thinking through the process can put you in harm's way. Instead, "Plan Your Work, and Then Work Your Plan!" 🛡️

“It is better to be careful 100 times than to get killed once.” —Mark Twain





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Events Center

August 31 – September 2

2022

Topeka Capitol Plaza / Stormont Vail  
Events Center

August 30 – September 1

### **AWWA Annual Conference**

June 13–16, 2021      San Diego, CA

June 12–15, 2022      San Antonio, TX

June 11–14, 2023      Toronto, Canada

### **KsAWWA Annual Meeting**

August 31, 2021