

AWWA Retreat, August 13

Location: 901 Hardin Hall, UNL East Campus

Possible Agenda Items – 9 a.m, start; 3 p.m. adjournment

Moderator – Rob Pierce

- 9 a.m. Opening and Introductions — Rob Pierce
- 9:15 a.m. Review/Verify last Retreat Outcomes and Directions — John Olsson
- 9:45 a.m. Member Survey and Action Items from same — Marc Rosso
- 10:45 a.m. Educational Opportunities – expansion of pipe workshop concept — Mike Wentink
- 11:30 a.m. Membership Update — Rich Robinson
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch
- 12:30 to 2 p.m. Breakout Session 1 – Work on SOPs -- Independent work with guidance from Teresa
Breakout Session 2 – Review Committee List and Goals and Responsibilities
— Rob Pierce
(National has a draft matrix that Tony will provide)
- 2 p.m. New Initiatives and Nitrate Committee Discussion —
Rob Pierce/Ben Day/Bruce Dvorak
- 3 p.m. Adjourn
- Coffee and Rolls:** Coffee – Rob Pierce; Donuts – John Olsson (Please RSVP to Rob or John so they can get a head count -- Rob: 402.476.2829, e-mail: rbp@lonm.org; John: 402.458.5661, e-mail: jolsson@oaconsulting.com)
- Parking:** Contract Bruce Dvorak (402.472.3431; e-mail: bdvorak@unl.edu) by noon, August 11 for a parking pass, otherwise you're on your own
- Lunch:** We will walk across the street to Valentino's
- Post Retreat Social:** Beer and Brats at the home of Bruce Dvorak
RSVP to Bruce by noon, August 11 (402.472.3431; e-mail: bdvorak@unl.edu)

Nebraska Section AWWA Summer Retreat
August 13, 2010

The 2010 summer retreat was held in Hardin Hall on UNL East Campus. Those participating in the retreat were: John Olsson, Teresa Konda, Mary Poe, Marc Rosso, Milo Rust, Xu Li, Rich Robinson, Rob Pierce, Bruce Dvorak, Chad Roberts, Doug Woodbeck, Eric Lee, Brian Gongol and Mike Wentink.

Agenda items covered at the retreat included:

- 1) Review of last retreat outcomes and directions
- 2) Member Survey and Action items for the Survey
- 3) Educational Opportunities: Expansion of the Pipe Workshop concept
- 4) Membership update
- 5) Breakout sessions for continued work on Standard Operating Procedures
- 6) Breakout sessions for review of committee goals and responsibilities
- 7) New Initiative and Nitrate discussions

As part of the review for last year's retreat outcomes John Olsson presented discussions on the Section's Strategic Plan Goals. He brought up each of the seven goals and asked the group to rate the Section on how we thought we were doing on the goal and any associated comments.

Under the goal of maintaining continuing education the group gave a rating of + and generally thought a good job was being done in this area. Doug Woodbeck noted that he would like to see some focus on training for entry level workers that work in systems that use treatment of their water. Examples would be for Iron and Manganese removal, Reverse Osmosis, Ion Exchange etc.

Public confidence and understanding of Public Water Supplies received a + mark also with the note that local and national efforts have been stepping up their efforts to keep the public informed on the safety, affordability and convenience of PWS. A trend was noted that consumers are not purchasing as much bottled water as in the past due environmental concerns, high cost and the increased information and confidence in PWS. The Nebraska Section remains committed to this concept and strategic plan goal.

Nebraska continues to maintain its status in the top five in the nation in member retention, placing third this year as outlined in the July 2010 membership retention sheet provided by Rich Robinson. The Section realizes we are small in overall numbers compared to other sections so we will continue to actively pursue new members. A grade of + was recorded in the membership goal of the strategic plan.

Small systems continue to be the core of the Nebraska Section. There are a lot of positive comments on the small system workshops and the help that is available to these systems. The section graded this goal a + with the only comment being that the mentoring program needs to be re-vamped and re-charged so that any system can contact mentors for advice, concerns or help. There are a good number of mentors available and the retreat participants want to figure out how they can be used more effectively. One idea was to feature a section on the mentors and their areas of expertise in Wise Water Words. Another idea was to have a presentation at the Fall Conference featuring mentors and what they have to offer.

Advocacy for drinking water providers was given a neutral grade by the Section due in large part to the national legislative aspect of this goal. The section is doing some positive things in this area but felt we could do more and defined this as a work in progress needing some attention.

Goals six and seven were tabled for further discussions due to time constraints in this allotted meeting time.

Member Survey and action items were presented by Marc Rosso and Mike Wentink

Marc showed power point slides that summarized information from the member survey. There was a 28% return rate on the survey with a total number of respondents of 698. The basic concept of the survey was what do you want your membership in the Nebraska Section to do for you. The complete survey results are listed on the Section's website. Some survey components are listed below.

- One day seminars followed by the Fall Conference are preferred by respondents for educational opportunities.
- Respondents want to see more one day seminars and support material for public information.
- The topics most needed for seminars and support material was system operations and maintenance, followed by management.
- One encouraging item for the Section is that people seem to want more of the same types of things that we currently provide members.
- A need for assistance in succession planning was identified in the survey.

Educational opportunities by Mike Wentink

Discussions were held about the "pipe workshop" held every other year at Mahoney Park. This has proved to be a well-attended function with positive feedback from participants. Several ideas were put forth on if it should continue to be held at Mahoney, or change the location, or hold the workshop every year or possibly combine this event with another function such as the Great Plains design conference. It seemed that the people involved in the logistics of the workshop, as well as participants, viewed the every other year schedule and keeping it separate from other functions was working very well. The general consensus was that the format for this workshop works well and to keep it as is.

David Lathrop brought up the subject of having a SCADA workshop put on by the Education Committee. The retreat attendees thought this would be an excellent topic as more systems, even small ones, are incorporating some type of SCADA system use in their systems. The topic could range from the very basics up to the large, complex systems used by large utilities. There will be more information to follow on this subject.

Membership Update by Rich Robinson

The "Pour it On" campaign initially was an effort to increase section membership in the utility and service provider areas. The Section then made the decision to concentrate our recruitment efforts on the utility side. Rich distributed copies of the membership development plan (as required by National) for review. 14 utilities were selected for recruitment, with two utilities being signed up as new members at this point. The City of Papillion is a grade 81 commitment and the City of Aurora is a grade 80 commitment. Rich also distributed copies of the July 2010 membership report which shows Nebraska ranked third nationally in member retention and as noted earlier in membership discussions, continues to rank in the top five for this category.

Breakout Session #1 – Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) by Teresa Konda

The following committees have not submitted an SOP as of the retreat date — Archive & History, Audit, Budget, Awards, Cross Connection and Student Activities and Research.

The following officer positions have not submitted an SOP as of the retreat date — Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Director.

The retreat attendees broke out into small groups to review the draft SOPs that had been turned in, while some individuals took this time to start working on committee or officers SOPs. Some officer and committee chair positions have over-lapping duties/responsibilities and one intent of the SOPs in this regard is to decide who the responsibility for certain tasks should rest with or how they are to be shared jointly in an effective/efficient manner and get that clearly defined in the written SOP.

I observed a very busy and productive effort by all participants in making revisions, suggestions and moving the SOP process forward. Based on this, it is expected that draft SOPs will have revisions coming and the areas where no SOPs have been formulated will get some concentrated work on them.

Breakout Session #2 – Committee list, goals and responsibilities by Rob Pierce

Tony Bilek had made available before the retreat, a committee review process matrix by National that the retreat participants did not get the time to adequately review before the retreat. It was decided it would be in the group's best interest to table this session discussion until all had a chance to review this document and process. This item will be placed on the agenda for the September Board meeting under new business. This would be a good opportunity to direct the new trustees to examine the document and process from an "outside the group's" perspective, and evaluate the program as it pertains to the committees in the Nebraska Section.

Nitrate ad-hoc Committee by Rob Pierce, Ben Day and Bruce Dvorak

The general question put forth by the participants in the retreat to the Nitrate ad-hoc Committee was, can the Section contribute to the overall nitrate issue for the state and public water systems for items such as Occurrence, MCL issues and Administrative Orders? Discussions included that the Section and members have always been advocates of Best Management Practices (BMP) and should continue to do so.

It was also noted by Bruce Dvorak that the efforts of the Section Board or committees should stay fairly close to home in their particular areas of expertise (e.g. meaning as an example), not having an engineering professor try to explain to a seasoned Ag producer, PWS, or NRD etc. how to run certain aspects of their business or when discussing BMPs with these groups.

These discussions can be of a sensitive nature and it would only be our goal to help with the nitrate issues we face in the drinking water community, not introduce conflict.

A special thank you to all individuals who helped organize and performed logistics for the retreat. This is just one way your commitment to the Section is appreciated!

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Lee, Section Secretary, NEAWWA
August 17, 2010

See photos on next page

Nebraska Section AWWA Retreat August 13, 2010



From left: Doug Woodbeck, Nebraska Health & Human Services; Rob Pierce, League of Nebraska Municipalities; Dr. Xu Li, UNL Civil Engineering; David Lathrop, City of Seward; Rich Robinson, Kirkham Michael Consulting Engineers; Chad Roberts, City of Norfolk; Eric Lee, Lincoln Water System; Mary Poe, Mike Wentink, Nebraska Health & Human Services; Teresa Konda, HDR Inc., and Milo Rust, City of Chadron. Photo by Brian Gongol, DJ Gongol Associates.



From left: Mike Wentink, Education Committee chair; Bruce Dvorak, past chair, and John Olsson, chair

From left: Chad Roberts, trustee; Teresa Konda, chairperson-elect, and Mary Poe, Public Information Committee chair.



From left: Rob Pierce, Safety Committee chair; Doug Woodbeck, trustee; Eric Lee, secretary, and Mike Wentink, Education Committee chair.



From left: Xu Li, Research and Student Activities Committee chair; Rich Robinson, Membership Committee chair; Rob Pierce, Safety Committee chair, and David Lathrop, treasurer.