

# The Waterfront



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Winter 2016

## Word From The Street

I've had the opportunity to attend a dozen or so Regional Advisory Committee Meetings since October and have heard great reports regarding the others I have not attended. All I can say is Wow! The level of expertise and energy around these meeting tables is impressive to say the least! We are so fortunate to have these folks volunteer their time to help implement the *Water Vision* and address our most pressing water issues. I wanted to devote a few words in my column to express my appreciation and to say Thank You!

As we reported at the Governor's Water Conference, more than 80 percent of the Phase I Action Items included in the *Vision* are underway. Since the Conference, there has been significant activity on several fronts, mostly related to groundwater modeling, conservation and technology adoption.

The Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) is now under contract to expand the groundwater model for the entire Equus Beds Aquifer, in partnership with Groundwater Management District (GMD) #2 and the Kansas Water Office (KWO). The KGS and KWO is also planning to partner with the other GMD's over the next five years update and integrate models across the entire High Plains Aquifer.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture has been very busy working with individuals and groups of water users in the Ogallala to develop Water Conservation Areas. The Chief Engineer has now officially approved two WCA's and approximately 25 more are in discussion or under development.

Finally, interest is growing in the development of Water Technology Farms. This concept was described in the *Vision* to

promote technology adoption on a whole field scale at various locations across Kansas under various water, soil and crop scenarios. One large farm is under development in Finney County that compares different irrigation system technology under various crop rotations and well capacities. A Water Conservation Area is also planned for inclusion with this project to demonstrate the economic impacts of technology adoption in concert with a reduction in groundwater pumping. Other Technology Farms are being planned and ideally we would like to see at least one in each of the regional planning areas.



Tracy Streeter, Director

## Legislative Update

The 2016 Legislative Session has been busy, and the Kansas Water Authority (KWA) has been active with visits and testimony. On January 27, KWA and RAC members met with more than 90 legislators to discuss a wide range of water-related issues. The KWO also staffed an informational booth in the rotunda of the capitol and answered questions regarding the 14 regions and their water priority water supply goals.

Throughout the session, the KWA has engaged with the Legislature through

testimony and letters on important priorities such as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and water appropriation application legislation. Below is a summary of key KWA legislative action.

### **Senate Substitute for HB 2059**

A bill regarding chemigation and applications to appropriate water was passed out of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and prompted the KWA to hold two conference calls to draft a letter to both the House and Senate Committees as

well as Leadership. The KWA specifically noted concerns with the unintended consequences of the bill, and requested the legislature give KWA and other stakeholders time to have a discussion surrounding the need to secure additional sources of water supply for the state. The [letter](#) was delivered, and on February 17, the bill was withdrawn from the Calendar and referred to the Committee on Natural Resources. The KWA will continue this conversation in the coming year.

## Legislative Update (Continued):

### **SB 330, Establishing the Kansas Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

Ginger Harper, on behalf of the KWA, testified in favor of this bill. The CREP legislation was referred to a Sub Committee of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, which met with stakeholders to work out differences on the legislation. SB 330 passed the Senate on February 22, and now moves to the House for further action. A few key changes to the CREP bill are:

- Limit the total number of acres enrolled in Kansas in CREP to 40,000 acres.
- Ensure water rights retired in water quantity CREPs are in good standing and will result in conservation.
- An annual report of all CREP activities shall be submitted to the legislature.

### **HB 2245, Amending procedure for cases involving groundwater**

The impairment legislation, which was introduced in 2015, was the topic of a recent House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee meeting. KWO provided written, neutral testimony on the legislation. The testimony highlighted the stakeholder group formed by KDA, which includes three KWA members, has been discussing the issue at length, and will continue to work to find a solution for everyone.



*Ginger Harper, Chief of Planning & Policy at the KWO testifying on behalf of the KWA.*

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## Republican River Implementation Plan and Update:

This past year many things transpired after more than a decade working on Lower Republican issues.

On February 24, 2015, in the case of *Kansas v. Nebraska* No. 126 Original, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in favor of Kansas in the dispute over the states' rights to the waters of the Republican River Basin. The Court ruled Nebraska had "knowingly failed" to comply with the Republican River Compact and awarded Kansas \$5.5 million for its losses.

The 2015 Legislature introduced Senate Bill 112 Section 178, which designated where all moneys recovered by the state of Kansas would be deposited. Of the \$5.5 million, \$2 million was reimbursed to the Attorney General's office for litigation costs and through the action of state legislators the remaining \$3.5 million was credited to fund water improvement projects in the basin.

Last month, a stakeholder group representing multiple interests within the Lower Republican met to discuss potential projects. They agreed \$2.5 million should be used for projects within the Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District (KBID) and \$1 million should be used for projects which are not part of the KBID system. You can read more

about this contract agreement in the recent press release at: [http://www.kwo.org/News-Events/PressReleases/Rls\\_KBIDSecures2.5M\\_020816.pdf](http://www.kwo.org/News-Events/PressReleases/Rls_KBIDSecures2.5M_020816.pdf)

KBID will seek additional funding from the Bureau of Reclamation, with state support, to finish the remaining canals that cannot be completed with damage award funding.

### **Non KBID Projects**

At the stakeholder meeting it was recognized that increased efficiency from conversion of open canals to pipes within KBID will lead to lower return flows and less water available to users below KBID. Lower users need to develop a legal and



*KBID Tour 2015*

## Republican River Implementation Plan and Update:

operational mechanism to get access to water within Harlan County Reservoir to compensate for depletions. There is also a need for additional storage to increase available supply during dry periods. To complete this effort, two actions will begin immediately.

There is a computer model of the Lower Republican existing surface and groundwater. Andrea Brookfield with KGS helped develop the modeling on the Bureau of Reclamation study and has agreed to start updating the model to look at development of an access district, as well as how new storage would fit into the water management system. The update should be completed this year.

The second action involves an RFP in the Lower Republican Basin for the development of additional multipurpose small reservoirs there were previously identified. No work

has been completed on these sites to determine their suitability or feasibility for construction. An outside engineering firm will be retained to determine the suitability and feasibility of two or three sites. The cost for this activity is \$75,000 - \$100,000.

The remaining \$850,000 will be used to begin implementation of actions identified by the modeling and/or engineering analysis. This effort should provide the Lower Republican Basin with a more reliable water supply during drought conditions.



*KBID Tour 2015*

## Regional Advisory Committee Action Plans -Where are we?

After two years of Vision meetings, eight months of regional water supply goal setting and the Regional Advisory Committee membership (RAC) being approved by the Kansas Water Authority (KWA) in August, action plans are currently being developed for each region to implement priority goals.

There are many different approaches being taken to develop the regional action plans. For example the Kansas RAC decided at their first meeting this past October to tackle a goal to reduce the rate of sedimentation in reservoirs. They chose to hold an informational webinar later the same month and then met five weeks later to draft an action plan. In January they presented their first draft plan to the KWA. The Upper Ark, Upper Republican and Upper Smoky Hill are developing bullet points of possible options for an action plan to address their top priorities in addition to supporting the Water Conservation Areas and Water Technology Farms being implemented in the western regions.



*Regional Advisory Committee Chairpersons providing their Regional Goal updates to the Kansas Water Authority at their December 2016 meeting in Ellsworth, KS.*

Similar activity is taking place across the state in the other remaining planning regions. Some are holding informational webinars, others reviewing ideas shared by members and staff. One region, the Equus-Walnut, has even set up three subcommittees each focused on a specific goal. The timeline for this process is the 14 RACs will have presented their first action plans to the KWA by May with all action items for each region to be presented by this coming fall.

The bottom line is input from the region's stakeholders to address the local issues is the best solution for support of the water issues and priorities that need to be addressed. A guiding principle of the Vision is that "Locally driven solutions have the highest opportunity for long term success". The regional approach is being utilized to identify actions and monitor progress in meeting the goals. The Vision for our water supply future is long term. Many short term, local steps are being taken to make this a success.

For comments or questions on the WaterFront please contact Katie Patterson-Ingels at: [Katie.Ingels@kwo.ks.gov](mailto:Katie.Ingels@kwo.ks.gov)

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## March

- 10 - Vision Education & Outreach Coordination Team Meeting - Manhattan, KS**
- 10 - Great Bend Prairie Regional Advisory Committee Meeting - Larned, KS**
- 11 - Equus-Walnut Regional Advisory Committee Meeting - Newton, KS**
- 16 - Red Hills Regional Advisory Committee Meeting - Medicine Lodge, KS**
- 17 - Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting - White Cloud, KS**
- 18 - Blue Ribbon Task Force Meeting - Topeka, KS**

## APRIL

- 5 - Cimarron Regional Advisory Committee Meeting - Liberal, KS**
- 6 - Upper Arkansas Regional Advisory Committee Meeting - Garden City, KS**

## MAY

- 3 - Marais des Cygnes Regional Advisory Committee Meeting - Ottawa, KS**
- 5 - Neosho & Verdigris Joint Regional Advisory Committee Meeting - Wolf Creek**
- 12 - Vision Education & Outreach Coordination Team Meeting - Manhattan, KS**
- 18-19 - Kansas Water Authority Meeting - Oakley, KS**

## Meet New Authority Member Alan King

Recently Alan King was appointed to serve on the Kansas Water Authority to represent the League of Kansas Municipalities.

He was raised in the Seattle area. He received a bachelor degree in Business Administration from Seattle International/National University. He is currently studying for his Masters in Public Administration.

Alan has worked in the public works field for 38 years. His career includes working nine years as a private consultant for local governments across the United States and South America. He served as Assistant Director for the city of Bellevue, Washington, General Manager of Eastgate Utilities District, Director of Public Works at the city and county of Broomfield Colorado, and is presently serving as Director of Public Works & Utilities for the city of Wichita, Kansas. Alan currently oversees more than 850 employees and manages an annual operating budget of \$250 million and a capital budget of \$1.7 billion. The city of Wichita provides water to over 450 thousand people.

“I am working to improve the city of Wichita’s water supply now and 50 years from now. My hope is that I can also contribute to the Governor’s 50 year water vision,” said Alan.

“Water is an essential need for life, society and the economy. I look forward to working with my fellow Authority mem-

bers in this very important area of public service.”

Alan has been married to his wife Karen for 38 years. They have two children and three grandchildren. They both enjoy riding their motorcycle cross country as well as hiking and watching wildlife.



**Save the Date!**

Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas  
November 14-15, 2016  
Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan, Kansas  
[www.kwo.org](http://www.kwo.org)