

**Press Release - March 20, 2017**

**Minnesota Rural Water Association**

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**Minnesota Rural Water Association presents the Henry Walraven Award to Lennis ‘Red’ Arndt, Lewis & Clark Regional Water System.**



The most prestigious award given by the Minnesota Rural Water Association is the Henry Walraven Award. The criteria for the Henry Walraven Award is leadership contributions for the improvement of a water/wastewater system in Minnesota.

Henry Walraven had a vision. His vision was to help Minnesota’s small rural community water system with training, troubleshooting problems and improving legislation that governs water systems.

Henry was on the first MRWA board and often times when the association was struggling Henry kept the fire lit. Without the foresight and Henry’s dedication to helping rural Minnesota solve water problems MRWA would not be what it is today. When Henry suddenly passed away the MRWA board respected Henry and his vision so much they dedicated an award in his name so that he may live on throughout the growth of MRWA.

The recipient of the Henry Walraven Award has been a friend of rural water for the past 28 years. This individual served as Luverne's Public Utilities Director for 24 years -from 1989 to 2003. He was responsible for all aspects of water, sewer and electricity in the city. Early in his tenure he understood the importance of securing a long-term source of water for the community.

Through his urging Luverne became a member of the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System in 1990. For the last 27 years this individual has served on Lewis & Clark's board of directors, working tirelessly to bring a reliable source of high quality drinking water into southwest Minnesota, northwest Iowa and southeast South Dakota.

In 1994 the recipient became Vice-Chairman and has served with distinction as Chairman since 2006, including participating on all four of Lewis & Clark's committees. He has been a driving force in his relentless and tenacious pursuit to bring critically needed drinking water to the tristate region. His steadfast belief in the project goes way beyond traditional words like "dedication" and "commitment." It is an all-consuming passion. He is a visionary who understands this is a legacy-type project that will have a profound impact on the region for generations to come.

To say that he has always been there for Lewis & Clark would be a vast understatement. Less than two weeks after open heart surgery he spoke at the ribbon cutting for our treatment plant in July 2012. Whenever times have gotten tough, and there have been plenty, Red has always been our eternal optimist; assuring us we'll get it done. Whenever we need someone to go to Washington and St. Paul to lobby for the project, he is always ready to pack a suitcase. We conservatively estimate he has been to Washington over 60 times and St. Paul over 60 times the past 27 years, as well as attending more than a thousand other local meetings. Whenever we have needed leadership and direction, he has always put what is best for Lewis & Clark first, as opposed to what may be most beneficial to an individual community or rural water system.

Luverne finally began receiving water from Lewis & Clark in March 2016. Rock County Rural Water District started receiving water at Magnolia -the second of their two connections – in August 2016. By the end of this year Lewis & Clark will be delivering water to Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water System at both of their connections points – Magnolia and just east of Adrian. Worthington is on track to begin receiving water by the end of 2018.

He is a very humble person and would be the first to acknowledge this project is a team effort. However, it is an undisputable fact that his tremendous contributions to bringing Lewis & Clark water to the tristate region are second to none

*Photo on previous page (from left to right) MRWA Chairman Steve Burklund, Lewis & Clark Regional Water System Board of Director Lennis 'Red' Arndt, and NRWA Representative Steve Wear.*