

# 2015 MRWA Board of Directors

We work for YOU!

We are a non-profit association governed by a board of directors.

We are staffed with 16 full-time personnel trained to offer on-site technical assistance and training to water and wastewater system personnel in managerial, financial, operation and maintenance of systems, and source water protection. MRWA is funded through grants, contracts, and memberships to allow us to offer our services at no charge to community water and wastewater systems and rural water districts with populations under 10,000.



2015 MRWA Board of Directors: (shown above, bottom row left to right) Tracy Bergh, Director—North Kittson Rural Water; Steve Burklund, Chairman—City of Milaca; Del Walraven Director—Rock County Rural Water; and Rod Spronk, Secretary-Treasurer—Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water; (top row left to right) Ron Abrahamson, Director—Marshall & Polk Rural Water; Allan Rutter, Director—City of Cyrus; Les Anderson, Vice Chairman and National Director—Red Rock Rural Water; and Tom Dowdle, Director—Kittson Marshall Rural Water.

## Minnesota Rural Water Association—Contact Us!

Decisions made today will determine your system's future!



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**Excellence in Training &  
Technical Assistance**

# Minnesota Rural Water Association 2015 Annual Report



*Excellence in Training and Technical Assistance*

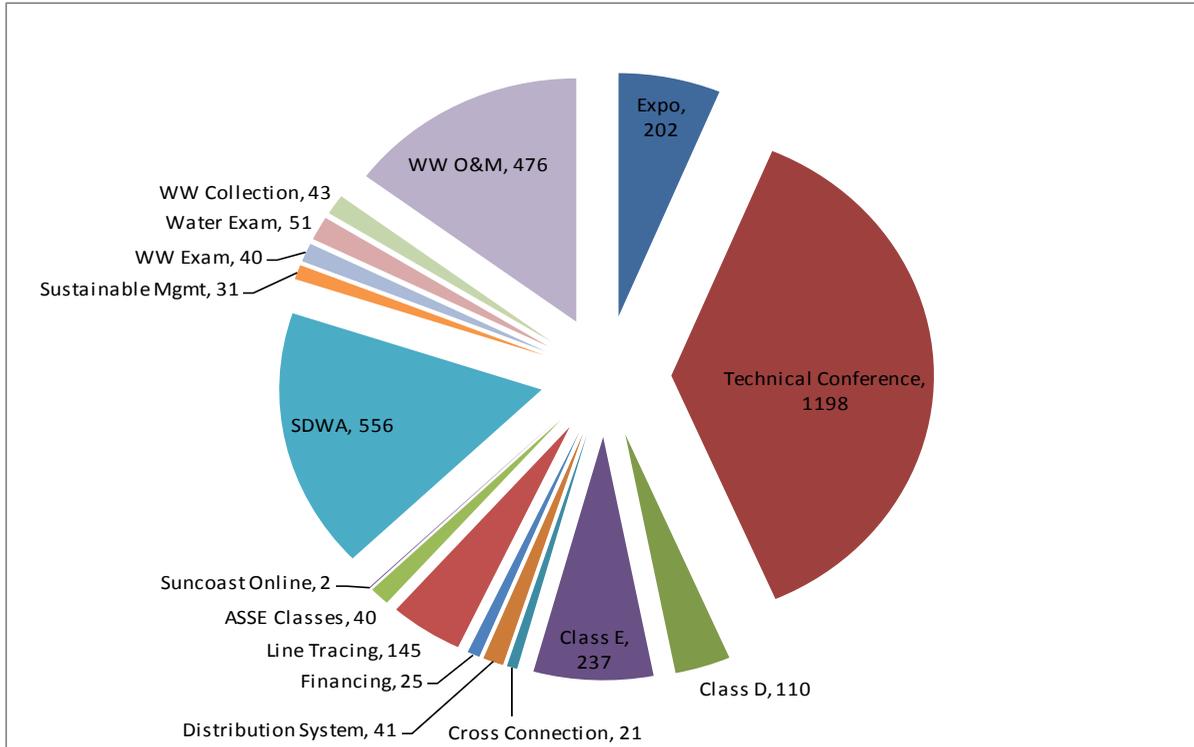


On the Web at: [www.MRWA.com](http://www.MRWA.com)

# MRWA TRAINING SUMMARY 2015

**Training is what we are all about!** It is one of the main reasons that we are in existence—to provide classroom and on-site training to water and wastewater systems and governing personnel on the most up-to-date methods of efficient operations and management techniques.

## MRWA 2015 Training Sessions With Attendance



Total Number of Certification Hours Earned:  
**23,957**

Total Number of Training Sessions Held:  
**67**

Total of Personnel Trained: **3,218**  
Admin: **17** Decision Makers: **25**  
Government: **72** Operations Specialists: **2,630**  
Others: **474**

# 2015 Technical Assistance Visits by District

MRWA visits systems in all 8 Congressional Districts with a focus on small rural areas with populations under 10,000. MRWA's technical advisors help systems to assure the most effective use of scarce funding is being utilized, ensures problems are being solved for the least expense, and assists in better communication and cooperation between local officials.

## Senators Amy Klobuchar & Al Franken

2,432 technical on-site assistance & 3,218 personnel trained.

## District 1—Rep. Tim Walz

297 technical on-site assistance & 413 personnel trained.

## District 2—Rep. John Kline

118 technical on-site assistance & 334 personnel trained.

## District 3—Rep. Erik Paulsen

41 technical on-site assistance & 168 personnel trained.

## District 4—Rep. Betty McCollum

53 technical on-site assistance & 256 personnel trained.

## District 5—Rep. Keith Ellison

14 technical on-site assistance & 107 personnel trained.

## District 6—Rep. Tom Emmer

374 technical on-site assistance & 501 personnel trained.

## District 7—Rep. Collin C. Peterson

972 technical on-site assistance & 857 personnel trained.

## District 8—Rep. Rick Nolan

563 technical on-site assistance & 525 personnel trained.



# 2015 MRWA Membership & Miles

## MRWA Mission Statement

“To provide the latest information, education, and technical assistance to protect our public waters and improve the quality of life in Minnesota.”

MRWA would like to thank our members for their strong support and their continued participation in Minnesota Rural Water Association’s activities. *This truly is your Association!*



## Minnesota Rural Water Association Membership 2015

|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| Associate Membership | 430        |
| Active Membership    | 274        |
| Industry Membership  | 241        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>945</b> |

## Minnesota Rural Water Association 2015 Miles By Program

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Circuit Riders.....                                | 76,625         |
| Wastewater Technicians .....                       | 72,786         |
| Financial Services Planner .....                   | 12,750         |
| Training Specialist.....                           | 13,800         |
| FSA Source Water Specialist .....                  | 14,469         |
| Source Water Specialists .....                     | 50,806         |
| Nontransient/Nonmunicipal Technical Advisors ..... | 64,425         |
| Executive Director .....                           | 16,095         |
| <b>2015 TOTAL.....</b>                             | <b>321,756</b> |

# MRWA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE 2015

MRWA staff provides on-site technical assistance to operations specialists, managers, and other personnel of water and wastewater utilities geographically across the state of Minnesota.

|  | <u>On-Site Hours</u> | <u>Total Contacts</u> |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Water Program</b>                     |                      |                       |
| Circuit Rider 1—Mike Roers               | 460.50               | 391                   |
| Circuit Rider 2—Jeff Dale                | 549.75               | 403                   |
| <b>Wastewater Program</b>                |                      |                       |
| Wastewater Technician 1—Tim Hagemeyer    | 460.75               | 401                   |
| Wastewater Technician 2—Frank Stuemke    | 455                  | 400                   |
| <b>Financial Services Program</b>        |                      |                       |
| Financial Services Planner—Teri Osterman | 228.50               | 60                    |
| <b>Training Program—EPA &amp; WW</b>     |                      |                       |
| Training Specialist—Teri Osterman        | 152.50               | 84                    |
| <b>Source Water Program</b>              |                      |                       |
| FSA Source Water Specialist—Aaron Meyer  | 297                  | 109                   |
| Source Water Specialist—Mike Strodtman   | 345.25               | 154                   |
| Source Water Specialist—Dave Neiman      | 235                  | 114                   |
| Source Water Specialist—Robyn Hoerr      | 157.75               | 113                   |
| <b>NM/NTNC Program</b>                   |                      |                       |
| NonMunicipal Advisor—Kyle Kedrowski      | 331.75               | 378                   |
| NTNC Advisor/Trainer—Jennifer Koenig     | 170.50               | 327                   |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                       | <b>3,844.25</b>      | <b>2,935</b>          |

# 2015 Training Specialist Water Program

MRWA provides classroom and on-site training to water systems and governing personnel on the most up-to-date methods of efficient operations and management techniques. MRWA offers management and specialized training to operations specialists, managers, board members, decision makers, councils, government personnel, administrators, and other interested personnel. MRWA hosted **Safe Drinking Water Act** training sessions and **Sustainable Management Workshops** under the EPA Water and EPA Wastewater programs respectively. MRWA's Training Specialist is Teri Osterman.

**Training Sessions Held: 14**

**Training Session Attendance: 587**

**Number of Systems Benefitted by Training Sessions: 299**

**TOTAL TRAINING HOURS: 96**



# 2015 Letters of Support

"MRWA gives assistance to our small community throughout the year, every year, in various ways. *The training, technical guidance, budget advice, financial support, and on-site evaluations have been invaluable.* Heron Lake is weighing options for water for our residents—what a huge decision: build a new treatment plant or join a rural water provider? Jeff Dale has spent considerable time doing on-site visits, attending council meetings, and working with engineers and finance people on our behalf."

—Brenda Martin-Granstra, Clerk/Treasurer, City of Heron Lake

"On November 12th, the city of Braham was made aware that there was a major break somewhere in the city's waterline system because of the amount of water being pumped from the city well. Our city crew searched the city trying to locate the break to no avail. I then called Mike Roers, who was out of the area, and Mike was amazing. He came right away the next morning with his equipment and within a short amount of time, he located the break. The water from the break was traveling underground to a nearby ditch that was concealed by vegetation. We were so impressed on how quickly Mike responded to our need, and how quickly he was able to help us locate this break. *I just want you to know how important MRWA is to small communities like Braham, and what an outstanding staff you have!*"

—Sally Hoy, City Administrator, City of Braham

"Like many other small out-state Minnesota cities, we have limited resources and limited manpower with which to provide our citizens with a safe and reliable water system. The resources made available to us by MRWA is not only very much appreciated, *but they are essential in helping us comply with environmental mandates and helping us meet the needs of our citizens.*"

—Roger Knutson, Public Works Director, City of Rushford

"Over the previous years, MRWA personnel have always been invaluable for questions and instructions. Mike Strodman has worked with us intensely to get our Groundwater Wellhead Protection Plan in place and kept up-to-date. Without his assistance, we would have struggled to get this done and in compliance. Teri Osterman is also a wealth of information. She always has time for my questions and has answers and information for me. Frank Stuemke has been a great help with obstacles that we ran into with eDMR reporting. Frank is only a phone call away for help and instruction. And Mike Roers has been a tremendous help with locating water breaks and curb stops in the past. *We greatly appreciate assistance from MRWA staff!*"

—LuAnn Freiermuth & Tom Johnson, Clerk and Water Manager, City of Cromwell

"Our operators use MRWA's training programs and enjoy hosting a school. *MRWA's web site is also used by our operators for ideas and contacts related to water and wastewater.* With this type of on-site technical assistance, small communities like ours can save time and money."

—Pat Kaderlik, Operator LeCenter WWTP, City of LeCenter

# 2015 Financial Services Program

The Financial Services Planner focuses on the financial and managerial aspects pertaining to municipalities. This position focuses on helping systems with rates studies, wellhead protection plans, services for city clerks and administrators in management and financial issues. The Financial Services Planner travels the entire state to provide immediate on-site advice and assistance to systems. *The Financial Services Planner is Teri Osterman.*

## This program focuses on:

- ◆ On-site training for new clerks/treasurers,
- ◆ Software training for utility billing,
- ◆ Consulting administrative services for cities,
- ◆ Work with systems on utility improvement needs,
- ◆ Prepare rate studies to ensure adequate revenue,
- ◆ Ordinances, funding options, computer technology and electronic reporting forms,
- ◆ Write Wellhead Protection Plans and assist with WHP Implementation activities,
- ◆ Conduct Potential Contaminant Source Inventories and land use planning,
- ◆ Assist with comprehensive planning activities,
- ◆ AND, a resource for all your municipal management questions.



## Specialized Fee-Based Training Classes Offered by MRWA:

MRWA hosts specialized, hands-on training sessions throughout the year bringing a much needed training niche to Minnesota including the **largest water and wastewater technical conference in Minnesota**. MRWA offered line tracing, wastewater collection, Expo, cross connections, ASSE backflow, financing, and exam refreshers in 2015.

## GPS/GIS Services Offered by MRWA:

Through the implementation of GPS & GIS technology, MRWA can effectively produce hard copy and digital maps to be utilized by system personnel for water and/or wastewater facilities in the state. With this service available from MRWA, utilities can obtain new and accurate maps to better manage their infrastructure assets.



# 2015 Letters of Support

*“I want to thank MRWA, its board, staff, and circuit riders for the hard work and assistance that you have provided to USDA Rural Development and the communities of Minnesota this past year. The assistance your organization continues to provide to the rural communities in Minnesota is valuable and has resulted in the improved operation and management of utility systems in many of our small towns and communities. The circuit rider’s assistance with operational issues continues to prove valuable for the continued long term success of our projects. The schools you put on for operators not only teach what is required, helps operators to be licensed, but it also builds a great network for information sharing and problem solving. Additionally, the Management Training you are providing for Board members of small systems is essential to enable communities to successfully develop and then manage their utility projects. The circuit rider’s assistance to Rural Development in developing new ways to improve the way we administer project construction and oversight has resulted in a significant cost savings for a number of our projects. **Our partnership with MRWA is vital for small communities and for our continued assistance to these communities.**”*

—Colleen Landkamer, State Director, USDA Rural Development

*“MRWA is a vital asset, not only to the Austin Utilities, but throughout the state by providing training and support to many small and medium sized municipal water systems. Training seminars are conveniently located at various sites every year to provide cost effective and valuable training for all water operations specialists.”*

—Todd Jorgenson, Gas & Water Operations Director, Austin Utilities

*“MRWA does a great job of helping out all of the operators and communities in Minnesota. **I try to take advantage every chance I get to attend one of MRWA’s training sessions, especially the free ones.** It gets expensive to keep up on our credit hours and it is a great help to the cities and the operators to attend these schools. The March Technical Conference is second to none. It is a great piece of mind to know if we ever are in need of help with any problems, we may have the MRWA help.”*

—Randy Peterson, Operations Specialist, City of Starbuck

*“I would just like to thank all the great staff at MRWA. Your December 8, 2015 wastewater training session was a great event. I come from a small municipality (pop. 115) and **I can’t thank you enough for having these great accredited seminars so close to home and for no cost to our small community.** It is through great companies and services like you that we can keep our community safe and clean.”*

—Paul Thoennes, Wastewater Operations Specialist, City of Millerville

*“Most recently, with the help of MRWA, the city of Cottonwood hosted a smoke testing training session in which other area communities were able to participate in this hands-on demonstration as well. These various classes and **trainings are very important as they keep operators up to speed on new practices** as well as providing a refresher of current practices.”*

—Charles Seipel & Steve Alm, Maintenance Managers, City of Cottonwood

# 2015 Wastewater Program

MRWA provides classroom training to wastewater systems and governing personnel for wastewater issues. MRWA's Wastewater Advisors are experienced operations specialists/technicians/teachers that travel the entire state, day-in and day-out to provide immediate on-site, hands-on technical assistance to small systems and USDA Rural Development wastewater system borrowers and/or potential borrowers. Training consists of Wastewater Operation & Maintenance Sessions. *Wastewater Technical Advisors and Trainers are Tim Hagemeyer and Frank Stuemke.*

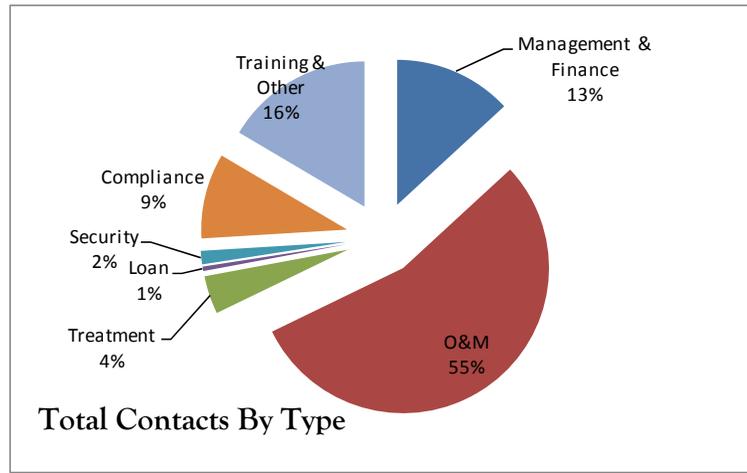
**Training Sessions Held: 12**

**Training Session Attendance: 476**

**Number of Systems Benefitted by Training Sessions: 227**

**TOTAL TRAINING HOURS: 84**

**TOTAL CONTACTS: 801**



# 2015 NM and NTNC Technical Assistance Programs

Minnesota Rural Water Association offers technical assistance and training to non-municipal and nontransient/noncommunity water suppliers in Minnesota. These systems are required to have licensed water operations specialists and to provide a safe and adequate supply of water under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Minnesota Rural Water Association provides free of charge training sessions for nonmunicipal and non-transient/noncommunity water systems. *The Technical Advisors are Jennifer Koenig and Kyle Kedrowski.*

**Training Sessions Held: 16**

**Number of Attendees: 347**

**Total NM On-site Contacts: 378**

**Total NTNC On-site Contacts: 327**

**TOTAL CONTACTS: 705**



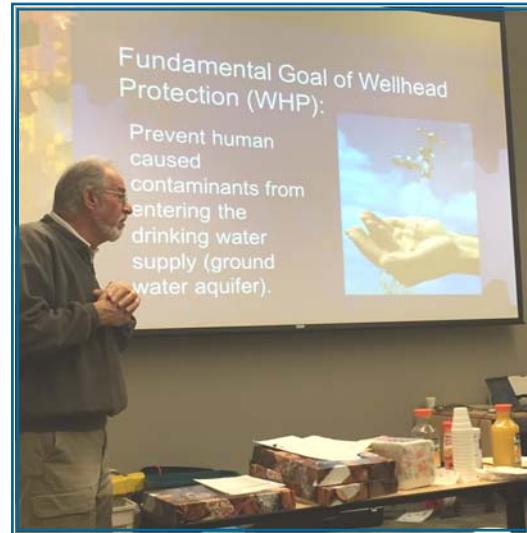
# 2015 Source Water Protection Program

Minnesota Rural Water Association's Groundwater/Source Water Protection Specialist's offer an opportunity for public water suppliers to develop Wellhead Protection Plans to protect the quality of drinking water using local community resources. They also work with implementation of those plans and are available to provide information and training for city councils, boards, utility commissions, other local community leaders, and Source Water Protection Team members. *The Source Water Specialists are Robyn Hoerr, Mike Strotzman, and Dave Neiman.*

**On-Site Visits: 489**

**On-Site Hours: 1,035**

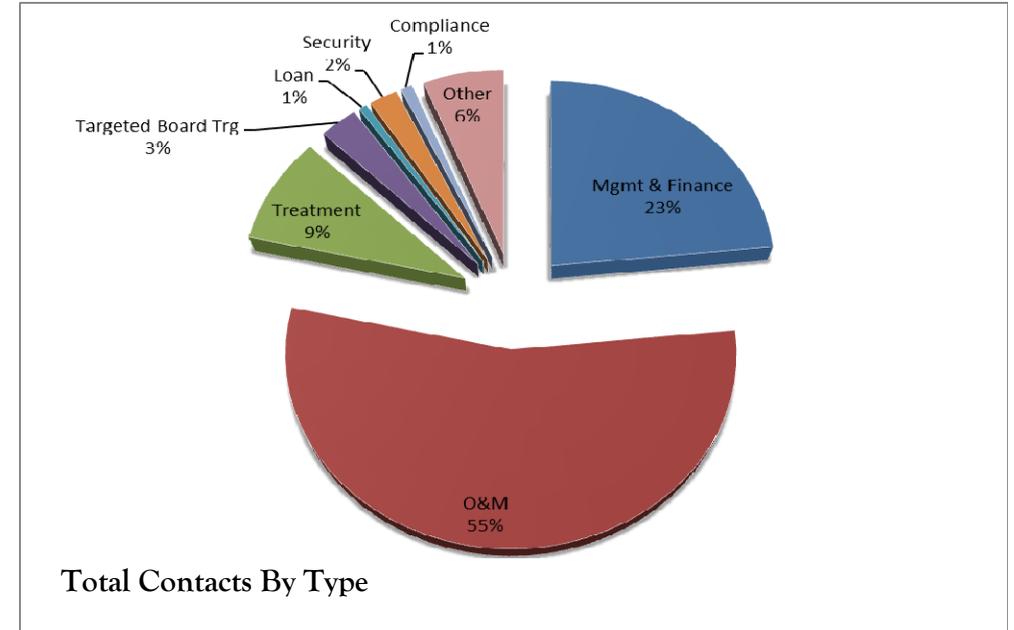
**Hours Developing & Implementing Wellhead Protection Plans & Source Water Protection Plans: 2,258.25**



# 2015 Circuit Rider Program

Minnesota Rural Water Association's Circuit Riders are experienced operations specialists/technicians/teachers that travel the entire state, day-in and day-out to provide on-site, hands-on technical assistance to small systems and USDA Rural Development water system borrowers and/or potential borrowers. *Circuit Riders are Mike Roers and Jeff Dale.*

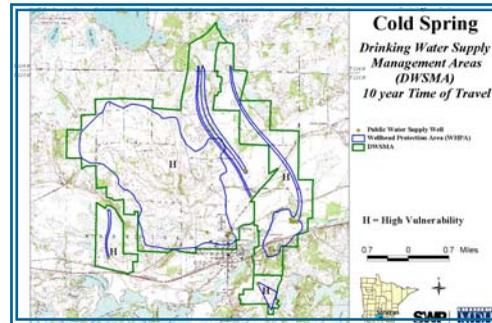
**TOTAL CONTACTS: 794**



# 2015 FSA Source Water Program

The FSA Source Water Protection (SWP) Program works closely with state and federal agencies to identify priority areas where local pollution prevention efforts are needed to protect drinking water supplies. Local teams are created to help guide the creation of SWP plans which are written to promote clean water in the local community. The SWP Specialist helps develop and implement these source water protection plans in an effort to protect drinking water supplies. *The FSA USDA Source Water Specialist is Aaron Meyer.*

- ◆ **Developed** wellhead protection plans for public water suppliers.
- ◆ **Coordinated** an effort with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the various stakeholders and commodity groups in MN to create a Source Water Protection Environmental Quality Incentive Program Initiative.
- ◆ **Secured** perpetual easements to protect drinking water supplies.
- ◆ **Partnered** with various agencies to provide conservation program materials to all landowners with cropping history located in sensitive groundwater areas.
- ◆ **Implemented** nitrogen best management practices with landowners across the state to reduce nitrate levels within public drinking water supplies.
- ◆ *Currently working with State and local agencies to create additional N BMP programs to further reduce nitrate loading in sensitive areas.*



# 2015 Letters of Support

*“Over the past three years, critical technical assistance was provided for source water protection and wellhead protection planning and implementation for our community. Professional assistance including **training and certification and resources provided by MRWA has had a positive impact on thousands of people, including our staff. Thank you for your assistance and continued support of our community and state!**”*

**—Kurt Neidermeier, Utility Manager, City of Otsego**

*“It is through MRWA that our associates have been able to renew their certification license. MRWA has also been very instrumental in helping us maintain our systems through water leak detection, televising sewer lines, and education. **The work that MRWA does and the assistance that they give our community is vital to helping us keep our municipal water and sewer system running efficiently in a cost effective manner.** MRWA helps our city stay compliant with environmental mandates and assists us in being proactive on repairs before they become major repairs.”*

**—John Werner, Mayor, City of Rice Lake**

*“MRWA helped complete Part 1 and 2 of Willow River’s Wellhead Protection Plan. The preparation of a program such as this is almost impossible for small cities such as Willow River, who usually have only one full-time employee. **Without the help of MRWA professionals, like Dave Neiman, we would not have been able to comply with Minnesota State Law.** In past years, MRWA has helped with identifying I&I, televising mains, smoke testing, and providing assistance for many other items that would have been outside of our expertise and out of our reach financially. MRWA is truly a blessing for small cities!”*

**—Connie Ecklund, City Clerk, City of Willow River**

*“You have served as an excellent resource for water and wastewater problems that we have incurred. Many of your staff members have played a critical role in helping the city of Cold Spring to develop and utilize a Wellhead Protection Plan. Dave Neiman has lent enormous support when we prepare for our annual Children’s Water Festival. His role was significantly vital to the planning process for our first festival because he had knowledge from organizing other festivals. MRWA also helps unite different communities. For example, Tim Hagemeier from MRWA calibrates the pumping capacity of the lift stations, which pump the sewage from the city of Rockville to the Cold Spring Wastewater Treatment Plant. Both communities have such confidence in MRWA that these calibrations are accepted by both communities for billing purposes. The support and guidance that you offer Cold Spring is phenomenal. It is always reassuring to know that when there is a need for technical assistance, you are there to advise or direct us. Your staff members have frequently given advice to help us through critical problems. Without this assistance, things would not run as efficiently and problems would not be resolved with such ease. **MRWA provides cost-effective problem solving assistance that enables us to better care for the nation’s waterways.**”*

**—Jon Stueve, Public Works Director, City of Cold Spring**