



THE SPIGOT

from the NORTH DAKOTA RURAL WATER SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION

Individuals recognized during 2018 Awards Ceremony

By Lisa Schatz

Honoring the Best in the Business

During the North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA) annual water EXPO, an awards ceremony was held to recognize individuals that have dedicated years of service to the water industry. Numerous nominee applications were submitted to be reviewed by the awards committee. "The amount of experience, dedication, and hard work remains evident when reviewing applications for this year's awards. I would like to congratulate the 2018 winners and thank them for their years of commitment and perseverance in making potable, reliable water a reality," said Michele Schommer, awards committee chair, of this year's nominees. Please join the NDRWSA staff and board of directors in congratulating this year's winners!

Outstanding Office Employee

Deb Foertsch of Southeast Water Users District (SWUD) was awarded the "Outstanding Office Employee" award. This award is given to the unsung heroes working quietly in the background: office managers, secretaries, clerks, city auditors, whatever their title may be, they are the backbone of every organization. Foertsch has gone that extra mile in promoting water issues to the boards, councils, management, and communities. She has been involved in the water industry for 20 years and currently works as an administrative assistant for SWUD. Foertsch is a Mantador VFW board member and is very involved with the Lidgerwood Golf Course Ladies Association. She dedicates many hours in community benefits that help individuals with health issues or financial needs. Foertsch participates in various fundraising events such as fish fries, golf tournaments, and various charitable events. Foertsch is an avid golfer and loves spending time with her granddaughter and grandson. Foertsch is an integral part of SWUD and a true team player, who has braved two major system expansions that involved adding 900 new users. Foertsch is the front person in customer service and treats every customer with professionalism. Deb Foertsch is not afraid of hard work or extra tasks, and is truly an exemplary employee. Congratulations, Deb!



Friend of Rural Water

Ken Royse was presented with the prestigious "Friend of Rural Water" award. This award is given each year to those individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to providing quality water to North Dakotans through the promotion, development, or enhancement of the state association or a local city or rural water system. Royse recently retired from Bartlett & West with more than 30 years of water engineering experience and 43 years in the engineering field. Royse's passion to serve the water community is apparent. Royse served 22 years on the Burleigh County Water Resource District board and 13 years on the Garrison Diversion board of directors. Royse was appointed by Gov. Hoeven to serve on the Missouri River Task Force and was the North Dakota representative to the Upper Missouri River Association. He also served on the North Dakota Water Education Foundation board and the North Dakota Water Users Association board. Royse loves a challenge and has never given up on a project or client. He has been instrumental in the design and construction of numerous regional rural water systems throughout our state. When not working, he spends time with his wife Kay and his children. He enjoys reading, golfing, and taking walks with their dogs. Congratulations, Ken!

Outstanding Water Works Employee

Gus Cronquist of Agassiz Water Users District (AWUD) was the recipient of the “Outstanding Water Works Employee” award. This award is given to a water operator or rural water system manager with outstanding leadership abilities and extraordinary accomplishments in water operations beyond the normal requirements of their job. This individual has demonstrated superior performance, dedication, and leadership in their endeavor to provide quality water to North Dakotans. Cronquist began his career in the water industry in 1978. For 40 years, he has guided AWUD as a hands-on manager and made himself available day and night, in all sorts of weather. Over the years, Cronquist has taught many classes and workshops and provided on-site assistance training. Cronquist’s wealth of knowledge and experience is unsurmountable to fellow managers, board members, and employees. He is a leader and mentor to those involved in the water industry. He often goes beyond his scope of work and is willing to help anyone having plumbing issues. Cronquist volunteers his time with various local organizations and his willingness to lend a hand is greatly appreciated by many. AWUD is a financially sound district due to Cronquist’s hard work and dedication. As he nears retirement, his knowledge and experience will be difficult to replace. Congratulations, Gus, and best of luck in your future endeavors!



Clark Cronquist Waterline

Keith Nilson was presented with the highly prized “Clark Cronquist Waterline” award. This award is given to someone, who, through their distinctive leadership and perseverance, has gone above and beyond the call of duty in the promotion, development, and enhancement of rural water on a state or national level. Nilson has been involved in the water industry since 1994. Over the course of his career, he served two years as a board director, three years as a board secretary/treasurer, three years as board vice president, and currently serves as the president of Walsh Rural Water District. Nilson served 10 years on the NDRWSA executive board and is an active member of the Lake Agassiz Water Authority. Nilson has attended many water conferences and National Rural Water Association legislative rallies to help promote the water industry. In addition to the water industry, he maintains a successful farming operation with his family in Park River. Nilson volunteers his time at Zion Luthern church and plays golf during his time off. He enjoys spending time with his wife Brenda, four children, and two grandchildren. He is a great cook, and family members look forward to his Sunday evening meals. Congratulations, Keith!

