



THE SPIGOT

from the NORTH DAKOTA RURAL WATER SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION

Vernon Anderson: A Building Block of Rural Water

By Lisa Schatz

It isn't often an individual dedicates 46 years to a service that takes determination, collaboration, and a willingness to provide a better way of life for neighbors, friends, and family. The quest for obtaining potable water started for Vernon Anderson in 1970.

Anderson recalls the '70s as a time when Barnes County was drought stricken with no rain in the forecast. Although few rural water systems existed, he became aware of a rural water system being built to provide potable water to this area of North Dakota. He immediately became interested and involved in the project.

Anderson's career in rural water began when he noticed an announcement in a local newspaper that emergency

federal funds were available for drought relief. He and a group of local officials worked diligently to obtain funding for a rural water system in Barnes, Stutsman, Griggs, LaMoure, Ransom, and Cass counties. Enough people signed up for the system to satisfy the loan requirements, funding was received, and the project startup came soon after that. Within three years, some members were receiving clean, safe water.

Anderson was elected to serve as president of the Barnes Rural Water District's board of directors in 1976. In 1986-87 he was elected president of the North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association's (NDRWSA) executive board. Throughout his term as president, he spent time in Washington, D.C., rallying for clean, potable water for all rural areas of North Dakota. In 1990, he received the Clark Cronquist Waterline Award, which is given to individuals, who demonstrate distinctive leadership and perseverance, and have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the promotion, development, or enhancement of rural water on a state or national level. He was recently recognized with an appreciation award for his 25 years of service as president. And, in 2011, a new water treatment plant was dedicated in his name.

Anderson is a retired farmer and says he "shares his good life with his good wife," two children, and two grandchildren. He and his wife were selected as the



recipients of the Great American Family award. His hobbies include golfing, fishing, and woodworking. His exceptional talent for woodworking has raised thousands of dollars during the NDRWSA's live auction, which benefits the Patrick Denne Memorial Scholarship Fund. Attendees of the event often gather around the table to admire his beautiful handmade wooden bowls.

Anderson is not all work and no play. He was a major player on the city of Leal's bowling team. In his leisure time, he spent time helping farmers as a farmhand and built several homes in the area. His involvement in the following organizations, shows his dedication to rural North Dakota.

- March of Dimes treasurer
- Leal City Council, 25 years
- Leal Rod and Gun Club, board member for 40 years
- Wimbledon Knights of Columbus, 35 years
- Wimbledon American Legion commander
- St. Boniface Church in Wimbledon, council and committees
- Barnes County Highway Planning Committee

After nearly 50 years in rural water, Anderson retired from the Barnes Rural Water board of directors. Barnes Rural Water and the NDRWSA thank him for his many years of service and wish him the best in his retirement.

NDRWSA to host Budget Workshops

More than ever, rural and small utilities in North Dakota are faced with complex challenges that can cloud their financial futures. Aging infrastructure, uncertain economies, fluctuating customer bases, and increasing operational costs all add up to the question, "How can we be sure our system is headed down the right financial path?" A free day-long interactive workshop will answer that question. The workshop will also help participants:

- Identify the critical components of the utility's infrastructure assets
- Determine the risks and consequences of asset failure
- Explore rate planning concepts and options
- Understand long-term financing options to avoid rate shock for customers
- Hear more about potential project funding options
- Learn more about the budget-setting process
- Review the money-saving services provided by the North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA)

Whether you are an operator, manager, auditor, or board member, you have a stake in the financial future of your system. Spend the day learning what steps you can take to guide your system down the right financial path.

This training is brought to you by a grant from the North Dakota Department of Health, and will be presented by NDRWSA and AE2S. It will be held on the following dates and locations from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. local time. A working lunch will be provided. Dates and locations are:

- Aug. 2 – Dickinson
- Aug. 3 – Stanley
- Aug. 4 – Rugby
- Aug. 9 – Park River
- Aug. 10 – Mapleton
- Aug. 11 – Bismarck

For more information or to register, visit www.ndrw.org.