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Patrick Denne Scholarship:

### The Importance of the Water Industry

“Alright,” my grandfather’s voice boomed out, on a humid day following a huge rainstorm from the day prior, “who wants to come with me to go and check the water level at Matejcek Dam!” And without hesitation, a resounding “Me, me, I do!” came from my brother and I, and we quickly made our way to his truck. I share with you this small picture of what it was like to not only enjoy but appreciate and care for the rural water. Through these experiences, I gained knowledge of how rural water systems work, and what they provide to the community.

Water is such an important and vital element to our lives and our ecosystems, but it can only be maintained by those of us who take the time to care for it. For instance, my grandfather, who has proudly served on several local water boards for a combined total of 31 years so far. Including his service on the Tri-County Rural Water Board since 1993, and the Walsh County Water Resource Board since 2016. In his time, he has influenced major changes in our community concerning the water. To illustrate, when my grandfather was growing up, in our area, there were only three-four wells available to support all the local families and farmers. This made daily tasks in his profession, like watering the cattle and spraying the crops, nearly impossible to achieve. So, in the 1990’s my grandfather, along with several other board members, worked relentlessly to provide rural water for our community. And, low and behold, it worked! All the families in the area were provided with the resources they needed to keep their farming operations alive, including my own father’s. This is just a brief example of what water can do for us.

Speaking plainly, water is something so special, yet an element that is taken for granted. Without it, farming operations would die out just as quickly as they are built, families would leave our communities in search of better resources, and people across our nation would spiral into desperation. Water is the very substance that makes up our bodies, and our ways of living. And without water industry leaders, public safety, health, and the environment would be in danger. To conclude, the water industry impacts so many aspects of our lives, many of which we do not even think about. So, let's change the narrative, and become more involved in the driving force of our lives, the water industry, because that is what is important.