

# WaterOne CURRENT

Winter 2014

We believe in the meaningful work of producing clean water.

## WaterOne Named Best Tasting Water

The Kansas Section of the American Water Works Association (KsAWWA) has named WaterOne “**Best Tasting Water in Kansas**” 2014. This makes WaterOne the state’s winningest taste test titleholder.

The decision is made in a blind taste test by judges at the annual KsAWWA conference. Entries are submitted in a regulation container: an unmarked 1-liter vessel, preferably glass. Samples are coded to prevent bias.

Judges taste each sample, served at room temperature since ice can affect the flavoring. Much like a wine tasting, they are instructed to “sniff, sip, slurp, swish, and swallow.” Judges score the entry on a scale from 1-7 as the “ideal drinking water.”

“The contest is really about how well the utility uses its knowledge, technology, and testing to manage the natural factors in its source water to create safe drinking water that’s pleasing to the palate,” says Tom Schrempp, Director of Production.



Greg Totzke, WaterOne Lab Manager, agrees, “It’s our extensive multi-tiered treatment process coupled with real-time process data that enables us to consistently produce great water.”

WaterOne draws its water from the Kansas and Missouri rivers, both directly through river intakes and through naturally pre-filtered collector wells adjacent to the rivers.

The water is then rigorously purified at one of WaterOne’s two water treatment facilities depending on the source or the season. Water is run through a multi-barrier treatment process and quality tested by WaterOne’s certified laboratory both at the production plants and in the distribution field. WaterOne’s lab runs over 120,000 tests each year on 18,000 water samples to ensure the finest quality tap water.

As the state winner, WaterOne will be entered in the national AWWA taste test challenge in June 2015. 



## WaterOne Wins Top National Honor

WaterOne has been honored with the Platinum Award for Utility Excellence from the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA). General Manager Mike Armstrong recently accepted the award on behalf of WaterOne from AMWA President Chuck Murray.

This national award recognizes outstanding achievement in implementing qualities of effective utility management, such as strategic business planning, performance measurement, financial viability, infrastructure stability, and customer satisfaction.

WaterOne won the AMWA Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance in 2011. 

# Celebrating Customer Service

At WaterOne, customer service is everybody's business. Whether in the office, on the job site, or in our neighborhoods, every interaction with a WaterOne customer forms an impression of WaterOne. Each year, WaterOne takes a week to celebrate the importance of customer service and focus on its shared responsibility during Customer Service Week.

"Customers view every WaterOne employee they come into contact with as a member of customer service," says Dana Sargent-Buhl, Customer Service Manager. "Customers don't know how we label our departments at WaterOne, nor should they have to. If you're talking with a customer, you *are* customer service."

In honor of Customer Service Week, our Facebook and Twitter lit up with support and praise for WaterOne.

"Each time I call I get the most friendliest, intelligent and wonderful people. I love calling to get my bills paid and get such awesome service."

"Phone assistance is always great! Very polite and helpful answering questions about billing. Such as when I misplaced my water bill!"

"I've always had great customer service from WaterOne."

"The other employees at WaterOne have always been very helpful to me and have assisted in making my job easier." ♦



Each sticky note represents a WaterOne customer who expressed appreciation for customer service on social media with a Like, Share, Retweet, or Comment.



## Communications, Website Win Awards

WaterOne was on a winning streak this fall with its Communications team taking home top honors too. WaterOne received the Silver Circle award from the City-County Communications & Marketing Association (3CMA) for its new website WaterOne.org. Launched last fall, the website earned recognition for its clean design, easy navigation, and good content.

The NotifyJoCo emergency alert service was also recognized, taking tops honors in design and promotional categories. Learn more and sign-up for NotifyJoCo alerts at [www.notifyjoco.org](http://www.notifyjoco.org).

To date, NotifyJoCo has earned five communications, marketing, and design awards from national communications associations. WaterOne was a lead partner in developing the NotifyJoCo brand, promotional materials, and marketing strategy. ♦

# Making Progress On Hedge Lane Pipeline, Pump Station

Construction at the Hedge Lane project continues to be on schedule. The floor level of the pump station has been constructed as have the perimeter walls up to the operating level. Perimeter walls and interior baffle walls are also going up at the 7.5 million gallon buried reservoir.

Pipeline contractors have 59% of rock blasting completed, 39% of tunnel construction completed, and 22% of pipeline installed. A progress report will be mailed to Olathe residents in December in the neighborhoods adjacent to the project.

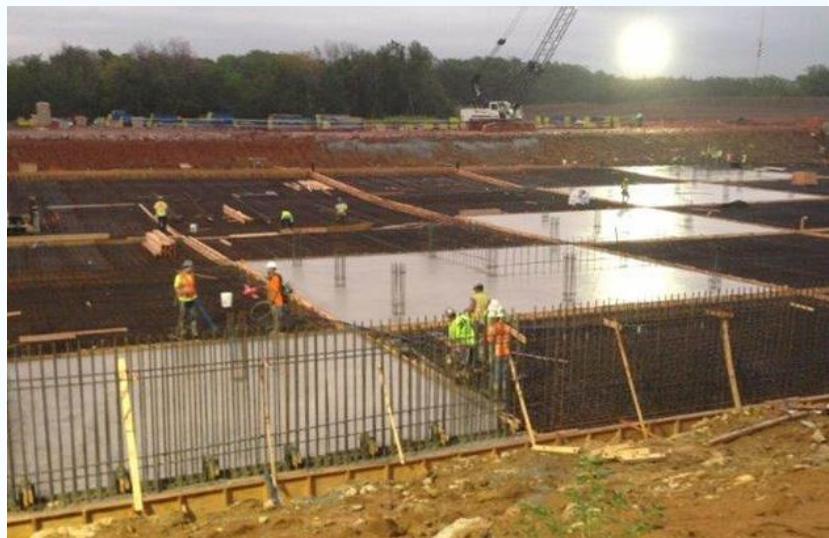
The project began in Spring 2014 and is scheduled for completion by Spring 2016, although work in some residential areas may be completed sooner.

## Project Description

The Hedge Lane Pipeline, Pump Station & Reservoir project ensures that an ample supply of water is on tap as southern Johnson County continues to grow. A 13 mile 42"-60" diameter buried pipeline will be installed along Hedge Lane from Highway K-10 south to 175th Street and along 175th Street from Hedge Lane to Ridgeview Road. With the permission of the City of Olathe, the pipeline runs through city boundaries in order to connect northern and southern parts of WaterOne's service area.

The pipeline ties into the new pump station and reservoir at Hedge Lane & 159th Street which will add localized storage capacity and the extra power of its pumps to push the water to the farthest reaches of our service area and ensure good water pressure.

See photos, video progress reports, and more info at [www.waterone.org/projects](http://www.waterone.org/projects). 



**Top:** Installation of the buried pipeline. **Bottom:** Greeting the dawn as contractors lay concrete foundation at the pump station and reservoir.

## Prepare Your Water Pipes for Winter



Is your home ready for temps in the teens? There's still time to winterize your home to prevent frozen pipes and avoid in-home plumbing disasters.

WaterOne provides all the tips that you need to be winter smart. View the 90 second video clip at [www.waterone.org/winterize](http://www.waterone.org/winterize). 

**True or False?** Your thermostat can help keep your pipes from freezing.

**TRUE.** Leave your thermostat set at 55° even if you're away from home.

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**Setting the Standard for Utility Excellence**

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## Board Adopts 2015 Budget, Sets Rates

At its December 9th meeting, the WaterOne Governing Board officially adopted its 2015 operating budget of \$106.9 million. As a part of the budget process, the Board set water rates that will go into effect on January 1, 2015.

The planned water rate adjustment is 3.8% based on a cost of service analysis. This represents an impact of \$1.58/month for the typical residential customer.

The main cost drivers that make an increase in 2015 necessary are investments in infrastructure replacement, labor expenses, power and chemicals, and a gradual decline in indoor water use.

The 2015 rate is consistent with WaterOne's approach to avoid rate volatility by creating incremental increases. Stable, predictable rates are preferred by customers and promote the growth of the local economy.

WaterOne is not tax-supported. As a non-profit public utility rates and fees are used to cover the cost of daily operations and infrastructure. On average, 50% of every rate dollar goes to daily operations; 50% goes to infrastructure.

WaterOne remains one of the lowest rates and best values for the dollar. For one dollar a customer can consume an entire year's worth of recommended daily water intake (eight - 8 oz. glasses/day).

Learn more at [www.waterone.org/value](http://www.waterone.org/value). 

**VALUE**  =   
(1 penny = 2 gallons of water)

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