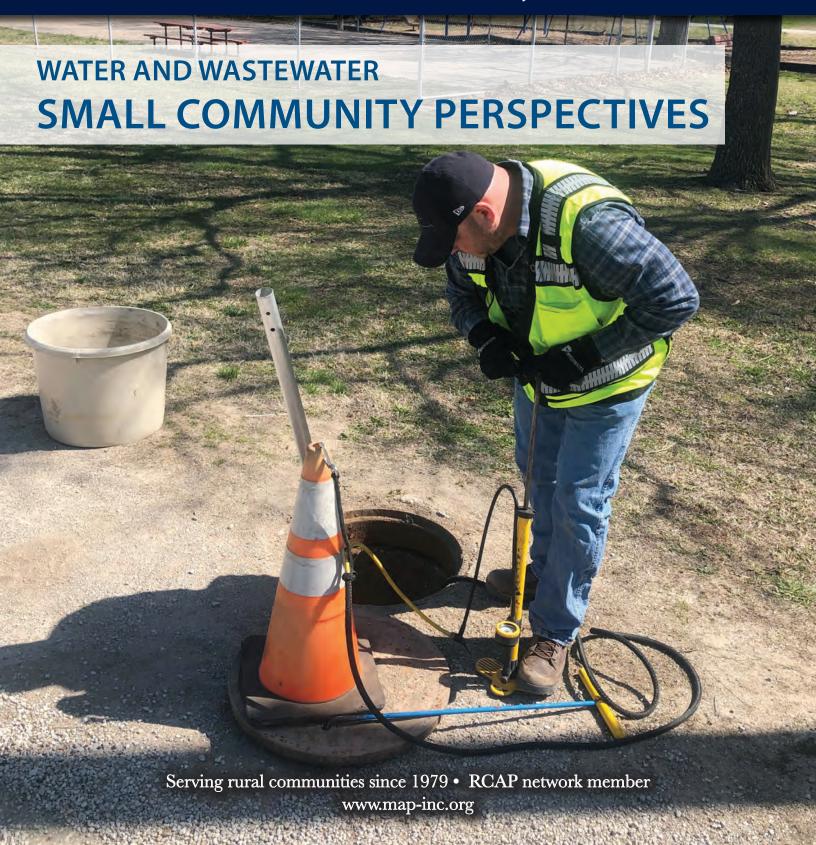
MIDWEST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SOURCE

Your source for community solutions





www.map-inc.org 660.562.2575 map@map-inc.org



Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP) is an approved vendor by the General Services Administration:

- MAP is already a GSA-approved contract
- Agencies can bypass the full request-forproposal process and come directly to MAP
- Less delay getting projects underway

MAP is the first member of the RCAP network to receive this designation.

Pictured on front cover:

MAP's Monte Kerchal, Project Manager/Technical Assistance Provider setting up a smoke test to identify infiltration and inflow (I&I testing) into the sewage system in Liberty, Kansas.

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GIS Coordinator

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Upcoming MAP Trainings:

July 21 Elected Officials Training, Covering the Basics – South Dakota – VIRTUAL

August 4 Backflow Procedures Training – Columbus, Nebraska

August 5 Training for Small Systems – Centerview, Missouri

August 19 Clerk & Board Duties, Responsibilities, & Financial Reporting – Maxwell, Nebraska

For a full list of current trainings and how to register, visit our website www.map-inc.org

New Staff Hires

Tyrel Owens, Project Manager/Technical Assistance Provider joined Midwest Assistance
Program, Inc. (MAP) in Wyoming with over nine
years of experience as a water and wastewater



operator for a small municipality. Tyrel has worn many hats while serving the people of the community where he resides. His duties have included everything from operations to maintenance. He understands the importance of being flexible

and open-minded while conducting daily operations. Tyrel believes good communication, customer service, and relationship-building are paramount while providing aid to people in any circumstance.

Tyrel currently holds four Level 2 licenses in water and wastewater through the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. In 2008, he received an Associate in Applied Science degree in Fire Science from the Western Dakota Technical Institute and was an active member of several volunteer fire departments through the years. Tyrel has a wife and four children; three boys and one girl, that he loves with his whole heart. Tyrel is fond of the area he and his family call home. He enjoys many outdoor activities; his favorites include hunting and fishing.

Jackie Luttrell, Project Manager/Technical Assistance Provider for MAP assists rural communities in South Dakota. She began her municipal government career in 2004 as the Finance Officer for the City of Clark. Jackie oversaw several departments and managed a \$2+ million budget for water, wastewater, and general government. Over her sixteen years as the Finance Officer, she worked on several public works projects, overseeing the funding applications for USDA Rural Development, SD State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program, SD Department of Environmental & Natural Resources (DENR) Consolidated and Community Development Block Grant Programs (CDBG). Her duties involved financial reporting, budgeting, fund accounting, payroll, zoning, human

resources, code enforcement, council meetings, training, and the city's acquisition of the local golf club. She designed the city's operations manual and website. Jackie is proficient in Banyon Data Systems software, QuickBooks,



and Microsoft Office applications. She was president of the Northeast Area Finance Officer Group for 4 years and mentored several finance officers in that area. Jackie has a background in technical writing where she produced hardcopy,

online training, and operation documents for a major insurance company. Jackie received her Municipal Clerk Certification from the University of South Dakota in 2009 and holds a Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Marketing and International Business from Mankato State University in Mankato, MN.

Kay Fowler, Project Manager/Technical Assistance Provider is excited to share knowledge with small communities to help meet the safe drinking water and compliance

standards in the state of Wyoming. The focus of Kay's career has been people. Her customer service and experience within the water industry are at the forefront of what makes her a great addition to MAP. She has spent time working in the water



industry as the Public Works Administrative
Assistant – Water Division in southwest Kansas.
During that time, she handled the Supervisory
Control & Data Acquisition (SCADA) Operating
System and the scope of document retention
connected with operating the water supply
for a city with a population of 30,000. This
required joint monitoring with a major industry
and meeting the requirements for production,
while balancing the system's daily water
needs in a groundwater system with 27 wells
and 4 storage facilities. From water sampling
to distributing the Consumer Confidence
Report (CCR), she was involved in all aspects of

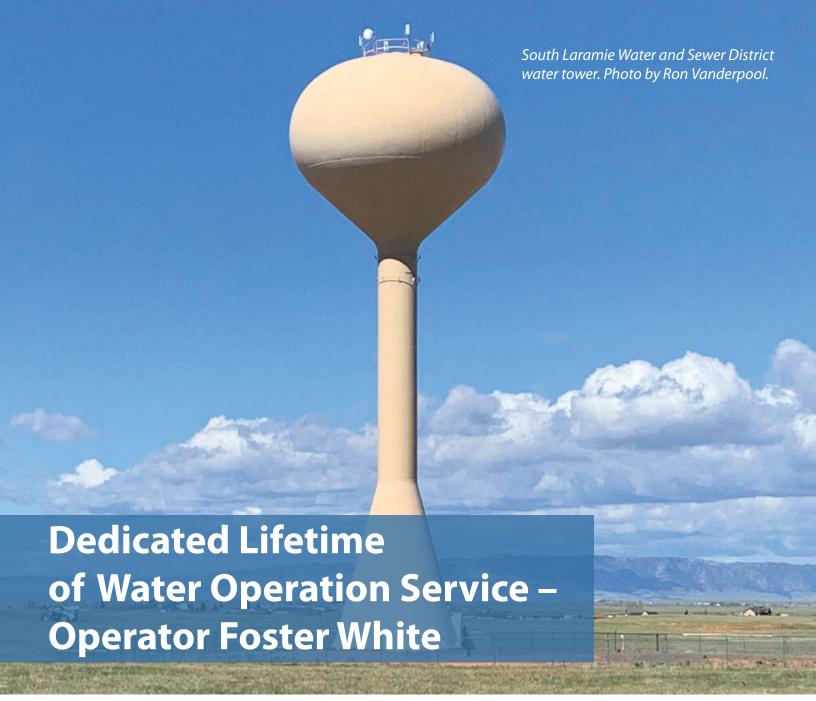
meeting requirements for Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE) compliance, sanitary surveys, emergency response plans, and compiling data for evaluation by city administrators. Kay attained a Class IV Water Certification from KDHE. Spending time with her family and friends is where Kay finds her joy. Fishing, riding, and hiking are high on her list of activities in Wyoming. She is eager to share these experiences with her children and all who visit.

Kelli Fika, GIS Technician, based out of Minnesota, holds a Master of Arts degree in Geography from the University of North Dakota, a Bachelor of Science degree in Geoscience from Minnesota State University-Moorhead, and a certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). She has previously worked in utilities/facil-

ities management, and environmental industries as a GIS Technician. This work has given her experience in creating maps, collecting and analyzing data, and utilizing a variety of webbased applications with a geographic focus. She is



skilled in spatial analysis, data collection, and cartographic principles. Kelli is experienced with ArcGIS Desktop, Online, and Apps' collection. She is very passionate about GIS and all its capabilities. Kelli looks forward to helping rural and tribal communities find innovative geographic solutions.



By Kay Fowler, Project Manager/Technical Assistance Provider

ater Operator Foster White began his life in northeast Wyoming on a ranch at the foothills of the Big Horn mountains. As a child of hard-working parents, his work ethic was established early in life. He has many fond memories of his childhood and those colorful adventures paint a beautiful story of his youth.

Foster met his wife and graduated high school in Buffalo, Wyoming. He attended the University of Wyoming and eloped with Katherine to Colorado. That decision was made nearly 53 years ago, and he contends that it must have been a good one. They established a home outside of Laramie, Wyoming and raised three daughters, a son, and served 27 foster children. During his life, Foster has been involved in the Peace Corps, insurance sales, and construction. Ultimately, his excavation company led him into the water industry.

In 1984, he joined the City of Laramie and

became a Class III operator in distribution and collection. He spent over twelve years with the city and was an operations supervisor for a crew of 11 servicing 30,000 residents. He managed the water distribution and collection systems, water meters, and oversaw the building and shops. As many in the industry know, the numerous hats and responsibilities that are required to maintain a system can become substantial and Foster chose to pursue opportunities in this line of work.

Foster has continued to provide service to the community he calls home. He managed and was the operator of the South Laramie Water & Sewer District (SLWSD) for over 19 years. Currently, he is the Operator of Record for five small systems around Laramie, with responsibility for approximately 650 connections. Checking the operation and efficiency within the systems requires maintenance, usage readings, and analyzing pump rates and flows. Sampling and evaluation are also part of his duties. Experience with motors, pumps, chlorination, generators, chemistry, and reporting are among his numerous areas of expertise.

Operator White is serving his fourth year on the Board of Directors for SLWSD. He is in a golden time when he is valuable more for what he knows than what he physically does and he is grateful to have made it that far.

The water and wastewater industries are seeing less interest in the "working man" jobs offered. Today's positions require knowledge, dedication, and commitment. In return, there can be feedback that is less

supportive from customers and sometimes employers. Many do not understand what it takes to ensure clean, safe water when the tap is turned on. Value for the work which is required to make it all happen can literally take a lifetime to see.

After spending so much of his time caring for his neighbors and community, he will be lucky if he can find opportunities to tackle the many years' worth of home projects that have been piling up. Foster has said, "I'm starting to think my 'list line' is longer than my lifeline."

For me, meeting and hearing the stories of a life well-lived and dreams still being pursued was wonderful. In the industry, we understand the sacrifices he has made in his occupation. We also understand what it has given him. Thank you for your commitment Operator White.



Operator Foster White



By Tom Finger, Project Manager/Technical Assistance Provider

n the heart of the Flint Hills, three water systems serving the majority of the residents of Chase County, Kansas, were facing the challenge of identifying a long-term source of quality drinking water in 2008. The communities of Cottonwood Falls and Strong City both had groundwater wells producing poor quality water, and their water conditioning plants were approaching the end of their life cycles with key components in danger of failing. Strong City also supplied water to the Chase County RWD #1, which serves a significant portion of the rural residents of the county. The systems were all experiencing excessive water loss from their aging distribution systems, and the storage tower for Cottonwood Falls did not provide adequate pressure.

The three systems knew they had to develop a plan to evaluate improvements to their distribution systems and to potentially develop a regional water source solution for meeting the needs of their service areas. Together they pooled resources and identified funding sources to complete a comprehensive Preliminary

Engineering Report. The report confirmed it was feasible to develop a public wholesale water supply district (PWWSD) to consolidate the water supply wells output to a centralized treatment plant. Consolidation would enhance water storage capacity, as well as providing quality water at acceptable pressures and volume to all three systems.

The systems began the process of reaching an agreement that would allow a PWWSD to be formed. The cities were

initially hesitant to relinquish ownership of their wells to a new district. Phillip Fishburn, Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP) Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) suggested the cities lease their wells to the district. This alternative was a key component in developing the positive momentum to achieve the formation of the district. The district would take over control of the supply wells, construct a new water treatment plant, and install a 500,000-gallon centrally located storage tank. The individual entities developed plans to proceed concurrently with substantial individual distribution system improvement projects, allowing for the proper sizing of the treatment plant to be able to meet the anticipated water demand.

Once the framework for the cooperative agreement was achieved, the newly formed district secured the financing required to build the system. TAP Fishburn worked closely with the newly formed district to apply for funding from USDA Rural Development (RD) and the Community Development Block Grant Program

(CDBG). Fishburn was also instrumental in completing the environmental report required by USDA RD for the project, as well as navigating the fledgling district through the application process to obtain a public water supply permit from the Kansas Dept. of Health & Environment. The final funding package was awarded in late 2012, which permitted project design and pilot plant testing to proceed. All design work and related pre-development funding commitment terms were met, allowing the ground-breaking for construction in late 2014. Multiple contractors were coordinated for the line installation, water storage, treatment equipment, and the actual treatment plant. The initial start-up of the plant occurred in early 2016.

Matt Markley, Manager/Operator for the district noted, "everyone is thrilled with the quality of the water compared to what could be achieved with the old treatment plants." The cooperative nature established by the communities allows for Markley to serve as the primary operator for the district plant with a rotation of operational coverage on weekends and as needed by David Jones, Cottonwood Falls Water Operator and

Larry Sigler, original operator for Strong City and the district.

The PWWSD Board consists of two members from each of the three systems. They work closely together to steer the district through the challenges faced by any start-up system. During the 2018 drought conditions, the district experienced water supply shortfalls which adversely impacted well capacity, leading the district to implement water-use restrictions for nearly two months. To address future supply concerns, the district again utilized the skills of TAP Fishburn to provide guidance through the USDA RD Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant application process and the completion of the necessary environmental clearance review. Funding was secured to perform the necessary hydrogeological modeling study to strategically locate new supply wells which will aid the district in addressing future drought challenges.

In addition to the district project, Strong City had also completed a comprehensive upgrade to both their water and wastewater systems. Shari Dewitt serves as the secretary for the district and has also been the city clerk for

Strong City for over 20 years. Dewitt said, "I greatly appreciate the assistance which MAP staff has provided to the district and the city with our major utility improvement projects."

The Strong City staff were recently recognized during an annual water association meeting for their outstanding accomplishments.
Successful projects such as those highlighted in Chase County, and the ability to work with the local staff, are a fulfilling part of the MAP mission.





By R.J. Inskeep, Project Manager/Technical Assistance Provider

he City of Faith is a small town located in Meade County, in central South Dakota, that is a hub for cattle ranching, general livestock, farming, and providing accomodations for visiting travelers. With a population of 421, the city has approximately 192 sewer/water service connections to residents and businesses. The famous dinosaur T-Rex called "Sue" was found in an area not far from Faith.

The City of Faith needed to refurbish its entire wastewater collection system to address significant inflow and infiltration problems within the system. The city also needed a remedy for the persistent clogging of pipes from tree roots, the corroding condition of system manholes, and the improper connection of sewer service lines. The original wastewater collection system was installed in the 1920s using vitrified clay piping. In recent years, a

few short segments have been replaced with newer pipe; however, the vast majority of the system (over 80%) is original material and is showing signs of significant deterioration. A Preliminary Engineering Report recommended the best option to remediate the city's sewer collection issues was to "slip-line" the existing sewer collection piping and replace the corroding system manholes.

The city did an excellent job of long-term planning for the project. Over the last several years they were able to save \$500,000 to contribute to the almost \$2,000,000 project. MAP worked closely with the city and the local planning district, Black Hills Council of Local Governments, to access additional public financing for the project. With this assistance, the city was able to obtain a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for \$515,000, a USDA Rural Development (RD) grant for \$116,836, and a low-interest loan from USDA RD for \$829,000. The above mentioned funding, coupled with the city's \$500,000 contribution to the project, completed the financing package making the project feasible

and affordable for the community.

MAP provided technical assistance to the city in the bidding phase and during project construction, with the goal of ensuring the project moved along smoothly. Due to the multiple funding



sources, it took coordination among organizations to ensure the funds were spent in the correct order.

When MAP asked Debbie Brown, Finance Officer for the City of Faith, about the project's financial impact to the residents and businesses, she stated, "due to long-term planning and being able to leverage funds, the overall impact to the local residents and businesses was minimal and rates remain affordable for the city's customers."

The community's long-term outcome of this

can provide
dependable
wastewater
services to the
residents and
businesses in the
City of Faith. The
reparations to
Faith's wastewater
system ensure the
safety and health
of the individuals
living in the
community.

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By: Kristina Hartley, Project Manager/ Technical Assistance Provider

ural systems serving fewer than 3,300 water users are responsible for the majority of the Safe Drinking Water Act violations in the United States. The rural population accounts for about 14% of residents spread across 72% of the nation's land. There are approximately 60,000 community water systems in the U.S. and 67% serve populations of fewer than 500 people. Infrastructure is critical to clean water. Small utilities often find themselves in precarious positions particularly due to their rural location. Rural drinking

water infrastructure, purveyors, and wastewater treatment plants are critical to the communities they serve.

For over forty years, Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP) has provided technical assistance to rural water and wastewater facilities serving districts, municipalities, tribal nations, and private entities. Two-thirds of MAP's region are in states with the largest rural populations. MAP surveyed over 1,100 rural communities in 2018. Three primary questions asked were: What are some of the biggest challenges they currently face? What are some of the obstacles encountered and how does this affect morale? What accomplishments have they achieved with MAP's assistance?

BIGGEST CHALLENGES

The overwhelming response to the biggest challenge being faced involved financial concerns. Numer-

ous communities said they are experiencing difficulties covering the cost of their systems using only funds generated from their water and/or sewer operations. They often use cash from the general funds to keep the utility afloat. Each utility should be self-sufficient in a healthy financial environment. In some cases, the water and sewer accounts are being used to balance and support the general ledger and fund other departments. This is not a sustainable practice and should never happen. Citizens and communities need to understand the rates they pay are investments in their community. Rate increases on utilities are difficult to pass in small systems.



They are often obstructed for decades because of a perceived vulnerable population. In some cases, re-election can hinge on main-

taining current rates. The largest asset in a rural community is often its water and wastewater utility. Officers, councils and board members are responsible for the effective management of these utilities. Pushing a problem down the road will ultimately result in costly infrastructure degradation and repairs. Raising rates annually to equal the cost of increased operations is the minimum increase a utility should adopt. This option results in a negligible increase to the customer and responsibly helps the utility remain solvent. The financial issues faced by some small utilities have been so great, they have sold the utilities to private companies. Such entities have no requirement or political motivation

to keep rates low and are currently lobbying in the State of Missouri to approve a more expedient route for rate increases. It is therefore beneficial for small systems to maintain a good financial balance on their utilities.

OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED

The majority of obstacles were related to a lack of understanding of the duties for a board and/or council, and high turnover in those positions. Clerks

and operators often feel unappreciated for their efforts to maintain the systems. MAP provides personalized no-cost training to boards and councils. These trainings are designed to help understand responsibilities regarding state laws and their duties in a governing position. A well-managed board will lessen stress on new members and reduce confusion for both the board and the public. It is also the job of the governing board and council to ensure their staff are appreciated and paid equitably. Another area of concern was the ability of an operator to get the money necessary to complete repairs to the utilities. MAP can aid in the communication process with governing boards and/or councils to understand the

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

making necessary repairs.

According to those surveyed, accomplishments achieved with MAP's assistance included helping with capital improvements, assisting with rate increases, and providing guidance

importance of maintaining the system and

on fencing a lagoon. MAP also provides one-on-one training to help water and wastewater operators pass state-required exams and receive operator certifications.

Rural America continues to be resilient. The staff at MAP are dedicated to the success of rural communities and keeping our rural utility infrastructure maintained and operating for the duration.



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Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP) would like to take the opportunity to spotlight one of our many hard-working Project Managers/Technical Assistance Providers.

FEATURING: Brian Day

By Erin Miller, Accounting/HR Assistant

Brian Day, Project Manager/Technical Assistance Provider for MAP, strives every single day to bring 100% to the work he does in rural communities and tribal nations in North Dakota. Brian's approach is working hand-in-hand with a utility to build long-term, beneficial solutions to water and wastewater issues. "The thing I enjoy most is going in and getting a system back into compliance. The system is struggling, whether that be from a regulatory aspect or perhaps the system has a new operator who is just learning to navigate this industry. I want to give them the knowledge to be self-sufficient."

Brian received a Master of Arts degree in Economics and a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Community Development from the Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois. In 2010, he began assisting communities as a Rural Specialist with the Illinois Rural Community Assistance Program (IL RCAP, part of Great Lakes RCAP) in Springfield, Illinois. In the summer of 2012, Brian volunteered as a Community Economic Development Advisor with the Peace Corps in El Cacheo, Dominican Republic. During this time,





he assisted a community in the implementation of a water filter project that provided 50 houses and their neighbors (600+ persons) with free, clean, and safe potable water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing.

Brian joined MAP in 2015, bringing with him significant experience in administration, project management, water and wastewater, planning, and community economic development. MAP Executive Director Michael Brownfield remarked, "I knew Brian was going to be a great addition to MAP when he was willing to relocate to North Dakota in January. The high temperature was zero on his first day. The average temperature in the Dominican Republic is 85°F!"

Brian is focused on developing water and wastewater projects, providing guidance on regulatory matters as they relate to environmental compliance, USDA Rural Development funding programs, and aiding in the organization of citizen support for community projects. He is also committed to helping communities manage, operate, and maintain their utilities. As with all his projects, Brian builds solid relationships over time to ensure each utility is operating with maximum efficiency. One such community is the City of Sanborn, North Dakota. He assisted city officials with the completion of a rate study and discussed aspects of the system's financial management plan. He has also aided with grant

"Brian has helped me with many things over the years. Budgets, loan processing, making things work better, and always good advice. I would like to say that Brian is the best 'Desk Help' I can find and he is fun to work with too."

-Julie Franklin, Sanborn City Auditor

applications to repair and upgrade system components and plan a course of action to replace faulty water meters.

Brian's most recent project with the city involved assisting with mapping the utility's service

area. The city had lost their water system maps in a fire and they were utilizing outdated maps from 1968. The lack of accurate maps was causing the city to put the system at risk of contamination as they were unable to isolate and repair leaks on mains. They requested MAP's assistance in

locating and correctly mapping the water system components. Utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping, Brian began the process of tracing lines and entering these in the GIS system. Gate valves were one of the most important items to be located to allow for line repairs in case of a main break. Brian then met with the city's auditor and water operator to find all remaining gate valves and curb stops. After a successful day of mapping in Sanborn, Brian met with city officials and discussed the importance of having an asset management plan for keeping

track of each infrastructure component of the water system and the maintenance performed on them. Brian delivered a customized map booklet containing all the water system's data. This allows the city to operate safely and sustainably by creating a unidirectional flushing program, mapping chlorine residuals, isolating leaks for repairs, and identifying dead ends and the need to upgrade components.

Brian is currently working with the Turtle
Mountain Band of Chippewa, Native American
Tribe located in Belcourt, North Dakota to update
their emergency response plan to meet new
requirements from the EPA. He is also preparing
a risk and resiliency assessment of their water
utility system. In addition, Brian is also getting
ready for upcoming North Dakota training events
to provide water operators with an overview
of disinfection and treatment strategies, main
breaks and cross-connections, lead and copper

regulations, chlorine sampling, and distribution flushing programs.

When Brian isn't "boots on the ground" in the communities and tribal nations he serves, he can be found browsing thrift stores, antique shops/auctions, and volunteering as a member of Gideons International, a Christian associa-

tion. Travel is on the top of Brian's list as he likes to take 3-4 trips each year, especially internationally. So far, he has visited or lived in 41 different countries and plans to continue to travel, hoping to see as many as possible. Brian says, "The best part of visiting another country is seeing the culture, staying away from tourist traps, while backpacking and traveling the local countryside."

Brian always grabs his camera before he heads out; as an avid photographer he has a keen eye for the little details, just as he does in the valuable work he provides to MAP communities.



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SOURCE SOURCE

Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. Central Office

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Source Mission:

To provide information for the clients of the Midwest Assistance Program so they better understand the programs and services MAP offers to help them improve their communities and tribal associations; and to showcase the expertise of MAP employees.



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Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP) is a member of The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP network). RCAP is made up of a total of six regional partners including MAP.

MAP has been helping communities, water and wastewater districts, home owners' associations, lake associations and tribal nations find solutions to their infrastructure, financial, managerial, operational and development needs through drinking water, wastewater and solid waste technical assistance since 1979.

MAP provides drinking water, wastewater and solid waste solutions to more than 400 communities and tribal nations each year in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

Through individualized support from staff, communities and systems find the solutions that will help revitalize their communities and sustain their infrastructure. MAP consists of a highly



professional and competent staff that has a deep commitment to the strength, future and vitality of rural America.