

Matthew Holmes was born and raised in Los Alamos. He received an undergraduate degree in business economics from the University of Arizona and a master's degree in natural resource and environmental economics from UNM. Matt's professional experience includes wetland planting and riparian restoration, environmental cost benefit analysis, satellite data modeling, and business consulting. He now works for the New Mexico Rural Water Association, a nonprofit technical assistance provider for water and wastewater utilities. Matt initially started with NMRWA as a Groundwater Protection Specialist and recently became the Executive Director.



New Mexico Rural Water Association

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MISSION AND STRUCTURE

The mission of the New Mexico Rural Water Association is to provide top quality, responsive technical assistance and training for rural water and wastewater systems in New Mexico. The Association was established as a non-profit organization under New Mexico laws in 1978 and is affiliated with the National Rural Water Association in Duncan, Oklahoma. The Association currently has over 450 members collectively serving over 460,000 persons throughout the state of New Mexico. The active membership of the State Association elects a Board of Directors to oversee the affairs of the Association. The general membership is made up of the mutual domestic water associations, small municipal government water utilities, community water cooperatives, public water and wastewater sanitation districts, and non-profit water utility

organizations in the state. The Executive Committee of the New Mexico Rural Water Association Board of Directors provides policy direction and fiscal oversight for all of the programs of the organization. The Board of Directors commissions an annual independent audit to review all programs, contracts, and practices of the New Mexico Rural Water Association.

The New Mexico Rural Water Association maintains its office at 3413 Carlisle NE in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The services, programs and emergency responses are deployed from this centralized location throughout the state. Logistical and fiscal support is provided to the technical support personnel to assure quality, responsive services to water and wastewater systems in need of technical assistance or training. The programs and services of the New Mexico Rural Water Association are implemented by a team of highly experienced

professionals, who provide on-site assistance, training, and troubleshooting support to the operators in charge of water and wastewater systems in rural communities throughout the state. The Board of Directors and the staff of New Mexico Rural Water Association have established an excellent track record in their response to the emergency needs of small water systems in all sectors of the state, often after normal working hours or on weekends.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

At present, the New Mexico Rural Water Association implements the following services on a statewide basis:

- Circuit Rider and Field Specialist Technical Assistance and Training Program
- Water System Operator and Board Member Training
- Source Water/Groundwater Protection Program
- Native American Circuit Rider Technical Assistance and Training Program
- Native American Source Water Protection Program
- Wastewater Specialist Technical Support Program
- Board Training and Technical Assistance Program

These services are provided free-of-charge to the recipients. The Association is funded by membership fees and contracts with the Environmental Protection Agency, the USDA Rural Utility Service, and the New Mexico Environment Department in support of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Our Circuit Riders and Field Specialists assist small utilities in rural areas and in Native American communities with various technical assistance needs such as installing and maintaining disinfection systems, repairing pumps and motors, conducting leak detections, providing water storage tank inspections, spearheading wellhead protection, preventing cross connections, demonstrating water sampling procedures, and troubleshooting water pressure losses. Equally as important is the promotion and implementation of training and mentoring experiences for water and wastewater operators to obtain State Certification. Our Circuit Riders and Field Specialists made over 2400 contacts with rural entities in 1999 - a remarkable feat and record of accomplishment. They are on the road most of the time, and in

emergencies, they work around the clock to help small systems.

The Native American technical support program provides technical assistance and training in the Nineteen Pueblos, the Navajo Nation and the Mescalero and Jicarilla Apache Tribal areas. The Native American source water protection program works with Tribal communities to protect drinking water sources.

The New Mexico Rural Water Association Training Program features classroom training for water system operators and water system Board members. In years past, the classes for water system operator and water system Board members have been averaging fifty or more participants in each class—and we typically hold 35 classes each year around the state. We utilize a group of instructors who are highly experienced water utility operators, water industry experts, and governmental specialists in technical or regulatory procedures. Coordination of the statewide training calendar and quality assurance of the various training activities are the responsibility of New Mexico Rural Water Association Training Specialist. There is on-going consultation and coordination throughout the year between the Program and Training Specialist and the Facilities Operation Certification Office of the New Mexico Environment Department to ensure that our classes are approved for credit toward New Mexico Utility Operator Certification.

Each March, the New Mexico Rural Water Association organizes and implements a Technical Assistance Conference for water and wastewater systems in New Mexico. This past year, over 300 water system representatives attended the Conference held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The focus of the Conference was leadership development, capacity development, operator training, and funding support.

The strength of the New Mexico Rural Water Association is its commitment to being responsive to the needs of the many community water systems in New Mexico. Both at the leadership and the staff level, the focus of the New Mexico Rural Water Association is development of the capacity of small public water and wastewater systems to provide quality, consistent services to rural families.

The New Mexico Rural Water Association, because of its strong collaboration with the National

Rural Water Association, is able to provide its water and wastewater system members with top-quality models and tools to meet the regulations of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Among these tools are the Consumer Confidence Report, the Capacity Development Self-Assessment Questionnaire, the Five-Step Wellhead Protection Plan, and the Long Range Plan outline.

Under the Board Training Program the NMRWA is providing on-site assistance to rural water systems covering financial management, budget development, review of rate structures, and long-range financial planning.

PARTNERSHIPS

We are proud of the solid network of support that is present in New Mexico to assist community water and wastewater systems with their needs. Four key partners in providing assistance to communities in their water and wastewater utility needs are the New Mexico Rural Water Association, the New Mexico Environment Department, the USDA Rural Utilities Service and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. In addition to these resources the New Mexico Legislature, the New Mexico Finance Authority, the New Mexico Finance & Administration Department, the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, and others enhance this network of support for the rural utilities in New Mexico.

The most important factor in our partnerships continues to be the leadership and operational representatives at the local community levels. Community members provide the local commitment and talent that makes our enterprise work to provide safe, affordable, consistent drinking water, and to provide dependable, affordable, sanitary wastewater services to the families of New Mexico.

The talent and skill needed to operate, maintain and effectively manage water and wastewater utilities is present in every corner of the state in the mutual domestic water associations, villages, Pueblos, towns, small cities, water cooperatives and the water and sanitation districts. To support these local efforts, a strong partnership for technical assistance, troubleshooting, training and support is active state-wide through the New Mexico Rural Water Association. Additional information can be obtained by calling the Association at:

(505) 884-1031 (Office) (505) 884-1032 (Fax)

or surfing to

www.nmrwa.org

or writing:

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