



**** Press Release ****

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Contact: Katie Miller

Phone: 785-210-6628

Email: kmiller@kmunet.org

Re: Diana VanBruggen – 2024 Kansas Municipal Utilities Water Operator Award of Excellence

Diana VanBruggen, City of Russell Water Production Superintendent and Operator of Record, was recently recognized for her outstanding dedication to the water utility industry in Kansas as the recipient of the **2024 Kansas Municipal Utilities Water Operator Award of Excellence**. This award is presented annually to a water operator demonstrating proficiency and excellence in the areas of compliance, operation and maintenance, training and mentoring and dedication to their community served in Kansas.

Diana's leadership and expertise have been instrumental in the operation and maintenance of the City of Russell's water utility. She oversees two separate water treatment plants, including a water-softening plant originally built in 1938 and an electro-dialysis reversal water treatment plant built in 2008. Despite facing numerous challenges, Diana's innovative maintenance and inventory programs have significantly reduced costly delays and breakdowns, ensuring uninterrupted water supply for the community.

Diana's exceptional leadership was particularly evident when she assumed the role of superintendent amidst challenging circumstances. She spearheaded the rehabilitation of the water softening plant, collaborating with the public works and utility directors, engineers, and contractors to overcome various obstacles, including supply chain disruptions, construction and equipment delays, and environmental concerns. Despite adversity, Diana ensured the uninterrupted provision of quality water for the community, even during extreme drought and plant failure.

Diana's commitment to excellence extends beyond her daily responsibilities to the training and mentoring of other water operators. She takes great pride in sharing her knowledge and expertise, fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development within the utility.

Diana's continuous commitment to excellence is reflected in her Class IV water operator certification status, ensuring the highest standards of professionalism and proficiency in her role. Diana's dedication, expertise, and outstanding contributions to the water industry in Kansas exemplify the criteria set forth for this award. Diana received the 2024 Kansas Municipal Utilities Water Operator Award of Excellence at the KMU Annual Conference Awards Banquet on April 25th in Wichita, Kansas.