

Minnesota Rural Water Association

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Press Release

Minnesota Rural Water Association

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Minnesota Rural Water Association presents the Henry Walraven Award to Luther Johnson, Kittson Marshall Rural Water.

The most prestigious award given by the Minnesota Rural Water Association is the Henry Walraven Award. The criteria for the Henry Walraven Award is leadership contributions for the improvement of a water/wastewater system in Minnesota.

Henry Walraven had a vision. His vision was to help Minnesota's small rural community water system with training, troubleshooting problems and improving legislation that governs water systems. Henry was on the first MRWA board and often times when the association was struggling Henry kept the fire lit. Without the foresight and Henry's dedication to helping rural Minnesota solve water problems MRWA would not be what it is today. When Henry suddenly passed away the MRWA board respected Henry and his vision so much they dedicated an award in his name so that he may live on throughout the growth of MRWA.

The recipient of the Henry Walraven Award is LUTHER JOHNSON.

In 1973, Luther Johnson was among a small group of men who decided to try to start a rural water system, as the water in the area was saline, or salty. Rural water systems had been born in other states, but never before in Minnesota. Special legislation had to be written to build the system and many hours of volunteer work by Luther and others, getting petitions signed and working with the District Court. In 1974, Kittson-Marshall Rural Water was born. Luther was on the founding Board of Directors that oversaw the building of the system and was on hand when the first valve was turned on in 1976. In 1982, Luther was instrumental in adding a water treatment plant to the water system to improve the quality of water. In 1985, Luther became the Chairman of the Board of Directors at KMRW and served in that position for 25 years. Luther resigned as Chairman of Kittson Marshall Rural Water in 2005 but continues to serve on their board. Luther joined the Board for Minnesota Rural Water in 1983 (27 years ago) and has been the Chairman for the past 12 years. Luther will resign as Chairman this year however he will remain on the board. Over these many years, Luther has served both organizations faithfully and is being recognized for the legacy that he has helped to create. Carol Johnson, Luther's wife, has helped him through these years and remains by his side as another proud member of the rural water family. The Board of Directors and staff congratulate this year's Henry Walraven Award to Luther Johnson, Kittson Marshall Rural Water.

