

Norfolk Insider

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“Chad Roberts-Cross Connection Award”



Chad Roberts, Water Plant Supervisor for the City of Norfolk, recently received the first ever Cross Connection Award from the Nebraska chapter of the America Water Works Association (AWWA).

The cross connections or backflow program in Norfolk, which Roberts manages, is used to educate citizens about the actual or potential connection between a potable water supply and a non-potable supply. For instance, an unprotected garden hose should not be left in a hot tub as it may siphon chemicals from the tub back into the water supply.

One of the reasons Roberts received the award was that he has used many ways of informing the public of the danger of cross connections.

According to the nominating

application for the award, “Roberts has established an outstanding program which includes surveying, installation, testing and repairing assemblies.” A backflow prevention assembly uses valves to prevent potential contaminants from flowing into the potable water system.

A communications plan that included newspaper articles, school presentations, radio interviews and a booth at Norfolk’s annual Home and Garden show were key to presenting the cross connections information to the public.

A survey of 94% of the community has also been done that provides data as to how many people are aware of correcting cross connecting hazards such as raising the level of the discharge hose from the water softener so that it doesn’t siphon sewage back into the unit.

Roberts was presented the award at the Nebraska AWWA convention. As of January 1, he also began a two year term as the secretary of the Nebraska AWWA chapter.

Roberts began working in the City Water Division in 1997 as a Plant Operator I. In 2000, Roberts worked on the water distribution crew. After earning a Grade VI Water Operator license in 2001, he became a Plant Operator II at the water treatment plant. In 2004, he received a Grade I Water Operator License. In 2009 Roberts was promoted to Water Plant Supervisor. He is currently on the Nebraska Water Works Association Board of Trustees and the AWWA Young Professionals, Awards, Nitrate/Source Water Protection and Cross Connection Committees.

He has worked with an engineering group in completing water and sewer master plans for the city. He also programs the computers at the water plant and was instrumental in the development of the city's wellhead protection program.

Roberts and his wife, Jessica, have three children.