

Ethical Practices, Professional Conduct Has Always Been WWE's Creed

When Ken Wright started his water resources consulting firm in 1961, his vision was to take his academic knowledge and US Bureau of Reclamation experiences to local levels of government. Knowing the value of water while understanding the damage it could unleash when not controlled, he clearly saw the challenges every community in the nation was or would soon be facing. Local governments would have to be shown how to put their communities between too much and not enough of a good thing.

Despite the global, technological and economic changes that have occurred in the last half century, much at Wright Water Engineers Inc. has remained consistent. Still very much involved in the firm's day-to-day operations, Wright gives credit to the 50-person staff working as a team for its legacy of successes.

"We've always been an employee-owned company," he says. "That is the foundation the company is built upon. It has allowed us to serve clients with a personal touch as we've grown our staff of professionals."

"Wright Water Engineers has been a long-time member and supporter of Council," says Marilen Reimer, executive director of the American Consulting Engineers Council of Colorado. "The company has added to the sustainability of many landmark Colorado projects. One that immediately comes to mind is the original planning, design and construction of the extensive water system at Denver Botanic Gardens. Ken and his staff have done much and given much to advance the engineering profession and for that we thank them as they celebrate 50 years in business."

Micro-managing employees has never been Wright's style, except maybe when one first comes on board. He insists on professional conduct and leads by example. As a result, the company is widely rec-

ognized as a grass-roots leader in floodplain management.

"The Urban Drainage and Flood Control District has a long history with Wright Water Engineers and Ken Wright," says UDFCD's Executive Director, Paul Hindman, PE. "They were the first authors of our *Storm Drainage Criteria Manual* 40 years ago and have helped us on all of the many updates, including the current update to Volume 3 which addresses stormwater quality. The three volumes are the main vehicle that has allowed the District to spread its message, not just locally and nationally, but also worldwide. Without the direct involvement of Ken and his staff over the years, the District would not be where it is today in the field of stormwater."

In an era when many similar-sized competitors have been swallowed up by larger conglomerates, WWE has been proud to maintain its independence while presiding over projects that make a difference.

"The Urban Watersheds Research Institute is proud to have Wright Water Engineers' CEO Jonathan Jones as a member of the Institute's Board of Directors," says Ben Urbonas, PE, president of UWRI. "I have worked with Ken and the WWE staff for over 30 years and have come to expect first class engineering services. The Institute especially appreciates the support of the firm and the advice and guidance of Ken when we were incorporating and struggling through the maze of issues needed to establish a non-profit research and training organization. Ken and everyone at WWE deserve a big 'thank you' for the many contributions to the profession of civil engineering and for their efforts in advancing the history of water resources through their work in paleohydrology."

WWE's emphasis on public works and service to the community continues to be a primary focus, anchored by a history of high-profile

projects on waterways such as Cherry Creek and South Platte River. Colorado has hundreds of water and sanitation districts that were formed in the last 50 years and WWE has helped create and shape many of those by providing engineering feasibility that guides growth of the communities they serve. The company's involvement with the water needs of private industry, as well, often helps drive the economic vitality of an entire community. There's no better example of this than WWE's 45-year relationship with Adolph Coors Company in its efforts to obtain and maintain reliable water rights as the brewery continues to grow its markets.

Although a 50-year anniversary is a prime opportunity to reflect on past service and achievements, WWE management can't take their eyes off the future. While continuing to provide traditional water resources engineering services for clients both old and new, the company recognizes the importance of pioneering new methodology and strategy within the broad field of water resources management to maintain a competitive edge and its recognition as an industry leader.

"Utilities across the nation are always facing new challenges that complicate the services they provide," says WWE President Wayne Lorenz, PE. "The new one-acre threshold for municipal stormwater permits has compelled us to pursue new solutions for our utility clients, such as umbrella stormwater permitting. These efforts continue to foster better understanding of the complexities of urban drainage and flood control for our firm. New challenges always have the benefit of bringing new insight and keeping our work and strategies fresh. Even after 50 years, it feels like we're just beginning." ●