Jerry Henscheid, Water Operator at Omaha Tribal Utilities

Jerry Henscheid Nominated for Water Operator of the Year

Omaha Tribal Utility Department's Jerry Henscheid was nominated for Water Operator of the Year by The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. National Tribal Water & Wastewater Operator Certification Program. Jerry and 10 other operators from tribal water and wastewater systems were honored at a ceremony in Temecula, California, on Aug. 30.

The quality and integrity of Jerry’s work to transform the performance and reliability of Macy’s drinking water system is the reason for the nomination. Jerry started his career as Macy’s water operator after volunteering at the utility in 1993.

“I was actually the tribal planner, and I was tasked with writing a grant application to get money to repair and replace equipment at the water system. I’m a farm boy, so when I saw that the current operator needed a hand, I’d hop in and help however I could,” Jerry said.

Jerry learned a lot about water system operations while helping out at the utility. When the utility needed a successor operator, the Council naturally turned to Jerry. He became a certified water operator in 1995, and became Macy’s right-hand man for a broad variety of public works roles until his retirement in 2009. However, Jerry’s hard-working nature and dedication to public service brought him back to the utility in 2014, in an effort to help address water quality and availability concerns in the community.

"I’m proud of working through the challenges the utility faced. I’m also proud that the reliability and safety of Macy’s water is back. I enjoy serving the people of Omaha. I think if you have safe, healthy, and clean tap water when you need it, that helps people a lot, and that makes me feel good about my work every day.”

What does a water operator do?

Water operators provide one of the most important services in a community: delivering safe water to every person.

- Water operators run the equipment and control the processes that collect and clean water before it is delivered to you, or when dirty water is cleaned and then recycled back into the environment.
- Operators play a critical role in making sure water is safe for you and the environment. They collect samples and test water daily, then report water quality to government regulatory officials and health departments.
- Water operators are required to pass state exams in order to be certified to perform their job. Operators are also required to attend trainings each year to maintain their certification.