

Governor Issues a Call to Action

Governor Sam Brownback today issued a call to action to address the need for a 50-year vision for Kansas water that meets the state's needs now and in the future. More than 550 attendees representing diverse water interests are participating in the Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas.

"We have been reminded of the importance of water with another year of extreme drought for our state, which is now beginning to ease in eastern Kansas, but continues to persist in the west," said Governor Sam Brownback. "Water and the Kansas economy are directly linked. Water is a finite resource and without further planning and action we will no longer be able to meet our state's current needs, let alone growth."

Governor Brownback articulated the need for a future vision for Kansas water management and issued a call to action for that work to begin immediately. He charged his administration, including the Kansas Water Office, Kansas Department of Agriculture, and Kansas Water Authority, along with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, to lead the vision and called upon his Council of Economic Advisors to engage in the planning since water and the economy are closely linked.

"We are at a pivotal moment in our state. We can talk these issues to death, but without vision we won't be able to address these priorities," said Governor Brownback. "Ensuring each citizen has a reliable water supply includes addressing both the groundwater decline in the Ogallala Aquifer as well as securing, protecting and restoring our reservoir storage."

The Vision will take the *Kansas Water Plan* to a new level with more intense work and cooperation with communities, affected industries and citizens throughout the state to develop this vision to ensure a reliable water supply for Kansas citizens. Governor Brownback directed the groups to deliver the 50-Year Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas to the Governor's office for review no later than Nov. 1, 2014.

"As the Governor said today, we have a good set of laws to govern and manage our water resources however we do face a number of significant, but manageable challenges," said Tracy Streeter, Kansas Water Office Director. "We have the ability and responsibility to choose our future vision for Kansas water management. We want future generations to benefit from our effort as we appreciate the decisions made by those who came before us."

"We need the help of all those here today, and the help of every Kansan, to place this vital resource as a top priority for our future," said Gary Harshberger, Chair of the Kansas Water Authority. "We can see how bleak our future can be if we continue on this same path."

The conference continues with discussion and presentations by Charles Fishman, author of *The Big Thirst* and *The Wal-Mart Effect* and Pat Mulroy, who oversees the Las Vegas Valley Water District and Southern Nevada Water Authority. A legislative panel with Senator Carolyn McGinn, Senator Larry Powell, Representative Kyle Hoffman and Representative Sharon Schwartz. Secretary Dale Rodman, Kansas Department of Agriculture, discussed water's role in developing the Kansas agriculture economy.

Secretary Rodman urged water conference attendees to consider all options in developing the vision, including new technologies, different agricultural practices, policy changes, local input and cooperation, and more.

“It is time we all figure out where we want to go. We have to develop a plan and take action,” said Secretary Rodman. “We have to invest in conservation and technology. We all have to cooperate.”

Friday’s session will build on the today’s water policy discussions with technical presentation posters and talks, involving many researchers, geologists and water planners for the state. Graduate and undergraduate students will present their research and Dr. James Stack, Director of the Great Plains Diagnostic will present *Feeding a Growing Population in a Resource Stressed World*.

For a complete list of the conference’s speakers and topics visit: www.kwo.org

The Governor’s Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas is co-sponsored by the Kansas Water Office (KWO) and K-State /Kansas Water Resources Institute. Sponsors for the event come from multiple diverse water interests. Major sponsors for the event include Black & Veatch, Burns and McDonnell and Select Energy.