The Arkansas Business Hall of Fame inducted the late Joe M. Steele into the 2019 Hall of Fame at a ceremony held Feb. 8th in Little Rock. Steele was a founding Board member of Beaver Water District (BWD).

“His vision insured that Beaver Water District continues to be poised to meet the region’s growing needs for years to come,” said Lane Crider, CEO of Beaver Water District.

Steele served on the District’s Board of Directors from 1959-1976. Without his vision, BWD, Beaver Dam, the drinking water treatment plants, Beaver Lake, and a plentiful supply of water for Northwest Arkansas would never have come to fruition.

Steele was born on April 1, 1905 in Elm Springs. At age four, he moved with his family to a farm south of Tonitown. As a teenager, he attended Springdale High School. To earn money to attend the University Arkansas to study engineering, he grew, canned and sold tomatoes. Steele Canning Company's growth led him to leave school and devote his full time to the company. He expanded to can spinach, lima beans, green beans, field peas, sweet potatoes and more.

Of course, canning vegetables requires a reliable source of clean, safe water. As the company expanded to Springdale and grew, the need for water grew. By 1950, the situation became untenable. During dry summers, Steele's canneries sometimes had to shut down and shift production to other plants. Not only was Springdale experiencing water challenges, so were nearby Fayetteville, Rogers and Bentonville.

With the vision and leadership of Steele and other business people and elected officials, the idea of ensuring a continuous supply of abundant water took hold. In 1959, Steele helped found Beaver Water District. Then, in 1960, Springdale, Fayetteville, Rogers and Bentonville joined forces to pay for water storage in the proposed Beaver Reservoir. BWD signed contracts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to underwrite water allocations.

Steele, also a banker in the community and a close friend of the late John Tyson, was known for going above and beyond when the situation called for it. A prime example? In 1963, while in Boston recuperating from eye surgery, Steele received an urgent phone call alerting him of an immediate need for a $700,000 local match the federal government required to underwrite construction of a new water plant. Steele personally guaranteed the loan so the project could move forward. The new water plant was initially built and operated by the Springdale Water and Sewer Department, of which Steele was chairman. The water treatment facility, which is named in Steele’s honor, was later turned over to the Beaver Water District at cost as other cities came online. Continued on page 2
Today, BWD has grown from operating one 10 million gallon a day (MGD) plant to three plants that can process up to 140 MGD daily to provide safe, clean drinking water to Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers and Bentonville. BWD owns storage rights in Beaver Lake sufficient to meet the growing demand in Northwest Arkansas for the next quarter century or more. All of this is thanks to Steele and other visionaries who made it their charge to provide for future generations to come.

The late Joe M. Steele was inducted into the Arkansas Business Hall of Fame on Feb. 8, 2019, at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock, Ark., for his contributions to the state and to his community. Steele, co-founder of Steele Canning Company and Springdale Canning Company, was a founding director of the Beaver Water District and was instrumental in the creation of Beaver Lake and Dam. The family of Joe M. Steele accepted the award on his behalf. From left to right: Ann Bordelon, chair of the Arkansas Business Hall of Fame Board; Macy Brooks, great-granddaughter of Joe M. Steele; Marjorie Brooks, daughter of Joe M. Steele; Charlotte Steele, daughter-in-law of Joe M. Steele; and Matt Waller, dean of the Sam M. Walton College of Business.

Continued on page 3
JOE M. STEELE’S KEY CONTRIBUTION

“In fact, water, man’s most necessary and useful natural resource, continues to be his best and most economical investment.”

Joe M. Steele, Springdale Water and Sewer Commission Chairman 1965

“Joe M. Steele, of Springdale, founder of Steele Canning, put up $700,000 of his own money to get the Beaver Lake project moving. He knew more than anyone else that water was necessary to secure the future prosperity of his community. I don’t think any of us realized how important it was until after it was done. Water is something people take for granted.”

Charles McKinney, Springdale Mayor 1991

Photos Courtesy of McGoodwin, Williams, and Yates, Inc.; Rogers Historical Museum; Shiloh Museum of Ozark History; Beaver Water District
JOE M. STEELE’S LEGACY

The plant, dedicated the Joe M. Steele Water Treatment Plant in 1965, had initial design capacity of 10 million gallons a day (MGD), with provision for expansion to 25 MGD. Soon thereafter, the four cities — Springdale, Fayetteville, Rogers, and Bentonville — agreed to underwrite the cost of expansion of the plant, major transmission lines, and storage facilities. In 1973, the average daily demand for water from the cities was about 15 MGD.

Today, the average daily demand is 55 MGD and a peak day in the summer could reach to almost 90 MGD. The daily pumping capacity at Beaver Water District’s intake at Beaver Lake is 150 MGD. The daily water treatment capacity is 140 MGD. The Hardy Croxton plant and its expansion can produce up to 100 MGD of drinking water. The 40 MGD Steele facility has been modified and updated.
New beginnings. After almost 30 years as a consulting engineer, my dream job, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Beaver Water District (BWD), has come to fruition. From now on, you can expect to see this column from time to time in future issues.

Since April of 2004, BWD has published this quarterly newsletter to inform the public about what’s going on, from construction projects and flood events, to master planning, source water protection, water education, and public outreach.

A plentiful supply of economical water is essential for Northwest Arkansas. Beaver Water District, Beaver Dam, and Beaver Lake – as well as our four customer cities and the three other water utilities that rely on the lake – make it possible for our community, 1 in 7 Arkansans, to have safe, dependable drinking water.

Speaking of a plentiful supply of water, in this newsletter we are recognizing the induction of one of BWD’s founders, the late Joe M. Steele, into the 2019 Arkansas Business Hall of Fame. Since Steele operated his own vegetable canning companies from as early as the 1940s, he was well aware of the effects of a lack of sufficient water for food processing. Additionally, his vision allowed him to imagine a future where this area would prosper into the Northwest Arkansas we know today. Mr. Steele is a role model for all of us. He certainly inspires me as I begin my tenure as CEO of the District.

As for my overall vision, the primary goal is to continue moving BWD forward to be positioned to meet upcoming demands for additional water. Due in part to the current rate of growth – about 1,000 people are moving to Northwest Arkansas every month – BWD has commissioned an update to projections from our 2016 Master Plan. This plan, which will be reviewed by BWD’s elected Board of Directors, will provide a roadmap to continued plentiful water for everyone and an engine for economic growth well into the future, for our children, our grandchildren and for generations to come.

Stay tuned.
The Beaver Water District Board of Directors voted at its monthly meeting on Jan. 17 to appoint Leigh Ann Johnston of Springdale (Washington County) to fill the director’s position vacated by Cathy Foraker. Foraker, who served from 2011 to 2018, resigned her position this past November upon moving from Washington County to Benton County.

“It’s an honor to be chosen to fill this position on the Beaver Water District Board,” Johnston said. “As a Board Member, I am eager to learn more about drinking water treatment and the District’s essential role in our community. It’s a privilege to serve our community in this capacity and to be a part of ensuring there is a plentiful supply of clean drinking water for Northwest Arkansas residents and businesses for years to come. I believe my business and sustainability background will be useful as I fill this role.”

Lane Crider, CEO of Beaver Water District, said Johnston’s expertise in sustainability will serve Beaver Water District well.

“I believe that the Board made an excellent choice in selecting Johnston,” Crider said. As a representative of one of our largest water end-users in Northwest Arkansas and with her expertise in sustainability strategy and implementation, she brings valuable insight and perspective as Beaver Water District continues to provide for the growth in NWA and the future needs of our customer cities.”

Johnston, a graduate of the University of North Georgia, joined Tyson Foods in 2001 and serves as Director of Sustainable Food Strategy. She is responsible for developing and implementing the company’s sustainability strategy and related efforts. This entails working with all business units within Tyson Foods to achieve the company’s sustainability strategy, assisting the company in building partnerships with internal and external stakeholder groups, and leading the development of the company’s sustainability report. She serves as Tyson Foods’ representative on the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef and as Chair of the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Poultry and Egg. Johnston enjoys spending time with her family and dogs, cooking, and managing Red Kite Coffee Company, which she co-owns.

Springdale Water Utilities took first place for best tasting drinking water on March 13th at the Center for Nonprofits in Rogers during the monthly meeting of the Northwest District of the Arkansas Waterworks and Water Environment Association (AWW&WEA). Springdale Water Utilities will now compete for the statewide award during the 2019 Annual Conference & Exposition of AWW&WEA, which will be held April 28-May 1 in Hot Springs.

Bella Vista Water Association took second place. Other competitors included Beaver Water District, Rogers Water Utilities, Washington Water Authority, and Holiday Island Utilities.
BWD’s Mindi Dearing, Jesse Burch receive awards; Northwest District AWW&WEA Elects 2019 Officers

Hallmarks of Beaver Water District (BWD) staff include a strong work ethic and dedication. BWD staff work 365 days a year, 24 hours a day to ensure the public’s drinking water is safe. That’s why recognizing excellence and hard work means so much.

On Dec. 12, 2018, members of the Northwest District of the Arkansas Water Works & Water Environment Association (Northwest District AWW&WEA) recognized Mindi Dearing, BWD’s Laboratory Supervisor, with the 2018 Outstanding Achievement Awards for Drinking Water Laboratory Professional of the Year. Jesse Burch, BWD’s Operations Supervisor, received the Water Operator of the Year Award (population more than 5000).

Others receiving awards included:
- Water Operator less than 5000 population: William Winn, Winn Environmental Tech
- Manager of the Year Water: Kimberly Patulak, Springdale Water Utilities
- Backflow Prevention Professional: Jerry Cook, Springdale Water Utilities
- Wastewater Operator more than 5000 population: John Eoff, Springdale Water Utilities
- Manager of the Year Wastewater: Nancy Busen, Bentonville Wastewater
- Small System Award Wastewater: Mike Neil, NACA
- Pretreatment Professional: Ashley Gregg, Jacobs Engineering

Northwest District AWW&WEA members elected the following officers for 2019: Nathan Hooper, Benton-Washington Regional Public Water Authority, Chair; Mayo Miller, Jacobs Engineering, Secretary/Treasurer; and Zak Johnston, Washington Water Authority, Vice Chair. Brad Stewart, Springdale Water Utilities, received a plaque recognizing his years of service as outgoing Chair.

The mission of the Northwest District of AWW&WEA, which formed in 1950, is to encourage the education and licensing of its members in the field of water and wastewater systems and to provide a venue by which the members can share information, obtain training, and improve the overall standing of the profession within their communities. Visit nwd-awwwea.org for more information.

From left, award winners included Jesse Burch, Ashley Gregg, Nancy Busen, Kim Patulak, Jerry Cook, and John Eoff. (William Winn, Mindi Dearing and Mike Neil were not present for the photograph.)
You Are Invited To . . .
Beaver Water District

DRINKING WATER WEEK
Kickoff Party & Press Conference

Monday, May 6, 2019
2:15-3:00 p.m.
Beaver Water District’s Administration & Water Education Center
301 N. Primrose Road, Lowell, AR

Meet The District’s New CEO,
Lane Crider

Elected officials, water department staff, & the general public are welcome.

Special Guests:
Papa Rap (Al Lopez)
Melisa Laelan, CEO
Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese

The event is FREE. No RSVP.

Commemorative Giveaways & Refreshments

May 5-11 is National Drinking Water Week

FREE EVENT

SAVE THE DATE! 14th Annual Secchi Day
& SCIENCE FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 2019

No Registration Required! Visit bwdh2o.org.