

Kearyn Nelsen

It would be fun to say that my most vivid memory concerning water would be in reference to a big trip to a fancy water park in Wisconsin. However, since I was raised in a small town, with a father who has served on our local city council for over a decade, when I think about the topic of water, I instinctively recall memories of growing up in a household where water is not thought of in traditional terms.

Growing up as the daughter of a city council member in a small town is not as easy as one would think. I know a lot more about municipal water systems than a typical 17-year-old girl should know.

I know about the importance of preventative maintenance to our city's water system and even know what the term "exercise the valves" means. I know about the anxiety created when the thermometer dips below zero and there is legitimate concern our city's water tower is going to "freeze up" leaving 459 residents without access to water.

I know what a struggle it is to keep a dilapidated municipal swimming pool open so that the kids can have a place to hang out in the summer. I know what a pain it is when there is a water break at 2:30 a.m. I know



how challenging it is to find qualified employees that can effectively operate a small water processing plant so that 450 residents can shower, wash their clothes and make supper.

And above all, after 17 years in the trenches as the daughter of small-town city council member, I know how much we take this valuable natural resource for granted. Only when we lift the faucet handle and nothing comes out or when the swimming pool remains unfilled because a line is broken or when the local restaurant is closed because of an 'infrastructure upgrade' do we truly appreciate the

importance of water and the amount of work and people it takes to provide the water we need to make our days go as planned.

While I may not have grandiose memories of splashing at a fancy Wisconsin water park, I do have some pretty cool memories involving water (and I didn't have to travel far to create those memories). And what makes my memories of those awesome summer days hanging out at our local swimming pool even better is that I know (and appreciate) what it took to make that fun day at the pool possible!