

Patrick Denne Scholarship - Essay - Luke Shirek

Water has played a crucial role in the establishment and progression of civilizations throughout human history. Not only is roughly 60% of the body made of it, but water has also provided societies with ways to trade, travel, and grow food. Access to water continues to be a necessity in today's world and the availability of clean and reliable water in our area is due to the work of the water industry.

Personally, I have seen the impact of the water industry from two different perspectives. First as a high school athlete and a future physical therapist, and secondly from the perspective of my job as a farm laborer.

As a high school athlete and future healthcare worker, I am aware that access to clean drinking water is a necessity. It helps prevent illness, lubricates joints, and supports healthy body systems. In addition, the consumption of water promotes peak athletic performance whether that is on the field, court, or track. In my exercise science class, I learned that water acts as the body's natural filtration fluid that helps your liver and kidneys get rid of toxins and waste. But, how does this connect to the water industry? Well, the water that rural water industries provide all day, every day, has been filtered, cleaned, and treated to make sure that it can do its job without causing any illness or issue. As a future healthcare worker, I see that ready access to this cleaned and treated water means it can be used for proper hygiene, like brushing teeth, taking showers, and washing hands.

Our rural water industry has not only been essential to the wellbeing of our local society, but it also plays a vital role in the farming economy of our area. The growth of both gardens and crops is dependent on the availability of water. When farmers spray their crops, they spray

mixtures that are approximately 95 percent water. When the hard and dirty work of planting and harvest is over, equipment needs to be cleaned. Thousands of gallons of water are used every year to ensure that expensive farm equipment is cared for and continues to be a worthwhile investment. This means many farms depend on a well run and well kept rural water system to deliver the water their operations need to run smoothly.

In summary, the water industry plays a vital role in supporting both human health and the local economy. Clean, treated water is essential for daily life, helping prevent illness, maintaining hygiene, and supporting physical performance. The water industry ensures that water is safe for drinking, cooking, and cleaning. In addition, rural water systems are vital for agriculture, and provide the large amounts of water needed to grow crops, mix chemicals for spraying, and clean farming equipment. The water industry is important because it provides the necessary access to water that allows both the community and the economy to thrive.