Seventh Annual
Patrick Denne Memorial Scholarship
By Lisa Schatz

The North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA) held its seventh annual live auction in February during its annual Rural Water Expo. The Patrick Denne Memorial Scholarship is in memory of a dedicated rural water circuit rider who traveled approximately 750,000 miles to provide assistance anywhere or anytime it was needed. In an attempt to keep Denne’s memory alive, the NDRWSA board of directors awards four individual, one-time $1,750 scholarships each year. Students may use the money to defray tuition, room and board, and books at Bismarck State College’s Water and Wastewater Technology program. A selection committee appointed by the NDRWSA executive board reviews applications and selects the recipients based on academic performance, career goals, extracurricular activities, and a brief essay on a predetermined topic.

NDRWSA is pleased to announce that Dillon Erhardt of Mandan has received one of this year’s scholarships. Below is his essay.

What I Hope to Accomplish in the Water Industry

By Dillon Erhardt

In 2011, I received my associate of science [degree] in power plant technology. I am currently working on my water/wastewater treatment technology certification. After going on a tour at the Mandan Water Treatment Plant during a power plant class, I decided I wanted to go into water treatment.

I have been working at South Central Regional Water District since June 2014. The past eight months have been a fantastic start to my career in the water industry. Since people are always going to need water in life, it means that the industry is only going to grow and innovate itself as time goes on. This means I have endless learning possibilities being in the water industry. I hope to one day become a level four water treatment operator. One day I hope I can bring some new ideas to the industry or invent something that would make certain processes easier. That would be an amazing accomplishment, but for now I want to concentrate on learning everything behind the processes of the current water treatment plant that I am employed with.

I am fortunate enough to not only be employed in the water industry, but I am employed at a facility that is unique. The use of ozone technology has not popularized yet, especially in North Dakota. I hope to stay at this facility for a long time and earn all my operator certificates, and maybe after a while I will look to do something else in the water industry.

Going to another country where clean water is not in abundance and help in creating ways to clean the water is a dream of mine. This would be a wonderful accomplishment and experience if I could make a difference by helping come up with way to get clean water to people who really need it. Creating clean drinking water is so crucially important and giving these countries the knowledge on how to create it would be very rewarding. I would be willing to go over there and help train people on how to operate the equipment. That experience would give me a great feeling that I accomplished something worthwhile in the water industry. Helping people get the clean water they need to live better, healthier lives is something I would be very proud to be a part of.
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Items Donated for Scholarship Auction

AE2S............................................................... Hunting Blind
All Season Water Users District .......... Andrew Knudson Art
Barnes Rural Water District ............... Terry Redlin Print
Bolton & Menk, Inc................................. HP Tablet
Burke Divide Williams Rural Water .. George Foreman Grill
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DN Tanks, Inc.............................................. Keurig
Eric Volk ................................................... Smoker
Grand Forks-Traill Water District ....... 4.5” Dewalt Angle Grinder
Greater Ramsey Water District......... Drill Bit Set & Jam/Syrup/Salsa Basket
Joe LaFave.............................. 1/2” Air Impact Wrench
Missouri West Water System............. Kim Norlien Print, Numbered & Signed
Mueller Water Products.................. Binoculars
North Prairie Rural Water District...... Headphones
Northeast Regional Water District..... Dewalt 12v Cordless Drill/Driver Impact Kit
South Central Regional Water District.. Mechanics Tool Set
Southeast Water Users District.......... Dewalt Drill
Southwest Water Authority.............. Medora Package
Stantec Consulting Services Inc........ St. Croix Rod
Stutsman Rural Water District......... Fenwick Graphite Fishing Rod/Reel
Traill Rural Water District.............. Home Theatre System
Tri-County Rural Water District........ Digiland Tablet
Vernon Anderson.......................... Handcrafted Wooden Bowl
Walsh Rural Water District.. 200 pounds Red River Potatoes
Western Area Water Supply Authority .... Ipad Mini
Western Area Water Supply Authority ... Mr. Heater
Williams Rural Water District........ Reciprocating Saw Kit