

**DEVILS LAKE BASIN  
JOINT WATER RESOURCE BOARD**

*SERVING*

*CAVALIER, EDDY, NELSON, PIERCE, RAMSEY, TOWNER & WALSH COUNTIES*

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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**‘WATER STEWARDSHIP AWARD GIVEN OUT BY DEVILS LAKE  
BASIN JOINT WATER RESOURCE BOARD’**

On Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, the Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resource Board presented their 2023 Water Stewardship Award to a very deserving individual during the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint North Dakota Water Convention & Irrigation Workshop’s Awards Banquet in Bismarck. The award was presented to Dick Johnson, former Devils Lake City Commissioner, Mayor, and ND State Water Commissioner.

The plaque reads; *“Presented to Dick Johnson” – “For serving and enhancing the lives of the citizens of the Devils Lake Basin for over 32 years as a City Commissioner and Mayor of the City of Devils Lake as well as Basin Representative on the North Dakota State Water Commission. Through those various roles, Dick assisted the region with flood control projects, water supply needs, and water-related projects, too numerous to mention.”*

Dick Johnson served the City of Devils Lake for 32 years, 20 years as a City Commissioner and the last 12 years as mayor. During this time, Dick was instrumental in navigating the City of Devils Lake through very unique water challenges. Dick worked endlessly to help develop the best flood control measures possible, given the very complex issues surrounding Devils Lake.

Not only did Dick fight to get the very best flood protection possible for the city and surrounding area through multiple projects spanning nearly two decades, but he also fought for outlet construction that could help those residents and areas that were not protected by the city dike.

Dick was involved with the city replacing its entire drinking water supply system - new aquifer, wells, transmission pipeline, and water treatment facility - to serve City residents. Soon after the completion of this extremely important project, Dick went to work to generously share this water resource with rural water systems that were less fortunate. This concept is now known as regionalization.

Dick also served on the Lake Access Committee and fully supported efforts to increase lake access through the development of ADA-compliant fishing piers and access gangways for those individuals that are mobility impaired. Supporting lake access projects has improved boat launch areas and fish cleaning stations.

**In addition to working tirelessly to solve Devils Lake's water issues, Dick shared his talents by serving on the ND State Water Commission from 2017 to 2023. During his time on the Water Commission, Dick was selected by his peers to serve as Vice-Chairman of the State Water Commission because of his leadership and willingness to commit time, energy, and talent to solving state-wide water issues.**

**The water community respects Dick well and is very deserving of recognition for his efforts.**

**As a City Commissioner, Mayor, and State Water Commission member, Dick fought to get as much water as possible off Devils Lake, benefitting the agricultural community by reducing inundated farm acres.**

**Dick supported efforts for increased lake access for mobility-impaired individuals and improved overall lake access and recreational fish cleaning facilities around the lake.**

**The City's water supply infrastructure that was accomplished while Dick was on the City Commission greatly improved our economic development potential and has allowed the city to be a central water supply hub for northeast North Dakota.**

**Dick Johnson's efforts directly benefitted residents in Devils Lake through flood protection and water supply. His efforts to get water off Devils Lake benefitted those outside the City's flood protection. Dick's efforts on the State Water Commission benefitted residents throughout the state through the completion of affordable water projects that serve all aspects of the water community.**

**The Grand Forks Herald named Dick as the 2022 Person of the Year for efforts to improve our area's health care. Dick has used this same level of effort and unwavering commitment to help solve water challenges in the Devils Lake area and throughout the State. This continued effort has spanned nearly three decades. I was present when Dick pressed the Governor to make increased flood control efforts for our area. Not only did Dick press hard to get funding for flood control efforts that protected the city and surrounding area, but Dick pressed very hard to get additional water off the lake. His efforts helped push the state to construct the east-end outlet.**



**Jeff Frith, Manager of the Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resource Board, presenting DL Basin Water Stewardship Award To Dick Johnson.**