

The water industry is the glue that holds our communities and economy together. This crucial industry provides safe, clean water to homes, businesses, and any other area connected to a local water system. Having quality water is essential to living a quality life. It is an amenity that I think many people overlook or take for granted.

Where would we be without the water industry and wastewater services? Without it, much of North Dakota would not have easy access to safe drinking water, water for crops and livestock, or waste treatment after the water had been used. This would be an economic crisis. Wastewater goes through many different steps and treatments in order to provide clean water to the surrounding area. According to the *Infrastructure Report Card*, there are over 16,000 active water treatment plants in the United States. These vary in size depending on the demand and capacity needed to serve the community. The plants are all very much necessary for citizens to continue to our domesticated way of life. Without them, everyone would have to have a private water system or a septic tank. The problem with this is a septic system may require more maintenance, be less cost effective on a large scale, and you must be very mindful of what you send into the tank. They are not designed to hold food waste or any other items that will not decompose quickly as this will cause the septic tank system to fill up fast or even cause damage.

The water industry is not only an important part of our modern life, and it is also a great career choice. The people behind the industry are the true glue that holds our communities together. There are many different sectors that make up the water industry making it rather diverse. Water restoration technicians work to restore buildings and

areas after water damage. Wastewater operators monitor the chemicals in the ponds that treat wastewater. Water plant operators run the treatment plants and run tests on the water to ensure it is safe. Wastewater engineers specialize in moving the water after it is used. This is only a few of the many crucial positions held by workers of the industry.

This past summer, I started working for the City of Hatton alongside my stepdad, Steve Gylten. A big part of our job was working at and monitoring the water treatment plant. Because of this, I had the opportunity to see first hand how our local system works. As Steve explained the functions of the ponds and how the whole thing operated, I became pretty interested in the industry. I found it fascinating how through a series of pipes and levers wastewater would be collected and treated before being returned as usable water to be sent back to the town.