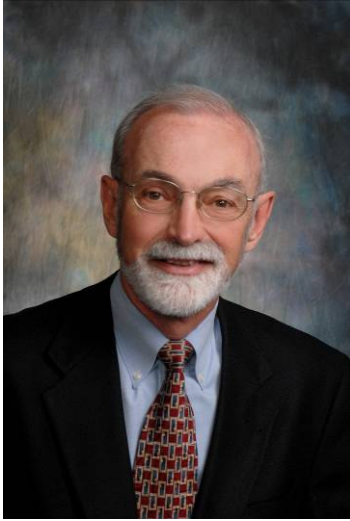


## ***FOX Engineering Salutes a “Practical Environmentalist”***



6-18-08

AMES –It’s rare to hear an engineer describe his work as “touchy, feely,” but Dave Fox explains his 43-year career as an environmental engineer as the “softer side” of the technical and, often scientific, field.

Fox, 66, who earned degrees in civil and sanitary engineering from Iowa State University, says designing water and wastewater treatment plants and landfills is a “cross between engineering and biological sciences.”

Describing himself as a “practical environmentalist,” Fox, who is retiring from FOX Engineering Associates, Inc. of Ames, says it’s been his goal to help communities meet their environmental needs in ways that actually improve the quality of life.

“We try to convince people to spend money on things that improve the environment,” not just allow them to check one

more box on a regulatory form.

Addressing those environmental issues has, in many ways, become easier over the years, Fox says. Computer-collected data, computer-assisted design and modeling help engineers develop facilities to meet individual communities’ needs.

The result is that water quality in Iowa is “light years ahead of where it was,” Fox says. “Most, if not all, medium and larger communities are doing a good job.”

At the same time, engineers’ ability to design better treatment processes and plants has raised the regulatory bar.

When he was in graduate school, Fox says, design was more art than science. “You tried it and, if it worked, you did it again,” he says. Technology, for the most part, proved engineers’ assumptions and theories.

As the science was refined, “it allowed us to understand what we know,” Fox says. “We also discovered more problems,” he says. “We found contaminants we didn’t know were there, so now we remove them.”

Fox can admit that he didn’t know what he was getting into when he began designing treatments plants. His goals coming out of college were to be a consulting engineer and an owner. He achieved that by age 27 when he became a part owner of Clapsaddle-Garber Associates in Marshalltown. He crossed a career milestone when he convinced the Marshalltown Water Works to hire the small firm to design a plant larger than anything it had done using a process it had never worked with. The plant, Fox says proudly, is still there and the firm that bears his name is involved in the second major upgrade of the facility.

“I didn’t know what I was getting into or where it would lead, but it went well,” he says. Eventually, CGA opened an Ames office and in 1993 Fox and eleven others formed FOX Engineering, which today has its offices in the Aspen Business Park.

He has gained as much satisfaction from the success of the firm as from his engineering work, Fox says. Today, FOX has 20 engineers and has the largest and most experienced water and wastewater staff in Iowa. It serves many municipal clients across Iowa as well as private companies across the U.S. He takes pride in the development of a professional

staff over the years and says it has paid off in the firm's ability to maintain long-term relationships with clients.

Maintaining those relationships requires more than degrees on the wall and a bulging portfolio of previous projects, however.

"Good design and functional facilities, it's a given that has to happen," he says. "Keeping clients is more a relationship thing – responding to their questions, fixing problems they didn't even know they had."

It has also helped, he says, that the firm's partners have continued to be hands-on engineers involved with design and operation of treatment facilities.

"We tried to set up the company so that management was never your major function," says Fox, who stepped down as president in 2000. "We all do projects. We all do design. That's what we like doing."

It was also a goal to make FOX a "family-like atmosphere," he says. Those efforts were recognized in 2006 as FOX was named one of the top 50 best civil engineering firms to work for by Civil Engineering News.

Fox stays close to water-related issues away from the office, too. He's been active in Water For People, a project of the American Water Works Association with a goal of developing safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and basic health services around the world. He raises money for the international association. In 2005 Fox received the Water For People Miller Award for increasing the visibility of Water For People in Iowa, including formation of a joint committee with the Iowa Water Pollution Control Association.

He plans to ramp up his Water For People activities in retirement. He's helping organize the group's World Water Corps to recruit and train in-country volunteers to do needs assessments, data collection and monitoring.

"If we can train volunteers to do that, the money we raise can be used for real projects," he says.

Fox also has been involved in Habitat for Humanity in Story County and Rotary.

Professionally, Fox has been a member of the American Water Works Association for more than 40 years holding every office at the state level, served as an International Director and served on a number of its committees, including its Diversity and Member Improvement Committee.

## Bio

Dave Fox

Hometown: Council Bluffs, Iowa

Education: Bachelor's degree, with distinction, in civil engineering, Iowa State University, master's degree in sanitary engineering, ISU

Occupation: Civil engineer, founding partner, chairman of the board, former president, FOX Engineering Associates, Inc.

Family: Wife, Marilla, sons Richard and Jeffrey

Professional Societies: American Academy of Environmental Engineering, Board Certified Environmental Engineer: American Water Works Association, International Director, past section chair, committee chair; Water Environment Federation, National Director; Iowa Water Pollution Control Association, past president, committee chair; ISU Department of Civil and Construction Engineering Advisory Committee past chair