



## Winding Down

By: Frank Dunmire, Executive Director

September 2010  
VOLUME 14 ISSUE 3

As summer begins to wind down, signaling an end to another construction season, it is time for those involved in the water and wastewater field to make that last big push to complete their special projects. For some that might be a water/sewer main replacement while for others that might have been a plant expansion or replacement. Whatever the instance might be, from the outside looking in, one would think that once those projects are completed there would be some time to sit back, relax and bask in that feeling of accomplishment. But wait, that would only be the case if we lived in a perfect world – and we all know that is not the case. Now is the time that water and wastewater operators must come face-to-face with the stark reality that they must now begin to address all of those routine maintenance tasks that were moved to the back burner to make room for those special projects. Although we here at Illinois Rural Water Association are not involved in supplying water and wastewater services directly to customers we certainly are involved in assisting those that do and we see the differences in technical assistance requests as the seasons progress.

IRWA staff has provided technical assistance to several small water systems in complying with the Stage 2 D/DBP Rule earlier in the summer as well as assisting in the completion of those pesky Consumer Confidence Reports that we have all grown to love (or hate). As a true testament to the quality of professional operators throughout Illinois, this was NOT a year that our staff spent assisting facilities that had to address serious drinking and/or wastewater violations. From the field staff reports that came across my desk I could tell that there was still a slight increase in the number of less serious reporting violations and most of those were a direct result in the changes made to the lead/copper rule. It wasn't that the samples weren't taken properly but rather the results were not provided to the individual homeowners where the samples were taken. Our field staff spent many hours reminding operators of this change in the regulation and the importance of proper sampling and recordkeeping in an effort to keep systems in compliance. If your system is scheduled for lead/copper samples during the next sampling cycle, be sure to familiarize yourself with the recent changes in reporting.

Formal classroom training sessions for both water and wastewater were held throughout the state to broaden the knowl-

edge of operators and all indications are that this year we will have had a record number of attendees at both wastewater and water sessions. IRWA staff is committed to offering operators sessions that they both want and need. We fully realize that there is no pleasing everyone when setting topics for training sessions and that is the reason our trainers use surveys to identify subject matter, so when presented with the surveys please complete and turn them back in to the trainers.

This year was also the second that IRWA partnered with the Illinois Department of Public Health and the USEPA (through MTAC) to provide recertification training for the non-transient non-community (NTNC) operators of Illinois. This was also the second year for offering two training sessions for managers of rural water systems and they seem to be growing in popularity.

Source Water Protection (SWP) staff for your Association has also been busy crating new and updating existing Source Water Protection plans. This area has seen an increase in activity due to the additional funding received from the USEPA last year. Instead of one person having to cover the entire state, IRWA now

has funds to keep two full-time SWP technicians on staff. If you have not heard from one of them – you will soon.

Your Association is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who is elected from districts throughout the state and they have been busy this past year identifying system needs and ways to address them. Although tackling a needs assessment is not an easy task, they accepted the challenge nonetheless. Throughout the past year several needs were identified and the challenge then became how best to meet them. As a direct result of these assessments several new and exciting services will be offered to our members in the upcoming months. I will not go into detail about them in this article but I will say that you won't want to miss the next quarterly magazine coming out in October.

This has been but a brief summary of what your Association has been working on this past year and a promise to continue our efforts to meet and exceed your needs. In the mean time, if you have any special requests for either technical assistance or training, let us know.

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### **IRWA'S MISSION STATEMENT**

**“Protecting and preserving the water and wastewater resources of Rural Illinois through education, representation and on-site technical assistance”**

Technical Assistance



In the fall of 2004 the Illinois Rural Water Association began offering a wastewater and water training program appropriately called “**ONE-ON-ONE WATER & WASTEWATER CERTIFICATION OVERVIEW TRAINING.**” The “one-on-one” program was initiated to fulfill a need for those operators who were unable to attend training at an out-of-town location. The IRWA representative would make the necessary arrangements to conveniently meet with an operator, at the operator’s location, and review typical questions that could be encountered on the state certification exam. I will limit my discussion on this subject to the wastewater side of the one-on-one program. If you would like to know more details about the water program you can call the office and talk to Heather (217-287-2115), contact your area circuit rider or get on the computer and search us up on the web ([www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org)).

one-on-one booklets were reviewing with an operator would be encountered in the state certification exam. Several of the IRWA staff including Frank Dunmire, Gary Chase, Bill Dowell, Chuck Woodworth and I met with Bob Voss, IEPA –Coordinator Wastewater Operator Certification Program, and reviewed the certification exams. We weren’t allowed to make copies, write notes or even take pictures of the exam. Bob has been very unreasonable in this regard and no matter how much we try to change his mind, he just won’t change his position on the matter. After the review of the exam all of us met to “brain storm” about what we had observed and determine if the material for the one-on-one review was up to date. The consensus of the IRWA staff was that the Class IV and III are in need of very little modification. The Class II and I hand out material needs some modification, but essentially cover the questions that would be encountered on those respective exams.

Starting in June 2010, the IEPA wastewater certification examination for the Class I, II and III took on a new look. The same subjects for the different certification levels remained relatively unchanged but the number of questions asked on the exams had increased. For example, the Class I exam now has 150 questions compared to the previous certification exam consisting of 100 questions. The Class II and III exam have also increased in the number of questions. The Class IV certification exam, for the time being, remains at 100 questions. With the IEPA update on the wastewater exams it became necessary that we at IRWA review the exams to determine if the material we were using for the

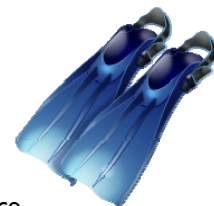
Modifications are being made as you read this article and the Class IV and III hand out material will be completed and ready for use by operators in July. I wish all of you to have high scores on the state exam. You can be assured that IRWA will help in any way we can to facilitate you getting properly certified, and updating the one-on-one material is one way we can assist you. Another way that we can help is inform you that the one-on-one material is only small part of you passing the state exam. The large part of passing the state exam is to love your craft and study like heck.

**6th ANNUAL NORTHERN CONFERENCE TENTATIVE AGENDA**

**Tuesday October 26**

Water Sessions

Wastewater Sessions



9:00 – 9:30 Welcome/Rural Development Update

9:30 – 10:30 IEPA Regulatory Update

10:30 – 11:00

**Break**

11:00 – 12:00 FOIA/Open Meeting Act Changes

Using Engineered Natural Systems to Treat Wastewater

12:00 – 1:00

**Lunch (Provided)**

1:00 – 2:00 Water Loss/Large Meter Testing

IEPA Updates

2:00 – 2:30

**Break**

2:30 – 4:00 Well & Pumps How to Save Your System \$\$\$

Advanced Aeration

4:00 – 4:30 Reverse Osmosis—The +’s & -’s

How to Read a Pump Curve

**Wednesday October 27**

Water Sessions

Wastewater Sessions

9:00 – 10:30 Hydrant & Valve O & M

Blower O & M

10:30 – 11:00

**Break**

11:00 – 12:00 Water/Sewer Rate Studies

Alternative Energy Sources

12:00 – 1:00

**Lunch (Provided)**

1:00 – 2:30 Storage Tank O & M

Land Application of Bio-Solids

2:30 – 2:45

**Break**

2:45 – 4:00 Source Water/Wellhead Protection Program

Control Panel Troubleshooting

4:00

**Closing & Grand Prize Drawing**

By: Wayne Nelson, EPA Training Specialist



For those of us of a certain age that remembers The A-Team on television we know that this was Colonel Hannibal Smith's favorite line. When a public water supply or wastewater system does a major installation or improvement it also has to be a team effort. Decision-makers, funding agencies, input from the public, and engineers are all a part of this team.

Recently IRWA staff returned from our annual In-Service classes. At a day-long session presented by Rural Development (RD) the speakers discussed who needs to be in the driver's seat on projects. It was their opinion that too many times they see that the system's engineering firm is driving the bus when it should always be the decision-makers behind the wheel. Before I go any further I wish to state that this article is not an attack on engineering firms. They are, should be, and must be a part of your team. However, for the **few** out there that do not look out for the best interests of their boss (and that boss is YOU, folks) let them know how you feel and that even the best partnerships can have a parting of ways.

Obviously there are many things that have to be done a certain way to satisfy regulatory requirements or just good construction criteria. However, over the years I've had decision-makers tell me that they sometimes wonder why a project is being done a certain way but are afraid to ask questions because their engineer must know best.

In my travels I viewed such an example of when decision-makers should have been demanding a reason why. A new rural water project was being installed. Each service line would be tapped on the water main and the line would be installed to

the property line. At that point a curb stop/curb box would be installed. Within a foot of the curb stop would be a meter pit with a meter yoke equipped with (wait for it) another shut-off valve. Does anybody reading this think that this may have been a bit of overkill? This situation offers two extra connections (possible future leaks), something else that can be hit with a mower, and also added around \$100.00 to the cost of each service tap.

Another time I observed a new elevated storage tank at a system that was replacing a shorter tower. After installation of the new tank it was discovered that the existing pumps could not fill the new tower to the top as expected. That's like buying a new car so that you can take long trips but find that you only have a five gallon gas tank. Both the elevated tank and the car will work but with less than anticipated expectations.

In the Rural Development session it was suggested that decision-makers should ask questions of everyone (including engineers) that receives dollars over which their government entity has authority. I recently served as an inspector on a water main extension project. I asked my RD representative if I had the right as an inspector to require the contractor to follow the rules as written. His response was that not only did I have the right but the responsibility to see that it is done right. As leaders of your system you also have that responsibility.

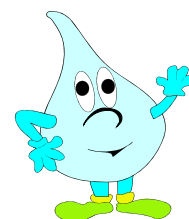
So, decision-makers, don't be afraid to ask questions and offer comments. We all make mistakes (!). By the way, all of the speakers at the Rural Development session were engineers.



## Remember to sign up for IRWA's 6th Annual Northern Conference!



- ◆ October 26-27, 2010  
Clock Tower Resort & Conference Center
- ◆ Call 815-398-6000 for rooms  
Room Rate is \$91.00  
(includes 4 tickets to the CoCo Key Water Resort!)
- ◆ 10.75 CEU's  
See agenda on-line for sessions available  
and registration information
- ◆ 39 Exhibitors  
*Exhibit Hall is sold out!*



Remember to check out our website, [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org), for the latest training sessions to register for!!

### Upcoming Training Sessions

#### Water & Wastewater

**October 26—27, 2010**  
**6th Annual Northern Conference—Rockford**

**Illinois Rural Water Association**  
**3305 Kennedy Road**  
**P.O. Box 49**  
**Taylorville, IL 62568**  
**217-287-2115**

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- USDA Source Water Protection Specialist**  
**Mark Mitchell** (mitchell@ilrwa.org)
- USEPA Source Water Protection Specialist**  
**Kathy Rodgers** (Rodgers@ilrwa.org)

**Website: www.ilrwa.org**

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**CITY OF CARMI ILLINOIS**

Walter T. Evans, Mayor  
 618.376.3131  
 Glenn D. Jones, Clerk  
 618.376.3131  
 Treasurer: Donna C. Moore  
 618.376.3131

August 24, 2010

Mr. Don L. Craig  
 Deputy Director  
 Illinois Rural Water Association  
 3305 Kennedy Road  
 P. O. Box 4949  
 Taylorville, IL 62568

Dear Mr. Craig:

I would like to express my appreciation to IRWA for our recent leak detection analysis performed by Circuit Rider Pat Gammill. She did an outstanding job of assisting us in locating several water leaks within our system.

Subsequently, the leaks were repaired by our water department crew. During a follow-up inspection, Mr. Gammill determined that the repairs were successful and no additional leaks were found to exist in those areas.

We value our membership in the Illinois Rural Water Association and all of the many benefits offered through them.

Thank you for all your time and efforts on behalf of the City of Carmi.

Sincerely,

*Stacy Straka*

Stacy Straka  
 Superintendent  
 Water & Sewer Department

VILLAGE OF BROWNSTOWN  
 P.O. BOX 336  
 BROWNSTOWN, ILLINOIS 62416  
 PHONE NO. 618-427-3345  
 FAX NO. 618-427-3346

August 4, 2010

Illinois Rural Water Association  
 P.O. Box 6049  
 Taylorville, IL 62568

Re: Mr. John Bell

Dear Supervisor of John Bell:

The Village of Brownstown would like to say THANK YOU to JOHN BELL for his assistance in helping Mike Sefton, Sewer Superintendent with smoking the sewer lines in the Village of Brownstown.

We would like to compliment on your employee, John is very qualified, friendly person who not only knows his job, but also knows how to work with the public. We are extremely fortunate to have John represent your Association.

Thank you for your assistance and generous support.

Sincerely yours,  
*Mike Sefton*  
 Mike Sefton  
 Sewer Superintendent

*Sherry Meador*  
 Sherry Meador  
 Village Clerk

STATED MEMBERS - FIRST & THIRD MONDAY EVENINGS OF EACH MONTH

*The Village of Chelms*  
 275 S. Oak St., P. O. Box 400  
 Chelms, IL 60922

Office (618) 697-2214

Fax (618) 697-2280

Email: clerk@chelmsilrwa.org

To Whom It May Concern:

For several years your own our Village has maintained membership with the Illinois Rural Water Association. We have benefited from the membership through the use of much needed equipment and assistance with our water and waste water systems. Recently, we contacted IRWA to contact Mr. Chuck Woodworth to conduct ground leak detection on our water system. Our Village was having water on a daily basis. Our chemistry and energy usage was doubling and we were water leaks were increasing. Mr. Woodworth came immediately to assist with the issue and after just four short hours of investigating, an underground leak was detected. Once after our Village maintenance personnel excavated the site marked by Mr. Woodworth and found a four inch broken water main leaking profusely. The breaks team had a crack the entire circumference of the pipe and was losing water at a high velocity. The water from the break was following the path of three lines trenches and seeping the village on down line leaving the line contaminated. Once we have made repairs to the water line, we have decreased our Village water consumption from 200,000 gallons a day to 100,000 gallons per day. Our chemical usage has dropped dramatically and we no longer see energy usage increases of our well houses. On behalf of the Village of Chelms and myself I would like to thank the IRWA and Mr. Chuck Woodworth for their quick response and professionalism with this issue.

*James S. Smith*

James S. Smith  
 Public Works Department  
 Chelms, IL  
 618-687-2213 (work)  
 618-687-2280 (fax)  
 jsmith@chelmsilrwa.org



VILLAGE OF TREMONT  
 311 S. Sanspore St. • P.O. Box 144 • Tremont, IL 61558  
 Phone: (309) 925-5711 • Fax: (309) 925-3635

Todd R. Bong  
 Village President

September 1, 2010

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for Gale Moore's assistance with helping find a very well hidden water shut off. His help was greatly appreciated and we are glad to have him to help all small town operators.

The support we receive from Illinois Rural Water Association is a valuable resource. It is good to know that help is only a phone call away.

Yours Truly,

*Brian Hill*  
 Brian Hill  
 Water Superintendent  
 Village of Tremont