



The Real Importance of Membership

By: Don Craig, Deputy Director

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Recently, I was meeting with some system personnel at a small community in northeastern Illinois. The purpose of our meeting was to discuss the possibility of completing a GPS-GIS project for their water utility next spring. We also, discussed some other assistance provided by IRWA, such as the new Sewer Video Inspection Service.

After talking a while, I mentioned to them that it's really good that IRWA has been able to provide one-on-one technical assistance in the field, to rural public water and wastewater facilities throughout the years.... as well as providing operator training. Also, how it's a great asset that we are able to service our members, and continue to generate more membership with each passing year. But then, I went on to discuss with them what is the 'real' importance of systems being members of Illinois Rural Water Association. This is something I have discussed with utilities, clear back many, many years ago when I was the only Circuit Rider (no Wastewater Techs then), throughout the state of Illinois. And, also as the Chief Staff Officer for IRWA, I have stressed this several times to our field staff to relay to system personnel in the state.

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The important point is, that with strong membership, comes power. This is not only true and important for IRWA, but for ALL the state rural water association affiliates of the National Rural Water Association. Through each state association's membership base, combined through one channel, that of the NRWA.... We continue to have a very strong voice in federal legislation concerning rural water and waste-water facilities throughout the United States.

Such programs as the USDA's Rural Development Loan and Grant Program for rural systems, Revolving Loan fund money distributed to state government for utilities, EPA regulatory requirements, and others, all have some kind of influence through NRWA, and the overall membership of all State Associations, to help and benefit smaller utilities in this country, to some degree. As most of you know, we are experiencing cutbacks to our EPA funded programs at this point. We hope that those programs are reinstated with proper funding in the coming year. But it's TRULY important, that all of you representing rural water and wastewater facilities throughout the state, take the time to contact your Congressmen to let them know you support the work of the Illinois Rural Water Association (through the National Rural Water Association) and their Training and Technical Assistance Programs into the future. These are very viable and important programs, that need to continue for the benefit of rural systems in Illinois, and the nation.

So, you can see, it is really great that we have professionals in the field to directly provide assistance to you and your system with operational and management issues; but the real value of being a member of IRWA is not always 'seen'... yet, the impact is there.

And, with nearly 30,000 member systems throughout all the state associations, represented through NRWA; that 'impact' is strong. Thanks to ALL our members for continuing to support and promote the Illinois Rural Water Association. It's truly appreciated.



THE IRWA BOARD AND STAFF WISHES YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY & SAFE NEW YEAR!

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



The following items contain some newer information for operations and maintenance topics tossed out there in past articles:

Barley Straw

Occasionally we still get questions about the use of barley straw for algae and suspended solids control in lagoon operations. The decomposition of barley straw apparently causes a chemical reaction in the water that elevates the levels of hydrogen peroxide and helps retard the growth of algae. The straw application should be about 375 pounds per surface acre of pond or lagoon. The bales can be suspended at the surface approximately two-thirds of the way through the lagoon. Be sure any material that may break loose cannot plug any outlets or weirs. Initial installation should be March/early April, with replacement dosing in September/October to maintain an even, annual treatment level. Normally, the second year of usage will confirm the enhancements to effluent quality.

Currently, there seems to be a reduce availability of barley straw. (Local farmers that were getting into the business a few years ago, switched back to corn and beans when those prices jumped.) Run a search for barley straw on the Internet, and all kinds of suppliers open up. Check those prices closely and shop around, and keep in mind that shipping and trucking costs have escalated. (Consideration might be given to other types of straw also. Local availability might make another grain straw more cost-effective. Increase the dosing by 10-15% and you should get similar results.) As with any large purchase for your system, be sure to do some good cost-comparisons with other methods or treatments.

Emergency Generators

The recent fall blizzard on the northeast coast brought ice and snow accumulations that pulled down trees and power lines. This unusual storm caused the loss of electrical power for a few hours in some places, but also for more extended periods, up to six weeks in some areas. Repairing large sections of downed lines and damaged substations is a formidable task, even when

additional crews and equipment are brought in while the storm is developing. Response-time became a public-relations nightmare for a lot of large energy companies in that area.

Here in the good old Midwest, we seem to have taken the hint a little better. In an effort to cope with such issues, many water and wastewater systems have up-graded existing, even installed new, emergency power generators in their facilities. Just in the last few years, a significant number of new generator units have appeared in our areas. Some systems were able to accomplish this by including the units in plant expansions, some managed by purchasing low-cost used/surplus units, and some systems acquired units through security-related improvements. (That nasty ice-storm about 2005 was a not-so-subtle reminder of dangerous weather conditions.) Keep on top of exercising and maintaining those wonderful units. Being able to provide water and wastewater services during a power outage, short or long-term, can help alleviate a lot of anxiety and health concerns to an already traumatized community.

Metering for Fun and Profit

Rate adjustments, water-loss issues, and overall system financial management depend on accurate meter-readings. The last two years or so, has seen a tremendous number of systems, large and small, install new meters throughout their service areas. (And a lot of them are radio-reads.) All of them seem pleasantly impressed with the results, both for O&M purposes, and for the financial benefits of accurate readings. Keeping on top of rates and charges is just good business, and those issues should be reviewed at least annually. (Systems could consider an annual adjustment, based on inflationary changes over the previous year, as a useful aid to this process.)

Just some things to ponder during those long, winter nights.



Remember to check out our website, www.ilrwa.org, for the latest training sessions to register for!!

Upcoming Training Sessions

Wastewater

January 19, 2012—Safety - Carterville

January 25, 2012—Wastewater A - Z - Hamilton



Is A "D" All You Need...But Still Need Help Preparing For The Exam? By Patricia Gammill

Well, don't feel alone...because in my travels I have run across a lot of water operators that for various reasons do not have their water certification. The majority of systems I get the pleasure to visit are distribution systems which purchase water from another source. So because they do not treat the water themselves, the operator only needs a Class D or C (if they feed chlorine) certification. Lately, it seems many of you are wanting or needing that certification. Whether it's due to the retirement of the present certified operator, or if it means more money on your paycheck...whatever the reason everyone needs some way to prepare for the exam. So I wanted to just throw a few options out there for you.

As you all should know IRWA offers a certification overview. This is a fee based service that consists of a D portion and a C portion. The Circuit Rider in your area will come to you and assist in a one on one overview. Please keep in mind, it is strictly an overview. So it is still helpful if you have an understanding of water terminology or have even had some formal water training. The overview is set up like an exam with similar questions you may likely see on the test. That doesn't mean if you memorize the overview that you will pass the exam. The Circuit Rider will go through each question with you and supply you with the correct answer. There is also a math section that the Circuit Rider will go through with you step by step. You will have this information to keep and study from.

I have conducted quite a few of these over the years and can say that it's a great feeling when the operator calls to tell me they passed the exam and to thank me for my efforts. I appreciate that because first and foremost I wanna see you pass that exam!

Because you will receive both the D and C material, it can be a bit overwhelming. That's why I have suggested to operators that only need the class D certification, to go ahead and just study to take the D exam first. Then at a later date if you want to upgrade, study and concentrate on the C material. Many have taken the advice and are now certified D operators.

If your system is distribution only and do not feed chlorine then all you need is the class D. The following categories for class D exam per IEPA Critical Needs are:

- General-Laboratory Testing - total coliform hold time
- General-pH test - interpret data
- General-System Management - Manganese levels in distribution system
- General-Distribution Math
- Rules & Regulations - MCL for THMs
- Distribution O&M - Hazards-pressure drops
- Distribution O&M Regulations
- Distribution System Math - % unaccounted for?
- Distribution System Math - pounds of disinfectant
- Distribution System Math - total dynamic head

If your system is distribution but feeds chlorine you need a class C. The following categories for class C exam per IEPA Critical Needs are:

- Rules & Regulations - Chemical characteristics - iron problems in distribution system-level?
- Chemical Treatment - Construct/Install-positive displacement feed pump
- Chemical Treatment Math - NaOH and PH
- Chemical Treatment Math - % by weight
- Wells-general knowledge - H₂S
- Wells-general knowledge - BacT
- Chlorination Math - pounds formula
- Chemical Treatment Math - chlorine demand
- Fluoridation Math - dry feeder - pounds formula
- Fluoridation Math - feed rate calculation
- Chemical Feed Math - pounds formula
- Distribution O&M - Regulations
- Chlorination - chemical characteristics - THMs
- Chlorination Math - chlorine dosage-pounds formula
- Fluoridation Math - pounds formula
- BacT Regulations - records, SWTR
- Distribution System Math - feet of head/psi

Yes, obviously there is a lot of chlorine and chlorine math on the C exam. If you're a system that does not feed chlorine, and have no prior experience with chlorine, then it is a lot of material to soak in. So you have the option to just take the D exam.

Some other study material and/or learning options are:

Environmental Resources Training Center @ SIUE located in Edwardsville. They offer a year long training course in water/wastewater...but they also offer night classes which upon completion in a few short weeks you will be eligible to take your certification exam.

There is an Operator Basics Training Series CD that is a very good learning tool for exam preparation. It can also be used to obtain CEUs once you receive your certification. The series is no longer available via internet but you can get a copy through the IEPA.

IRWA has books and training manuals that can be borrowed at no charge.

So however you decide to prepare for the exam...if you need more information or are interested in the overview, give your Circuit Rider a call. We want to see you succeed. So why not bring in the New Year with your water certification.

Good Luck and See Ya In My Travels

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