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Volume XII — Summer 2015



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MISSION STATEMENT

"Protecting and preserving the water and wastewater resources of Rural Illinois through education, representation and on-site technical assistance".

On the Cover:

The picture of the lighthouse on the front cover was taken in Grafton, Illinois, on the Mississippi River.

Water Ways is the official publication of the Illinois Rural Water Association, P.O. Box 49, Taylorville, Illinois 62568, and is published quarterly for distribution to members as well as other industry associations and friends. Our website is www.ilrwa.org. Articles and photographs are encouraged. Advertising and submissions should be mailed to the above address or e-mail us at ilrwadb@ilrwa.org.



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Why NRWA?

Over the years that very question has been offered up to me on several occasions so I am taking this opportunity to answer it. One of the definitions of an association is that it is a group of people or organizations joined together for a common purpose or cause. That is the case with the National Rural Water Association (NRWA). The National Rural Water Association is a not-for-profit association dedicated to “training, supporting, and promoting the water and wastewater professionals that serve small communities across the United States.” NRWA’s mission is to strengthen State Associations.

NRWA provides training and technical assistance through 49 affiliated State Rural Water Associations that currently have over 31,000 utility system members. Last year, State Rural Water Association staff delivered over 75,000 on-site technical assistance visits and 150,000 hours of training to more than 37,000 utilities. How is this made possible? Read on.

Each February, the Illinois Rural Water Association (IRWA), along with Rural Water affiliates from across the country descends on the Nation’s Capitol to attend what has become known as the Rural Water Rally. It is during this event that all members of Congress are asked to support federal funding and policy that will benefit small and rural systems the most. With forty-nine (49) state associations (Connecticut and Rhode Island are combined) converging on DC at the same time it would be difficult, to say the least, ensuring the “message” was the same no matter who was delivering

it. This is where the strength of an association and what they can accomplish through their grassroots efforts shines through.

NRWA is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of one delegate from each state affiliate and each Board member is assigned to at least one of several committees. One of these is the Legislative Committee and their charge is to meet, discuss, and finally recommend to the full Board what our message to Congress should be for that year. As we all know, Congress is ultimately responsible for appropriating the necessary funds for the Circuit Rider; the Wastewater Technician; and Source Water Specialist programs. In addition to appropriating those programmatic dollars they are also responsible for setting funding levels for water infrastructure projects through USDA Rural Development loans and grants as well as the USEPA state revolving funds. But the advocating does not stop there!

All of us are familiar with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), the Clean Water act (CWA), and the Farm Bill. NRWA, through its DC office staff and state affiliates, also lead the charge for regulatory and policy relief through these and many other acts or laws. Many members of NRWA’s Board participate on several of the panels, committees, work groups etc. from a multitude of agencies in an effort to ensure that the voice of Rural Water is being heard.

Recently, the Regulatory Committee met in Washington DC to review a number of active policy issues and craft a number of policy positions that will

*by Frank Dunmire,
IRWA Executive Director*



be referred to the full NRWA Board of Directors. Issues considered by the Committee included: NRWA’s seat on the National Drinking Water Advisory Committee, Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, EPA’s Nutrient Programs, Waters of the United States (WOTUS), Disinfection Byproducts Rule, Water Privatization, Fluoridation, 1926(b), etc. Mike Keegan is the editor-in-chief of NRWA’s “Rural Water Policy Advisory” and has provided a list of the following policy measures the committee approved at its meeting last week:

- Raise eight concerns with the current version of a new Lead and Copper Rule using NRWA’s representative on the EPA advisory committee (NRWA’s eight concerns).
- Support a limitation on federal regulatory authority of water systems’ water quality to the terminus of the distribution system; the property line of the customer - the private property of the customer). Some stakeholders in the Lead and Copper deliberations are advocating for the water utility,

continued on page 5

Why NRWA?

continued from page 4

in some cases, to be responsible for service line on the customer's property.

- Provide a statement to EPA opposing new regulatory authority for inspections/standards of storage tanks. This has been proposed by EPA.
- Determine if the new WOTUS rule extends federal authority beyond the Supreme Court's delineation in their most recent (Rapanos) case.
- Have unregulated contaminant monitoring results be made publicly available but not part of the consumer confidence reports
- Nominate three NRWA representatives to EPA's advisory

committee considering changes to their Risk Management Plans' program.

- Support Senator Wicker's effort to provide relief under the Stage II Disinfection Byproducts Rule.
- Oppose (with statement) EPA's recent decision to release sensitive water utility location data to the internet.
 - Reiterate NRWA's position that the decision to fluoridate drinking water should be made at the local community level.
 - Support local community authority in rate-making determinations. This is a reaction

to a popular policy trend in DC to have wealthier customers pay more than others.

So, when asked why there is a National Rural Water Association my response is always "if they aren't looking out for our best interests – then who is?" It is only through the power of an association that wholesale changes can be made at a national level. Only by organizing and acting together can we achieve what we could never achieve alone! Thanks for your support of IRWA and NRWA! 💧

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Monday, September 7 — Labor Day

Wednesday, November 11 — Veterans Day

Thursday & Friday—November 26 & 27 — Thanksgiving

Thursday & Friday—December 24 & 25 — Christmas

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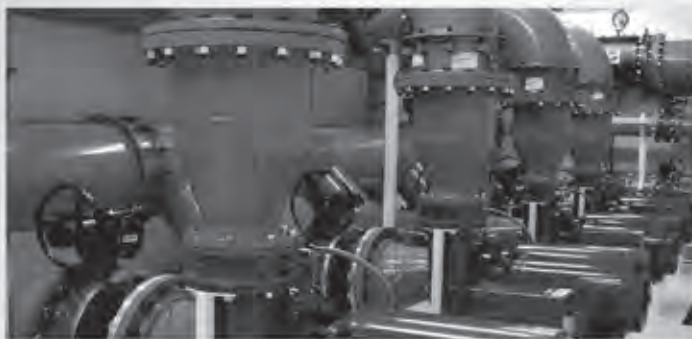


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IRWA Administrative Conference — A Good Time Had By All and an Update on IEPA Water Loss

*by Phil Donelson,
IRWA Training & Marketing*

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer so far! Time keeps flying right on by and before you know it; it will be winter again... oh no, sorry, we don't want to go there yet do we? Heck no!! Hopefully you will be able to take a little time off work and have some cookouts, watch a few ball games, go boating, or whatever it is you do to enjoy time with family and friends! As we get into full swing of summer, I wanted to take this opportunity to mention a couple programs that are ongoing in the IRWA training division.

First of all I wanted to thank all of you who took part in our Spring Administrative Conference in Fairview Heights in May. Wow, what a ball!! I think I can safely say that we all had a really fun conference and our speakers did an amazing job! We had some very informative topics and I had really good post conference comments. There are a couple photos included with this article, or at least those are the ones that are safe to put in our publication—"wink, wink"... what happens at the Admin Conference stays at the Admin Conference! All kidding aside, I want to thank the speakers and all of you in attendance for making it a very memorable conference once again. If you have not yet made it to one of these events, you really should

attend one and see for yourself!

Speaking of attending one for yourself, you are in luck! The next IRWA Administrative Conference is coming up soon! We are planning to go back to East Peoria and the ParaDice Hotel Casino on the 19th and 20th of November. There are lots of places to eat, shop, and of course there is the casino!

If you are unfamiliar with the Administrative Conference, it is a full day of speakers on Thursday, and a half day on Friday concluding by noon. We have a lot of fun getting to know one another and sharing stories. There is also great food and prizes, as well as a hospitality hour after the sessions conclude on Thursday. The focus of this conference is on the administrative staff, board members, city officials, and any other clerical staff who works for municipalities or water systems. We plan to have similar topics to the ones in Fairview Heights since we had such good feedback in the spring. Mark your calendar, and look to the website for registration material later this summer. We really hope to see you there! Also, as we have done in the past, there will be a **"Buy-One, Get-One-Half-Off" registration promotion**. If a system pays for one regular priced registration, the



second person from the same system is 1/2 off!! What a deal!

Many of you are aware of the IEPA Water Loss program that I have been promoting for the better part of a year. All of you who come to see me for the fee based sessions have probably noticed that there have been fewer fee based offerings this spring than normal. The main reason is that we only have a short window of time to offer this training program which concludes in September. To our knowledge they do not intend to offer it again, hence the importance to attend this **FREE class** while it is still available to you. I have spent a lot of time canvassing the bottom 75% of the state in an effort to reach as many of you as we can. Turn out has been OK, but

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IRWA Administrative Conference — A Good Time Had By All and an Update on IEPA Water Loss

continued from page 9

IRWA and the IEPA are still in hopes that we can encourage more of you to attend over the next couple months. There are still many of you who have not taken advantage of this class!

The training itself is a one day class worth 6 hours of credit. Once again, it **is FREE of charge for two members of your staff**. The day offers a great opportunity to examine how to better perform water audits and help to make your system more efficient. We will show you how to use a tool that will encompass many of the variables that allow for potential loss in your system. We ask you to bring a laptop with you and gather up some notes about your system. A full list of what you should bring with you is on the Water Loss page on our website. Also, we have some laptops for you to use, so just because you don't have one, that isn't a good excuse, show up and we will take care of you. Hopefully we can help you discover ways to save your valuable resources, such as time, money, and of course your water! The class is free for up to 2 people from each municipality.

It is very beneficial for an administrative person, and an operator to attend together because there are discussions that involve billing and system policies, as well as the physical system itself. **Again-Attention administrative staff**, your system can really benefit from you attending this class with one of your production staff.

As I mentioned earlier in the article, we are starting to wind down on the training phase of the program. I want to make you all aware that I am going to be offering about 15 trainings in locations around the state over the next 3 months. If you missed one earlier in the year, had to cancel, or just didn't know if you wanted to attend... take it from me; "You do want to attend!" Many who have come to the class were less than prepared for the class, and some had no idea what it was about when they stepped in the door, but I can honestly say that I have not had anyone in the last 24 sessions leaving the class regretting that they showed up. I have had stellar reviews on these sessions so don't miss out on a session that could benefit your system.

Please consider it. Check it out on our website at www.ilrwa.org, click on the training tab, then select "water loss" and you should be able to see all the dates and locations listed.

One more note while discussing training... Since Wayne Nelson has officially retired from the USEPA sponsored program that he has always hosted, training sessions will be continued on by yours truly if the USEPA approves it and funds it for another year. With that said, I know I'm not Wayne, but I will do my best to provide some quality sponsored training around the state... and don't be too surprised if you see Wayne out running around again soon in some context... he's just like a bad penny! (Just kidding Wayne, we all love ya!!)

In closing, please keep checking our website, looking for the e-mails, and our fliers to register for upcoming sessions of all types. Thanks again to all of you who support the training we do, whether it is through speaking or attending as a student! See ya soon in class!!

I wish you a safe and fun summer!! 💧



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It's Hard to Say Goodbye... So I Won't

*by Wayne Nelson,
IRWA Training Specialist (Retired)*

We all have dates in our lives that we never forget. The dates of happy events like our high school graduation, the birth of a child, and life's successes as well as sad events like deaths and national tragedies. There are a couple of dates that are very much on my mind right now.

Forty years ago, on July 1, 1972, I began my career in the water and wastewater industry when the mayor of my hometown of Virginia, Illinois needed a water/sewer superintendent and he decided that the nineteen year old kid on the street department fit the bill.

After working both full-time and contractual for several water systems over the next twenty-two years, I applied for a position with the Illinois Rural

Water Association. I had earlier worked in 1991-92 on the association's first groundwater program on a part-time basis as well as an emergency Circuit Rider during the Mississippi River Flood of 1993. I was hired full-time on June 1, 1994 as a Wastewater Training Technician that transitioned into Circuit Rider and, later, into the Training Specialist position.

Fast-forward twenty-one years to May 31, 2015. That was the day that I officially retired from the association. And the changes that I've seen not only in my own life but that of the association! When I started with the association we had one Circuit Rider for the entire state (we currently have 3). That meant that you left home on Monday morning



and came home Friday afternoon and never knew where you were going to end up. We had to call in to the office every morning to check for messages and I think I knew the location of every pay phone in the state. Back in 1994 we drove our own vehicles. Now the association has a fleet of sta f vehicles,

a mobile training unit for on-site training, two emergency generators for use by systems during disasters, and a truck equipped to camera sewer lines.

One of the biggest changes in my job with IRWA is that it morphed from in-the-field assistance such as leak and valve locating and plant operations to that of regulatory assistance. In 1994 we were just beginning to deal with the lead and copper and disinfectant byproducts rules. The Consumer Confidence Report rule, the lowering of the MCL for Arsenic, and mandatory operator training was still in the future.

The one thing that hasn't

continued on page 13



It's Hard to Say Goodbye... So I Won't

continued from page 12

changed was the opportunity to work with the water and wastewater personnel that operate the systems that serve our state. While I will miss several things in retirement it is this that I will miss most. Over my two decades with the association I have gained so many friends in this business. Not just people that I "had to work with" but, instead, the people that I loved working with. In many cases, it was almost like an extension of my family. Many of my contacts know that my wife is Mary Ann who loves to garden and that my best friend is my beagle dog Buddy. Similarly, many times I know about the good times and the bad in their lives.

When I started many operators still weren't sure what we were about and I was often asked what it was we were selling. Those days are long past. I remember one of my first stops as in the City of Minonk. I found Charlie McGuire and his crew patching potholes and he really didn't have time to talk to this stranger. I remember that they were using a new type of cold patch that worked like hot patch. I've shoveled a lot of patching material (and other things) in my time and I wanted to see how this stuff worked. I grabbed a shovel and while we patched holes we talked water.

That's another thing that made this job so enjoyable. There was no script, no standard operating procedures - there was just the job of providing the information that was needed to solve the operators' problem. I want to say right now that you taught me as much or more than what I taught you. This made it easy for me to help the guy down the road that was experiencing the same problem and I thank you for that.

There are so many other people to thank. As I said, this job turned into being heavy on regulatory compliance. I often turned to the folks at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for help in wading through the quagmire of many regulations. It's easy for the public to say that state workers just collect a paycheck but let me tell you right now, the people there that I've had the privilege to work with have been nothing but helpful even though their plates are way more than full.

And, then there is the IRWA staff and board. As the old dog, I've seen many people come through the IRWA doors. Some stayed for a while and some did not. Some were great to work with and some were not. Our current staff is a mixture of seasoned veterans and new blood. And, as with the aging of our industry, the association will continue to see new people take the place of us old

dogs as we spend more time with our latest issue of AARP magazine.

Even with the changes that will occur I have full confidence in the future of the association under the able leadership of Executive Director Frank Dunmire, Deputy Director Don Craig, and the IRWA board. And, finally, a big shout-out to Heather McLeod and Denise Burke. While some of you may think that they just answer the phones the real truth is they keep the association running right and on schedule.

I can say nothing else but again say that it has been both an honor and a privilege to work with all of you but this is not the end. When I played in a band a long time ago we always ended the night by telling the audience:

"This is not goodbye but just goodnight and we'll see you soon."

I do hope to see you soon. 💧



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ILLINOIS RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

12th Annual Golf Outing

The Illinois Rural Water Association (IRWA) is hosting its 12th Annual Golf Outing. This event is sponsored as a way to have a fun IRWA member activity.

The location for this event is **Piper Glen Golf Course in Springfield, Illinois**. The date for this four person scramble is **Friday, August 21, 2015**. The fee is \$60.00 which includes lunch, a gift bag, green fees and golf cart. Various prizes will be given away as well. As always, IRWA is trying to make this a fun-filled and affordable golf scramble. Your participation will ensure that this year's event will be every bit as successful as past outings. This event gives the IRWA members an opportunity to have fun and enjoy a day of golf with fellow industry professionals.

Last year's event sold out so you are encouraged to submit your registration forms prior to the **Friday, August 7, 2015** deadline. Please make checks payable to Illinois Rural Water Association. You can also go online and sign up and pay by credit card at www.ilrwa.org.

This will be a four-person scramble with a **10:00 a.m. shotgun start**. Participants are encouraged to be at Piper Glen Golf Course and check in at the registration table no later than 9:45 a.m. Lunch will be served as you make your way by the club house while playing golf.

It is IRWA's hope that you will be able to attend this event. Please feel free to contact **Denise Burke** at 1-217-287-2115 with any questions you may have. We look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,



Board of Directors & Staff

WHAT: 12th Annual
IRWA Golf Outing

WHO: Water &
Wastewater Operators,
Board Members,
Councilmen, Mayors,
Vendors, Others

WHEN: Friday,
August 21, 2015

WHERE: Piper Glen
Golf Course—
Springfield, IL

FEE: \$60.00 for
operators (includes
lunch, gift bag, green
fees & golf cart)



ILLINOIS RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
12TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

The 12th Annual Illinois Rural Water Association Golf Outing will be held on Friday, August 21, 2015 at Piper Glen Golf Course located in Springfield, Illinois. Directions to the course are located on the last page. The golf format will be a shotgun start at **10:00 a.m.** Please check in at the registration table no later than 9:45 a.m. Please fill out the registration form below and send it along with your check to the address listed below. **You may also pay by credit card online at www.ilrwa.org.** **Registration must be received and paid by Friday, August 7, 2015 in order to reserve your spot.** We are limited to 144 golfers for this event.

Course Rules:

- Dress must be in good taste keeping with golf tradition.
- Only non metal spikes are allowed.

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Registration Form

Friday, August 21, 2015—10:00 a.m. (Shotgun start—4 person scramble)

Single Golfers will be teamed with a foursome.

NAME(S):

SYSTEM NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

OF GOLFERS

Operators / City Officials / Guests _____ **@ \$60.00 =** _____

Associate Members / Vendors _____ **@ \$75.00 =** _____

(If Associate members are sponsoring the golf outing (please see next page), then the fee to participate will be \$60.00).

Total _____ **=** _____
(includes lunch, gift bag, green fees & golf cart)

Please make all checks payable to Illinois Rural Water Association. Return your completed registration and payment to: **Illinois Rural Water Association—P.O. Box 49—Taylorville, Illinois 62568**

If you have any questions, please contact **Denise** at Illinois Rural Water Association at 1-800-762-3547 or email her at: **ilrwadb@ilrwa.org**.

Sponsorship Form

Lunch Sponsorship	-	\$500.00	(limited to 3 sponsors)
Beverage Cart Sponsorship	-	\$500.00	(limited to 2 sponsors)
Hole Sponsorship	-	\$150.00	(limited to 18 sponsors)
Hole in One Sponsorship	-		
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Gift Bag & Prize Sponsorship	-	SEE BELOW	

LUNCH SPONSORSHIP: Lunch sponsors will have their sponsorship sign posted where lunch will be served reaching all of the golfers and two free registrations to participate in the golf outing.

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GIFT BAG SPONSORSHIP: If your company wishes to provide an item for each gift bag (approximately 144), please contact Denise to discuss.

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If you plan on participating in the golf outing, please fill out the registration form on the previous page and return this form with your payment. If you plan to attend but not golf in the outing, please let us on this form.

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Water Tanks and Severe Weather

by Erika Henderson,
Pittsburg Tank & Tower Group

Severe weather can be devastating, and according to numerous weather sources- is occurring more frequently and widespread. Tornadoes are now occurring anywhere from the Rockies to the east coast. Currently, the southern pacific coast is experiencing a severe drought, many areas in the east coast are flooded, and thousands of people were killed in the Nepal earthquake.

Severe weather does not discriminate and it can damage or destroy everything in its path including water tanks. Necessary water supply for consumption, fire protection, and emergency needs is crucial to everyday well-being, and even more when a severe weather event

occurs. Therefore, water tanks should be designed, constructed, maintained, and inspected to withstand severe weather.

Tanks that have experienced winter storms and freezing should obviously be inspected for damage, but seismic activity, high winds, lightening, droughts, and flooding also occur in the summer months and tanks are susceptible to damage from them as well.

High Winds/Lightning Strikes

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states, "Anchor bolts shall be arranged to securely engage a weight at least equal to the net uplift when the tank is empty and the wind is blowing from any direction (1)." Lightweight tanks

definitely need to be anchored against high winds in areas that experience them, and elevated water tanks should have their windage rods inspected and tightened regularly to maintain winds of 150 mph, blowing from any direction.

Tanks not grounded are subject to lightning damage. Lightning strikes could cause power outages that could affect the ability to receive water. Water pumps and alarms could malfunction, or a complete tank failure could occur. NFPA 780 states, "Tanks shall be grounded to conduct away the current of direct strokes and the buildup and potential that cause sparks to ground (2)."

Drought/Flooding

When a drought occurs, aggressive water conservation measures are often taken; but tanks still need to be inspected and cleaned. To conserve precious water,

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Robotic Operated Vehicles (ROVs) can be used to inspect and clean tanks without draining them, thus saving the water.

Foundation damage can easily occur if tanks are subjected to flooding for prolonged periods. Tank sites should have good drainage to minimize or prevent possible foundation damage from flooding. The site design should also include provisions for draining the tank and the discharge from the tank overflow without damaging the tank site or neighboring properties.

Seismic Activity


Tanks are designed and constructed for resisting earthquake damage by complying with the earthquake design load provisions of American Water Works Association (AWWA), in accordance with its Seismic Use Group (SUG) and site class. The SUG is a classification assigned to a tank based on its intended use and expected performance; Tanks that serve multiple facilities use the highest SUG. Site class accounts for the effect of local soil conditions on the ground motion and are based on the soil present and their engineering properties as established by a geotechnical investigation. The SUG and site class help determine the appropriate freeboard and the number of anchor bolts needed. Freeboard is the distance from the Maximum Operating Level (MOL) to the

lowest level of the roof framing and is determined by the sloshing wave height that could occur (3). Freeboard is taken into consideration to prevent a tank from overturning or causing roof damage due to sloshing.

The design of the piping system connected to the tank should consider the effects of foundation movements and potential movement of the connection points during earthquakes. Sufficient flexibility should be provided to avoid release of the tank contents due to failure of the piping system. The piping system and supports shall be designed so as not to impart significant mechanical loading on the attachments of the tank. Mechanical devices that add flexibility, such as bellows, expansion joints, and other flexible apparatus, may be used when designed for the seismic displacements and defined operating pressure (4).

What to Look For

Water tanks should be inspected regularly for proper working order and stability before severe weather hits. Overhead

obstructions, trees and overgrowth that could puncture or damage a tank during severe weather should be removed, and operators should routinely look for foundation, wind, and earthquake damage. Such damage on tower-supported tanks may be indicated by cracked coating or welds at the tower connections; broken, bent, or sagging rods; buckled struts; dented or twisted columns; or missing or loose rod pins. If any of these conditions are observed, the tank should be professionally inspected. In addition, tanks in areas at high risk for wind or earthquake damage should be inspected more frequently than tanks in low risk areas (5). 



References

1. National Fire Protection Association, NFPA-22 Standard for Water Tanks for Private Fire Protection. 2013
2. National Fire Protection Association, NFPA-780 Standard for the Installation of Lightning Protection Systems. 2014.
- 3.-4. American Water Works Association, D100-11 Welded Carbon Steel Tanks for Water Storage. 2011.
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Emergency Response

by Evan Jones,
IRWA Wastewater Technician

Chuck Woodworth, Roger Noe and I just recently returned from the state of Arkansas where we took part in a multi-state emergency response training and table top exercise. While there, we covered numerous topics from the simple everyday things that we contend with like leak locating, pump troubleshooting and generators to other more specialized things like communications during a disaster and the use of ground penetrating radar.

As training sessions go this one was great!!!! Several states brought their "toys" so that all could have an opportunity to experience their use. It was great to see and hear how other states, communities and associations deal with the various emergencies they are presented with. The biggest thing I want to stress for everyone that reads this is to at least pull that emergency response plan off the shelf or out of the drawer that it's been hiding in since it was finished and **UPDATE THAT BAD BOY!!! ASAP!!!** That thing is your life blood - it contains the information on who you are going to call and when and what for. If you need help, give one of the field staff a call and we will be more than happy to help you revise and update your emergency response plan.

Now having spoken about that little thing called the ERP, we will get on to some other things like communications. We all have that cell phone or that dusty radio that some guy from ESDA gave us at one time. The problem with these things is that during an emergency everyone and their 7 year old is trying to make calls and overloading the towers. So, just some food for thought – if this does occur, how are you going to communicate? You also have to remember that land

lines are probably a no go because the pole outside your office is laying on the ground! My suggestion is make sure you have alternate communications such as radios (even cheap ones from Walmart will work - just don't forget batteries). And if you have the budget and just like having fancy toys, satellite phones work wonderful but there is the initial cost of the phone and then they do cost about a dollar a minute for a conversation, so talk fast. The big thing for communicating is to have a location picked out for a meeting place with you and your crew. Depending on how spread out your system is this may be all that is needed for the entire duration of your emergency with regularly scheduled meeting times so everyone stays on the same page.

Equipment
– Having a well-stocked shop or maintenance garage is a great thing and an inventory list of what you have and where it is located is also a great thing. But, like we saw in Gifford, a couple years ago, after the tornado hits and the maintenance building is no longer there, that wouldn't have helped one bit. Their shop and office were nowhere to be found and what parts and tools that were left after the strike were under



what remained of the building. So it is also an absolute must to have that ERP up to date and have several in different locations so that at least one of them will survive. That book will have all the numbers that you need for any parts or equipment you are going to need.

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Emergency Response

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Something else that is a very good thing to have in place is mutual aid agreements with other communities and systems in the immediate area. These agreements can be as complex or as simple as you would like them to be. The bottom line is that a mutual aid agreement makes it possible for your “neighbors” to bring their entire crew and equipment to you in your time of need. A lot of time it is as simple as they have a generator they are willing to loan you until power has been restored. The most important part of this is to have the agreement in writing and approved by your Board. This saves time and just keeps all parties safe if something happens to a worker or a piece of equipment that breaks or is misplaced during the crazy times.

GPS and Mapping - I won't dwell on this subject very long, but if you haven't thought of mapping your system, then you should at least give it some consideration. Knowing where all your manholes and main line valves is a huge plus when all of your landmarks have been rearranged. But if you are like most of us, you can walk into an intersection and even if it is covered in snow and ice, you can take your bearing off the tree across the street or the mail box along the side of the road and be within a few feet. That is great - BUT what happens when all those markers we used every day are gone? An even bigger issue would be if someone assisting you through your mutual aid agreement is sent to an intersection to find a valve or manhole

and there isn't even a street sign left to identify the intersection where the valve or manhole is located. GPS/GIS mapping would be a great time saver for locating assets – anyone would be able to punch the coordinates into a GPS locator and wham-bam you are there. Like I said give it a thought.

One important thing to remember if you have an emergency in your area – don't hesitate in giving your Circuit Rider or your Wastewater Technician a call. We are here to help in any way we can. Even if it is just to help with the Emergency Response plan, we will be there for you and your system. If you have any questions about emergency response, just give one of the field staff a call. 💧



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The Future Is Now

*by Roger Noe,
IRWA Circuit Rider #2*

As I travel through the Southern Region, meeting and building relationships with workers in the water industry, I always ask the operator how long they have been working for the village, city, or water district. The response usually is between 10-20 years. Then I ask them how many years they have left before retirement. The response is usually 3-5 years.

I spend so much time in the truck traveling that I have plenty of time to think about the future of our industry. In the next decade a significant number of water operators will exit the field according to the Social Security Administration. Furthermore, many of these veteran water operators have so much knowledge of their own system and village that it will be hard to reproduce that much expertise.

In addition to a workforce that will be leaving the field, they will be leaving behind aging infrastructures. Many plants and distribution lines are old and in disrepair. Some municipalities have their original water plants with minimal upgrades. Therefore the situation in the near future? Not enough skilled and trained operators, partnered with inadequate facilities.

Now is the time to act and recruit young men and women into our industry.

First, the water industry has to be appealing to young people as a possible profession. (The field has been overlooked.) One idea I have is to develop a program to go into high schools and speak to students about the water industry. Informing students about the industry is the first line to get more people thinking about the job as a career. Students who are interested would then have the chance to enhance their education with classes that would be beneficial to them later on. There are going to be many opportunities for young people in this industry. Many of the jobs have decent benefits with good retirement packages.

Next? Your village board or city council support and encouragement for these technologically savvy new hires is a must!

These entities must encourage their new workers and they will need to be accommodating to new technology. So budgets may have to be adjusted to support upgrades to outdated facilities. Situations may arise and a new strategy will need to be adopted to better serve water customers.

As a village board member myself, I understand that new ideas need to be implemented to further the water industry. When replacing retiring



water operators, boards need to look at candidates who have the skills and education and can make it not just a job, but a career.

I can work with boards and councils when they are in the selection process. Providing information about pay scale, certifications, and training can help a board/council make the best decisions for their village or town.

We are looking at a time of great change in the industry, and it's in the not so distant future. The water industry will remain vitally important whether we are ready or not. My hope is that with proper planning we will be ready to not only maintain what we have, but improve.

As I stated previously, I would be happy to assist interested villages, cities, or water district's in any way I can to help them prepare for their community's future. 💧

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Bruce Wilbee



Genuine Happiness Comes From Within

*by Chris Carter,
selfimpr vementclub.com*

Life isn't the sweetest candy. Sometimes, when I feel like the world is just too heavy, I look around and find people who continue to live fascinating and wonderful lives. And then thoughts come popping into my mind like bubbles from nowhere - "How did their life become so adorably sweet? How come they still can manage to laugh and play around despite a busy stressful life?" Then I pause and observe for awhile. I figured out that maybe, they start to work on a place called 'self'.

So, how does one become genuinely happy? Step 1 is to love yourself.

My theology professor once said that "loving means accepting." To love oneself means to accept that you are not a perfect being, but behind the imperfections must lie a great bit of courage to be able to discover ways of how to improve your ability to recover from your mistakes.

Genuine happiness also pertains to contentment. When you are contented with the job you have, the way you look, with your family, your friends, the place you live in, your car, and all the things you now have - truly, you know the answer to the question "how to be genuinely happy."

When we discover a small start somewhere from within, that small start will eventually lead to something else, and to something else. But if you keep questioning life like it has never done you any good, you will never be able to find genuine happiness.

I believe that life is about finding out about right and wrong, trying and failing, winning and losing. These are things that happen as often as you inhale and exhale. Failure in a person's life has become as abundant and necessary as air. But this should not hinder us from becoming happy.

How to be genuinely happy in spite of all these? I tell you- every time you exert effort to improve the quality of life and your being, whether it is cleaning up your room, helping a friend, taking care of your sick dog, failing an exam and trying again, life gives you equivalent points for that.

Imagine life as a big score board like those which are used in sports. Every time you take a step forward, you make points. Wouldn't it be nice to look at that board at the end of each game and think to yourself "Whew! I got a point today. I'm glad I gave it a shot", instead of looking at it all blank and realizing "Geez, I didn't even try today. I wish I had the guts to try out. We could have won!" and then walk away.

Genuine happiness isn't about driving the hottest Formula 1 car, nor getting the employee of the year award, earning the highest pay, or beating the sales quota. Sometimes, the most sought after prizes in life don't always go to the fastest, the strongest, the bravest or not even the best. So, how do you become genuinely happy? Every one has his own definition of happiness.

Happiness for a writer may mean launching as many best selling books as possible. Happiness for a basketball rookie may mean getting the rookie of the year award. Happiness for a beggar may mean a lot of money. Happiness for a businessman may mean success.

So, really now, how do we become genuinely happy? Simple. You don't have to have the best things in this world. It's about doing and making the best

out of every single thing. When you find yourself smiling at your own mistakes and telling yourself "Oh, I'll do better next time", you carry with you a flame of strong willpower to persevere that may spread out like a brush fire. You possess a willingness to stand up again and try - that will make you a genuinely happy person.

When you learn to accept yourself and your own faults. You pass step 1 in the project of how to become genuinely happy. For as long as you know how to accept others, you will also be accepted. For as long as you love and know how to love, you will receive love tenfold back.

Again, throw me that same question how to become genuinely happy. I'll refer you to a friend of mine who strongly stated - "Most of us know that laughter is the best medicine to life's aches and pain. But most of us don't know that the best kind of laughter is laughter over yourself. Because then you don't just become happy, you become free."💧

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