



## More Alphabet Soup...

By: Frank Dunmire, Executive Director

September  
2021  
Newsletter

THE ILLINOIS RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

This past year, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has been in the process of collecting finished water samples from approximately 1,500 entry points into the distribution system. The samples were being collected and analyzed for the presence (or absence) of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in finished water. According to the IEPA's website, the "purpose of this investigation is to support the potential development and promulgation of maximum contaminant level (MCL) standards in Illinois for certain PFAS, and to respond to scientific data throughout the nation regarding the effects of PFAS on public health." As I write this article, it appears that fewer than 100 sites have not been sampled and of the more than 1,343 sites sampled, 65 detections were greater than or equal to the Maximum Reporting Level (MRL) – meaning that PFAS was detected in the sample at levels at or above the lowest concentration the laboratory can reliably detect, but below the IEPA Guidance Level. 60 samples collected were

greater than or equal to the Guidance Level. It should be noted that for PFOA, the MRL and guidance level are both set at 2.0 parts per trillion (ng/L). To confuse you even more with the alphabet soup of acronyms, I have included a table of PFAS analytes from IEPA's website.

PFAS are a large, complex, and ever-expanding **group** of manufactured chemicals that are widely used to make all sorts of everyday products. Some of the more common uses are for keeping food from sticking to cookware, making clothes and carpets stain resistant, and firefighting foam. PFAS are used in industries such as aerospace, automotive, construction, electronics, and military. We will throw in a little bit of a chemistry les-

son at this point – PFAS molecules are made up of a chain of linked carbon and fluorine atoms. A carbon-fluorine bond is one of the strongest, allowing these chemicals to not degrade in the environment, which leads to its nickname as the "forever chemical". The National Rural Water Association ("NRWA") filed a lawsuit on behalf of its members now dealing with unregulated chemicals in their drinking water. The NRWA is a non-profit organization dedicated to training, supporting, and promoting the water and wastewater professionals that serve small communities across the United States.

The lawsuit seeks money for testing and treatment along with other damages and penalties from the chemical manufacturers, The 3M Co., Tyco Fire Products L.P., National Foam, Inc., Buckeye Fire Protection, Chemguard, E.I. Du Pont De Nemours and Company ("DuPont") and The Chemours Company. These manufactures developed, marketed, and sold perfluorooctanoic acid and perfluorooctane sulfonate ("PFAS") that can be found in products such as firefighting foam, household and food products, industrial sites

PFAS Analyte	Acronym	Health-Based Guidance Level (ng/L)	Minimum Reporting Level (ng/L)
Perfluorobutanesulfonic acid	PFBS	2,100	2
Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid	PFHxS	140	2
Perfluorononanoic acid	PFNA	21	2
Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid	PFOS	14	2
Perfluorooctanoic acid	PFOA	2	2
Perfluorohexanoic acid	PFHxA	560,000	2
Hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid	HFPO-DA	560	2

as well as landfills across the country. NRWA has joined with the law office of Napoli Shkolnik PLLC to bring together utility systems from across the country that have concerns or have been affected by PFAS contamination. If you are one of the many systems in Illinois that did have a PFAS detection, this potential landmark contamination case could help your system recoup money spent on treatment and remediation.

Napoli Shkolnik will represent clients in any state who are dealing with contamination of public water supplies. For more information you can type the following URL into your favorite browser.

<http://nrwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Press-Release-NRWA-2.25.20.pdf>



## Apprenticeship Program Update

By: Jeff Tumati, Apprenticeship Coordinator

I'm very excited to provide you with an update about the NRWA/IRWA Apprenticeship training program. Also, I would like to follow up on the article, (*The Next Generation – A Solution*) which was published in the IRWA Water Ways magazine winter edition. It discussed the apprenticeship program and the necessary steps and required approvals to get the program active/up and running. I'm very happy to report that we gained final approval from the Illinois Department of Labor a few weeks ago. And I have recently completed training with Bruce Hallam from the U.S. Department of Labor - Office of Apprenticeship. The training dealt with how to enter employers and apprentices into the Federal tracking system known as RAP-IDS which stands for Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System. Now Illinois Rural Water is able to enter data directly into the tracking system.

We have been and will continue to actively seek apprentices and employers then hopefully pair them up geographically. I am pleased to tell you that, to date, we have ten applicants, and three registered employers with incumbent workers. These incumbent workers are now transitioning to become IRWA's first group of apprentices. They will be starting this hopefully exciting and fun two-year journey to become Water Operation Specialists very soon.

As mentioned in the previous article their journey will consist of a great mix of curriculum made up of in person sessions, some instructor lead, and others being hands on type training as well as required home study, self-paced online training courses, and good old fashioned printed course manuals - all dealing with safety and technical knowledge for each of the four six-month training periods. The two-year program requires successful completion of 288 hours of curriculum and 4000 hours of documented on the job training being completed under the direct supervision of a mentor.

After successful completion of all requirements of the program, the apprentice will be awarded a certification of completion of the apprenticeship program. The certification is provided by the U.S Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship and will be accepted throughout the nation.

The photo below is the first Illinois Rural Water Association apprentice, Chadd Peden, signing his apprenticeship agreement. Chadd is employed with the Village of Blue Mound Illinois. In closing, be very proud of what you do every day, working in the Water and Wastewater field and know that you do make a difference by providing safe potable water and/or properly treating wastewater before returning it to the waterways of Illinois. Until we meet again stay healthy, work safe and best wishes.



### IRWA'S MISSION STATEMENT

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



**For upcoming IRWA training sessions, please check your mailbox or sign up online at [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org)**



Registration and badges are required for all conference attendees. Please register each attendee by completing the registration form below and return it with your payment to:  
**IRWA, P.O. BOX 49, TAYLORVILLE, IL 62568.** You may also sign up on-line and pay with a credit card at: [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org). All fees must be paid when registering - we cannot do special billings or purchase orders. *IRWA will not send a confirmation of registration.*

***Pre-registration must be postmarked by October 1st 2021.***

## Registration Form

Please print or type

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

SYSTEM REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

***(PLEASE CIRCLE REGISTRATION TYPE)***

### FULL REGISTRATION:

(Includes Technical Sessions, Meals, Activities & Exhibit Hall for both days)

MEMBER \$150.00

NON-MEMBER \$190.00

### ONE DAY REGISTRATION:

(Includes Technical Sessions, Meals, Activities & Exhibit Hall for ONE DAY ONLY- circle day)

MEMBER \$120.00 attending Tuesday or Wednesday

NON-MEMBER \$160.00 attending Tuesday or Wednesday

Please make check payable to: Illinois Rural Water Association, P.O. Box 49, Taylorville, IL 62568

**Go to [www.ilrwa.org/NConf.html](http://www.ilrwa.org/NConf.html) to see the agenda or register via credit card**



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**FREE RATE STUDY**

Why Have a Rate Study Conducted?

With the amount of grant dollars available for water and wastewater projects continuing to dwindle, coupled with the aging water and/or wastewater infrastructure, it is increasingly more important that decision makers for systems throughout the state become more educated about system finances. This **FREE** rate study takes an in-depth look into the expenses and revenue that a system has. Once all of the data has been gathered and entered into a spreadsheet a detailed report is generated to explain the findings and recommendations. This easy to read report and any rate changes recommended will assist Boards and Councils in mapping out the financial future of their respective systems.

If your system is interested in having a rate study conducted, please contact Clark Cameron at (217) 287-2115(Office) or (217) 820-3814 (Cell).

What Information Will the Rate Study Provide?

- ⇒ Breakdown of expenses
- ⇒ The cost to produce the water (if applicable)
- ⇒ Amount of nonrevenue water
- ⇒ Amount of lost revenue from water loss
- ⇒ Annual gain or shortfall in revenue
- ⇒ Different rate scenarios

What Information Will I Need to Supply for a Rate Study?

- ⇒ Financial statements for the most current fiscal year (audit report preferred)
- ⇒ Amount of water produced and/or purchased during the most current fiscal year
- ⇒ Amount of water sold during the most current fiscal year
- ⇒ Current rate structure
- ⇒ Number of customers in each rate class
- ⇒ Amount of debt (if any)

