



**Coming Soon**

**By: Frank Dunmire, Executive Director**

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**Water Matters**

Soon, water system personnel all throughout the state will have the opportunity to sit in on training sessions that will be dealing with water loss audits. Now, don't make the same mistake that I did when I first heard the term "water loss audit". At first I thought what is new about calculating water loss? This is something that those of us in the water treatment profession have been doing for what seems like a hundred years. But water loss auditing takes things to an entirely new level.

As we all know, public water systems are faced with increasing challenges which include: the much talked about aging of our infrastructure; the ever popular increases in regulatory requirements; the problems associated with water quantity and/or quality; and the often overlooked lack of resources. All of these challenges leave most systems throughout the state with no alternative other than trying to "do more with less". I know many who are reading this know exactly what I mean and can attest to the fact that trying to do more with less oft times can be equated to deferring of maintenance. This postponement ultimately results in what were once manageable preventative maintenance projects becoming one crisis after another as things reach a state of failure. So, how do systems determine what they should be spending their limited funds on and when? That's where the water loss auditing tool comes into play.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has made a commitment to water systems throughout the state and will be rolling out a statewide program designed to assist water systems implement best practices in water loss control aimed at reducing unnecessary wa-

ter waste and revenue loss in their systems. IEPA will be partnering with ISAWWA and IRWA in this initiative to help the State's water systems better understand the extent of water lost from leaking pipes, meter inaccuracies and unauthorized consumption.

Over the coming year, IEPA will partner with ISAWWA and IRWA to offer water utilities (free of charge) a one-day training workshop on the basics of water loss control auditing. These workshops will give utilities the information they need to get started on water loss accounting by conducting a desktop audit using existing

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utility-specific records and AWWA's free online software to get an overall picture of water losses. Most utilities have the data needed to get started, including the quantity of water entering the system, customer billing summaries, leak repair summaries, average system pressure, production and customer meter accuracy percentages, permitted fire hydrant and flushing usage, and information that may be kept on water theft and unmetered uses, such as street cleaning.

As this article is being written ISAWWA and IRWA are busy putting together a very ambitious training calendar that will include at least 40 different locations where these workshops on the basics of water loss control auditing will be held. Each training session, whether it is hosted by ISAWWA or IRWA, will have identical content as both will be utilizing identical PowerPoint presentations and supporting documents. Hope to see you at one of these workshops!

**IRWA'S MISSION STATEMENT**

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

By: Wayne Nelson, Training Specialist



As Illinois certified public water supply operators, we know that we must renew our operator's certificate on or before June 30 of the third year. We also know that the number of required training hours is based on the classification we possess (A & B requires 30 hours/C & D requires 15 hours). Due to the great exodus of certified water operators from the business I keep an eye on how many operators renew every year, how many don't, and how many newly certified operators have come on board during the last year. FYI: As of August 1, 2014, 198 operators did not renew in this cycle and 194 newly certified operators have come on board in the past year. The gap this year is much smaller than the last few years where operators were not renewing at an alarming rate and new people were not coming in. For example, in 2013, 225 operators did not renew while only 133 newly certified operators came into the field.

So, to those 194 newly certified operators I say welcome but keep in mind the goal of getting your required training hours for the first time you renew. That three years can fly by pretty fast. I also want to take this opportunity to remind some of the operators that have been around a while of the same need.

While I see this problem several times every June, this year I have received a larger than usual number of calls from operators needing training hours before their June 30 deadline. The worse calls I got this year was from a Class C operator needing 12 additional hours with only

three weeks left on the clock and a Class B operator that only had the first 5 of the 30 required hours and with only four weeks remaining to get them.

This may sound pretty harsh but to those people I have to ask, "What the heck have you been doing for the past three years?" Even if you need the maximum of 30 hours that's just an average of 10 hours per year and there is a lot of training out there. There are several great conferences that occur every year. We hold our northern conference in October and our annual technical conference in February, ISAWWA has WaterCon every March, and the IPWSOA holds its annual conference every September. In addition, we conduct both free and/or for-charge training sessions all over Illinois as does the other water organizations. Finally, operators should utilize their local dues-supported water operator associations that provide free or very inexpensive training.

Can't get away from your job long enough to get training? There are free and low-cost on-line training options including webinars that count toward renewal requirements. While I'm not a doctor and don't play one on TV, I do want to offer this prescription: Make a plan to get your training hours over the entire three-year renewal cycle. Failure to follow this advice may result in frayed nerves, headaches, upset stomach, and the chance of showing up on the inactive operators list. Ignoring the problem long-term may result in the loss of your certification.

## OCTOBER 28 & 29, 2014

**Can you believe it?? This is the 10th year for the Northern Conference!**

Come to Grand Bear Lodge in Utica, IL and visit with 40 exhibitors, get a bit of knowledge, and mingle with your peers.

\$150.00 (\*if you are an IRWA member) will get you access to the exhibit hall, lunch for 2 days, breakfast for 1 day, hospitality night and all the classes you can stand!

10 credit hours are offered this year with topics on: Cross Connection Control, Well & Pump Maintenance, Pipe Connections & Repair, AMI Metering, Filter Maintenance, J.U.L.I.E. Etickets, Monthly Operating Reports, Water Main Lining, UV Disinfection, I & I, NetDMR, Preparing WWTP & Lagoons for Winter, and of course, the ever popular IEPA Updates.

If you need an agenda, hotel information, or would like to pay by credit card, just visit our website: [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org).



**By: John Bell, Wastewater Technician**



I stopped at 'BEST BUY' to get some ink for my printer. I easily found the ink cartridge I needed and proceeded to the check-out lane.

The store has twelve check-out lanes, and on this day, only one lane was staffed. I noticed as I got closer to the check-out area, that seven people were waiting in line, "the que was nasty" as they say in England. The check-out person was having a problem with an item properly being charged. I noticed that the item in question was a laptop computer. The mother and her teenage daughter were, I guessed, getting the necessary supplies for the start of school. I also noticed that two others in line were holding the same item to be checked-out. Oh joy! Oh rapture! I get to witness and be a part of a "log jam." Isn't it funny that in a store that sells computers, printers, cell phones, and is home of the "Geek-Squad" that they would have a computer problem? Anyway, when I was in high school and getting supplies for the start of school, I can assure you a laptop computer was not on anybody's list. Pencil, ball point pen maybe, some paper and a boy who was ready for school. I know, some of you guys would have your girl-friend slip you some paper and a pencil in class as a precaution of having the teacher jump your case about not being ready to study. Things in our lives have certainly moved ahead technologically, but I'm sure, the guy-girl

thing is about the same, technologically speaking.

As things zoom ahead and life is changing faster than we can keep pace, it appears some things do not. What's my point? Public utilities such as water and sewer systems have a core, and that core, has changed very little in the last fifty years, or even longer. Yes, we have had things that have improved the life of the municipal utility worker. But, for the most part, what our predecessor's challenges were, we of today face much the same. One of the most recent challenges for wastewater operators is the start of netDMR. By now, most if not all operators, have been exposed to this technology upgrade. If you don't know what this is about, you better call IRWA and get abreast of the new requirement. Training seminars have popped up all over the state to get everyone in compliance. IRWA will be presenting information about the netDMR at the October conference in Utica, Illinois. Whether it's a pencil and paper or a computer, the challenges to learning is still afoot. And as Mike said to me, "John, an operator can look up on the computer about how to repair a piece of equipment, but he still has to get off his +++ and repair it because the computer sure is not going to do it", technologically speaking.

## **Save the Date!!**

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fall Administrative Conference November 20 & 21, 2014



It is that time of year again and as the summer comes to a close, we are gearing up for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fall Administrative Conference. We are once again going back to the ParaDice Riverboat and Casino in East Peoria. They were gracious hosts and everyone in attendance not only learned quite a bit, but we also had a lot of fun! If you are unfamiliar with the conference, it is a full day of speakers on Thursday, and a half day on Friday concluding by noon. We have a well-rounded variety of topics that are directed at the office and administrative professionals. IRWA prides itself on practical real world education, not only for the operators in the field, but also for the administrative staff in the offices! Anyone who is on a city board, holds a public office, or any professional who works with the day to day administrative operations of one of our municipalities, should consider attending.

Registration information will be sent out soon. You will be able to sign up on-line (for credit card payments) or mail (for check payments). So, keep your eyes open for details in your mailboxes (this includes your e-mail!) and our website.

Our agenda will include some updates on the ever-changing world of insurance, going paperless, TIFF districts, recording public meetings, FOIA, setting up municipal websites, the open meetings act, and an overview of MS Excel.

We really hope you will take advantage of this conference and the wonderful networking opportunity. We always have great food, raffles, and giveaways, as well as a hospitality hour after the sessions conclude on Thursday. The area around the conference center offers many restaurants and quite a bit of shopping; so after sessions concludes, you have something fun to do.

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

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**Staff Members**

**Executive Director**  
Frank Dunmire (dunmire@ilrwa.org)  
**Deputy Director**  
Don Craig (craig@ilrwa.org)  
**Membership Services Assistant**  
Heather McLeod (ilrwahm@ilrwa.org)  
**Administrative/Program Assistant**  
Denise Burke (ilrwadb@ilrwa.org)  
**EPA Training Specialist**  
Wayne Nelson (ilrwawn@ilrwa.org)  
**Circuit Rider #1**  
Gale Moore (moore@ilrwa.org)  
**Circuit Rider #2**  
Evan Jones (jones@ilrwa.org)  
**Circuit Rider #3**  
Chuck Woodworth (ilrwacw@ilrwa.org)  
**Wastewater Technician #1**  
Bill Dowell (dowell@ilrwa.org)  
**Wastewater Technician #2**  
John Bell (ilrwajb@ilrwa.org)  
**USDA Source Water Protection Specialist**  
Mark Mitchell (mitchell@ilrwa.org)  
**Water/Wastewater Technician**  
Evan Jones (jones@ilrwa.org)  
**Training & Marketing**  
Phil Donelson (donelson@ilrwa.org)

**Website: [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org)**

**2014–2015 Tentative Training Schedule**

9/11/14	Oblong	Distribution System O & M/Regs.
9/17/14	Grand Tower	Distribution System O & M/Regs.
10/16/14	Freeport	Distribution System O & M
10/28 & 10/29/14	Utica	10th Annual Northern Conference
11/6/14	Aledo	Distribution System O & M/Proper Reporting Procedures
11/13/14	Warsaw	Plant Process Control/ System O & M
11/20 & 11/21/14	East Peoria	2nd Annual Fall Administrative Conference
12/3/14	Mason City	System Operation & Maintenance
1/21/15	Oakland	J.U.L.I.E. Program Update
1/22/15	Macon	J.U.L.I.E. Program Update
2/17 thru 2/19/15	Effingham	33rd Annual Conference
4/8/15	Riverton	System O & M / How to do that Paperwork
5/29/15	Wenona	Wastewater A to Z