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FALL 2025

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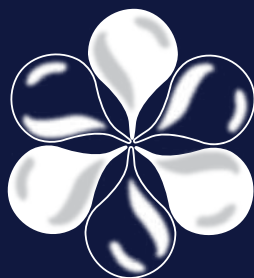
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RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE WORK WE DO

Molly Maciejewski

As I sit down to write this first article as Chair of the Michigan Section AWWA, I find my thoughts swirling, but one theme consistently rises to the top: **people**. You've likely heard the phrase, "People are our greatest asset." You've probably also heard, "Water is life." Both are true and deeply connected. We can't live without water, and as humans, we are innately tied to it in ways we often don't even realize.

In my experience, people are naturally drawn to water. I love to travel, and no matter where I go, I notice the same thing: people gravitate toward water. Beaches are top vacation destinations. In urban parks, crowds gather near ponds to picnic, relax, or read. Some of the most popular hiking trails lead to lakes or waterfalls. I recently attended a baseball game in Kansas City, and when I asked fans what they loved most about the stadium, nearly everyone mentioned "the beautiful water fountain."

If people are so naturally drawn to water, then raising awareness about the work we do, and attracting new talent to the water sector, should be easy, right? If only it were that simple.

As we think about how to bring in and retain the next generation of water professionals, we need to tap into that deep, instinctive connection people have with water. Recruitment and retention require a thoughtful, multi-faceted approach, often from unexpected angles. One place to start is by recognizing and embracing people's natural affinity for water, then building from there.

MI-AWWA understands the critical need for a strategic approach to workforce development. Earlier this year, we finalized our business plan, a practical guide to achieving the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan. This plan includes measurable actions across several areas of workforce development, such as attracting and retaining talent and preserving institutional knowledge through knowledge transfer.

It also includes objectives related to public education, engagement, advocacy, and innovation, elements that support workforce development in less direct but equally important ways. Engaging residents, elected officials, school-age children, and businesses in meaningful conversations about the value of water, not just as a resource, but as something that touches their daily lives, helps us protect our source



waters, build trust, and gain support for infrastructure investment. At the same time, it raises awareness of the diverse skills and careers available in our sector.

Our business plan also emphasizes financial stability and infrastructure resilience, goals that depend on people with a wide range of skills, including accounting, emergency management, and information technology. As an organization, we must attract members from these varied backgrounds to help advance our mission and strengthen our workforce.

I'm honored and excited to serve as Chair of MI-AWWA this year. I look forward to working with our members, Section Councils, the Board, and the dedicated staff, led by Executive Director Jonelle Moore, to drive progress on workforce development and all our strategic goals. 💧



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LEADING TOGETHER: A BOARD MEMBER'S VIEW OF AWWA'S MISSION

Jaime Fleming, Director

Serving as a Michigan Section board member – and now as a member of the Association's Board of Directors – is one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. Every day, I see firsthand how a community of dedicated professionals can make a global impact on something as essential as safe and sustainable water.

AWWA has been around since 1881, but our mission feels as urgent and relevant today as ever. With more than 50,000 members – utilities, engineers, scientists, manufacturers, educators, researchers, public health officials, customer service specialists, regulators, students, and community advocates – we work across neighborhoods, nations, and continents to protect the world's most vital resource. While "American" is in our name, our reach is vast, with strong partnerships across the globe.

How AWWA Leadership Works

The AWWA Board of Directors is made up of representatives from each of the 43 Sections -37 in the U.S., five in Canada, and one in Mexico. Together, we set the strategic direction of the Association – ensuring our priorities align with the needs of the water sector today and in the future. Between board meetings, our Executive Committee keeps the work moving forward, supported by six advisory councils focused on technical standards, education, public policy, membership, and other key areas.

Sections: Local Strength, Global Connection

The geographic Sections are where members get hands-on opportunities to lead and connect locally. We address region-specific challenges while still contributing to the broader mission. Thanks to our International Council, we also share expertise worldwide – through joint research, conference collaborations, and peer-to-peer exchanges that bridge continents.

The Heartbeat of AWWA: Our Volunteers

The real heartbeat of AWWA is our more than 250 specialized committees. These volunteer-led groups are where ideas move from concept to action. Members might develop water treatment guidelines, design school outreach programs, conduct field research, or organize community conservation events. Engineers work on system design standards, manufacturers contribute expertise on equipment innovations, educators create training resources, scientists collaborate

on new testing protocols, and customer service professionals strengthen utility-community relationships. Some volunteers focus on mentoring young or emerging professionals, others on advancing public health initiatives, and many on building connections between utilities, suppliers, and policymakers.

One of AWWA's greatest strengths is the active role our members play in policy advocacy. We engage with legislators, regulators, and community leaders to promote sound water policy, encourage infrastructure investment, and support legislation that advances water quality, sustainability, and access. This advocacy is grounded in real-world expertise, ensuring that policy decisions reflect both science and the on-the-ground realities of water professionals.

Why Volunteers Matter Most

I can confidently say that volunteers are the lifeblood of AWWA. Their expertise shapes industry standards, their outreach builds public trust, and their innovation keeps our profession moving forward. Advocacy volunteers help give the water sector a strong, informed voice in public policy debates. Technical experts turn knowledge into practical guidance that utilities can implement. Community-focused members help the public understand the value of water, building support for investments and conservation.

Every contribution – whether it's designing new technology, guiding a community workshop, improving customer engagement, mentoring a student, or managing a major conference – helps strengthen the water sector for the long term.

Our Shared Vision

From rural water systems to large metropolitan utilities, from manufacturing floors to engineering firms, from research labs to customer service centers, AWWA members share a common vision: clean, safe, and reliable water for all. By linking local expertise with national strategy, international collaboration, and a commitment to policy advocacy, we're creating a powerful platform for knowledge exchange, innovation, and influence.

If you're looking for a place where your voice matters and your efforts make a real difference, I encourage you to get involved. I've seen firsthand how even the smallest effort can ripple outward to benefit communities everywhere. Together, we're not just shaping the future of water – we're ensuring it.

You can find more information on how to get involved beyond the Michigan Section, by visiting www.awwa.org/volunteer. 💧

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A NEW CHAPTER

Jonelle Moore, Executive Director

Hello MI-AWWA members, It is both an honor and a privilege to introduce myself as your new Executive Director. With deep respect for the incredible work and leadership that have shaped our organization, I'm excited to continue the legacy of excellence and growth that has brought us to where we are today.

Stepping into this role with a fresh perspective, my primary goal is to ensure that MI-AWWA remains a resource that fosters growth, collaboration, and innovation across the water industry. As I begin this journey with you, I want to emphasize my commitment to support each and every one of you, regardless of your role, tenure, or area of expertise.

One of my key priorities is to build stronger connections within our membership. The diversity of experience and perspective among MI-AWWA members is our greatest asset. I'm here to listen, learn, and understand your needs and goals so we can work together to create a more vibrant, inclusive, and engaged organization.

We stand on a solid foundation built by years of dedicated leadership and passionate professionals. Yet, there is always room to grow and evolve. We must continue fostering an environment that welcomes everyone, from small communities across Michigan to the largest utilities, from operators to engineers, and everyone in between.

Inclusivity is essential. We have a tremendous opportunity to ensure that MI-AWWA reflects the diverse landscape of Michigan and that our programs, events, and communications resonate with the varied needs of our members. My goal is to connect you with the tools, resources, and support that will help you thrive in your careers and in the vital work you do to keep our communities safe and healthy.

As your Executive Director, I'm committed to cultivating an atmosphere of open communication and mutual support. I want to hear from you about your challenges, your ideas, and what you need from this association. Your feedback is invaluable as we work together to ensure MI-AWWA continues to be an organization that values collaboration, education, and shared success.

Looking ahead, I envision MI-AWWA as a beacon of support for all water professionals in Michigan. Together, we will continue to tackle the critical challenges our industry faces while strengthening the connections that make us all stronger.

Please don't hesitate to reach out. Whether you'd like to discuss the future of MI-AWWA, share your thoughts on how we can improve, or simply introduce yourself, I look forward to getting to know you.

The road ahead is bright, and I'm thrilled to walk it with you. Let's build on the foundation that has already been laid and grow MI-AWWA into an even more inclusive, innovative, and impactful organization for the entire state of Michigan.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Kelly Gleason

On behalf of the MI-AWWA community, I want to extend our deepest gratitude to Kelly Gleason for nearly ten years of dedicated service as Editor of Water Works News. Kelly's passion, attention to detail, and leadership have shaped the magazine into the trusted resource it is today.

Her hard work and commitment have left an indelible mark on our association. While Kelly's role as Editor is ending, her legacy will continue to inspire us. We are deeply thankful for her contributions and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Thank you, Kelly, for your exceptional service. 💧

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We are thrilled to announce that Hillary Caron has joined the MI-AWWA team as our new Director of Education & Workforce Training. Hillary brings a wealth of experience in education and workforce development, and we're excited to see the positive impact she will have on our organization and the broader water sector.

In this role, Hillary will lead the development and enhancement of MI-AWWA's educational programs, ensuring our members have access to top-tier training, resources, and opportunities for professional growth. Her fresh perspective and leadership will help us continue delivering high-quality, relevant educational offerings that meet the evolving needs of our industry.

Hillary's passion for empowering individuals and her expertise in workforce training will be instrumental in shaping the future of MI-AWWA's programs. She is committed to fostering a culture of learning and collaboration, and we're confident that her vision will elevate our educational efforts to new heights.

Please join us in welcoming Hillary to the MI-AWWA family! We're excited to have her on board and look forward to the great things we'll accomplish together. With Hillary's leadership, our education and workforce training programs are poised to thrive and support the continued growth of Michigan's water professionals.

Welcome aboard, Hillary! We can't wait to see the difference you'll make.💧

WHAT EVERY OPERATOR MUST KNOW

THE ROLE OF DATA IN MODERN WATER MANAGEMENT

In today's water industry, data is crucial for optimizing operations, improving efficiency, and ensuring the safety of our water systems. From real-time monitoring of water quality to predictive analytics for infrastructure management, the power of data enables water professionals to make informed decisions. Operators, engineers, and vendors alike rely on data to detect leaks, manage resources, and respond to emergencies more effectively. By leveraging technologies like smart meters, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Internet of Things (IoT) devices, water systems can reduce waste, prevent downtime, and enhance sustainability. As the industry continues to evolve, staying current with data-driven tools and practices is key to the future of water management.

Are you prepared to harness the power of data, or will you be the last to catch up? 💧

“IN TODAY’S WATER INDUSTRY, DATA IS CRUCIAL FOR OPTIMIZING OPERATIONS, IMPROVING EFFICIENCY, AND ENSURING THE SAFETY OF OUR WATER SYSTEMS.”



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Above the Bridge

Elberta Beach Enhancements: A Community's Vision Realized

Elberta Beach, a beloved destination along Lake Michigan, underwent significant enhancements this past summer to improve accessibility and provide better experience for all visitors. With the support of the local community, volunteers, and funding from organizations like the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the beach now boasts several upgraded features.

Key improvements included expanded parking, a new ADA-accessible walkway, modern restroom facilities, and a shaded pavilion with picnic seating for relaxation and gatherings. These updates made the beach more inclusive, welcoming visitors of all ages and abilities to enjoy its natural beauty.

To celebrate these upgrades, the village of Elberta hosted a community event on August 11, 2025. The celebration featured skydiving and hang-gliding demonstrations, a family-friendly kite-flying activity, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially dedicate the newly improved beach. The event was free and open to the public, bringing locals and visitors together to enjoy the new facilities.

The Elberta Beach enhancements reflect the power of community collaboration. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of local residents and organizations, the beach is now more accessible and enjoyable, making it an even more valuable resource for the region. 💧

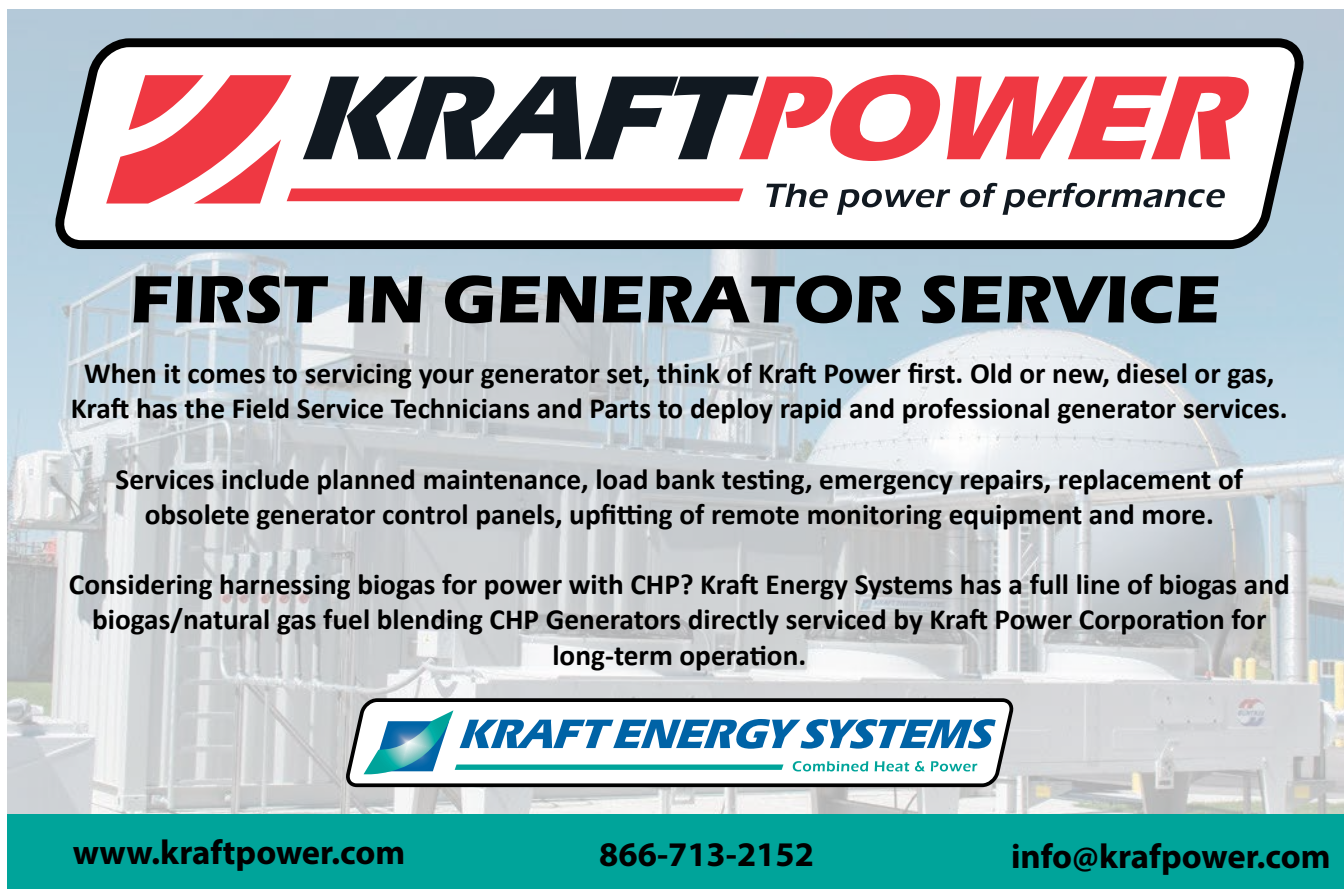




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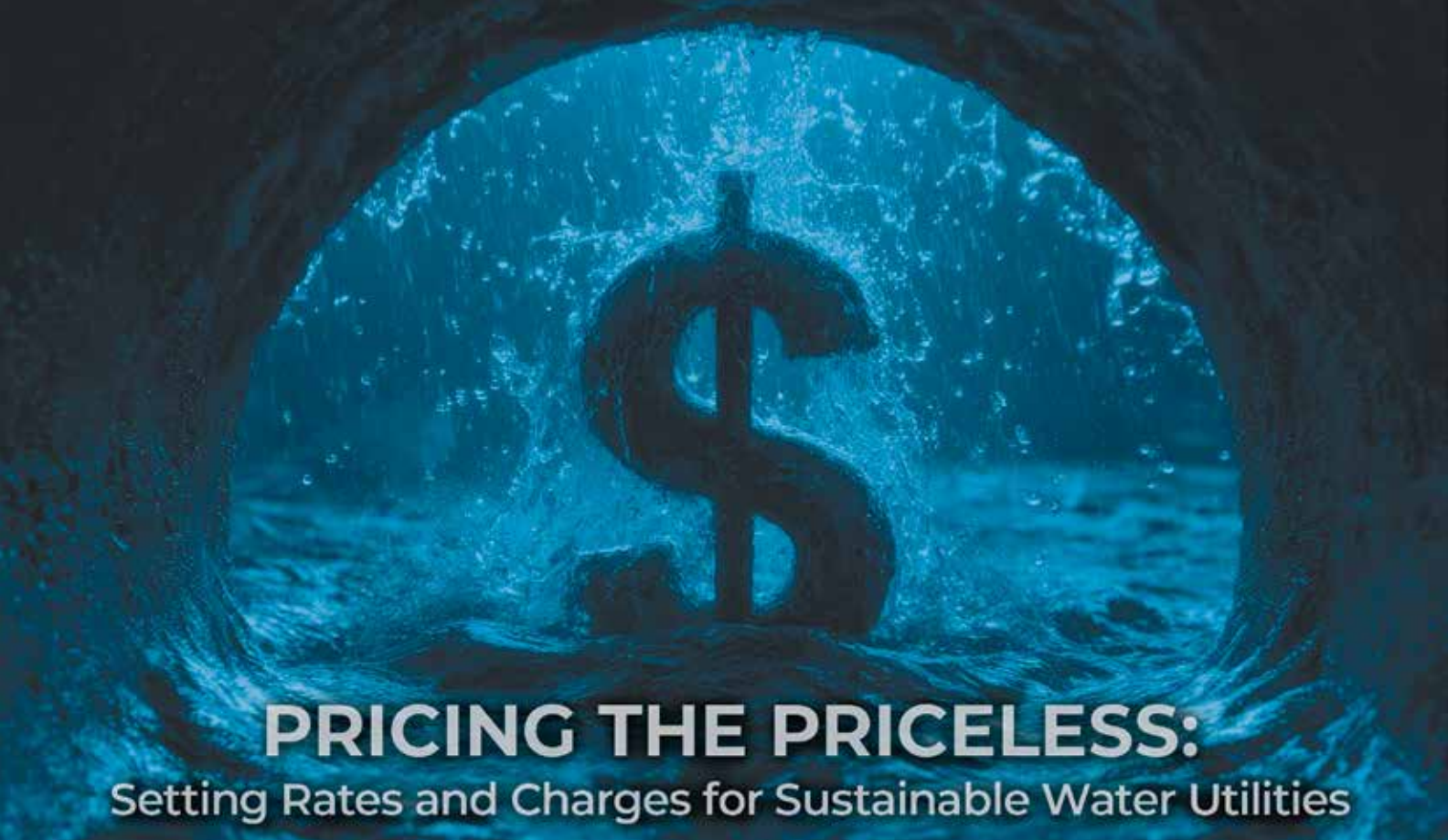
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PRICING THE PRICELESS:

Setting Rates and Charges for Sustainable Water Utilities

BY: MATT LANE, MANAGER- CHARGES OUTREACH & MODELING; GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY

A few years ago, my wife and I went on a week-long cruise from Miami to the Florida Keys to Cozumel, Mexico and back. We had the opportunity to do onshore excursions at each stop on the trip, and while we were docked in Cozumel, we signed up for a guided tour of some Mayan ruins, a snorkelling session at a private resort along the gulf coast and capped off the adventure with a group lunch at a local eatery. By the time we sat down in the open-air cantina, we were hot, tired and ready for a cold drink.

As we took our seats, servers were bringing out big pitchers of ice water to each table- some were colorful (think red and blue Kool-Aid) and others were just good old-fashioned drinking water. Next to the pitchers were stacks of disposable cups for guests to use. Looking around the place, I saw many of our tour mates taking a cup, filling it with water and drinking it without hesitation.

Now, I work in water. I know better. So, I ordered a beer. Not just because I wanted one – although let's be honest, it was vacation – but because I knew it would be safe.

My wife, though? She drank the "Kool-Aid." It was cold and looked refreshing. It seemed fine. But by the end of the day, she wasn't feeling so great, and by that night, she was really sick.

Now, it could have been the tacos, but I knew that it was the water.

That experience stuck with me. Not just because Jenna, my wife, was miserable and I felt helpless to make it better, but also because it reminded me how easy it is to take clean, safe drinking water for granted.

All of the tourists who came with us on this group excursion and drank water from those pitchers may have fallen victim to the assumption that the fresh water we consume here at home is effortless, on-demand, and freely available. But here's the thing – clean water doesn't just magically appear when you need it.

There is an entire network of interdependent systems behind the effort. Water Warriors like you: operators, engineers, planners, communicators and yes... finance people like me... think about how we develop, fund and sustain these systems.

How do we help our communities understand the value of their water? Let's explore what a utility does to help protect public health and ensure reliable, equitable, sustainable water by managing the operating costs, capital costs, and debt service costs of the system.

A water utility's finances are much like that of a family budget. Operating costs are like groceries and utilities – expenses that must be covered every month. Capital costs are similar to home improvements, such as replacing a roof or upgrading a furnace, which requires mid-to-long-range planning. Debt service is akin to a mortgage payment, ensuring past investments are paid off over time. And, just as a family should set aside savings for unexpected expenses, a sustainable utility maintains reserve funds for unforeseen challenges as well.

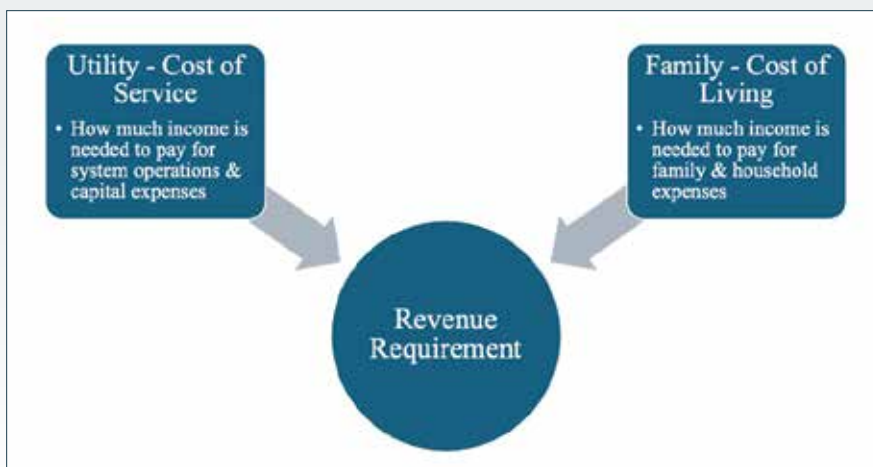
The similarity between these two types of operations can be referred to as the "Universal Costs Principle." This means that as a utility or a family incurs expenses, they must be offset by an adequate amount of revenue, regardless of scope and scale.



The commonalities between households and utilities do not end with the idea that “everyone needs money to operate.” In fact, some might argue that utilities, like households, should simply function within their means. But there is another pair of comparative concepts at play here – level of service and quality of life.

Thinking about how external forces impact both a utility’s level of service and a household’s (family) quality of life, consider how deferred maintenance and economic factors impact both.

Deferred maintenance refers to the practice of postponing repairs and upgrades to infrastructure due to financial constraints or prioritization of other projects. The utility sector often sees this with aging water systems that need replacement or repair, which can lead to increased risks of system failures and



higher emergency repair costs. Similarly, the state of disrepair of household appliances, roofs, water heaters, plumbing, etc., has risks for failures and emergency repairs as well.

Utilities must often raise rates to fund deferred maintenance projects, which is not ideal for large-scale projects since emergencies tend to be more costly. Investing in adequate maintenance and replacement under an improvement program tends to be more cost-effective. Households may have less flexibility to adjust income to cover emergency repairs and replacements. This means either a household will take on additional risk with short-term repairs, high-cost debts or reprioritizing of other assets. For both utilities and households, delaying maintenance can increase long-term costs by exacerbating system deterioration, ultimately requiring larger investments to repair.

Capital investment and asset maintenance are critical, but are not the only source of pressure for utilities and families. Consider that day-to-day operational costs are subject to a number of economic factors, as well. These include:

- **Inflation:** Rising costs for materials, energy, and labor can significantly impact utility expenses, requiring rate adjustments to maintain financial stability.
- **Population Growth:** Increasing demand from expanding populations necessitates infrastructure upgrades and increased operational costs.

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PRICING THE PRICELESS:

Setting Rates and Charges for Sustainable Water Utilities

- **Climate Change:** Severe weather events, droughts, and floods can impact water supply and treatment costs, leading to higher rates to ensure reliability and resilience.
- **Regulatory Changes:** New environmental or safety regulations can lead to costly system upgrades, influencing rates.
- **Economic Recession:** During downturns, water demand might decrease, but utilities still need to cover fixed costs, potentially leading to higher rates or deficits.

These factors impact utilities and households alike. Scale and scope might be disproportionate, but as costs go up, so too does the pressure to cover them. That pressure comes with a responsibility for long-term planning and transparency.

For a utility, effective communication with stakeholders is critical for successful rate implementation and public acceptance. Utilities must tailor their messaging to different audiences.

For wholesale customer communication, focus should be on:

- **Transparency in Cost Allocation:** Provide detailed explanations of wholesale charges, ensuring municipal and regional partners understand the cost-of-service methodology.
- **Regular Stakeholder Engagement:** Conduct workshops and meetings to discuss upcoming changes, cost projections, and potential impacts.
- **Data-Driven Justifications:** Use historical data, demand forecasts, and case studies to support pricing changes and build trust.

For retail customer communications, focus should be on:

- **Clear and Accessible Billing Information:** Ensure bills explain rate structures, consumption levels, and cost breakdowns.
- **Public Outreach and Education:** Implement social media campaigns, newsletters, and public meetings to educate customers on how

rates support infrastructure and water sustainability.

- **Affordability and Assistance Programs:** Provide information on financial assistance programs, tiered pricing benefits, and conservation incentives (if available).
- **Proactive Issue Management:** Address customer concerns through responsive customer service and transparent complaint resolution processes.

Water utilities face various challenges in rate and charge setting, including aging infrastructure that leads to rising costs for system replacements and upgrades; revenue volatility caused by decreased consumption due to conservation efforts; climate change impacts such as flood and drought; and emerging trends such as affordability

programs, dynamic pricing models, and alternative revenue sources to enhance financial sustainability.

By applying industry-standard frameworks like the ones discussed here, utilities can establish financially sound and equitable rate structures. Future efforts should focus on balancing financial sustainability with affordability and conservation to ensure resilient water service delivery. Additionally, strategic customer communication is essential for maintaining stakeholder trust and ensuring the successful implementation of rates and charges. Without adequate planning and financial stability, the safe, clean, on-demand tap water we take for granted could deteriorate, making the experience my wife and I had in Mexico a more common occurrence at home. 💧

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COMPETITIONS at AWWA ACE²⁵

This year's AWWA National Competitions were held in Denver, Colorado, during the Annual Conference & Exposition (ACE). Michigan had several teams representing our state from both Lansing and Battle Creek. The Board of Water & Light's (BWL) Lansing Lethal Ladies and Michigan Tappers represented our great state in the Pipe Tapping arena, one individual from BWL contended in the Meter Madness lineup, and the City of Battle Creek's men's and women's teams fought the ranks in Hydrant Hysteria.

Pipe Tapping preliminary times were fast and furious, trying to make it to the finals round. After the dust or water settled from preliminary tapping madness, both teams advanced to the finals round. It was the first time in over 20 years BWL men's team MADE IT TO THE FINALS. The competition was still tough, and the altitude didn't play nice. Both tapping teams finished within the top five; the ladies ended with 3rd place and the men with 4th.

The ladies' team members included Stasi Kreiner (Copper), Kelly Gleason (Cranker), Julie Maltby (Set-up), and Remecho Sanders (Coach). The men's team members included Richard (Mo) Garza (Copper), AJ Puente (Cranker), Jon VanDommelen (Set-up), and Brad Lundquist (Coach).

Also represented by BWL, the Meter Madness contender did not have quite enough umph to make it to the final round.

The Hydrant Hysteria competition was the busiest, with a long list of competing teams. Michigan's very own Battle Creek men's and women's teams tried to work their magic, and after the hydrants were completed and all the tools were put away, the men finished 9th and the women's team finished in 4th.

The ladies team members included Melissa Whitcomb, Amber Whitcomb and Tara Reniger (coach). The men's team members included Andrew Matthews, Ben Blaniar, and Mark Olmstead (coach).

Thank you for representing Michigan at AWWA ACE²⁵! Congratulations to all! 💧



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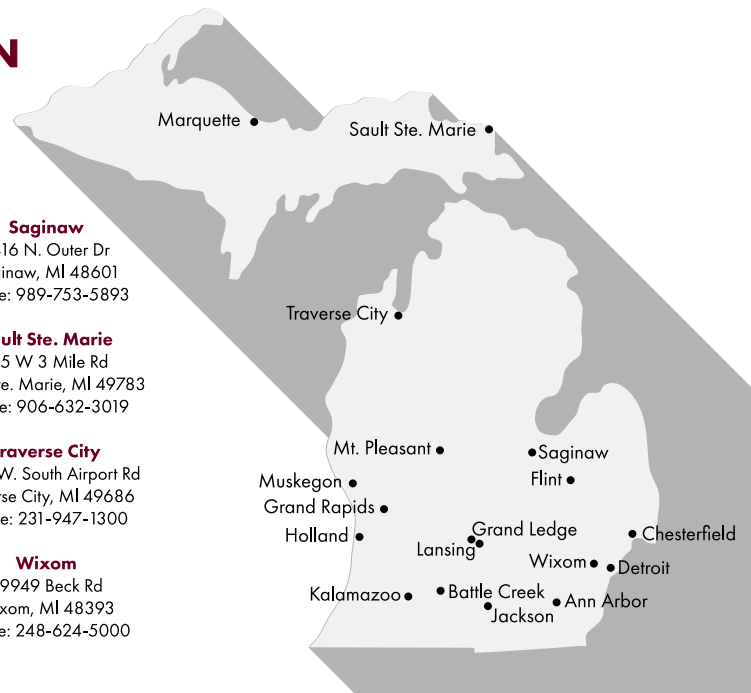
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MI-ACE 2025 Recap

87TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 9-12, 2025 | BLUE WATER CONVENTION CENTER | PORT HURON, MI



This year's conference brought together more than 400 attendees for 2 ½ days of education, networking, and celebration of the water profession.

Learning and Professional Growth

The conference featured more than 30 presentations delivered by over 60 speakers, providing a rich variety of sessions to meet the needs of professionals across the industry. Attendees engaged in thoughtful discussions, shared expertise, and explored practical solutions to today's water challenges.

Special Events and Networking

The week opened with the Welcome Reception and Trivia Night, hosted by the Young Professionals and Safe Water in Ecuador. It was a lively kickoff, blending networking with fun and friendly competition. The winning trivia team took home handmade ponchos from Ecuador,

adding a special touch to the evening. Wednesday evening was full of energy on the exhibit floor, where a sold-out hall of exhibitors showcased the latest innovations and services. Thank you to our exhibitors for making this possible – booth space sold out in record time! Attendees also gathered for the *Safe Water in Ecuador Auction*, a successful fundraiser supported by generous donations, ticket purchases, and enthusiastic participation.

Business Meeting and Leadership Recognition

The Annual Business Meeting gave members the opportunity to vote in new members of the Board of Trustees, shaping the future leadership of the Section.

At the George W. Fuller Lunch, outgoing leaders were recognized for their dedicated service, and the ceremonial gavel was passed to incoming Chair, **Molly Maciejewski**. Awards were also presented: the **Faust Award** honored

Angie Goodman and **Gary Wozniak** of Lansing Board of Water & Light, while the prestigious **Fuller Award** recognized **John Willemin** for his more than 30 years of service to the water industry and countless hours of volunteerism with MI-AWWA.

Recognizing Our Sponsors

Thank you to our sponsors for their generous contributions. Your commitment strengthens our community, enhances the conference experience, and ensures we can continue advancing the mission of MI-AWWA.

A Word of Thanks to Our Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of our Section, and this event would not have been possible without their time, talent, and energy. From sharing their expertise as speakers to assisting onsite, their contributions ensured a smooth, engaging, and memorable conference for all.

Recap



TUESDAY SPECIAL EVENT RECAP

MI-AWWA Annual Golf Outing

128 golfers teed off at Solitude Links Golf Course for the annual MI-AWWA Golf Outing. The day began with an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start, bringing together members and friends of the water industry for camaraderie, friendly competition, and supporting two great causes. Proceeds benefited Safe Water in Ecuador (SWIE), which brings clean drinking water to indigenous communities in Ecuador, and the Water Equation, which funds scholarships and leadership opportunities for young professionals.

Tournament Results

Winning Team – Score of 57

- Steve Berra
- Alando Chappell
- Shawn Eagle
- Rick Solle

Closest to the Pin

- Men: Ernie West
- Women: Paxton Quinn

Longest Drive

- Men: Adam Masfield
- Women: Mackenzie Chamberlain



A special thank you to our generous golf hole sponsors: Blue-Water Solutions, Certified Operator Services, LLC, Core & Main, EJ, Fishbeck, Jones & Henry, Peterson and Matz, SAK Construction, USALCO, USG Water Solutions, and Wade Trim.

Afterward, the group grabbed lunch at Raven Café, a local favorite with an Edgar Allan Poe twist. With its book-filled décor, cozy atmosphere, and hearty menu, it was the perfect spot to relax, connect, and recharge before diving back into the conference.

Fort Gratiot Lighthouse Tour

For those looking for a change of pace, a group tour headed to the historic Fort Gratiot Lighthouse, Michigan's oldest operating lighthouse. The highlight was climbing the light tower, where everyone enjoyed sweeping views of the St. Clair River and the Blue Water Bridge.



AWARD WINNERS

Evelyn Maiuri, MI-AWWA Student Member



Lansing Board of Water & Light Awarded Professional Excellence – Organization Award 2025

Awarded and recognized by the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA) for its ongoing, innovative efforts of providing education to the public about reducing exposure to lead in drinking water, the Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL) Community Water Advisory Council has received this year's Professional Excellence – Organization Award.

Since 1885, the BWL has provided water to Lansing and the surrounding areas, originally to support fire suppression and sanitation. Over time, it became increasingly evident that supplying a reliable source of clean, safe drinking water was essential to the health and well-being of the community.

The BWL's Community Water Advisory Council was established in 2019 in response to Michigan's 2018 revision of the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). However, because the BWL had already removed all known active lead service lines by 2016, the council shifted its focus toward reducing exposure within homes and buildings.

Upon learning of this recognition, Council Chair Angie Goodman expressed their surprise and gratitude.

"Our council has continued to work hard to develop new meaningful ways to provide education regarding lead," Goodman said. "Their creativity and out-of-the-box thinking deserve recognition."

Since the council's expansion, they have successfully developed brochures and surveys for new homeowners, as well as their Drinking Water School Flushing Program which was highlighted in their recognition for this honor.

"Our council had ongoing conversations about ways to help reduce lead exposure in drinking water – especially for children, who are most vulnerable," Goodman said. "That's where the idea for a school-based flushing program began, focusing on elementary students in grades K-3."

The council found that when faucets go unused overnight, lead levels can increase. However, running cold water for just 30 seconds can significantly reduce those levels – often to non-detectable amounts. This became the foundation of an interactive initiative that encourages young students to take part in protecting their health.

Although working within the water industry can be challenging at times, it can also be extremely rewarding, as seen in the council's development of the flushing program.

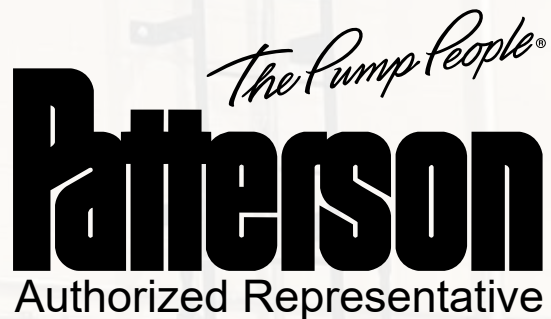
"Be ready to collaborate – this work is a team effort," Goodman shared. "If you care about protecting health and a critical resource, we all rely on it. This is a career where you can make a real difference."

Goodman also hopes this recognition serves as a reminder to the public:

"Even after all lead service lines are replaced, internal plumbing can still pose risks."

Through its dedication, creativity, and commitment to public health, the BWL's Community Water Advisory Council continues to set an inspiring example for water utilities across the state – creating a lasting impact on the community it serves.





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MUNICIPAL WATER PUMPS

Angie Goodman Awarded Richard Husby Public Awareness Award 2025

Awarded and recognized by the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA) for significant accomplishments in promoting awareness of water supply among the community through public education, Angie Goodman proudly receives this year's Richard Husby Public Awareness Award for her continued efforts to keep Lansing's drinking water clean.

Currently serving as Senior Water Quality Administrator at the Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL), Goodman entered the field with a strong interest in science. She began her journey at BWL as a Chemist in the Environmental Laboratory.

"At the time, I was drawn to the science side of things – but the more I learned, the more I realized how deeply connected water is to public health, trust, and community well-being. That's what really pulled me in," she shared.

When Goodman was notified of her achievement, she admitted the recognition came as a complete surprise.

She stated, "I do this work for our customers, not for recognition. So when I found out I had been selected, I was completely shocked but deeply honored. It's incredibly meaningful to be acknowledged for something I care so much about."

One of the key factors in Goodman's recognition was her efforts in water education for young students – particularly

the development of school-based flushing programs aimed at increasing awareness about lead in drinking water designed for grades K–3, which blends education with empowerment.

"With grant funding, we developed a fun and easy process that empowered students," she explained. "Each week, a student is chosen as the Water Safety Captain. They come in first thing in the morning, grab their badge and timer, and head to the designated drinking water faucet. They run the cold water at full flow, flip the timer, and once 30 seconds is up, they shut it off and move the Tommy Tap Water magnet to mark the day's flush."

She added, "It's a small step that makes a big difference – and it teaches kids to take an active role in their health and water safety."

Goodman's supervisor, Lori Myott, added to this sentiment by praising her deep rooted passion in education concerning water.

"She consistently seeks out creative and innovative approaches to communicate even the most complex or sensitive issues in an engaging and approachable way," Myott said. "The school flushing program is just one of the many examples that highlights Angie's commitment to public awareness and education."

Goodman's strength in customer service and natural ability to connect with people have become foundational to her

work in public awareness. She views water not only as a scientific concern but as a deeply human one.

"This work means a lot to me, both professionally and personally. Water is life – we all depend on it every single day. Yet most people, young and old, rarely think twice when they turn on the faucet and clean water flows out. But it only takes one bad day for that trust to be shaken. If that bad day ever comes, we want them to already know who we are, to trust us, and to feel confident that we're doing everything we can to make it right – quickly and transparently."

For those considering a career in public outreach, through the water industry or another passion, Goodman says this: "First – just do it. Don't overthink it. Second –and just as important – be the customer. Put yourself in their shoes."



Angie Goodman



Christine Spitzley – Service Recognition as Board Director 2022-2025



Leadership Recognition:
(Past Board Trustee) **Doug Scott**;
(Past Council Chair) **Samarhia Giffel**

Recognized but unable to attend:

Adam DeYoung – service recognition as Chair of the Conference and Recognition Council

Joel Martinez – service recognition as Chair of the Education and Training Council

Frank Williams – service recognition as Chair of the Member Recruitment and Engagement Council

City of Allegan Awarded Exemplary Source Water Protection Award 2025.

Awarded and recognized by the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA) for his exceptional contributions and impact in Michigan's water and his leadership within the Allegan Wellhead Protection Committee, Doug Sweeris and the team at the City of Allegan have been honored with this year's Exemplary Source Water Protection Award.

Sweeris, the city's Water Utilities Director, has a long-standing and personal connection to water. As an avid fisherman and having run a fishing charter business in college, his unique experiences have sparked a career in the water industry.

Sweeris began his tenure with the City of Allegan in 1993 as an operator at the wastewater plant, eventually becoming its superintendent. In 2015, he transitioned to the superintendent of the water plant, and in 2017, after the water distribution and sewer collection systems were transferred to his department he took on his current role as Director of Water Utilities.

"My passion for clean water started with a passion for being outdoors, hunting, fishing, farming," Sweeris shared. "I look at the community I live and work in and I strive to provide the community with the best water possible."

Being recognized as an outstanding public water system that has created and

implemented exemplary source water protection programs, the Allegan Wellhead Protection Committee has performed exceedingly well, focusing on education and outreach.

Sweeris described receiving the award as a "surprise moment" for both himself and the team.

"Submitting the application, you always hope that yours is selected, but then you think of how many other applications are submitted and all the good source water programs that other communities operate," Sweeris explained. "Then we got the notification that our program was selected to receive the award, and this gives another level of 'We do have a good source water protection program.'"

The city became exceedingly motivated to strengthen its water protection after learning a local misconception: that Allegan's water came from the nearby Kalamazoo River.

"This idea that our own residents have that their water comes from the [Kalamazoo] river made me feel that they did not know about Allegan water," Sweeris explained. "This creates a drive that I want to make people aware of where our water comes from. To maintain this pristine source, we need to take care of it."

Sweeris's leadership and passion have not gone unnoticed. His supervisor, Joel Dye, commended his hands-on approach and dedication.

"Doug leads by example and encourages all employees to participate," Dye said.

"While some may want to sit back in their office and manage from afar, Doug is out in public, always willing to engage and talk water with anyone."

Sweeris would like to thank his wife and son for their constant support in his endeavor to promote and protect clean water.



Bridgefest 2024, Zac Kortz, water plant manager and wellhead protection mascot (Michaela Kleehammer).



Represented by Doug Sweeris.

Joe Buthker Awarded Operator Meritorious Service Award 2025

Awarded and recognized by the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA) for his passion, precision, and impact in the City of Muskegon's water operations, Joseph Buthker has been honored with this year's Operator Meritorious Service Award.

With a strong foundation in chemistry, Buthker's entry into the water industry began with encouragement from his neighbor. A tour of the City of Muskegon's water plant quickly sparked his curiosity, changing the trajectory of his career.

"Seeing firsthand how drinking water is treated and delivered gave me an appreciation for a product I had used my entire life without thinking much about it," Buthker said.

He began his career in 2014 as a Water Plant Operator, quickly developing a lasting passion for the field. Over the next decade, he immersed himself in both operations and maintenance, gaining valuable experience and building a well-rounded understanding of what it takes to run a water treatment facility effectively.

Through his commitment and dedication, Buthker was eventually promoted to Water

Plant Superintendent and eventually to his current role as Public Works Superintendent. In this position, he oversees the city's water distribution system, highway maintenance, and equipment operations.

"I am enjoying the process of developing a deeper understanding of water distribution while making meaningful contributions to its operations and maintenance," he said.

Buthker's efforts extend beyond day-to-day responsibilities. He has invested in staff development, enhancing

(continued on page 32)

preventive maintenance programs, and contributing to capital improvement planning – all of which contributed to his recognition by MI-AWWA.

Upon receiving the award, Buttker expressed both gratitude and humility.

"In public service, and especially in the water industry, so much of the work happens behind the scenes," Buttker explained. "That's why having this work recognized truly means a great deal to me. However, I don't see this as a personal achievement, but as a reflection of the team effort behind it."

His supervisor, Dan VanderHeide, echoed this statement.

"While we see Joe's hard work and attention to detail here in Muskegon every

day, it's great to know that others in the field recognize it as well," VanderHeide said. "Joe has a passion for water quality and efficient operation, and he works closely with supervisors and staff to spread that work ethic throughout our water department."

When asked what advice he'd offer to those considering a career in the water industry, Buttker emphasized the value of hands-on experience.

"Take every opportunity to step in when problems arise," he advised. "These moments often serve as some of the best learning experiences and can significantly enhance your knowledge of what it takes to run and maintain a water system."

Joseph Buttker continues to lead by example – serving as a hands-on, forward-thinking leader who brings integrity and excellence to every facet of his work.



Joe Buttker

Kelly Gleason Awarded Professional Excellence – Individual Award 2025

Awarded and recognized by the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA) for her outstanding contributions to the Lansing community and her passionate involvement within the Section, Kelly Gleason has been awarded this year's Professional Excellence – Individual Award.

Gleason, an Environment Compliance Specialist, started her career in water in 2007 when she was first hired at the Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL). Her commitment to the industry deepened in 2012 when she became a part of the Section in 2012, initially serving on the Competitions Committee. For the past six years, she has served as Editor of the *Water Works News*, connecting and informing citizens all across Michigan.

Upon learning of the award, Gleason expressed complete gratitude.

"I've never done this work for recognition – I just try to do my job well and support others along the way," she shared. "So being selected for the Professional Excellence – Individual Award was both an honor and a reminder that the effort and care we put into our work really can make a difference."

Gleason went on to elaborate that this award is not only a personal milestone

but a reflection of the collaboration and support she has received from colleagues throughout her career.

The Professional Excellence – Individual Award emphasizes leadership, innovation, and commitment to excellence, all qualities that Gleason exemplifies. Whether it's leading editorial reviews, seeking and writing articles as Editor, or volunteering at Section events, Gleason remains a standout in her role within MI-AWWA.

"To me, leading by example means being dependable, honest, and putting in consistent effort every day," Gleason said. "I make sure to do my work thoroughly and with integrity, so my teammates know they can trust me to get things done right."

Lori Myott, Gleason's supervisor, commended her contributions to the Section, which truly capture the spirit of this honor.

"Throughout her career in the water industry, she has demonstrated outstanding leadership and an unwavering commitment to supporting MI-AWWA and its mission," Myott explained. "Her knowledge and strong commitment to protecting and preserving our clean water resources are truly impressive"

In addition to Gleason's responsibilities in the Section, as an Environmental Compliance Specialist, she is deeply

engaged within public health by ensuring facilities comply with state and federal water quality regulations. Her day-to-day work involves managing detailed reports, conducting inspections and sampling, and collaborating with plant operators, engineers, and lab staff.

"Public health relies on integrity, accuracy, and accountability – values I hold deeply," she said. "Knowing that my work can help protect people and the environment by ensuring standards are met gives me a strong sense of purpose."

Gleason encourages those entering the field to stay curious, embrace learning, and never underestimate the importance of communication and teamwork.

She shared, "if you're passionate about making a real difference, this is a great industry to be part of."



Kelly Gleason

Matt Weldon Awarded MI-AWWA Chuck Van Der Kolk Volunteer Award 2025

Recognized for his outstanding contributions and lasting impact within the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA), Matt Weldon has been honored with this year's Chuck Van Der Kolk Volunteer of the Year Award.

Having grown up around construction, Weldon was drawn to a hands-on career he could relate to. In his early twenties, he applied for a position with Plainfield Township's water department, where one of his first tasks was painting all 635 fire hydrants – each one, as he puts it, "up close and personal."

Today, Weldon serves as Manager of Water Distribution for the township, playing an active leadership role across multiple councils and committees, including the Education and Training Council, Distribution Practices Committee, and Competitions Committee.

On top of his commitment to these initiatives, Weldon has shared his expertise as a presenter at many events, such as the Joint Expo and Operators Day, UP Spring Water Conference, and the Gaylord Regional Seminar – even

stepping in on less than 24 hours' notice to fill a last-minute speaker spot.

Truthfully, Weldon's eager desire to be a reliable volunteer is who he is.

"I have always been involved in some type of volunteerism either through my church or on my county fair board, even through fraternal organizations," Weldon explained.

Weldon also added that his work as a volunteer has not only been tremendously rewarding, but also motivation for him to become even better.

"When the Operators Day committee gets the response report from evaluations letting us know how people liked the presenters and the overall program, it can make you feel good about what we did," Weldon said. "That same report has also been a 'kick in the pants' to do better next year."

Despite his behind-the-scenes nature, Weldon was both surprised and humbled when he learned he had received the award – especially given his personal connection to Chuck Van Der Kolk, the award's namesake.

On the other hand, Weldon's supervisor, Rick Solle, couldn't be any less surprised.

"It made perfect sense as he has become very involved in numerous

committees," Solle said. "Matt has been a mentor to many in our industry, and this award is well deserved."

With over forty years of experience in the industry, Weldon continues to encourage others to get involved in the work that has meant so much to him.

"With the effort that you put into Michigan Section AWWA, it will always give you back more," Weldon said. "So, no matter how young or old you are, please volunteer."

Weldon's reliability, generosity, and dedication have made him a go-to resource and an inspiration throughout the Section. His leadership and selfless service make this recognition rightfully earned.



Matt Weldon

Raymond J. Faust Award Gary Wozniak, Lansing Board of Water and Light



George Warren Fuller Award John Willemin, Fishbeck



Pictured with past Fuller Award winners: Patrick Staskiewicz, Molly Maciejewski, John Willemin, Christine Spitzley, Barbara Marczyk, and Ken Kawahara

Rachel McNamara Awarded Young Professional Award 2025

Awarded and recognized by the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA) for her notable contributions and impact in the Section and her efforts within the Deep End cohort, Rachel McNamara has been honored with this year's Young Professional of the Year Award.

McNamara began her journey in the industry in 2021 as a Project Engineer for the City of Grand Rapids Water System. During the peak of COVID-19, she spent a year working in hazardous water and air pollution monitoring, searching for a job that didn't involve spreadsheets and working from her parents' home office.

"Those days, I was applying to anything I could find and the City just happened to be the first to respond back. I actually didn't know the position was in Water/Sewer until my interview," she explained. "You could say I had to shoot from the hip when I was asked an interview question about pump asset management."

As she grew into the role, so did her appreciation for the field, not just for the systems behind safe water, but for the people who operate them.

"Mike Hielkema, Hillary Caron, our Field Operations crew, Plant Operators, Sewer Asset Technicians – I learned

what I did because of you and you made my career in water so fun and rewarding," McNamara said.

Through her efforts in developing the Deep End, a cohort dedicated to connecting emerging professionals in the industry with experienced professionals to pass down their knowledge, played a pivotal role in her recognition.

"I saw a need that AWWA could meet by creating a training program catered to the emerging professional that would lay the foundations for a well-rounded understanding of water and sewer utility operations using the organization's own senior members as Instructors," McNamara shared.

Upon receiving news of the award, McNamara was shocked, soon overtaken by appreciation as well as hope for future leaders in the industry.

"This organization gave me a unique opportunity to build something meaningful that I hope will benefit the next generation of water professionals," she shared. "Positive progress is achieved when young professionals are given a voice to share their perspectives and drive change."

Colleague Hillary Caron praised McNamara's leadership and ability to create an inclusive environment in the field.

"Rachel is building a legacy. The ripple effect of her work, especially through

The Deep End, will benefit the water industry in ways we're only beginning to see," Caron explained. "She's fostering a culture of curiosity and inclusivity for new professionals, all while reinforcing the importance of understanding the full One Water cycle. Her impact is lasting and transformative."

Throughout the early stages of creating the Deep End, McNamara was guided by this mantra:

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood, and don't assign them tasks and work. Instead, teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

With her ingenuity, passion, and inclusive spirit, Rachel McNamara remains an inspiring and invaluable asset to the water industry. 💧



Rachel McNamara

Life Member Status – 30 cumulative years of membership and at least 65 years of age

Donald DeGrand
Donald Detemple
Michael Drewyor
Ramzi El-Gharib, P.E.
James Lahti
M. Lunn
David Miller

John Paquin
Richard Schafer
Michael Slomski
Mark VerBerkmoes
Brian Washburn
Randall Roost



Hillary Caron Awarded AWWA Chuck Van Der Kolk Award 2025

Hillary Caron has been recognized with the Chuck Van Der Kolk Award at the Association level by the American Water Works Association (AWWA). She received this special honor at this year's AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE) held in June at the Colorado Convention Center in downtown Denver.

The Chuck Van Der Kolk Award is presented to an individual AWWA member who successfully recruits more new members than any other member. This award showcases not only a commitment to community-building but also a dedication to strengthening the legacy of AWWA.

Caron, now the Director of Education & Workforce Training for MI-AWWA, began working within the water industry back in November 2017 as a temporary lab technician with the City of Grand Rapids Water System. In 2018, she was hired as a full-time Chemist, marking the start of an evolving career in water.

Although with an impressive commitment to the industry, Caron expressed that her journey getting involved in the field was not a magical story, rather she fell into it.

"My educational background is not water-related, yet I stay in this field because of the ability to be in

an industry that intersects two of my deepest passions, education and the environment," Caron said.

When Caron learned about her achievement, she was surprised. She admitted her internal struggle with dealing with impostor syndrome – the persistent feeling of self-doubt despite accomplishments – and said, "I truly did not believe I was worthy of this honor."

After rereading her award letter several times, she came to terms with this recognition feeling proud to be able to contribute to the water industry in such a meaningful way.

As this award acknowledges member recruitment, Caron attributes her success with her passion to help individuals find a career that fits their values.

"The beauty of the water industry is that behind every drop of clean water, there are hundreds of career opportunities, each with its own unique pathway," she explained.

In support of Caron's recognition, her advisor Christine Spitzley noted that this award is especially well-deserved.

"Like Chuck, she deserves this award as someone who truly embodies the spirit of our organization – a welcoming community where professionals can grow their careers, build a supportive network of colleagues, learn from one another, and give back in meaningful ways," Spitzley said. "By recognizing the

power of shared support, she cultivates a culture where others are inspired to contribute and grow."

Spitzley also highlighted Caron's creativity and ability to build strong relationships as key strengths that position her as a leader in the industry and role model for the next generation of AWWA members.

To those interested in pursuing a career in public health and especially water, Caron offers thoughtful advice:

"Ask yourself these two questions, 'What drives you?' and 'What are your core values?' Once you have identified those aspects of your identity, start exploring. Be patient and don't give up. You will start to find themes, and soon enough, your true passions will come forward, leading you to a career you find meaningful," she said.



Hillary Caron

Gold Water Drop – 50 cumulative years of membersh Jon Bloemker



Silver Water Drop – 25 cumulative years of membership



**Joseph Bonhomme
Peter Brink
Mark Daneff
Michael Deneen
Derek Gajdos
Paul Glinski
Don Heck
Brian Hettinger
Jon Keim
Michael Shaffer
Timothy Sikma
Piper Tittle
Jeff Warren
Allen Wilson**



2025 Edward Dunbar Rich Service Awards

Michael Bolf, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
Otis Butler, City of Detroit
Eric Charles, City of Detroit
Brian Esparsa, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
Scott Gillhespy, City of Grand Rapids
Keith Hewitt, Charter Township of Meridian
Melvin Hightower, City of Detroit
Younes Ishraidi, Charter Township of Meridian
James Austin, City of Detroit
Luke Jankowski, Bay County Department of Water and Sewer
Terrence Lewis, City of Three Rivers
Lawrence Olson, City of Grand Rapids
Joseph W. Richardson, City of Detroit
James Rule, City of Grand Rapids
Mark Vanderlaan, City of Grand Rapids



Raymond J. Faust Award

Angie Goodman, Lansing Board of Water and Light – Pictured with Board Chair, Molly Maciejewski and Faust Committee Chair, William Fritz

Executive Director's Award

Frank Williams, Peerless Midwest

High School Scholarship

Matthew Smith

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WINNERS!

2025 BEST TASTING WATER IN MICHIGAN

While the competition was hard, the water was not. A full slate of Regional Champions brought their finest amalgamation of hydrogen and oxygen to show off at the Blue Water Convention Center. City of Lowell, Mancelona Area Water and Sewer Authority, East Lansing-Meridian Water & Sewer Authority, and the City of Marquette brought a mason jar of their artisanal, source to tap, drinking water determined to prove that they have the best. They all survived

and advanced out of their Regional Competitions in the Spring and arrived in Port Huron with dreams of being the Best in The Great Lakes State. Who would prevail? Which System would be crowned 2025's Best Tasting Water in Michigan? Only time and the judges would tell.

An unrelenting panel of judges brought to bear their discerning palates. It is difficult to imagine a more fluid competition. Judges poured over the details of aroma, appearance, and

taste. In the end, a sudden death, Pepsi-challenge-style second sampling would determine the Champ.

For the third year in a row, the Best Tasting Water in Michigan can be found North of the bridge... in the City of Marquette. They will represent the Section well at AWWA ACE in Washington, D.C. in June of 2026. Congratulations to the hardworking craftsmen and women who pour themselves into every single drop of 2025's Best Tasting Water in Michigan, the City of Marquette!



NETWORKING LAWN PARTY

The Networking Lawn Party brought together friends and colleagues for an evening of fun along the Saint Clair River. Guests enjoyed delicious food, refreshing

drinks, and the incredible walk-around magic of Josh Sawdon. Laughter and friendly competition filled the lawn with games like cornhole, Jenga, and Shut

the Box – some lucky winners even took the games home! It was the perfect mix of great company, stunning views, and unforgettable entertainment.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

We are deeply grateful to our generous sponsors for their continued support of the Michigan Annual Conference and Events (MI-ACE). Your partnership helps make this conference a powerful space for connection, inspiration, and advancement in higher education leadership across Michigan. Your contributions enable us to create meaningful experiences for attendees and drive positive change in our communities. Thank you for making MI-ACE possible! 💧

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Lansing Center, Lansing, MI

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Operator Days will feature three dynamic tracks: two focused on operators and one on leadership.
Registration coming soon!

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Pre-registration is encouraged but not required to walk the Exhibit Hall.
Those who register onsite will be required to pay a small entry fee.

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Reserve your 10'x10' booth space starting October 2025.
Booth space sold out within one month of going on sale last year – don't miss your chance!
Reserve early to secure your spot.
Sponsorship opportunities are available for exhibiting companies only.

JOIN US!

This event is co-presented by the Michigan Section –
American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA)
and the Michigan Water Environment Association (MWEA). 💧

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS MUST-ATTEND EVENT!

Thank You to Our Dedicated Volunteers and Welcome to New Leadership

The strength of MI-AWWA lies in the dedication and leadership of our volunteers. As we reflect on another successful year, we extend our deepest thanks to those who have served in critical roles, many going above and beyond their original terms. Your time, energy, and commitment have helped shape our organization and advance our mission.

We are grateful to the following individuals for their service:

- **Rick Solle**, Chair
- **Molly Maciejewski**, Chair-Elect
- **Gary Wozniak**, Past Chair
- **Christine Spitzley**, Director
- **Jaime Fleming**, Secretary/Treasurer
- **Angie Goodman**, Board Trustee
- **Doug Scott**, Board Trustee
- **Adam DeYoung**, Conference and Recognition – Council Chair
- **Samarhia Giffel**, Communications – Council Chair
- **Joel Martinez**, Education and Training – Council Chair
- **Frank Williams**, Membership and Recruitment – Council Chair
- **Kelly Gleason**, Editor in Chief, *Water Works News*

Your leadership has made a lasting impact, and we thank you sincerely for your service.

Following the Annual Board Meeting at MI-ACE, we're pleased to announce the newly elected and appointed individuals stepping into leadership roles.

Congratulations and welcome to the following members of the 2025 MI-AWWA Leadership Team:

- **Molly Maciejewski**, Chair
- **Angie Goodman**, Chair-Elect
- **Rick Solle**, Past Chair
- **Jaime Fleming**, Director
- **Tom Smith**, Secretary/Treasurer
- **Elliot Smith**, Board Trustee
- **Frank Williams**, Board Trustee
- **Zack Hampton**, Membership and Recruitment - Council Chair
- **Matt Lane**, Communications - Council Chair
- **Doug Scott**, Conference and Recognition - Council Chair
- **Gary Wozniak**, Education and Training - Council Chair

We look forward to a year of progress, collaboration, and continued excellence under your guidance. Thank you for your willingness to lead, and for helping to ensure a strong future for MI-AWWA. 💧

THANK YOU!



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MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATE

Hey everyone – I'm Zachary Hampton, and I'm excited to share that I'll be stepping into the role of Chair for the Michigan Section's Membership Council!

If we haven't met yet, I'm a Project Manager out of OHM Advisor's Detroit Office, and I've been an AWWA member since 2019. Over the years, I've held several positions on several committees/councils and have had the opportunity to work with some incredible people who are passionate about what they do – and that's exactly what drew me to chair the Membership Council in the first place.

I'm taking over this position from **Frank Williams**, who has chaired the council through a period of growth for the section. This transition was official as of the **87th Annual Conference and Exhibits**

"THE MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL PLAYS A BIG ROLE IN HELPING OUR SECTION GROW AND STAY CONNECTED, AND I'M HONORED TO BE PART OF THAT EFFORT."

in Port Huron, and I'm really looking forward to what's ahead. The Membership Council plays a big role in helping our section grow and stay connected, and I'm honored to be part of that effort.

I'm also thrilled to share that **Joseph Callahan**, Project Engineer for the City of East Lansing, has joined me as **Vice Chair** of the Membership Council. Joe brings great energy and insight, and I'm excited to team up with him to support our members.

Our goal is to make sure every member – whether you're brand new or have been around for years – feels welcome, supported, and part of something meaningful. I'm always open to ideas, feedback, or just a good conversation about how we can make MI-AWWA even better.

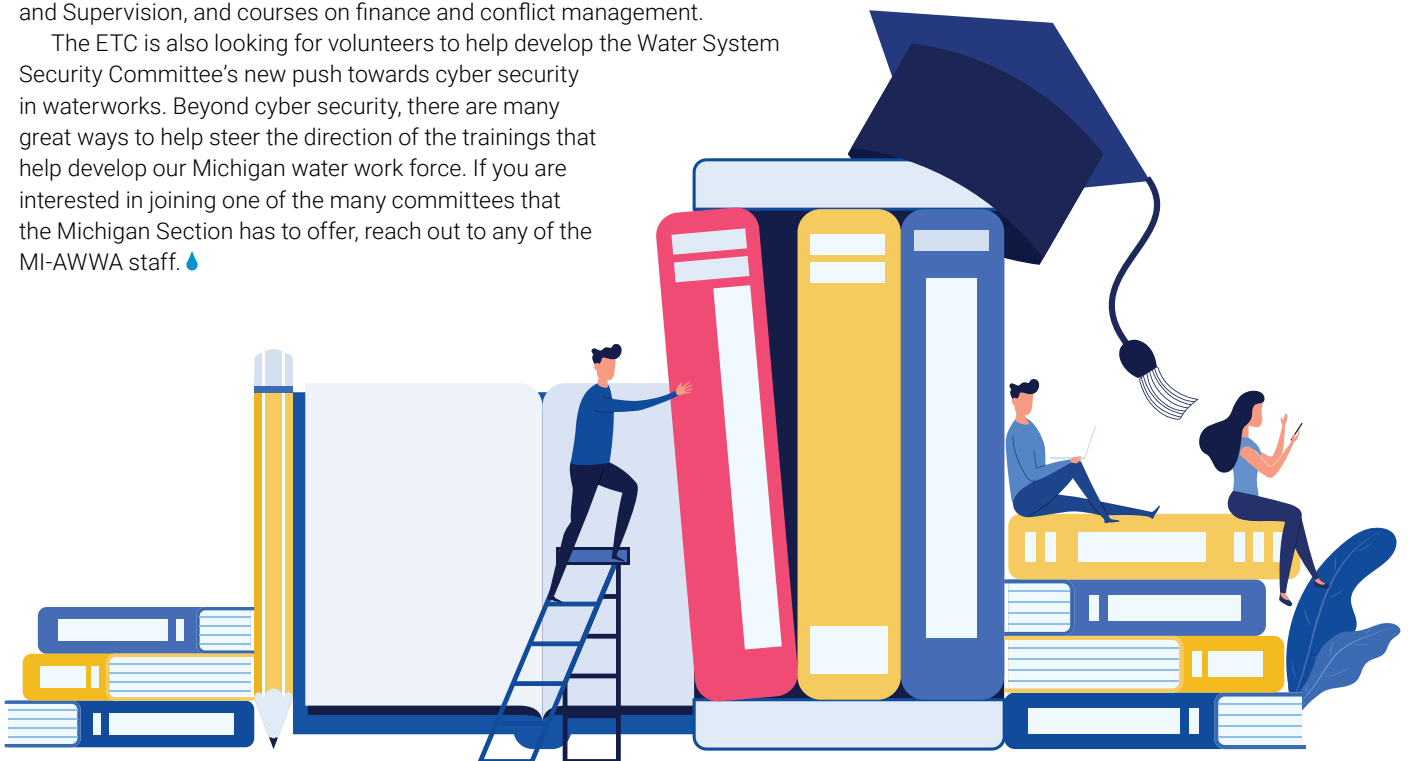
Looking forward to connecting with many of you soon!

Zachary Hampton –
Zachary.hampton@ohm-advisors.com. 💧

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL (ETC) UPDATE

The Education and Training Council (ETC) will be rolling out new and updated trainings in the upcoming year. These include Applied Hydraulics, Management and Supervision, and courses on finance and conflict management.

The ETC is also looking for volunteers to help develop the Water System Security Committee's new push towards cyber security in waterworks. Beyond cyber security, there are many great ways to help steer the direction of the trainings that help develop our Michigan water work force. If you are interested in joining one of the many committees that the Michigan Section has to offer, reach out to any of the MI-AWWA staff. 💧





COMMUNICATION COUNCIL

The Communication Council is excited to announce its latest episode of the Section's podcast 'The Current'. In this episode we explore Michigan's Upper Peninsula with 'Tales from the UP'. We encourage you to listen via Buzzsprout.com, MI-AWWA's The Current. Our podcast

hosts and guest host, bring amazing energy while interviewing special guests. We hope you enjoyed MI-ACE this year and look forward to your views on the conference. Simply submit a short article on your favorite parts of the conference and be featured in Water Works News.

You can also submit pictures to be featured on our social media platforms. As always, we will keep you updated via *Water Works News*, *Water Weekly Updates*, and our social media platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn, and X. – Samarhia Giffel, Communications Chair. 💧



CONFERENCE AND RECOGNITION COUNCIL UPDATE

The Conference and Recognition Council is seeking members to join our efforts in planning and recognizing excellence within the MI-AWWA community. We focus on ensuring the success of MI-AWWA's key events, including the Annual Conference, where we bring together water professionals to share knowledge, network, and collaborate. Additionally, we oversee the Association Service Awards, the Best Tasting Water competition, and various competitions that highlight the talent and dedication within our sector. We also manage the Manufacturers Advisory and Water Operator Continuing Education fund programs, aimed at supporting professional development and recognizing outstanding contributions. If you're interested in helping shape the future of MI-AWWA events and recognition programs, we invite you to join one of our committees. Reach out to us to get involved and make a lasting impact! 💧



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YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Calibrating Confidence & Curiosity – a YP Perspective

The AWWA YPs recently had the opportunity to take a trip to the McWane Ductile Iron Pipe Foundry in Coshocton, Ohio, where, in addition to the tour, we were able to sit in on a presentation on generational attitudes in the utility workplace given by Roy Mundy. In that presentation, Roy emphasized that today's young professionals seek employment where they can feel competent and make positive contributions. This highlights a core disconnect for young or new professionals: early in a career, we don't exactly know how to do our job well yet, and we aren't aware of all the things we still need to learn. To put it bluntly, unconscious incompetence. We don't know what we don't know. This may look like a bleak start to a career, but Roy's research shows that young professionals bring unique skills to an aging workforce.

Confidence: YPs bring new, valuable skills to a workforce that can use them!

Young and new professionals: Using our unique skills in confidence can help us feel more competent and valuable in the workplace. Workforce studies have repeatedly shown that millennials and Gen Z workers are skilled in multitasking. And, contrary to traditional thought, their form of multitasking does not measurably impact the quality of finished work (although yes, it will take longer to finish an individual task when multitasking with several others). Young professionals are also remarkably technologically gifted. In the utility field, young professionals tend to pick up on the intricacies of navigating and using SCADA systems, CAD software, modeling software, and others quickly, and will occasionally find more efficient or innovative ways to use them than those who have been working with them for years. Bottom line for those working with YPs: Utilize the unique gifts that YPs bring – encourage and direct YPs to work in an environment where they can put these skills to best use.

Curiosity: YPs need to recognize knowledge gaps and seek to fill them!

I once had a manager give me very simple advice: If you ever think someone might be doing something wrong, just ask them to walk you through what they're doing. Oftentimes, this



resulted in what I thought I knew being turned on its head (and many times helped me save face in front of a Contractor who otherwise would have called me a punk kid who doesn't know anything). I think this advice applies to more than just construction inspection, where I initially used it. Confidence in our abilities needs to be calibrated and balanced with a genuine thirst for knowledge. Those who have worked in positions with utilities, engineering firms, contractors, or municipalities for many years offer a wealth of knowledge that's readily available. Just ask! The first step towards being competent in your career and contributing meaningfully is to start building a knowledge base. Bottom line for YPs: It's not a sign of weakness to ask questions. Have the continual curiosity needed to lean on "seasoned" (our polite YP committee word) professionals for their help. One day, we'll end up being the "seasoned" ones!

¹Mundy, R.W. (2022) 'Managing Generational Differences in the Utility Workplace', Journal of New England Water Works Association, 136(4). ISSN:0028-4939. 💧

"YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ARE ALSO REMARKABLY TECHNOLOGICALLY GIFTED. IN THE UTILITY FIELD, YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TEND TO PICK UP ON THE INTRICACIES OF NAVIGATING AND USING SCADA SYSTEMS, CAD SOFTWARE, MODELING SOFTWARE, AND OTHERS QUICKLY, AND WILL OCCASIONALLY FIND MORE EFFICIENT OR INNOVATIVE WAYS TO USE THEM THAN THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH THEM FOR YEARS."

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COUNCIL UPDATE

Several MI-AWWA members participated in Legislative Day in Lansing on May 21 to discuss water policy priorities with state legislators. On June 17, GAC Chair, Sara Rubino, testified before the House Health and Human Services Sub-Appropriations Committee in support of continued funding that helps utilities maintain stable revenue and improve infrastructure. The GAC is actively monitoring and participating in stakeholder workgroups

regarding several pieces of legislation impacting Section members, including the reintroduced Water Affordability bill package, the Polluter Pay package, and Large Water Withdrawal legislation. The GAC also contributed feedback to EGLE regarding enforcement of Cross Connection Programs and is developing comments for EGLE regarding changes to SRF scoring criteria. The next GAC meeting will take place during MI-ACE 2025 in Port Huron, September 9–12. 



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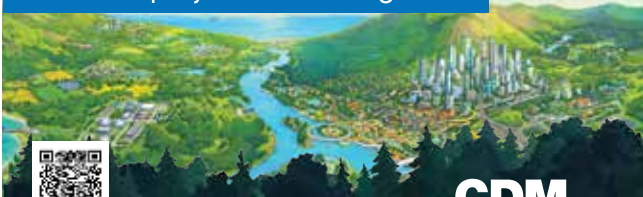
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Members who joined from April 18 – August 31, 2025

Corey Almas, Charter Township of Bloomfield

Azeez Balogun

Dennis Baranik, Birchtech

Mitchell Blum, City of Eastpointe

LaTanya Bradford, Great Lakes Water Authority

Shelby Byrne, Tetra Tech

Jose Castro, Segura

CETCO

Mackenzie Chamberlain, OHM Advisors

Steven Collick, Forsyth Township Water

Jada Flores, Redford Township Water Department

Ricardo Garcia

Jennifer Garza, Spicer Group Inc.

Ronald George, Plumb Tech, LLC

Julie Gorajczyk, Forberg Smith

Sean Grant, Great Lakes Water Authority

Brandon Green, Great Lakes Water Authority

Zach Guerrero, Spicer Group Inc.

Matt Hallett, City of Madison Heights Water Dept.

Richard Hensel, Hensel Associates, Inc

Spencer Herman, PVS Technologies

Michael Hopkins, Scope Services Inc

James Johnson, Worth Township DPW

Neil Johnston, Village of Beverly Hills

Noah Karberg, Grand Traverse County Dept of Public Works

Joseph Kelley, City of Ecorse

Lucy Knuppenburg, Charter Township of Shelby

Joseph Lambert, City of Birmingham

Nathan Larsen, Village of Howard City

Evelyn Maiuri, Grand Valley State University

Melissa McCabe, Great Lakes Water Authority

Jacob Mead, Village of Springport

Craig Miller, City of Buchanan

Jade Mitchell, Michigan State University

Jill Mondschein, City of St Joseph

Bo Moore, East Lansing-Meridian Water and Sewer Authority

Shawn Mullaly, City of Jonesville

Cooper Nicholas, HydroCorp

Bryant Osikowicz, Great Lakes Water Authority

Patrick Richardson, Grand Haven Charter Township

Tomas Saenz

Emily Satawa, Holland Board of Public Works

Scope Services Inc.

Sean Senkbeil, Redford Township Water Department

James Thompson, Grand Rapids Water Department

Eric VanLaanen, Core & Main

Allyson Walcott, Fishbeck

Kristi Walsh, Grand Haven Charter Township

Trey Williams, Fishbeck

Mark Windus, Scope Services Inc

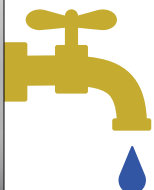
Shaghayegh Yaghmaie, Stantec Consulting Services

Kalpana Yendluri, Great Lakes Water Authority

Joe Young, Village of Lake Orion 

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in Memoriam



Thomas Newhof, PE

The Michigan Section of AWWA mourns the loss of Thomas Newhof, PE – a thoughtful leader, generous mentor, and devoted advocate for safe and sustainable water systems. For more than five decades, Tom's contributions shaped not only Michigan's physical infrastructure, but also the professional community that supports it.

Tom was not a man who sought the spotlight, but his influence was unmistakable. He brought a calm clarity to complex problems, a collaborative spirit to every meeting, and an unwavering belief in the power of public service. His long and active involvement in AWWA reflected his dedication to both the present and the future of the industry. From his tenure on the Board of Trustees (1985–1988) to his role as Board Chair in 1993, and later as Co-Chair of the Historical Preservation Committee (2002–2017), Tom continually invested his time, expertise, and heart in the organization and its mission.

Recognition followed him not because he pursued it, but because he lived out the values that AWWA holds dear. Over the years, Tom was honored with the Raymond J. Faust Award (1988), Life Member status (1994), the George Warren Fuller Award (1999), the Jack A. Borchardt Award (2008), and ultimately induction into the Michigan Water Industry Hall of Fame (2016). These honors reflect not only professional achievement, but also the respect and admiration of his peers.

Though his resume was impressive, it was Tom's presence – steady, insightful, and kind – that colleagues remember most. Whether leading a project, mentoring a young engineer, or preserving the stories of those who came before him, Tom left things better than he found them.

We are grateful for his enduring legacy and extend our heartfelt condolences to all who knew and loved him. 💧



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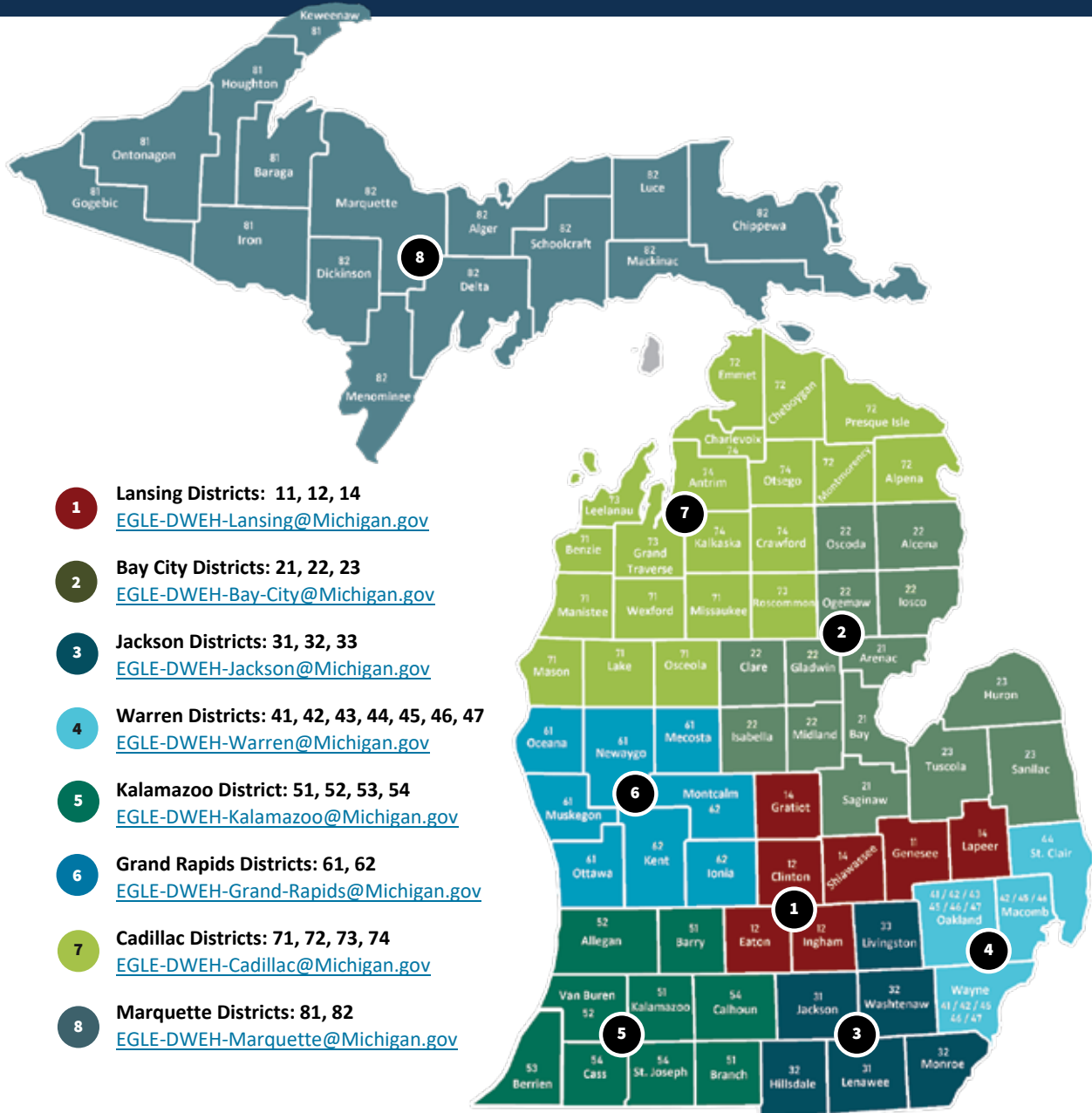
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Justina Fedewa, EQA: 517-899-4815

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District 12 - Steven Cummins, Engineer: 517-914-0933

District 13 - Geneva Vanlerberg, Engineer: 517-819-2398

District 14 - Kurt Swendsen, Engineer: 517-525-1487

2 Bay City District Office

Joseph Reinke, District Supervisor: 989-326-7709

Rebecca Kaiser, EQA: 989-326-6949

District 21 - Marissa Drobitch, Engineer: 517-242-6455

District 22 - Shane Mudd, Engineer: 517-388-3582

District 23 - Kristin Bailey, Engineer: 989-280-1291

MHCs* - Sue Huttinger, EQA: 989-220-8640

3 Jackson District Office

Taryn Simon, District Supervisor: 517-257-7465

Beverly Soave, EQA: 517-977-3422

District 31 - Md Abdullah Al Masud, Engineer: 269-569-4131

District 32 - Sean Brown, Engineer: 517-937-6799

District 33 - Meghan Austin, Engineer: 517-331-4128

4 Warren District Office

Vicki Garon, District Supervisor: 248-228-5134

Sabrina Fouché, EQA: 586-929-2429

Darrell Strong-Staples, Field EQA: 586-636-2483

District 41 - Tiffany Yusko-Kotimko, Engineer: 586-817-9120

District 42 - Kyle Zimes, Engineer: 248-820-7789

District 43 - Doug Loper, Engineer: 248-504-9142

District 44 - Yunfeng Li, Engineer: 586-504-7163

District 45 - Shamsul Fahim, Engineer: 586-206-0234

District 46 - Devany Bosetti, Engineer: 586-588-6062

District 47 - Zeba Rahman, Engineer: 586-765-5089

5 Kalamazoo District Office

Heather Bishop, District Supervisor: 269-330-9153

Stacy Wilson, EQA: 269-491-3107

District 51 - Vacant

District 52 - Chunyan He, Engineer: 269-569-1655

District 53 - Kory Kowalski, Engineer: 269-998-3165

District 54 - Katelyn Reyes, Engineer: 269-216-1691

MHCs* - Mark Kraenzlein, EQA: 269-491-8693

6 Grand Rapids District Office

Jeni Bolt, District Supervisor: 517-331-5161

Jeremy Klein, EQA: 616-250-1053

Stephanie Alvara, Engineer: 616-893-1594

District 61 - John Sidwell, Engineer: 616-290-6383

District 62 - Justina Carver, Engineer: 616-745-2982

MHCs* - Brian Esparsa, EQA: 616-307-0006

7 Cadillac District Office

Kevin Lemmer, District Supervisor: 517-614-8632

Carey Pauquette, EQA: 231-878-2931

Zach Prause, EQA: 231-942-1069

District 71 - Vacant

District 72 - Bob Weir, Engineer: 231-590-2050

District 73 - Jamie Wade, Engineer: 231-878-8592

District 74 - Taylor Quillan, Engineer: 231-878-1279

8 Marquette District Office

Tom Flaminio, District Supervisor: 906-236-9746

Lori Schultz, EQA: 906-869-6624

District 81 - Mike Westra, Engineer: 906-869-8823

District 82 - Amy Douville, Engineer: 906-236-4277

EQA = Environmental Quality Analyst

*MHC = Manufactured Housing Communities

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COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLY PROGRAM

Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division

Community Water Supply Section Manager: Kris Philip, PhilipK@Michigan.gov | 517-284-6518

Lead & Copper Unit

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Michigan.gov/CommunityWater

TECHNICAL, MANAGERIAL, AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

EGLE DWEHD Staff

There is a fundamental, but little-known, requirement of the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act (325.1004(2)) that water supplies shall have adequate technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capacity. It is easy to picture adequate TMF capacity as the three legs needed to hold up a water supply and how the lack of any of the three would cause the supply to fail. Although assessing TMF can sometimes be challenging, EGLE examines various indicators, such as whether the water supply has adequate water rates, qualified staff, and conducts necessary maintenance on a routine basis. EGLE regularly identifies water supplies that struggle to meet their water quality goals, level of service goals, and even their regulatory obligations. If your water supply is struggling with obtaining or maintaining TMF capacity, there are several options available to you.

Water supplies can utilize partnerships to enhance TMF capacity and better protect public health. Water supply partnerships take many different forms, including agreements as simple as emergency mutual aid, sharing equipment, and joint chemical purchases. On the other end of the spectrum, partnerships can be comprehensive, including the formation of a regional water authority or decommissioning a water source to purchase from another utility. On paper, these types

of partnerships make a lot of sense due to the economies of scale through shared services, consolidation of resources, and more favorable borrowing capacity. In practice, however, there are challenges anytime two or more political jurisdictions must negotiate the terms of a mutual agreement.

Another resource available to water supplies struggling with TMF capacity is technical assistance from Technical Assistance (TA) providers. TA providers are grant-funded organizations that work directly with water supplies to address their TMF capacity issues. TA providers can provide a variety of services, including SOP development, operator training, leak detection, developing flushing programs, asset management plan assistance, lead and copper rule compliance assistance, rate studies, board training, and more. There are a variety of providers, including state, regional, and national organizations with different expertise available to help.

For additional resources on Capacity Development, visit Michigan.gov/CommunityWater and select Capacity Development under Programs and Activities, or contact Ariel Zoldan, EGLE's Capacity Development Specialist at zoldana@michigan.gov or 517-599-8684. 💧

OPERATOR TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION EXAM PREPARATION MATERIALS

EGLE OTCU

Are you preparing to take an operator certification exam in November and looking for resources to help you study? The Operator Training and Certification Unit has published an enhanced exam preparation and study section on its website. The operator training and certification unit has prerecorded course videos related to drinking water treatment and distribution processes for community water supplies. These video libraries are intended for drinking water operators and personnel studying for their drinking water certification exams. These videos contain subjects such as rules and regulations, corrosion control, disinfection, membrane filtration, dosing calculations, etc. Practice exams and study guide materials can also be found for all three of our license type areas (F-complete treatment, D-limited treatment and S-distribution). You can find the materials by going to the main operator training and certification website and scrolling down the page to "Exam Study Material."

If you have any questions about these resources or other available resources, please reach out to Martin Morales, Environmental Engineer for the Operator Training and Certification Program, at moralesm1@michigan.gov or 517-525-8032. 💧





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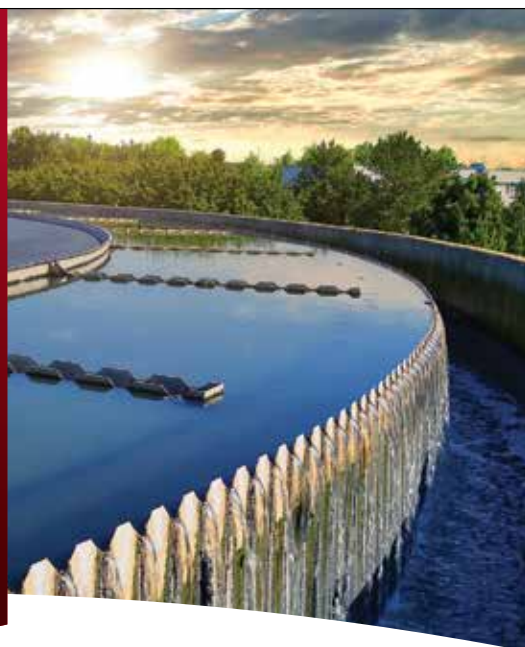
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TRAINING CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	1	2 Lab School for Water Operators (Ann Arbor)	3 Lab School for Water Operators (Holland)	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Livonia Fall Regional Seminar (Livonia)	15 Lansing Fall Regional Seminar (Lansing)	16 Gaylord Fall Regional Seminar (Gaylord)	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 MWEA/ MI-AWWA Annual Maintenance Seminar (Bath/Lansing)	30	31	1

NOVEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 MWEA/ MI-AWWA Lab Practices Seminar (Bath/Lansing)	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24	25	26	27	28	29

2026

The 2026 calendar is not yet finalized.

Dates and events will be announced in December at mi-water.org.

SPRING TRAININGS

The Spring 2026 registration will be open in January 2026.

MICHIGAN water works

NEWS

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