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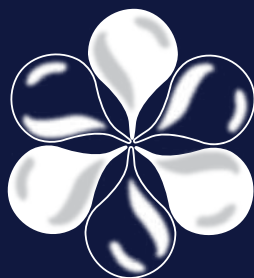
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Material may be submitted through the website at www.mi-water.org/publications.

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WINTER 2026



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BUILDING RESILIENCE IN EVERY SEASON

Molly Maciejewski

In Michigan, winter is a season of quiet reflection, a time for blankets, fires, and hot chocolate. For water systems, winter can be quiet as well, but it can also mean thawing frozen services and responding to an uptick in water main breaks, often during holidays or in extreme weather. While water demand may be low, the physical demands on distribution operators – working in the harshest conditions to keep water flowing – are high. Both our people and our systems must be resilient, ready to face any condition.

The U.S. EPA requires all water systems serving populations of 3,301 or more to maintain a Risk and Resilience Assessment (RRA) and an Emergency Response Plan (ERP). In a nutshell, the RRA identifies and assesses the risks to a water system and the corresponding resilience of the system. The ERP incorporates the findings from the

RRA and outlines strategies and actions for emergency response. Both plans must address cybersecurity. Large systems (population 100,000 or more) and medium systems (population > 50,000) were required to update in 2025, while smaller systems (population 3,301–49,999) must update their RRA by June 30, 2026. ERPs must be updated within six months of the RRA update. For more information on the RRA or ERP requirements, visit <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/awia-section-2013>.

While updating these plans can feel tedious, the plans are essential tools to ensure preparedness for any situation. Equally important is exercising the ERP, testing it through practice. Holding an emergency exercise or periodically setting aside time during a staff meeting to talk through an emergency scenario will help teams strengthen their readiness.

Consultants and vendors can play a key role in emergency preparedness both by assisting utilities in the planning process and by being positioned to provide support during an actual event.

The Section's is equally committed to support its members in these efforts. The Government Affairs Council advocates for policies and funding that strengthen water systems. The Education and Training Council develops training focused on asset management and emergency preparedness. The Membership Council works to attract members from diverse backgrounds to build fortitude within the Section. The Communication Council keeps our members informed and connected, and the Conference and Recognition Council ensures that Section seminars and conferences highlight presentations and case studies on system resilience, emergency preparedness, and response.

Over the past decade, water systems have faced constant change and challenges such as: PFAS, lead service line replacement, increasingly sophisticated cybersecurity threats, emerging contaminants like microplastics, and competing capital investment needs. Through it all, utilities have continued to deliver safe, reliable drinking water. We adapt on the job, innovating and evolving, all while working to maintain and grow public trust.

Whether protecting source water, strengthening infrastructure, preparing for emergencies, or bolstering financial stability, we must remain resilient. Emerging contaminants, shifting federal policies, and unforeseen events will continue to test the sector. Our responsibility is to ensure that no matter what happens, our systems, and our Section, remain strong and ready to face any adverse condition. 💧

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MICHIGAN'S WATER FUTURE: MI-AWWA'S 2025 BUSINESS PLAN

Jaime Fleming, Director

As Director of the Michigan Section, I'm proud to share highlights of our 2026 Business Plan, a roadmap that reflects our commitment to protecting and advancing Michigan's water sector. This plan is built around six strategic goals from our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, and it's packed with actionable items that Section leadership, staff, and our many incredible volunteers will be working on throughout the year.

Engaging the Public

One of the top priorities is helping people understand the true value of water. We'll work towards a statewide campaign to educate the public about why water matters and why infrastructure investments are essential. The goal is to create engaging materials, infographics, videos, or brochures, and work with local governments and utilities to spread the message. While this effort will stretch beyond 2026, the groundwork starts now.

We will also focus on building relationships with community organizations that share our goals, identifying potential partners, attending events, and laying the foundation for future collaborations.

Advocating for Change

Advocacy continues to be important work for MI-AWWA. We will maintain our partnership with Midwest Strategies to identify key policy objectives and will be meeting with lawmakers at events like the AWWA Fly-In and our state legislator gathering. We will help facilitate tours and other events to give policymakers a closer look at the challenges we face. In 2026, the foundation will be laid for standardizing metrics and improving access to water-



related data. Robust data is a key element of telling the story of water.

Strengthening Infrastructure

Infrastructure resilience is critical. MI-AWWA will be supporting communities in asset management and helping reestablish MI WARN, Michigan's mutual aid network. We're planning webinars and other opportunities to share best practices and success stories that can help others prepare for emergencies.

Growing and Training Our Workforce

Attracting and retaining talent is a long-term goal across the water sector. New training initiatives kick off in 2026. MI-AWWA will be identifying skill gaps, developing education options that bridge those gaps, and creating feedback loops to keep our content fresh and relevant.

Driving Innovation

Innovation is all about collaboration. We will map out opportunities across industries like energy and agriculture aimed at sharing ideas. We'll also be connecting with

regulators to build stronger partnerships and align on shared goals.

Ensuring Financial Sustainability

On the financial side, the focus will be on creating public education resources about the full cost of water. We hope to collaborate with subject matter experts to organize workshops on long-term planning strategies like rate setting and capital investment.

Measuring Our Impact

To track our progress, we've set five key performance indicators: membership retention and growth, net income, member engagement, and stakeholder collaborations. These metrics help us stay focused and ensure we're making a real impact.

This plan is more than a checklist, it's a reflection of our values, our vision, and our commitment to Michigan's water future. I'm excited to be part of it and look forward to the work ahead.

If you'd like to get involved, reach out to info@mi-water.org to find the volunteer opportunity that fits your interest, expertise, and available time commitment. 💧



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THE EVOLVING FACE OF VOLUNTEERISM

Jonelle Moore, Executive Director

Across every corner of our Section, we've seen the same pattern emerge, people are busier than ever. The demands of daily work, family, and community life seem to multiply by the week. Finding time to add one more meeting, event, or project can feel impossible. Yet somehow, our volunteers continue to show up, not because it's easy, but because they believe deeply in what we do.

Volunteerism is changing. The ways people give their time and energy look different than they once did. Some can

no longer serve in traditional roles or attend every meeting, while others contribute through short-term projects, virtual participation, or behind-the-scenes support. These shifts don't reflect a lack of dedication; they reflect an evolving balance between personal capacity and professional calling.

For organizations like ours, this evolution presents a challenge to adapt. It encourages us to reimagine how we engage volunteers and to value every contribution, regardless of its size or form. A single hour spent mentoring a young

professional, presenting at a workshop, or lending insight to a council discussion can have a lasting impact. The strength of our Section has never been measured by how many hours someone serves; it's measured by the difference they make when they do.

The success of the Michigan Section doesn't rest on one person, one council, or one event. It is the result of hundreds of individuals choosing, again and again, to invest in the future of the water industry. These are people who carry their passion from the plant to the boardroom, from the classroom to the conference, and from their workplaces back into their communities. They are the reason this Section thrives.

I am profoundly grateful to stand beside such individuals. Every volunteer who takes time away from their daily responsibilities to plan trainings, review policies, or mentor the next generation brings something irreplaceable to our collective mission. Your dedication, in all its forms, keeps our Section moving forward, even when the world feels busier than ever.

Thank you for continuing to choose this work. Thank you for sharing your expertise, your energy, and your belief in the importance of clean, safe, and sustainable water. Together, we remind our industry, and ourselves, that progress is powered not by abundance of time, but by abundance of heart. 💧

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RESHAPING TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Volunteers and staff are working hard to reshape the way we look at training, focusing on programs that

are more engaging, interactive, and directly connected to the real-world needs of water professionals. In 2026, MI-AWWA's training lineup will

feature more hands-on learning, scenario-based discussions, and opportunities to connect with peers in meaningful ways.

We've taken a deep dive into your feedback, and that's exactly why we're reimagining education to better serve you and your professional development. Get ready for a year of fresh ideas, dynamic sessions, and experiences that will inspire growth, spark innovation, and strengthen Michigan's water community.

Rooted in Purpose, Growing in Leadership

On November 7, 2025, MI-AWWA proudly hosted its first-ever Leadership Forum, marking an exciting milestone in the Section's ongoing commitment to strengthening leadership and collaboration. The Forum brought together Board members, council chairs and vice chairs, and staff for a day filled with reflection, connection, and purpose-driven planning.

Leaders explored our shared responsibility to the Association, the purpose of our councils, and how each contributes to MI-AWWA's mission and Business Plan.

The event created an inspiring environment for board, councils, staff perspectives to come together, fostering alignment and understanding across the Section.

The afternoon's Goal-Setting Workshop sparked amazing engagement as councils worked collaboratively to define clear, actionable, and impactful goals guided by thoughtful facilitators and challenge questions.

A special thanks goes out to all who participated and supported this event. Your energy and dedication made the first Leadership Forum an incredible success. 💧



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RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE: NAVIGATING CONFLICT IN WATER WORK

Conflict is inevitable in water work. A tough operational decision, a heated data discussion, or a difference of opinion on priorities can arise at any moment. But what if those moments could become your greatest opportunities?

Handled well, conflict is not a roadblock. It is a chance to listen, collaborate, and strengthen your team. Every conversation with colleagues, regulators, or the public is an opportunity to improve communication, make better decisions, and deliver outstanding service to the community.

**“HANDLED WELL,
CONFLICT IS NOT A
ROADBLOCK. IT IS A
CHANCE TO LISTEN,
COLLABORATE,
AND STRENGTHEN
YOUR TEAM.”**

Learning to navigate disagreements effectively is like learning to work with the current instead of against it. With the right skills, tension becomes energy that drives innovation, aligns teams, and prepares your system for future challenges.

MI-AWWA's "Navigating Workplace Conflict: Skills for Water Professionals" training in May 2026 gives you practical tools to turn difficult conversations into productive outcomes. You will learn strategies for communication, collaboration, and decision-making that build trust within your team and with the community you serve.

If all of this feels overwhelming or intimidating, consider registering for

the course. It is designed to help you handle tough conversations with confidence, strengthen your team, and serve your community more effectively.

When the next conflict arises, don't see it as a hurdle. See it as a chance to lead, collaborate, and keep your system flowing smoothly. 💧



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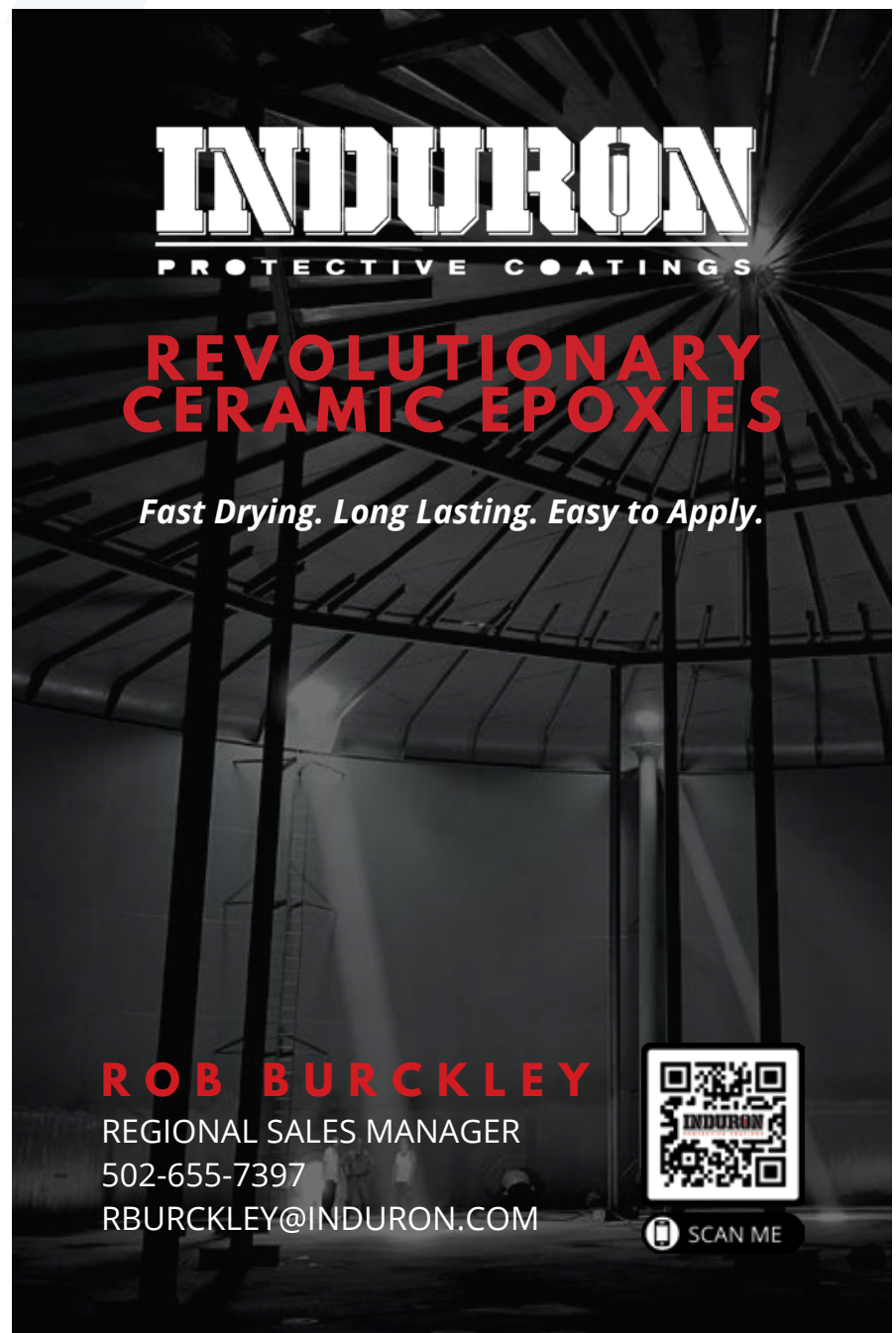
From the Gales to the Pipes: U.P. Water at Work

November 2025 marked 50 years since the loss of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*. Communities across the Upper Peninsula were reminded of the power and unpredictability of the water that shapes life above the bridge. For today's water professionals, the anniversary offers a moment to reflect on how far we've come in understanding, managing, and respecting this shared resource.

Across the U.P., utilities are investing in resilience and renewal. Major water infrastructure projects are underway from Sault Ste. Marie to Ironwood, improving the health and safety of the communities served. The City of Houghton received \$1.5 million for water line replacements, and the Village of Baraga secured \$1.8 million to renovate and repair one of its oldest lagoons at the wastewater treatment site. Regional partnerships, including the Superior Watershed Partnership, are helping small communities strengthen coastal infrastructure and protect drinking water intakes from changing lake conditions.

"ACROSS THE U.P., UTILITIES ARE INVESTING IN RESILIENCE AND RENEWAL."

Fifty years later, the *Fitzgeralds'* story still echoes across Superior, reminding us that those who work with water, whether on the lake or beneath our streets, share a common purpose: keeping communities safe, resilient, and connected through every wave and every season. 💧



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2026 EVENT CALENDAR

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JANUARY 2026

DATE	EVENT	CITY
	Applied Hydraulics (12 week course)	Jackson
9	MI-ACE Abstract Submissions Open	
12	Spring Training Registration Opens	
16	MI-AWWA Board Meeting	Virtual
30	Spring Water Works News – Articles DUE to MI-AWWA	

FEBRUARY 2026

DATE	EVENT	CITY
1	MI-AWWA Board Nominations Open	
2	Award and Recognition Nominations Open	
10-11	Joint Expo & Operator Days w/MWEA	Lansing
10	Career Roundtable at JEOD	Lansing
26	Effective Communication Strategies & Conflict Management for Water Professionals	Grand Rapids

MARCH 2026

DATE	EVENT	CITY
3	MI-ACE Abstract Submissions Close	
6	Lab School for Water Operators	Holland
8-14	National Groundwater Awareness Week	
10	Maintenance: Pumps and Valves	Wixom
18	Exam Prep: D and F Licenses	
22	World Water Day	
22-24	AWWA Young Professionals Summit	Charlotte, NC
25-26	MI-AWWA Young Professionals Summit	Detroit
31	MI-AWWA Board Nominations Close	
TBD	Exam Prep: S License	South Haven

APRIL 2026

DATE	EVENT	CITY
1	Volunteer Appreciation Month	
7-8	U.P. Spring Water Conference	Harris
9	Management and Supervision	Lansing
14	Regional Water Seminar	Grand Rapids
14-15	AWWA Water Meters Fly-in	Washington, D.C.
15	Regional Water Seminar	Waterford Township
15	Asset Management Seminar w/MWEA	Bath
22	Principals of Finance	Ann Arbor
24	MI-AWWA Board Meeting	Ann Arbor
27-29	Association RMSO	Indianapolis, IN
29	Michigan Field Day	Mason

MAY 2026

DATE	EVENT	CITY
3-9	Drinking Water Week	
4	MI-ACE Exhibitor Booth Sales Open	
5-6	The Borchardt Conference	Ann Arbor
TBD	EGLE Drinking Water Certification Exam	
8	Summer Water Works News – Articles DUE to MI-AWWA	
12	Ethics for Water Professionals	Grand Rapids
15	MI-AWWA Leadership Retreat	
29	Award and Recognition Nominations Close	

JUNE 2026

DATE	EVENT	CITY
8	MI-ACE Attendee Registration Opens	
21-24	ACE26 – Washington D.C.	Washington D.C.





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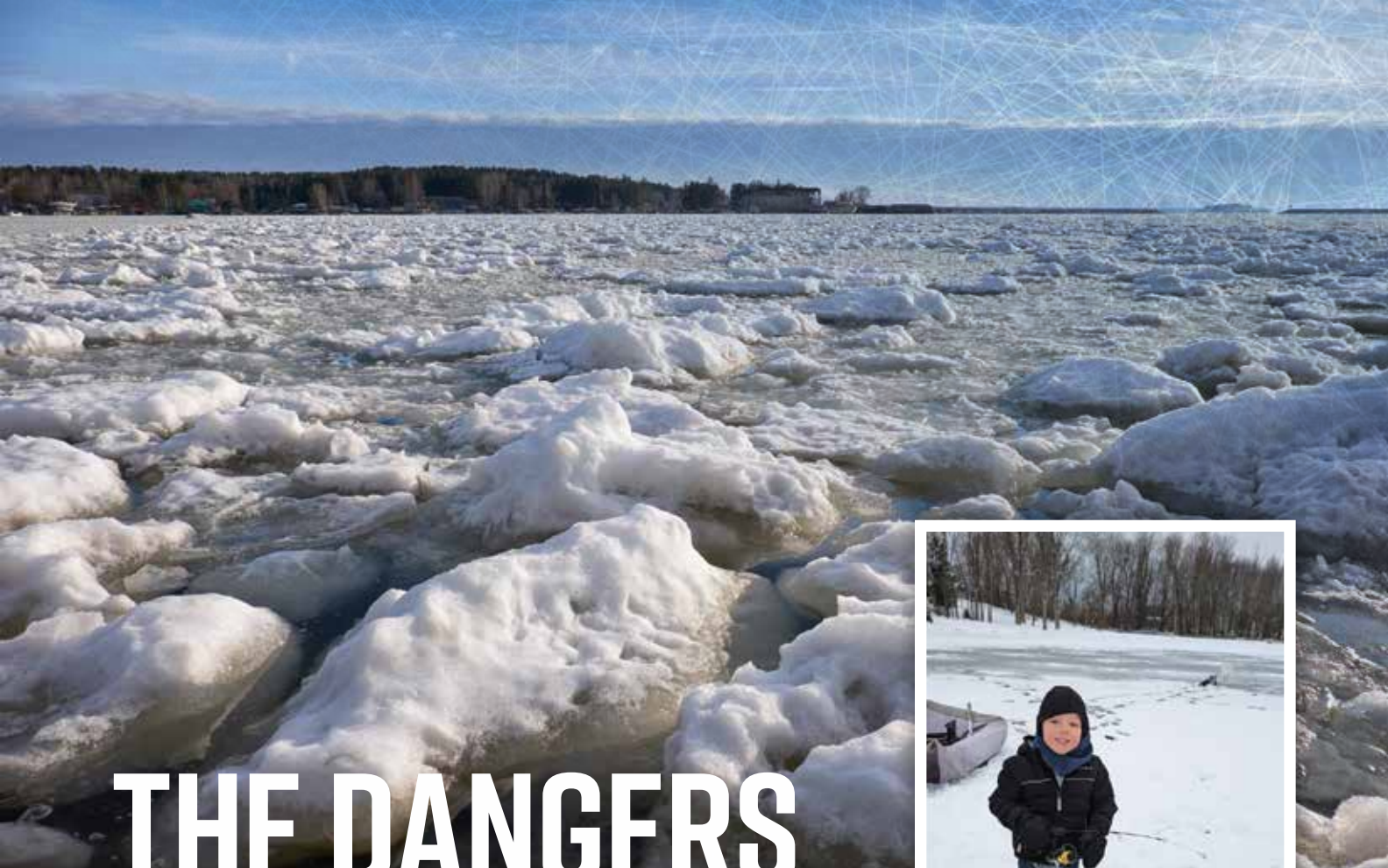
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THE DANGERS OF FRAZIL ICE

Gary Wozniak, PE, S1, D2, F3 Education & Training Council Chair



During mid-winter, we may or may not look forward to ice forming on the lakes. As water temperature drops and approaches the freezing (crystallization) point, it becomes less dense and ice forms on the top of the water surface. The ice formation then provides a little insulation and slows the heat loss from the water underneath. A calm lake or slow-moving stream may remain this way, with the ice on top, until the Spring thaw.

However, if the water is turbulent enough, the ice crystals may not have a chance to float and may remain suspended in the mixing water column. The suspended ice crystals will then stick to any available solid surface. In a fast-moving river, for example, with freezing water cascading over rocks, ice may form along the sides or bottom of the river.

We call these suspended ice crystals “frazil ice.” The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines frazil ice as “ice crystals or granules sometimes resembling slush that are formed in turbulent water.” Think of frazil ice as a slushy. Water containing frazil ice will no longer flow as easily due to the increased viscosity, and the ice will stick to hard surfaces, clogging water intakes and pipes. A water intake in a cold river may routinely deal with frazil ice every winter, and some lake intakes may rarely or never experience frazil ice. One thing is certain: frazil ice can easily shut down a water plant operation without a backup contingency.

How can frazil ice affect a lake intake? If the lake surface over the intake has a solid ice cover, frazil ice can't form. The intake is protected from the colder

temperatures of the air above the ice. However, if the intake is under open water and suddenly becomes turbulent and drops below the freezing point of water, frazil ice will start to form.

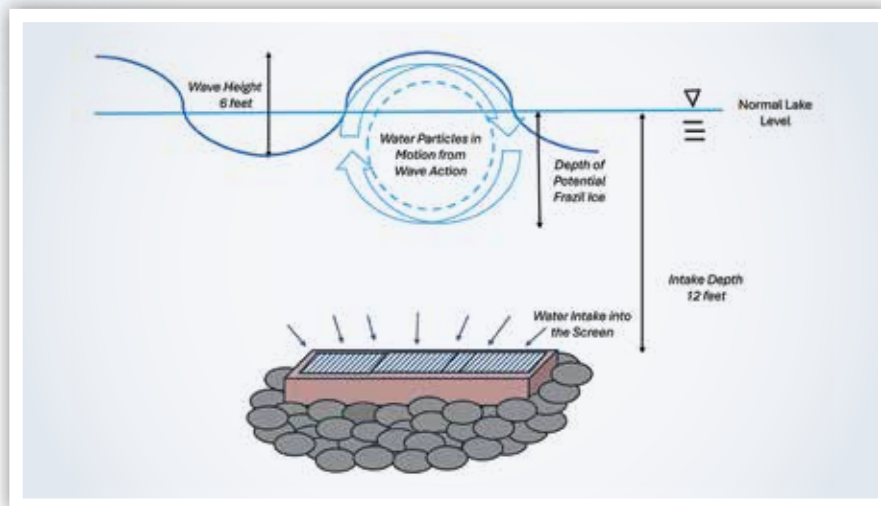
Imagine a cold day in February. The water plant lake intake is one-mile offshore and 12 feet deep (to the top of intake). There is one foot of ice on the lake surface that extends out three to four miles, and the air temperature is 36 degrees with a steady, but light, wind off the lake. Perfect conditions.

Later that night a storm blows in. The wind picks up to 30 mph, with gusts up to 45, changes direction to offshore, and the temperature drops to 28 degrees. The protective surface ice breaks up and floats across the lake, leaving open turbulent water above the intake. Waves

are now 6+ feet high above the intake and at 3-am the low-level alarm just went off in the wet well.

Depending on water depth, prevailing winds, and intake depth, this scenario may happen every year, or once a decade or so. Changing water levels in the Great Lakes may allow this situation to occur once or twice in an operator's career. Ice particles "could possibly" travel down to the inlet screen and stick (see drawing*). Once the intake screen starts to plug, the intake velocity increases (assuming constant flow) and the intake captures water farther away, grabbing more ice, and compounding the problem until the intake completely closes off.

What should an operator do to avoid the detrimental effects of frazil ice? Well, first, become familiar with the conditions that affect your plant's intake. Talk to experienced coworkers to determine the weather conditions that will affect your plant, wind direction, temperature, seasonal weather patterns, etc... Also, understand contingency planning to prepare for when such an event occurs. Exercise emergency valves and pumps



*The drawing is theoretical just to show some basic scale. The ice particles are also buoyant and are floating at the same time as the wave energy is mixing the ice up. How turbulent the surface waves are will have a contributing impact to how deep the ice will penetrate (i.e. rolling waves vs breakers).

for a standby intake if available. Make sure emergency interconnects with other water supplies are functional, if available. Know how to backflush your intake properly to dislodge ice from the screens if your plant has the capability. If extreme weather is pending, fill reservoirs early

to prepare in case the plant has to ride out the storm. Often, once the wind ceases and surface ice begins to form again above the intake, the submerged ice will dislodge, and operations will return to normal.

Then it is time to go fishing again. 💧

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Flomatic Valves is proud to announce the official release of its new AIS and BABA Compliant 12" Model 92 Swing Check Valve, a robust and versatile valve solution engineered for municipal and industrial water and wastewater applications that helps minimize the effects of water hammer during pump shutdown. Designed to meet the rigorous demands of modern infrastructure, Model 92 fully complies with ANSI/AWWA Standard C508, ensuring reliability and performance in critical environments.

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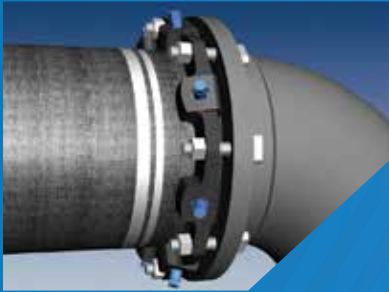
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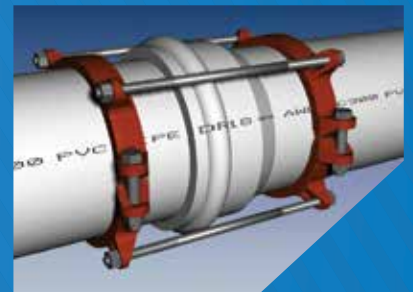
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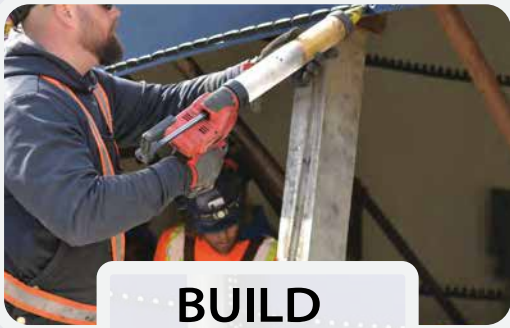
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The annual Joint Expo & Operator Days, a collaborative effort by the Michigan Water Environment Association (MWEA) and the Michigan Section American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA), is the ultimate gathering for water and wastewater operators in the state. It's a vibrant, high-energy experience, and operators who attend can discover the latest innovations, share best practices, and engage with industry leaders, all while ensuring the delivery of pristine drinking water and top-notch wastewater treatment across Michigan.

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Register today to attend the premier conference in the Midwest! For more information, please visit www.jointexpo.org.



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Join water and wastewater professionals from across Michigan for the **2026 Joint Expo & Operator Days!**

February 10-11, 2026 | Lansing Center in Lansing, MI



Operator Days

There will be two training sessions. One operator session and one leadership session offered each day.

Training registration includes your selected training session, timed lunch ticket, and entry to the exhibit hall.

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- EGLE Course Code: 338
- Track Selection: Choose Technical or Managerial at registration.
 - You must remain in your selected track for full credit.
 - Switching between tracks during the same day is not allowed.
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 - Partial credits cannot be awarded.
- Certificates will be emailed about one month after the event.





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Explore the Exhibit Hall Only – No Training Required!

Not attending the trainings? No problem! You can still explore the Exhibit Hall and connect with over 150 exhibitors showcasing the latest innovations in water and wastewater management from across the Midwest. Pre-register online for free access or register on-site for just \$10. Don't miss this opportunity to see the best the industry has to offer!

Continuing Education Credits – Exhibit Hall

- Earn up to 0.2 "Other" Drinking Water and Wastewater Credits for walking the Exhibit Hall floor
- EGLE Course Code: 344
- Certificates will be emailed about one month after the event.

Engage and Win at the Joint Expo Exhibit Hall!

Join us on February 10th for some interactive fun while you explore the Exhibit Hall!

Kick off your day by grabbing a Poker Run sheet at registration! Visit participating vendors, learn about their products and services, and draw a playing card at each stop. The more vendors you visit, the better your chances of building a winning poker hand! Submit your completed sheets by 3:30 PM for a chance to win exciting prizes.

Joint Expo Mixer

Tuesday attendees can join us for happy hour at the Lansing Brewing Company from 4:15 pm to 6:00 pm on Tuesday, February 10, 2026. Enjoy a drink, some nibbles, and more networking with colleagues and exhibitors.

Do You Know a Student Interested in the Water Sector?

Discover a Career in the Water Sector! Students (high school and college) are invited to an inspiring day at the Midwest's premier water and wastewater conference: **Joint Expo and Operator Days** on **Wednesday, February 11, 2026**, starting at **10 am** in Lansing, MI.

Why explore the water industry? Behind every drop of clean water lies a world of career possibilities – art, media, sales, engineering, chemistry, legislation, research, and more. Whatever your passion, the water sector has a place for you to shape the future! **Connect with Experts:** Meet professionals and learn about exciting careers in the water industry. **Lunch with Leaders:** Enjoy lunch with water supervisors who will share their stories and answer your questions. **Tailored Guided Tour:** Take a personalized tour of the expo floor to discover the latest technology and innovations in water and wastewater management.

Student registration is FREE, and lunch is included! Help a student take their first step toward a rewarding and impactful career in the water sector. For more information and to register: www.mi-water.org/jointexpo

Registration

REGISTRATION TYPE	THROUGH JANUARY 30, 2026	AFTER JANUARY 30:
Operator Days Full 2-Day Package Includes both days of sessions (Technical or Managerial), breakfast and lunch both days, Expo access, and entry to the Tuesday evening Mixer.	\$300 Early-Bird	Full Package: \$330
Operator Days Single Day Pass Includes one day of sessions (Technical or Managerial), breakfast, lunch, and Expo access.	\$160 Early-Bird	Single Day: \$175
Joint Expo Only After Jan 30, a \$10 fee applies. No penalty for early registration – sign up now!	FREE if registered by January 30!	Expo Only: \$10

Register at www.jointexpo.org.



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Tuesday, February 10th, 2026

TECHNICAL SESSION – TUESDAY

7:00 AM – REGISTRATION OPENS

7:45 AM – 8:00 AM – Welcome & Overview

Updates from MI-AWWA and MWEA Representatives

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM – Maximizing Reliability: Weekly and Monthly Generator Checks for Water & Wastewater Utilities

Max Nichol, Total Energy Systems

Reliable backup power is not just an operational priority, it's mission-critical for water and wastewater utilities to safeguard public health and ensure continuity. This presentation highlights best-practice maintenance strategies through routine weekly and monthly generator checks.

8:45 AM – 9:30 AM – From Locks to Logs: Optimizing LOTO in Water Operations

Kieyona Bailey, Darrin King, Tom Sims, Joy Lindsey, and Clifford McCall, Great Lakes Water Authority

Discover how a large treatment plant redesigned its Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) process to improve consistency, efficiency, and accountability across all shifts. Attendees will learn how standardization and digital integration can streamline operations, reduce variability, and create a more cohesive, high-performing work environment within water utilities.

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM – (15) Minute Break

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM – Move It or Lose It: Why Valve Exercising Matters

Caine Hornok, Great Lakes Water Authority

Just like muscles, valves need regular exercise to stay in good working order. This presentation explores the do's and don'ts of valve exercising, what to watch out for when things don't go as planned, and how consistent maintenance helps extend equipment life and build confidence in your system's performance.

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM – A Closer Look at Liquid Chemical Metering Systems AKA Why the Plumbing is as Important as the Pump

Joe Ciurlino, Solberg Knowles and Associates

Chemical dosing isn't just about choosing the right pump—it's about designing the entire system around it. Learn how piping, valves, and fittings affect accuracy, reliability, and maintenance in liquid chemical metering. Attendees will gain practical insights into common components, chemical challenges, and troubleshooting techniques for better system performance.

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM – SCADA Best Practices for Reliability, Data Accuracy, and Operational Insight in Water and Wastewater Systems

Andrae Savage, Robert Oliver Jr, and Kyle Smith, Great Lakes Water Authority

SCADA systems are the backbone of water and wastewater operations, but their value depends on accurate data and informed interpretation. This session shares best practices for improving data accuracy, optimizing alarms, strengthening cybersecurity, and integrating SCADA insights into maintenance and reporting. Real-world examples will show how utilities can enhance reliability, coordination, and decision-making across their systems.

11:15 AM – ADJOURN TO EXPO HALL

MANAGERIAL SESSION – TUESDAY

7:30 AM – REGISTRATION OPENS

8:15 AM – 8:30 AM – Welcome & Overview

Updates from MI-AWWA and MWEA Representatives

8:30 AM – 9:15 AM – Inclusive Leadership in the Water Industry: Building Stronger Teams Through Empathy and Advocacy

Speakers TBD from MI-AWWA Membership Council

Effective leadership in the water industry depends on empathy, active listening, and advocacy. This presentation explores common leadership challenges and practical strategies to build resilient, high-performing teams. Attendees will learn how to navigate conflict, support team members, and foster a culture that promotes both individual and organizational success.

9:15 AM – 10:00 AM – Trends in Project Finance & Funding

Andy Campbell, Bendzinski & Co.

Explore the latest trends in financing water and wastewater projects, including emerging funding sources, innovative financial structures, and strategies for securing capital. Gain insights into best practices for project planning, risk management, and maximizing funding opportunities in today's evolving landscape.

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM – (15) Minute Break

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM – Michigan Water Policy Update: Key Legislative and Regulatory Changes

Mike Compagnoni, Midwest Strategy Group

Stay up to date on the latest legislative and regulatory developments affecting Michigan water utilities. Led by the MWEA and MI-AWWA lobbyist, this presentation will review recent policy changes, upcoming regulations, and advocacy efforts that could influence operations, compliance, and funding opportunities for water utilities.

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM – AMP It Up: Making Your Asset Management Plan a Slam Dunk

Ashley Mitchell and Zanna Leciejewski, Hazen and Sawyer

Learn how to turn your Asset Management Plan (AMP) from a "shelf document" into a winning strategy. This presentation will show practical ways to create, maintain, and integrate AMPs, using real-world examples to improve planning, team collaboration, and digital tools. Attendees will leave with actionable steps to make their AMP a game-changer for both their utility and community.

11:15 AM – 11:45 AM – Knowing Your Numbers: Turning Data into Action

Caine Hornok, Great Lakes Water Authority

Operators collect hundreds of data points every day—but what do they really mean? Learn how to interpret control room data to spot equipment issues early, predict system demand, and empower your team to use data for smarter, proactive decision-making.

11:45am – ADJOURN TO EXPO HALLPOKER

EXHIBIT HALL POKER RUN | LUNCH BUFFET AVAILABLE UNTIL 1:30 PM (TICKET REQUIRED) | EXPO HALL CLOSING AT 4PM

*Agenda subject to change

JOINT EXPO & OPERATOR DAYS



EGLE Course Code: 338

Drinking Water & Wastewater CECs available per day: 0.3 Technical OR 0.3 Managerial (max of 0.6 in either category available) | Up to 6 PDHs

Wednesday, February 11th, 2026

TECHNICAL SESSION – WEDNESDAY

7:00 AM – REGISTRATION OPENS

7:45 AM – 8:00 AM, Welcome & Overview

Updates from MI-AWWA and MWEA Representatives

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM – Mastering Sample Collection: Ensuring Accurate Results Every Time

Jessica Oniovosa, Carlos Solomon, David Sumler, and Andrae Savage, Great Lakes Water Authority

Accurate sampling is critical for compliance, process control, and public health. This presentation covers best practices for water and wastewater sampling, including proper techniques, documentation, and communication with labs. Attendees will learn how to avoid common pitfalls, strengthen data reliability, and maintain regulatory compliance.

8:45 AM – 9:30 AM – Inside the Pipe: Advanced CIPP Technologies for Modern Utility Rehabilitation

Mark Chandler, United Felts

This presentation provides a technical introduction to cured-in-place pipe (CIPP), a trenchless rehabilitation method used to structurally restore deteriorated underground pipelines. The program covers the fundamentals of CIPP materials, manufacturing processes, installation techniques, and the quality controls to ensure consistent, long-term performance across all applications.

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM – (15) Minute Break

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM – A Day in the Life of a Water Chemist: Testing and Jar Trials

Douglas Wybo II and Christia Wheeler, Great Lakes Water Authority

Go behind the lab doors to see a chemist in action and learn how water quality is ensured every day. This presentation walks through a chemist's shift, highlights key tests from routine to advanced, and demonstrates jar testing and its role in optimizing treatment.

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM – Making Cross-Connection Control Work: Compliance Through Enforcement

Gary McLaren, HydroCorp

Effective cross-connection programs combine proactive follow-up with clear enforcement. This presentation covers strategies to maintain compliance, hold non-compliant customers accountable, and align with EGLE rules to protect the public and build community trust.

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM – Preventive Maintenance: Strategies for Reliable Operations

Daniel Aman, Great Lakes Water Authority

Learn how to keep assets running smoothly with proactive, data-driven preventive maintenance. Best practices for scheduling, inspections, and cross-team collaboration will be covered, plus tools like CMMS and predictive monitoring to reduce downtime, cut costs, and extend equipment life.

11:15am – ADJOURN TO EXPO HALL

MANAGERIAL SESSION – WEDNESDAY

7:30 AM – REGISTRATION OPENS

8:15 AM – 8:30 AM, Welcome & Overview

Updates from MI-AWWA and MWEA Representatives

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM – Fostering Operator Growth through the EGLE Certification Program

Koren Carpenter and Sarah Marshall, EGLE

An overview of EGLE's drinking water and wastewater operator certification programs and highlights how administrators and superintendents can support staff in advancing through the process. Attendees will learn about application requirements, practical tips for gaining experience across plant operations, and upcoming program updates. The discussion emphasizes strategies to help operators grow, succeed, and stay current in their professional development.

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM – Smooth Moves: Mastering CMMS Implementation

Teresa Johnson and Edwin Merriweather, Great Lakes Water Authority

Implementing a new Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) can be complex, but the increase in efficiency and reliability is worth it. We will explore common obstacles—like data migration, user adoption, and system integration—and offers practical strategies for planning, collaboration, and optimization to ensure a smooth rollout.

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM – (15) Minute Break

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM – Training at the Speed of Need: Modern Peer Approaches

Christopher Steary, Charles McConnell, and Donald Kraft, Great Lakes Water Authority

GLWA has reimagined peer-to-peer training to accelerate skill development for new operators. This session highlights a structured approach that combines classroom, self-guided, and peer training, with tools to track progress and ensure effective, timely onboarding in today's challenging workforce environment.

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM – Small Gate, Big Impact: A Critical Collaboration to Beat the Clock

Mary Koeger, Oakland County

What looks like a minor project can carry major consequences. See how a tight six-month gate replacement succeeded through agile project management, real-time problem-solving, and strong collaboration—proving that teamwork can be as impactful as technical expertise.

11:15 AM – 11:45 AM – Crisis Comms: Mastering Social Media in Critical Moments

Samarhia Giffel, City of Grand Rapids

Learn how to use social media strategically to guide your community during a crisis. You will understand the phases of crisis management, platform-specific strategies, and how to integrate these practices into your communication policies to become a trusted resource during events like boil water advisories, main breaks, or natural disasters.

11:45am – ADJOURN TO EXPO HALL

LUNCH BUFFET AVAILABLE UNTIL 1:30PM (TICKET REQUIRED) | EXPO HALL CLOSING AT 2PM

**Agenda subject to change*

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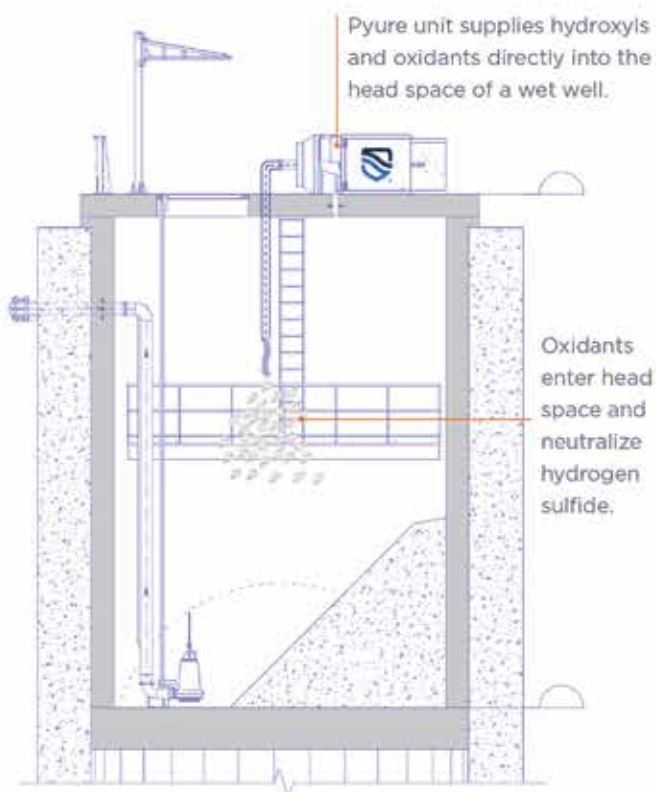
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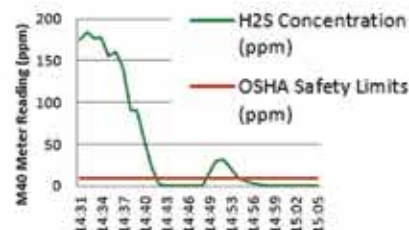
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BORCHARDT CONFERENCE RETURNS IN 2026

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The Borchardt Conference – one of the region's most respected gatherings for water and wastewater professionals – returns to Ann Arbor on May 5–6, 2026. Hosted triennially, the conference brings together researchers, utilities, regulators, and industry partners to exchange applied research, explore emerging technologies, and discuss practical strategies for improving water and wastewater systems.

Sponsored by the University of Michigan's Department of Environmental & Water Resources Engineering, MI-AWWA, MWEA, and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the conference offers a uniquely collaborative environment for science, engineering, and operations communities.

Call for Abstracts

The Borchardt Conference is now accepting abstracts for both oral and poster presentations. Submissions are due January 23, 2026. Abstracts should include a one-page summary and completed submission form.

Sponsorship Opportunities

A variety of sponsorship levels will be available, offering visibility and recognition throughout the event. Packages are designed to support organizations that wish to promote their work, engage with attendees, and demonstrate leadership in the water sector.

Borchardt-Glysson Water Treatment Innovation Prize

A highlight of the conference is the prestigious Borchardt-Glysson Water Treatment Innovation Prize, a \$10,000 award recognizing a senior or mid-career professional whose work in water or wastewater treatment has achieved national or international impact. Nominations for the 2026 prize are also due January 23, 2026. The recipient will deliver the Innovation Lecture during the conference.

Why Attend?

With keynote lectures from leading voices in the field, a robust technical program, and networking opportunities that span academia, industry, and operations, the Borchardt Conference delivers an exceptional platform for knowledge exchange and professional growth. Continuing Education Credits (CECs) and Professional Development Hours (PDHs) will be available for eligible participants.



Learn More

For more information, visit:

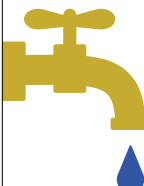
<https://www.mi-water.org/borchardt-conference>

Abstract and nomination forms can also be found at this link. 





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EGLE ANNOUNCES MAJOR REPORTING CHANGES FOR COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLIES STARTING JANUARY 2026

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is notifying all community water supplies of upcoming changes for submitting the Pumpage Annual Report and Cross Connection Annual Report, which are both due each year by March 31.

Beginning January 1, 2026, all Michigan Environmental Health and Drinking Water Information System (MiEHDWIS) users will complete and submit these reports directly within MiEHDWIS. This change is part of EGLE's effort to improve reporting efficiency, accuracy, and recordkeeping for all community water supplies.

What's Changing

Currently, MiEHDWIS users create Cross Connection Annual Report and Pumpage Annual Report activities using the MiEHDWIS Activity Menu and upload reports as scanned files or PDFs. Starting January 2026, these activity types will no longer be available for creation and file uploads will no longer be accepted for these report types. Instead, users will:

- Log into their MiEHDWIS account
- Find the Cross Connection Annual Report activity and the Pumpage Annual Report activity assigned to their supply
 - These activities will be automatically created by MiEHDWIS each year for the supplies required to submit them
- Complete the online report form on each of the activities
- Receive real-time prompts to ensure required fields are complete
- Submit each of the activities assigned to their supply
- Get instant submission confirmation
- Store reports securely in their account for future reference

EGLE is encouraging all water supplies to sign up for a MiEHDWIS account. MiEHDWIS is a dedicated workspace for water supplies to submit results, reports, permit applications, and other documentation to EGLE. MiEHDWIS also allows users access to previous submissions, track the progress of current submittals, and communicate with EGLE staff.



How to Get a MiEHDWIS Account

1. Visit michigan.gov/miehdwis.
2. Review the "Getting started with MiEHDWIS" section.
3. Create a MiLogin for Business Account and request access to MiEHDWIS.
4. Verify your role as the authorized water supply user.
5. Watch for your confirmation email from EGLE.

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**Key Dates, Training & Support**

- EGLE will release training materials and host webinars in late 2025 and early 2026 focusing on using these new annual report forms in MiEHDWIS.
- January 1, 2026 – MiEHDWIS online Pumpage and Cross Connection Report forms will be available to complete and submit to EGLE.
- Online training for community water supplies is offered routinely and provides users with updates on new functionality, assist with account setup, and answer any questions.
- Visit michigan.gov/miehdwis to learn more about this application, request an account, watch tutorial videos, or get information on upcoming trainings.
- For help, contact the MiEHDWIS Help Desk at egle-miehdwis@michigan.gov.

State Revolving Fund Savings Calculator

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is committed to ensuring the SRF can

be utilized by eligible applicants as an innovative and flexible financing option for critical water infrastructure improvements across the state. To help communities better understand the potential savings because of SRFs low interest rates, EGLE is excited to share the SRF Savings Calculator. This tool helps applicants visualize potential financial savings through the SRF program.

The SRF Savings Calculator is easy to use, simply:

- Enter an estimated project cost
- Select loan terms that best match eligibility
- Compare SRF financing against your municipality's standard open market interest rate
- Instantly view estimated savings

This is a powerful tool that can help communities make informed decisions and plan for future water infrastructure system repairs and upgrades. We encourage all eligible applicants to explore the SRF Savings Calculator and

see how the program can support your community's infrastructure goals.

To learn more about the SRF program visit www.michigan.gov/egle/regulatory-assistance/funding/fd/state-revolving-fund.

Water Supply Cyber Assessments Available

The United States has witnessed a rise in cyberattacks on infrastructure, including at water utilities. Without advanced preparation water supplies are vulnerable to these cyberattacks. To help water supplies protect themselves against cyberattacks, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy has partnered with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the Michigan Cyber Command Control Center (MCC3), the Department of Management and Budget (DTMB), and an outside vendor to create the MI Cyber Team.

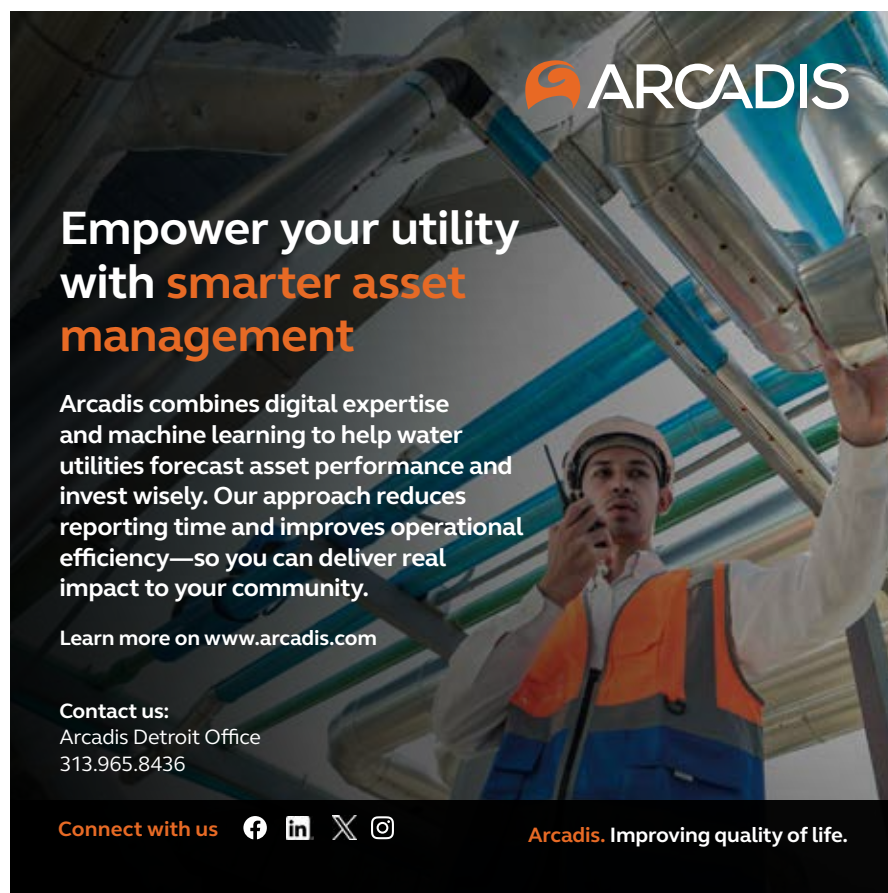
One tool that water supplies can use to help assess their vulnerability to cyberattacks is conducting a cybersecurity assessment. A cybersecurity assessment identifies risks that could lead to service disruptions or data breaches, establishes a baseline for future cybersecurity comparisons, and achieves the first step for a water supply to quality for cyber insurance coverage.

The MI Cyber Team is now available to conduct FREE cybersecurity assessments! The assessments conducted by the MI Cyber Team typically take 2-3 hours and include:

- An evaluation of the water supply's existing information technology and operational technology infrastructure.
- Use of industry wide assessment tools such as CISA's 38 cybersecurity performance goals or a similar tool to assess cyber resiliency.
- Confidential report of the findings for your utility.

More information on cybersecurity for the water sector, including registering for a cyber assessment can be found by visiting Michigan.gov/CommunityWater and selecting "Cybersecurity in the water sector".

If you have any further questions, contact the MI Cyber Team via email at egle-dwehd-cybersecurity@michigan.gov. 💧



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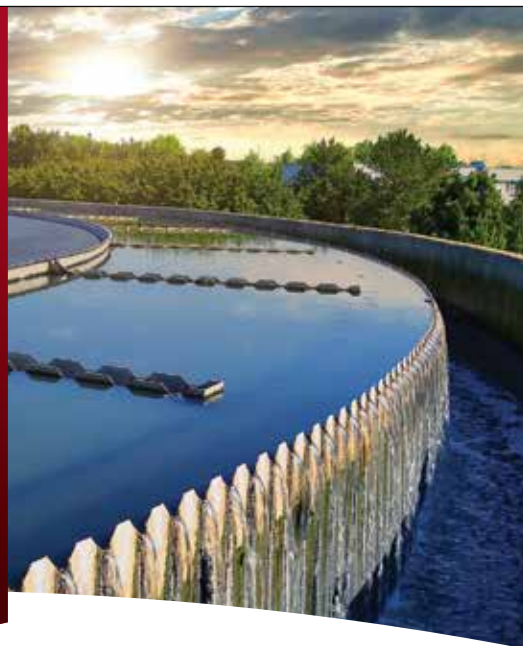
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MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATE

Zachary Hampton, PE, Member Recruitment & Engagement Council Chair

The Member Recruitment & Engagement Council has continued to meet regularly to discuss new and innovative ways to carry out the Michigan section of AWWA's mission. Over the past quarter, the council welcomed updates from several committees and discussed ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening engagement and growing membership across the Section.

Membership numbers have climbed to nearly 2,300. According to the latest membership data, Michigan is the seventh largest section, sandwiched between Illinois at sixth and Ohio at eighth.

The Council, in collaboration with Staff and the various other councils, is working on creating membership welcome videos to provide a more personal welcome to new members. We are hoping to develop these in the coming months.

Committee Updates

- **Diversity Committee:** Richie Garcia is now the Chair of the committee! Let's give him a warm welcome and support the DEI goals.
- **Young Professionals (YP) Committee:** The committee is planning the Michigan YP Summit, scheduled for Spring 2026 at Wayne State University. Registration is now open!
- **Industrial Recruitment Committee:** The committee showed its support at the MI Career Quest event in Oakland County in November. The event focused on 10th-grade students and included hands-on demonstrations. If you are interested in helping with these future events please contact Carrie Cox at coxco@oakgov.com.
- **Youth Education Committee:** This joint MI-AWWA/MWEA committee exists to inspire curiosity in youth by

providing and supporting communities with educational tools and awareness initiatives to highlight careers in water. If you are interested in joining please reach out to Membership Chair, Zach Hampton, at zachary.hampton@ohm-advisors.com.

- **Women on Water (WOW) Committee:** The WOW event at the Annual Conference was a hit! The committee has great things underway. Please reach out to Haran Stanley at haran.stanley@glwater.org, if you would like to join this committee.
- **National Membership Committee:** The Membership Summit will be represented by Amy Vail. Stay tuned for updates and a recap! 💧

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SUMMIT: REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

The momentum is building, our first-ever Young Professionals Summit is officially underway, and registration is now open. This event marks an exciting step forward for MI-AWWA as we continue to invest in the next generation of leaders shaping Michigan's water future.

This one-day Summit will bring together students, emerging professionals, and industry mentors for a full day of learning, connection, and inspiration. We are especially looking forward to welcoming exhibitors who will showcase their technologies, career opportunities, and hands-on insights directly to young professionals, creating a space where curiosity meets real-world application.

Our YPs are already making waves, and this Summit is poised to help their influence ripple into greatness. We can't wait to see what they do next. 💧





FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION: ETC'S PLAN TO ELEVATE WATER WORKFORCE TRAINING

Sally Duffy, P.E., Manager, Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc. and ETC Vice Chair



The Education and Training Council (ETC) has welcomed new leadership this fall as part of its regular three-year rotation. **Gary Woziak** (Distribution Engineer, Lansing Board of Water and Light) now serves as Council Chair, with **Joel Martinez** (Manager, East Lansing-Meridian Water and Sewer Authority) transitioning to Vice Chair. I (**Sally Duffy**) will be joining as Second Vice Chair, alongside **Elliot Smith** (Founder, Motmot) as Board Liaison. We're also excited to have **Hillary Caron**, MI-AWWA's new Director of Education, supporting the Council with her fresh perspective and boundless energy.

The ETC is currently developing a strategic plan and setting goals to ensure the Section continues to be a leading provider of education and training for Michigan's water professionals. This includes:

- **Reviewing and updating** existing programs and materials to reflect current needs.

- **Developing new content** to address emerging issues in the industry.
- **Expanding access** to training through non-traditional channels.

Success will be measured by increased participation in training programs, especially among operators earning continuing education credits, and by attendance at seminars and workshops.

To achieve these goals, the ETC is collaborating with the Council of Past Presidents and other committees to recruit volunteers and new content. A new **Task Force** is also being considered, which will have a focused, short-term mandate to produce training materials and programs.

The ETC has assigned liaisons to each of the 11 committees under its umbrella for better communication and support. These liaisons will help ensure committees have the tools they need to thrive and are actively engaging volunteers to develop impactful programming.

ETC Committees:

- Asset and Infrastructure Management (Joint with MWEA)
- Distribution System Practices
- Health & Safety
- Laboratory Practices (Joint with MWEA)
- Maintenance (Joint with MWEA)
- Regional Seminar Planning
- Research and Treatment Practices
- Small Systems
- Source Water
- U.P. Coordinating
- Water Security & Emergency Management

Get Involved!

If you're passionate about advancing education and training in Michigan's water sector, we'd love to hear from you. Whether you're interested in joining the Council, participating in a task force, or contributing to a committee, visit our webpage at <https://www.mi-water.org/education-and-training-council> or contact **Hillary Caron** at MI-AWWA. 💧



LAB PRACTICES COMMITTEE UPDATE

Jack Hughes, Chair, hughes@meridian.mi.us

Greetings from the Joint Lab Practices Committee! We represent a network of municipal treatment plants and private testing facilities from across the state with a goal of fostering open communication between all water and wastewater laboratories. Our roster includes over 50 water professionals and we are always on the hunt for additional interested members.

We meet once a month virtually to share organizational updates and discuss new developments affecting our tests, procedures and equipment. Occasional meetings, such as our recent September gathering, are held at a facility or lab often coupled with a tour. This fall we met at the Holland Board of Public Works Wastewater Plant for a hybrid meeting followed by a tour

led by our Vice Chair, Theo Van Aken. Each meeting includes an open floor round table where members have a chance to share their challenges and successes, news from their area of the state, or which positions they have open if currently hiring.

We have recently introduced a meeting segment where we specifically address issues or problems labs are experiencing, utilizing the wealth of knowledge available to this committee provided by its widespread membership. When discussing a laboratory issue with the group, it has been greatly helpful to have perspectives from both private labs and municipal facilities to aid in brainstorming up potential solutions.

Also new this year is the addition of a **Seminar Planning Subcommittee** which

met in parallel to organize the annual Lab Practices Seminar. The subcommittee started by selecting the presentation topics and speakers then moved to handle the logistics and running of the seminar. If you've ever been interested in building seminars or conferences, this is a great opportunity to gain experience with that process.

This year's seminar was on November 12, hosted by our committee with vital assistance from the MWEA and MI-AWWA staff. Thank you to all who came for supporting this seminar and this committee! While we often have a new wave of recruits after the seminar, please feel free to reach out anytime to myself or our Vice-Chair Theo Van Aken if you or someone you know would like to join our committee and mailing list. 💧

COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL UPDATE

The Communications Council and its Social Media Committee are proud of the success of our Water Wednesday member photo submissions. Showcasing all things water from across the state of Michigan. We welcome all members to submit their favorite water photos to be feature on the Section's social media pages. Also, stay tuned for

more new content on the Section podcast, The Current. The team has been working on new episodes and new topics for 2026.

The Communications Council has also assigned council liaisons to the other section councils to help facilitate the flow of information. These new liaison roles will help identify topics of interest for future

communication campaigns, news article, podcast episodes and brand-awareness opportunities generated throughout the organization. The Communications Council is embracing a cross-functional team approach and looks forward to working more closely with all members on telling the story of water. 💧





GET READY: MI-AWWA 2026 AWARD NOMINATIONS OPENING SOON!!!

Nominations for the 2026 MI-AWWA Awards will open February 2 and remain open through May 29.

This year, the nomination process is easier than ever – we've streamlined the form to require only the essentials: Name, Email, Organization, and the reason you're nominating them.

Now is the perfect time to recognize the outstanding individuals who strengthen Michigan's water community. You can nominate deserving candidates for awards such as:

- Young Professional of the Year
- Richard Husby Public Awareness Award
- Van Der Kolk Volunteer of the Year
- Operator Meritorious Service Award
- ...and many more!

Nominate someone today by visiting:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MI Awards26>



Help us celebrate excellence in the water industry – submit your nominations before May 29! 💧

BALDA LUPAXI BAJO CELEBRATES NEW SAFE WATER SYSTEM WITH SUPPORT FROM SWIE AND MI-AWWA

Mark De Haan

The community of Balda Lupaxi Bajo in Chimborazo province, Ecuador, now receives clean water at their homes, 24/7, thanks to contributions from Safe Water in Ecuador and Michigan AWWA.

The community of 140 homes recently worked with SWIE's Ecuadorian partner, CODEINSE, to protect its water source, build three new reservoirs, and construct a new distribution system consisting of over seven miles of pipe, digging every inch of the seven miles by hand!

A team of three from SWIE visited the community in August, assisting with the installation of pumps donated by the committee. The team also checked-in on past project communities, including Troje Grande, which is still in operation after 25 years, a major success in the space of rural water supply in Ecuador.



With incredible support from MI-ACE 2025 (thank you, MI-AWWA members!), the SWIE committee is looking to make a return trip to Ecuador in 2026 to support a water project in

another community. Contact committee chair Colin McCorkle (cmccorkle@fishbeck.com) if you are interested in getting involved with the committee or visiting Ecuador. 💧

STRENGTHENING WATER SYSTEMS: INSIGHTS FROM THE FALL U.P. CONFERENCE

Ashley Miller, Coleman Engineering/U.P. Conference Committee Member

The Fall U.P. Conference was held September 23–24 at the Island Resort and Casino in Harris, Michigan, with nearly 120 attendees.

Two long-serving operators, Russ Williams of Negaunee Township and Craig Marietti of Ishpeming Township, were recognized for their lifetime service to the water industry. Both recently retired after more than 40 years dedicated to their communities. Throughout their careers, they worked tirelessly to ensure safe and reliable access to drinking water – often behind the scenes, yet always at the heart of protecting public health. Russ Williams also served on the U.P. Committee for more than 25 years, helping organize these conferences.

The City of Marquette, having won Best Tasting Water in the U.P. Region during the Spring Conference, advanced to the state competition at MI-ACE in September, where they captured the state title. They will now represent Michigan at ACE in Washington, D.C., next June.

Raffles and door prizes donated by vendors were given away throughout the event. Vendors also provided operators with valuable insight on system maintenance, including EJ on hydrant maintenance, U.S. Pipe on pipe installation, and Blue-White Industries on chemical feed pumps. Rehau presented a live tap demonstration using a one-inch line on a six-inch PVC pipe. Michigan AWWA's Hillary Caron engaged operators with a hands-on session on rethinking training in the water industry. EGLE provided regulatory updates on the Lead and Copper Rule, DWSRF funding, UCMR5, and MiEHDWIS.

The conference also included an update on the City of Ironwood's Water Treatment Plant project with HDR and Coleman Engineering Company. EGLE's Tom Flaminio highlighted the project

as one of the first new water treatment plants to be built in the U.P. in nearly 20 years. Planning began in 2019, with Phase I construction starting in 2023, funded by \$11.5 million from USDA RD. Phase II construction began in 2024 with \$11.4 million in EGLE DWSRF funding. The project includes a new clearwell, high-service pumps, chemical feed systems, filters, an infiltration basin, and process pumps.

Don't miss the U.P. Spring Water Conference, taking place April 7–8 in Harris.

A special thank-you goes out to the Social Hour Sponsors, whose support helped create a relaxed and welcoming space for operators, vendors, and presenters to connect after the day's sessions. Their generosity made it possible for attendees to network, exchange ideas, and unwind together – always an important part of the U.P. Conference experience. Sponsors included:

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Don't miss the U.P. Spring Water Conference – April 7–8 in Harris. Join fellow operators and industry leaders for two days of training, networking, and technical insights.

Thank you to the Exhibitors who participated in the Fall Conference:

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GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COUNCIL UPDATE

Sara Rubino

Water affordability is a major focus this legislative session, with significant movement in Lansing. On October 28, Section Chair Molly Maciejewski testified in support of a statewide affordability package introduced in the Senate and led by Senator Stephanie Chang. The legislation includes income-based assistance, shutoff protections, and customer safeguards. The package passed committee on November 4 with bipartisan support, following an amendment ensuring that revenue collected by regional systems stays within their service areas.

A competing House package, **Affordable Water Now**, was introduced on October 29. The proposed bills would expand tenant protections, prohibit water bill liens, require automatic enrollment in assistance programs, and increase statewide reporting. A key difference between the two proposals is how they would be funded. The House package relies on existing state aid and local utility programs, potentially requiring utilities to adopt income-based rate structures. The Senate package would create a new statewide affordability fund, financed through a small, statewide fee added to customer bills.

Nationally, AWWA is focused on cybersecurity, data centers, and infrastructure investment. The organization continues to emphasize the need for full cost-of-water recovery, noting a \$2.6 trillion national infrastructure need and the importance of rates that reflect true service costs, paired with effective customer assistance.

Affordability will remain a central issue as Michigan utilities work to balance cost recovery, equity, and long-term investment needs. 💧

MI-AWWA BOARD OF TRUSTEES – CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Do you have ideas for MI-AWWA and want to make a meaningful difference in the future of our Section? Now is your chance to help shape the direction of our organization by serving on the MI-AWWA Board of Trustees. We invite you to nominate a colleague – or even nominate yourself – for this important leadership opportunity.

Nominations open on February 2 and close on April 22.

This year, MI-AWWA is seeking candidates for:

- Two (2) three-year Trustee positions
- One (1) three-year Chair Succession Track position
(Chair-Elect → Chair → Past Chair)

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Board service is a rewarding way to contribute your expertise, represent our membership, and support the continued growth and success of the Michigan Section.

Newly elected Board members will begin their term in September at MI-ACE, where they will be formally welcomed and introduced.

If you – or someone you know – has a passion for advancing the water sector and strengthening our Section, we encourage you to submit a nomination. 💧

WORD SCRAMBLE

Instructions:

Create as many words as you can using only the letters in **"DISTRIBUTION"**.
We found **50**, how many can you get?

Rules:

- Words must be 4 letters or more.
- You may reuse letters only as many times as they appear in "DISTRUBUTION".
- You do not have to use all the letters in a single word.
- No proper nouns, abbreviations, slang, or plurals

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

answers found on page 52



OUR CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IS MORE THAN JUST TALK

As we continue to deliver valuable information through the pages of this magazine, in a printed format that is appealing, reader-friendly and not lost in the proliferation of electronic messages that are bombarding our senses, we are also well aware of the need to be respectful of our environment. That is why we are committed to publishing the magazine in the most environmentally-friendly process possible. So enjoy this magazine... and keep thinking green.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Members who joined from Sept 1 – Nov 30, 2025

Jordan Tenjeras,

Great Lakes Water Authority

Aaron Atkinson, Marine City Public Works

Lisa Hominga, City of Plymouth

Sydney Peterson, Prein&Newhof

Eric Bean, Mersino/Global Pump

Kyle Danko, Wade Trim

Gabriel Williams,

Eurofins Eaton Analytical

Craig Wickham,

Hillsdale Board of Public Utilities

Nazmiye Cemre Birben, University of
Michigan Student

Santhoshi Navallika Dendukuri, University
of Michigan-Dearborn Student

Craig Antenucci, Paragon Laboratories

Toby Riley, Lake Township Water System

Brian Clark, Schneider Electric

James Ramer Jr, City of Battle Creek

Lorne Groe, BlueConduit

Jessica Hall, US Pipe

Tony Folino, City of Saginaw

Wesley Sanchez, Village of Lake Orion

Dustin Guminski,
South Haven Board of Public Utilities

Hannah Hathcock,
Great Lakes Water Authority

Jason Schwarzenberger, SME

Samuel Felleke, Black & Veatch

CJ Adsit,

Grand Haven Charter Township

Robert R. Johnson, Village of Baraga

Marc Santiago,

Grand Haven Charter Township

Steven Anderson, Anderson's
Environmental Services LLC

Jay Silvers, City of St. Clair

FINDING THE RIGHT TALENT: BUILDING A STRONG WATER WORKFORCE

Over the coming series, we'll explore practical ways to attract, grow, and retain a strong water workforce – one that serves your community today and builds for the future. The goal is to help reframe how you think about finding and keeping talent in this essential field.

Hiring for water careers doesn't have to feel overwhelming. Think of it as the start of a journey. Focus on the skills that matter most: problem-solving, teamwork, a willingness to learn, and a commitment to public service. Technical expertise is important, but a

motivated, curious candidate can grow into the role with the right guidance.

Some of the best talent is already in your community. High schools, vocational programs, and community colleges are full of students exploring careers in science, technology, and public service. Even without formal apprenticeship programs, you can create opportunities: invite a student to shadow your team, host a facility tour, or offer a hands-on workshop. Local job fairs, community centers, and social media are also great ways to reach

people who might not have considered a water career.

Take your first step today: reach out to a local school, host a tour, or create a small learning opportunity. Each connection could grow into a dedicated, lifelong water professional and start your stronger workforce story.

Need guidance? Contact Hillary Caron, MI-AWWA's Director of Education & Workforce Training, at hillary@mi-water.org for help connecting with resources and partners in your community.💧

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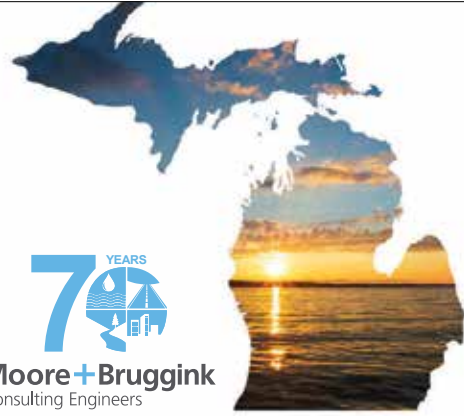
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WORD SCRAMBLE ANSWER

"DISTRIBUTION"

4-Letter Words:

bind, bird, bond, born, bout, burn, bunt, bust, dirt, dint, dour, dust, into, iron, oust, riot, rout, runt, snit, snub, sour, sort, stun, suit, tint, torn, tour, trio, unit, unto, trod

5-Letter Words:

bison, bound, burst, burnt, intro, orbit, round, sound, snout, stint, stout, stunt, torus, trout

6-Letter Words:

intuit, turbid

7-Letter Words:

disturb



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REGIONAL SPRING SEMINARS – NOW IN TWO LOCATIONS!

MI-AWWA is pleased to offer Regional Spring Seminars at two locations this April. This year's Spring sessions will place a strong emphasis on Distribution, providing valuable education and skill-building tailored to water professionals.

Grand Rapids:

Tuesday, April 14

Grand Rapids Community College – MTEC

Waterford Township:

Wednesday, April 15

Oakland County Executive Office Building

Conference Center East

Join us for in-depth training, practical insights, and opportunities to strengthen your distribution knowledge this spring.

Fall Regional Training locations are still being determined and will be announced in the coming months. 💧

MICHIGAN SECTION 88TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITS (MI-ACE)

Call for Abstracts Now Open!

The Michigan Section AWWA is now accepting abstract submissions for the 88th Annual Conference & Exhibits (MI-ACE), taking place September 15–18, 2026, at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Kalamazoo.

This is your opportunity to share your groundbreaking ideas, highlight innovative solutions, and connect with leaders across the water industry.

Submission Deadline: March 3, 2026

Submit at: www.mi-water.org/mi-ace

Presentation topics may include such areas as, but are not limited to:

- Digital and smart technologies, including AI
- Risk, Preparedness and Cybersecurity for utilities
- Environmental, Regulatory, Legal, and Legislative issues
- Infrastructure Management, Design, and Construction
- Water Quality and Contaminants

We welcome a wide range of topics that advance knowledge, spark dialogue, and support Michigan's water professionals.

Exhibits & Registration: Booth sales are scheduled to open on May 4, followed by the launch of attendee registration on June 8. Additional details and instructions will be shared as those dates approach.

MI-AWWA SPRING 2026 TRAINING SCHEDULE

DATE	EVENT	CITY
January (12 week course)	Applied Hydraulics	Jackson
February 10 & 11	Joint Expo & Operator Days (with MWEA)	Lansing
February 11	2026 Career Roundtable at Joint Expo and Operator Days	Lansing
February 26	Effective Communication Strategies & Conflict Management for Water Professionals	Grand Rapids
March 6	Lab School for Water Operators	Holland
March 10	Maintenance: Pumps and Valves	Wixom
March 18	Exam Prep: D and F Licenses	Okemos
TBA	Exam Prep: S License	South Haven
March 25 & 26	MI Section Young Professionals Summit	Detroit
April 7 & 8	U.P. Spring Water Conference	Harris
April 9	Management and Supervision	Lansing
April 14	Regional Water Seminar	Grand Rapids
April 15	Regional Water Seminar	Waterford
April 15	Asset Management Seminar (with MWEA)	Bath
April 22	Principles of Finance	Ann Arbor
April 29	Michigan Field Day	Mason
May 5 & 6	27th Triennial Borchardt Conference (with Univ. of Michigan College of Civil & Environmental Engineering, MWEA, and EGLE)	Ann Arbor
May 12	Ethics for Water Professionals	Grand Rapids
May 15	MI-AWWA Leadership Retreat	TBD

Registration opens January 12, 2026 – www.mi-water.org/events



Michigan Water Works News is made possible by the companies below who convey their important messages on our pages. We thank them for their support of the MI-AWWA and its publication and encourage you to contact them when making your purchasing decisions. To make it easier to contact these companies, we have included the page numbers of their advertisements, their phone numbers, and, where applicable, their websites.

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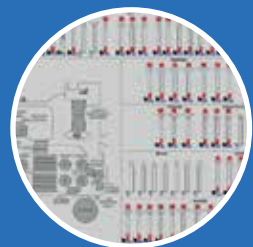
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