

MICHIGAN water works

FALL 2023

NEWS



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WATER WARRIORS

MI-ACE23 RECAP

The official publication of the
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 Michigan Section



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The Michigan Water Works News is a quarterly publication of the Michigan Section, American Water Works Association.

The deadline for submitting articles for Winter 2024 issue is November 10, 2023.

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

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FALL 2023



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ANOTHER AMAZING ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Kelly Gleason, Editor

I hope everyone had an amazing summer. Here we are again to my favorite time of year – fall. The days turn into crisp autumn nights, the leaves start to change color, AND it is football season!

This year, I was promoted to a new position. While it is very closely related to my previous line of work, it is a whole new world, and I have a lot to learn. The Section offers many training opportunities; see page 63 for the calendar of events.

The Annual Conference, MI-ACE23, was held at the Blue Water Convention Center in Port Huron. This year's fundraising events offered were the

annual golf outing and the Safe Water in Ecuador Chance Auction. As in years past, I participated in the golf outing held at the Elks Golf Club with some great people. The two events help raise money for *Water Equation* and *Safe Water in Ecuador*. The conference was, as always, superb! Two and a half days of water information, networking, familiar faces, and plenty of new faces, too. Anyone who didn't attend should make plans for next year; it's always a fantastic event. For a full recap from MI-ACE 2023, please see page 16.

Is there content you'd like to see covered in *Water Works News*? Please send me pictures, stories and updates to

kelly.gleason@lbwl.com with the subject line *Water Works News* or through the MI-AWWA website at www.mi-water.org/publications. I would love to hear from you. 💧

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Front to back: Kelly Gleason, Richie Garcia, DC Coulier, and Alex Chiporous.



View of the Blue Water Bridge.



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A PASSION FOR SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

Gary Wozniak, Chair

Groucho Marx once said, "I refuse to belong to any organization that would have ME as a member!" Well, I have been a member of the Michigan Section for over 25 years, and I haven't been asked to leave yet, so apparently, this saying must not apply to me. To take it a step further, as Chair, I want to thank the Board of Trustees for your nomination and the Section members for your vote.

I am a lifelong Michigan resident. Growing up, I spent my summers along Lake Huron. During the late sixties and early seventies, I remember the lake water quality being poor and algae sticking to my fishing rod, making swimming near shore gross. I also remember, as the seventies turned to the eighties, how pristine the water became and how I loved to snorkel in the shallows of the Great Lakes. Perhaps this has something to do with my current appreciation for surface water treatment challenges. With the ever-changing Great Lakes water quality today, I have a deep respect and appreciation for this immensely vast quantity of available water supply.

I also learned to fish perch with my dad, dip smelt with my college buddies, and fish trout in the streams of the Upper Peninsula during my undergrad. My love for the outdoors, with the direction of my high school teachers, helped define my conservationist viewpoints. I believe in the wise use of resources and proper stewardship to ensure future generations have the same opportunities as I did. With the challenges of changing climate, farming practices, and an ever-growing population, I have become committed to source water protection.

My father, as well as many of my childhood friends' fathers, were World

War II veterans and freely spoke to us about the war. History fascinated me as a kid and still does today. As I travel the state and tour water facilities, I can see the industrial giant Michigan once was and the water utilities that made it possible. With all the closed factories and boarded-up houses in our cities currently, the possibility of our state becoming populous and industrious once again may seem like a long past chapter, but the potential still exists. That potential lies in great part with the water resources. Michigan stands to become a future climate refuge. I believe we can once again become a leader in the industry if we maintain our water infrastructure and demonstrate the true value of our water supply. Perhaps this is why I am concerned about water affordability and how we can repair and maintain water infrastructure while providing an attractive quality of life associated with clean, plentiful water.

Early in my water career, I remember reading the Michigan Public Health case studies by Edward Dunbar Rich, who reported waterborne disease outbreaks on Mackinac Island and Munising during the early 20th century. I am privileged to work with those communities in the present. It fascinated me that despite the historical hardships of the day, the dependence on the Great Lakes for water supply and quality of life, even life itself, was alarmingly evident. Shortly before reading those case studies, the Milwaukee crypto outbreak had occurred, reminding the world of the importance of a clean water supply. Perhaps that is why I have a passion for public health protection, operator education, and emergency response.

I look forward to serving as Chair this year. If you have any Section concerns, please reach out to me at gary.wozniak@lbwl.com. As Groucho Marx also said, "Time flies like an arrow, fruit flies like a banana." 💧





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A BETTER WORLD THROUGH BETTER WATER

Christine Spitzley, Director

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller

Why should I join AWWA? This is a fair question regularly asked by prospective members. As a thirty-year member, I clearly believe in AWWA’s vision – *a better world through better water*. But sometimes, it’s hard to describe all that AWWA is and does. The following recent real-world example tells the story of the reach and power of your AWWA membership at work.

This summer, the US Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit granted a request from the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) to stop the US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) *Cybersecurity Rule* from going into effect until a decision is reached on the case challenging the rule.

AWWA and NRWA requested that the court stay (pause) the rule during a legal challenge from three states so that their members would not have to undertake costly changes to their operations until the court decides the validity of the rule. In response to this decision, AWWA CEO David LaFrance said, “AWWA is pleased the court recognized the importance of halting the *Cybersecurity Rule* for our utility members as it reviews the legality of the rulemaking process. AWWA strongly supports efforts to strengthen cybersecurity in the water sector, but the Sanitary Survey Program is not the right tool for the job. We are grateful our

viewpoint will be heard by the court and look forward to working together with EPA and others on a smart path forward.” AWWA and NRWA joined the states of Missouri, Arkansas, and Iowa in a legal challenge to the *Cybersecurity Rule* because of concerns about the legal process and legality of the rule,

concerns that the rule may create additional cybersecurity vulnerabilities for members, as well as concerns that states do not have appropriate resources, laws, rules, or procedures in place to adhere to the rule requirements. Specifically, in the absence of a viable primacy agency implementation



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framework, water systems were at risk of violations for which they were unable to prepare. The water systems also run the risk that the cybersecurity vulnerabilities of these systems would be publicly available if completed through the proposed sanitary surveys.

The public was not given the opportunity to comment on the approach before the EPA issued the new rule. By granting a stay, the court prevented these risks to members while reviewing the legality of EPA's rulemaking process.

This important story is just one example of how AWWA advocates for its members. This illustrates how AWWA's advocacy is so important because it's not a battle for a single utility, organization, or state but for the collective. United, we can do more.

AWWA's membership includes over 4,300 utilities that supply roughly 80% of the nation's drinking water and treat almost half of the nation's wastewater. Our 51,000 total members represent the full spectrum of the water community, including public water and wastewater systems, environmental advocates, scientists, academicians, and others, who work together to protect our most important resource – water.

So, the next time you are asked, why should I join AWWA?




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Tell them an AWWA story. Tell them about a great AWWA training course you attended. Tell them about someone you met at an AWWA networking event who faced a similar challenge and was able to share a solution. Tell them about an AWWA standard you rely on. Tell them about a funding source that is available because AWWA fought for it. Tell them about the people in your network you rely on in an emergency.

Now more than ever, it is important for the water industry to band together to face the ever-increasing and evolving challenges to our systems and our resources. AWWA has spent 142 years providing solutions to effectively manage water. I am glad you are a member. I hope that if someone asks why AWWA, you will tell a story that shows the value of membership and persuade them to join our vision of *a better world through better water.* 💧



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Bonnifer Ballard, Executive Director

I don't want to use the 'c' word, but I can't talk about our growth without doing so. COVID-19 – it affected everything for everyone. Yet, we're finally stepping back into the light. Okay, enough metaphors.

I was very proud of the Section when we earned the Club Seven Award at ACE23. This is an award for growing membership. The most recent growth is a direct result of efforts by Cheryl Porter and her colleagues at GLWA, the Membership Council, and a partnership between the staff of AWWA and MI-AWWA.

From training and conferences to tours and networking, members are creating ways to fulfill our mission of improving lives through the effective management of water. In order to support that work, the business side of running the Section needs to be nimble and efficient. We've updated a few of our systems over the last year to maximize staff and member efforts. I want to share with you a quick update on where MI-AWWA is operationally.

New Database

We have a new database that allows us to track member involvement better. The system receives regular updates and new functionality regularly. So, as we gain new capabilities, staff will be leveraging that to help us track, communicate, engage, and recognize members more frequently and in a more meaningful way.

New Website

By now, hopefully, you have engaged with the new website, which is tied to our new database. There are two features I want to point out. First, the online registration

“FROM TRAINING AND CONFERENCES TO TOURS AND NETWORKING, MEMBERS ARE CREATING WAYS TO FULFILL OUR MISSION OF IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF WATER.”



process should be easier. Second, each organization has the ability to manage its own employees. We will be holding a webinar later this fall to help utilities and service providers get the most out of this new functionality. The one downside is that you do need to log in to the site to register for an event. However, having a user profile is free and is usually approved within a couple of days.

New Email Marketing

If you haven't been getting emails, you may want to check your spam folder. We now use Constant Contact so that we can fully integrate with our database and gain insights into how our emails are being received. Also, check your web profile to ensure we have your email correct.

New Online Payment System

You now have a more secure way for you to pay online. You can pay invoices during the registration process by logging into

your Member Compass, or by having a pay link emailed directly to you. Staff will no longer ask you for your credit card information over the phone.

New Small Office/Co-working Space

You may have noticed that our mailing address has changed. MI-AWWA is now a hybrid office, meaning we have a small physical office, but the staff still mostly works from home. We had started using co-working space during the pandemic for high-speed internet access. Now, we have a small dedicated office in a co-working space that allows us to access high-speed internet and host small meetings.

Don't worry. These changes didn't cost much more than our previous systems. Other than the initial investment of time and energy, we will enjoy these efficiencies for only slightly more than our previous cost and hopefully provide a better member experience. 💧

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RECAP



The Michigan Section's 85th Annual Conference and Exhibits hosted 414 people in Port Huron from September 12-15, 2023. This was the first time hosting in beautiful Port Huron. The week was full of thought-provoking sessions, networking opportunities, and fun. Thank you to sponsors, golf exhibitors, speakers, volunteers, attendees, and everyone for making MI-ACE 2023 a success!

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!

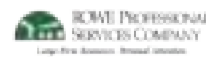
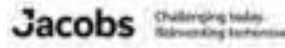
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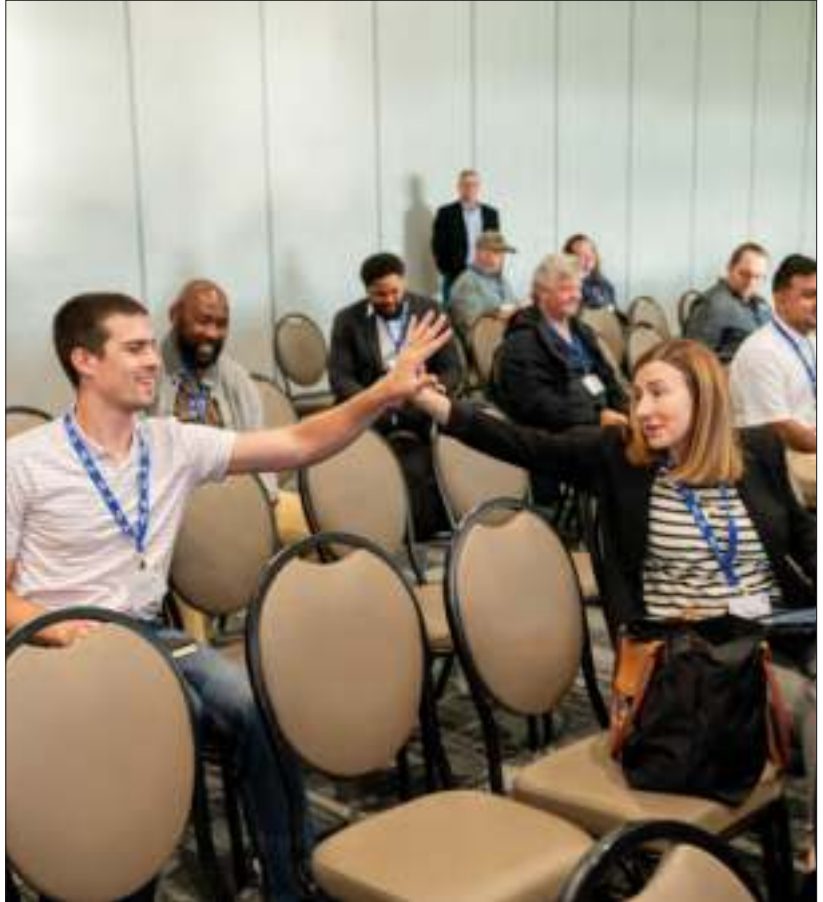
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HIGHLIGHTS

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PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE ORGANIZATION AWARD



Cheryl Porter accepts the 2023 Professional Excellence Organization Award.

OPERATOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD



Robert Cox received the 2023 Operator Meritorious Service Award.

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE INDIVIDUAL AWARD



Jaime Fleming received the 2023 Professional Excellence Individual Award.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S AWARD



Kyle Tryan received the 2023 Executive Director's Award.

CHUCK VAN DER KOLK VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Kelly Gleason received the 2023 Chuck Van der Kolk Volunteer of the Year Award.

RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL PRACTICES AWARD



Peter Minnich accepted the Research and Technical Practices Award on behalf of Robert Veneklasen.

RICHARD HUSBY PUBLIC AWARENESS AWARD



Esther Baptiste received the 2023 Richard Husby Public Awareness Award.

THE RAYMOND J. FAUST AWARD



John Willemin and Jaimie Fleming received the Raymond J. Faust Award at MI-ACE 2023.



HALL OF FAME 2023 INDUCTEES



David Timm and Mark Coleman were inducted into the Michigan Water Industry Hall of Fame at MI-ACE 2023.

GEORGE WARREN FULLER AWARD



Molly Maciejewski was named the George Warren Fuller awardee at MI-ACE 2023.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD



Hillary Caron received the 2023 Young Professional of the Year Award.

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Chair Wayne Jerberg passes the gavel to Chair-Elect Gary Wozniak.

THOMAS NEWHOFF LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST



Thomas Smith accepted the proclamation from the Michigan Section Board in honor of the Thomas Newhoff Leadership Breakfast.

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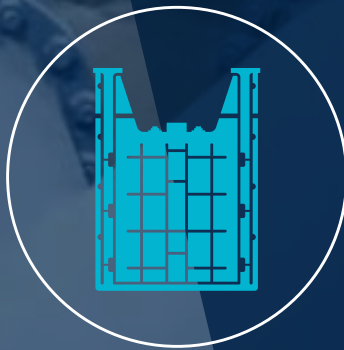
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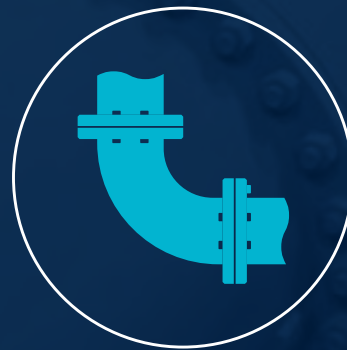
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UNDAUNED & UNWAVING BOARD OF WATER & LIGHT PREPARES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

ANGIE GOODMAN, TRUSTEE

Looking around at work, it seems there are more staff members eligible for retirement than younger workers ready to follow in their footsteps. This is a common theme among all industries, including the water sector. Keeping the water passion alive in the next generation means a lot to us water nerds. So, how do we attract and retain the next generation to want to be a part of the water world?

I have worked at the Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL) for 22 years and have seen our company offer many opportunities for students to learn the components of a utility business. I started my career as a chemist in the environmental laboratory, and we always had a summer intern learning proper techniques for washing dishes (yes, that is a very important skill), making



2023 Graduation of our 1st Step Students

reagents, shadowing the chemists in their work, and, of course enjoying the fun BWL community events. After moving into a new role, I realized interns were part of nearly every section of our company. We are introducing them to power, water, finance, maintenance, engineering, information technology (IT) and more. I wish I had a number of how many interns we retained or hired later. We also have a couple that are now working for other water utilities. For one summer, I believe we had 26 interns – that’s 26 opportunities to introduce a new generation into our world and get them excited about providing clean and safe drinking water.

However, is starting at the college level early enough? In 2008, the BWL started a program called the 1st STEP Program. In the spring of each school year, the BWL brings around 12-13 high school seniors to work for five months. “This program is important for a few reasons. It exposes the students to all sorts of careers, helps them build portfolios, and shows them how to work with teams and in a professional environment. It also enables our employees to become better mentors and challenges us with our ways of doing and thinking of things,” notes Dawn Plenar, BWL’s 1st STEP Coordinator. Highschoolers get the opportunity



2023 Interns Touring Dye Water Conditioning Plant



2023 Interns Touring Dye Water Conditioning Plant

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to work in the water plant and experience the daily operations; they are part of our safety department, learning the best practices to working safely both at work and at home; they work in the purchasing department, customer service, project engineering, water distribution engineering, IT, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and at the power plants. As of 2023, BWL has hired 22 1st STEP Students, with five in the water department.

These students are our future, and it is great we have started to get them excited about these essential jobs at a young age. The next step will be further education at the elementary and middle school age, so the next generation will say, “When I grow up, I want to be a doctor, a policeman, a firefighter, and a water operator.”💧

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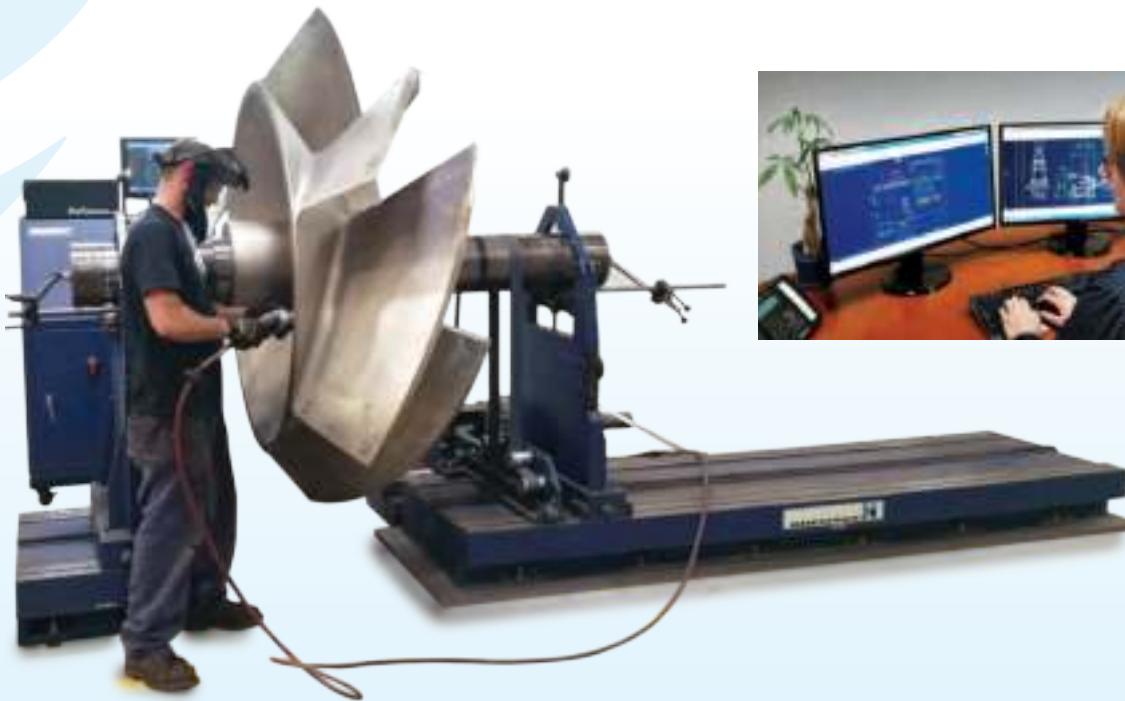
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FIRST TRANSFORMATIVE WATER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY COHORT DIVING IN

Originally printed on January 12, 2023 – www.awwa.org/awwa-articles/first-transformative-water-leadership-academy-cohort-diving-in

Great water utility leaders aren't born – they're developed. Right now, an important part of this development is happening for a select group of 50 young water professionals – the inaugural cohort of the Transformative Water Leadership Academy (TWLA). For more information, please visit www.awwa.org/professional-development/transformative-water-leadership-academy.

TWLA is a new educational program to equip emerging water utility leaders with key skills for sustainable community leadership. Offered jointly by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and WaterNow Alliance, TWLA features ten months of collaborative online learning and two in-person gatherings.

Throughout the course, which began in November, participants are meeting virtually and in person to discuss the challenges they face within their utility, career goals, and ideas for innovative, locally relevant capstone projects.

The twelve virtual sessions address six different leadership strategies around drinking water, wastewater, stormwater management, and water reuse management. In January, virtual classes on the principle "Protect Public Health" explore leadership challenges associated with current issues of replacing lead service lines and affordability of water services. Additional virtual gatherings divide participants into smaller groups to network, share resources, and

exchange ideas, perspectives, and insights. They are led by a volunteer mentor who is a current water sector leader.

One in-person workshop will focus on "Transforming Water Community Culture: Facilitating DE&I." A concluding workshop in August offers time to reflect on what it means to be a leader in the water sector, with some fun rivalry around who created the best capstone project.

"Each small group gathering collaborates closely. They'll get to know each other very well," said TWLA co-founder Tim Worley, managing director at Ortega Strategies Group.

Diversity is a key strength of TWLA. Almost half (46%) of the current cohort are people of color, and 60% are women. In all, 18 US states are represented within the ten regions of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and three participants are from Canada. Nearly all participants work for water utilities in a variety of departments.

Unlike most professional development programs for the water sector, TWLA reaches beyond the engineering ranks. Many of this year's participants are water operators or work in departments such as accounting, government affairs, communications, or conservation.

"It's exciting to see how they all work and think," said TWLA co-founder Alane Boyd, Principal of Desert Rose Environmental.

TWLA participants are eager to increase their capacity to positively impact the future of water.

"I applied to the Transformative Water Leadership Academy because I am looking to serve as a value-based leader, in not only Walnut Valley Water District but the industry as a whole," said Lily Lopez, Director of External Affairs and Sustainability for the Walnut Valley (California) Water District, in a video highlighting TWLA.

"I think it's important to find what and who you want to be as a leader based on your values and morals and to be authentic to who you are. Through this academy, we're doing transformative work to help leaders all around the country emerge," she added. "I'm excited that the academy will provide me with the tools and resources to grow as a leader, and then to give that back to my community through our programs and resources, as well as to my colleagues who are young professionals as well."

Volunteers and sponsors are crucial to TWLA's success. Among the industry leaders who have volunteered to lead a small group is former AWWA Board President Dr. Chi Ho Sham. Some TWLA sponsors are demonstrating thought leadership via presentations to the cohort.

TWLA is supported through a generous EPA grant for the first year. Program organizers will continuously improve TWLA based on each year's experience. Stay tuned later this year to learn how to apply for TWLA 2024.

2023 TWLA participants are listed here:

Abbigayle Dyke, City of Denton, TX
Adam Steurer, City of Hendersonville, NC
Alexandra Sitar, Union County, NC – Water
Ali Polda, Tacoma, WA – Water
Bethel Abate, DC – Water
Brittany Schacht, Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, PA
Chelsea Radcliff, City of Charlotte, NC
Daniel Klune, Connecticut Water Company, CT
Daniel Koge, Honolulu Board of Water Supply, HI
David Ridgeway, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, MI
Diane Moreau, City of Barrie, Ontario, Canada
Diego Ulibarri, City of Arvada, CO.
Dom Bennett, Lee's Summit, MO – Water Utilities
Elizabeth Cullen, AQUA, PA
Emily Stahl, City of Guelph, Ontario, Canada
Eric Best, EMSL Analytical Inc., NJ
Esther Baptiste, Great Lakes Water Authority
Gabriel Evans, EMA Inc., AZ
Gregory Williams, Valley Water, Santa Clara, CA
Gwen Henry, Toho, FL – Water Authority
Jennifer Lee, City of Burlingame, CA
Jenyffer Vasquez, West Basin Municipal Water District, CA
Jillian Croci, Long Beach, CA – Water Department
Karyn Rittenhouse, City of West Allis, WI
Kayla Durham, City of Franklin, TN – Water Plant
Kelly Bourque, City of Santa Barbara, CA
Kevin Rodier, New Jersey American Water, NJ
Kyle Delaney, City of Corona, CA
Lily Lopez, Walnut Valley, CA – Water District
Lisa Pace, Colorado Springs Utilities, CO
Mark Theiler, Middlesex, NJ – Water Company
Matthew Silverman, Littleton, MA – Water Department
Melissa Gray, City of Tulsa, OK
Michelle Bouchard, Prince William County, VA – Service Authority
Nathan Hodges, Northern Kentucky Water District, KY
NiChelle White, City of El Segundo, CA – Public Works Department, Water Division

Patricia Dennis, Renewable Water Resources (ReWa), SC
Philip Mendoza, Lakewood, WA – Water District
Poonam Kalkat, City of Boynton Beach, FL
Rainier Garcia, City of Benicia, CA – Water Treatment Plant
Sandra Stack, City of Cleveland Division of Water, OH
Sarah Trejo, Aquarion, Connecticut Water Co., CT

Shukwia Tajik, City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada
Shunda Boykins, Central Arkansas Water, AR
Skylar Reed, City of Newark, NJ – Department of Water & Sewer
Timothy Johnson, King County, WA – Water District No. 90
Tony Searls, Greater Cincinnati Water Works, OH
Virginia Montier-Burke, City of College Station, TX 💧

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SAFEGUARDING SOURCE WATER **FROM ZEBRA MUSSEL CONTAMINATION**

AMANI SAIYAD, GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY

Zebra mussels are scientifically known as *Dreissena polymorpha*. Zebra mussels are an invasive, fingernail-sized mollusk that is native to fresh waters in Eurasia. Their name comes from the dark, zig-zagged stripes on each shell.

An invasive species is not naturally found in a region but is introduced through natural or artificial means and is able to survive and compete well in its new habitat. A new species is considered invasive if it has new or no natural predators and, therefore, disrupts local ecosystems by replacing native species. Zebra mussels probably arrived in the Great Lakes in the 1980s via ballast water that was discharged by large ships. They have spread rapidly throughout the Great Lakes region. Zebra mussels can attach to recreational boats' hulls, motors, and other parts. When boaters travel from one lake to another, they may inadvertently transport zebra mussels and their microscopic larvae, facilitating their spread.

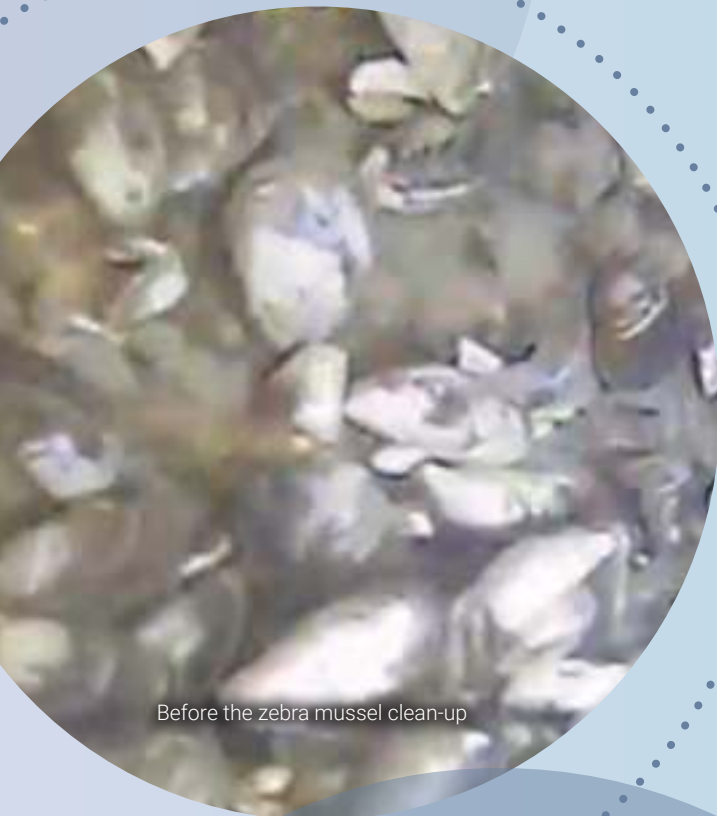
Once introduced to a new location, zebra mussels can rapidly reproduce and establish dense populations. They can outcompete native species for food and space, disrupt ecosystems, and clog water intake structures, posing significant ecological and economic challenges. While zebra mussels are not a direct source of water contamination in terms of introducing harmful substances, their rapid spread and population growth can have significant ecological consequences in aquatic environments. Efforts to control and manage zebra mussel populations are crucial to minimize their impact on water quality. Zebra mussels filter large amounts of

nutrients from the water, such as nitrogen and phosphorus.

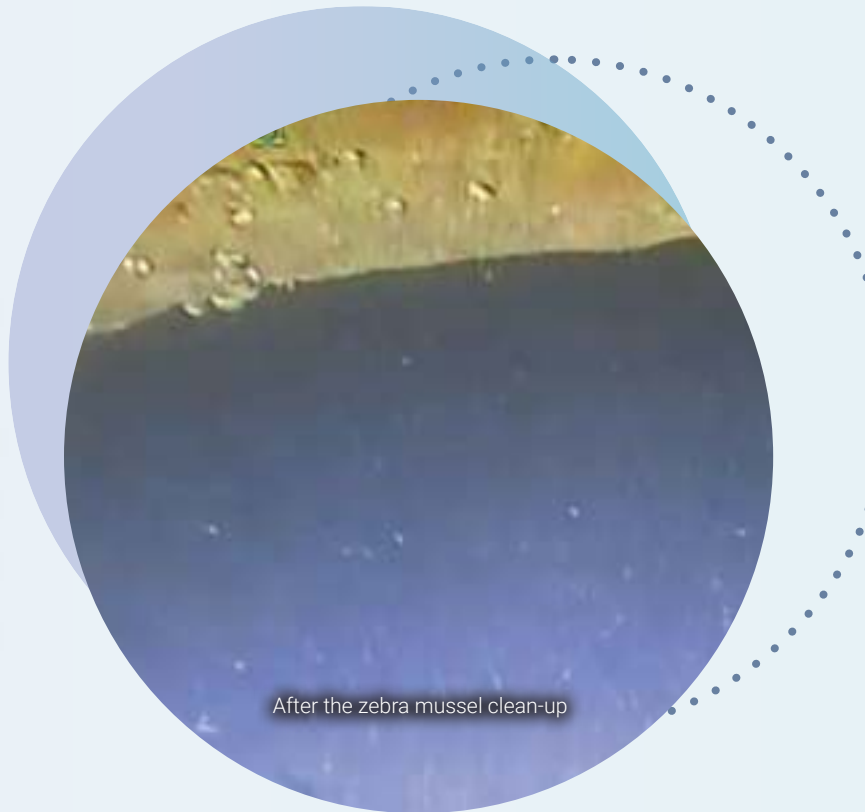
This can result in decreased nutrient concentrations, potentially affecting the growth of aquatic plants and algae and overall nutrient cycling in the ecosystem. While zebra mussels can reduce plankton levels, they can selectively remove some algae types while leaving others. This can increase certain algal species, potentially leading to harmful algal blooms that can negatively impact water quality and aquatic life. Controlling zebra mussel populations and monitoring their impact on water quality is essential to preserving the health and integrity of aquatic ecosystems. One of the more well-known problems with zebra mussels is the way they rapidly coat water intake pipes, which is a problem for drinking water treatment plants, power plants, and any other industries that are pulling water out of the lakes through a pipe. Great Lakes Water Authority faces the same problem



**ONCE INTRODUCED
TO A NEW LOCATION,
ZEBRA MUSSELS CAN
RAPIDLY REPRODUCE
AND ESTABLISH
DENSE POPULATIONS.**



Before the zebra mussel clean-up



After the zebra mussel clean-up

at its intake facilities. Though there are many available methods for combatting the zebra mussel problem, such as temperature treatments, barrier filtration, electric currents, and sonic vibration, these techniques have yielded only limited success. Sodium hypochlorite, commonly known as bleach, is an effective chemical treatment for controlling zebra mussels in water systems. Equipment can help manage and remove zebra mussel infestations from various water infrastructures and equipment when used appropriately. Sodium hypochlorite can also work by eliciting a protective response from zebra mussels, ultimately leading to their demise. When zebra mussels come into contact with sodium hypochlorite, they feel threatened and react by closing their shell valves tightly. This closing response helps them create a protective barrier to keep the chemical away. However, when their shells remain closed for an extended period, typically around ten days, they cannot open to feed on their usual food. As a result, they starve because they can't get the nutrients they need to survive. Regular dosing of sodium hypochlorite in the water intake structure has proven to be an effective means of preventing the zebra mussels from clogging the intake pipelines. Regular monitoring of water quality parameters is critical during and after the treatment to ensure that the desired results are achieved and to assess any potential impacts on non-target species.

The images on this page were taken underwater at the GLWA intake plant. 💧



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GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY 120-INCH WATER MAIN BREAK

MATT LANE, MANAGER – CHARGES
OUTREACH AND MODELING,
GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY

In the pre-dawn hours of August 13, 2022, as most of the nearly 3.8 million people served by the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) slept safely in their homes, there lurked a previously undetected weakening of a section of the largest water transmission main operated by the regional system, just waiting for the right moment to spring a leak (or a gusher in this case). At about 4:30 am, the first signs of trouble bubbled to the surface when GLWA team members noticed a sudden drop in the water pressure of the massive 120-inch pipe that connects the Lake Huron Water Treatment Plant (LHWTP) to the booster pump station near the small town of Imlay City. Such a noticeable change from the status quo triggered a flurry of activity and kickstarted a series of events.

According to an after-action report submitted to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), the initial investigation uncovered "... extensive flooding of a farmer's field approximately one-half mile due west of the [LHWTP] facility." This discovery unveils the typically out-of-sight, out-of-mind infrastructure we take for granted and places it directly under the lens of a microscope, both figuratively and literally. As GLWA turned the dial to focus on what exactly caused the catastrophic failure of its largest linear asset, a precautionary



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boil water advisory was issued for 23 communities with an affected population totaling roughly 935,000. Luckily, as data analysis and response efforts were ramped up, within 24 hours, this was reduced to only seven communities "... representing an impacted population of approximately 133,000 people," according to the GLWA report.

While this event serves as a real-world illustration of the challenges water utilities face in maintaining, renewing, and replacing aging infrastructure, it also highlights the resiliency of the men and women who work tirelessly to protect and maintain the integrity of our most precious natural resource. GLWA teams faced a historic test of their preparedness and their perseverance in the face of this adversity. Even though the break has been repaired, the threat remains – perhaps not in the immediacy of a major emergency but, certainly in the inevitability of continued structural deterioration.

According to a 2018 study conducted by the Buried Structures Laboratory at Utah State University titled, *Water Main Break Rates in the USA and Canada: A Comprehensive Study*, the rate of water main breaks between 2012 and 2018 increased from 11 breaks per hundred miles of main per year to 14, an increase of 27%. Though most of those breaks occur on water mains that are 50 years old or older and on comparatively smaller pipes of 12 inches or less (relative to the GLWA 120-inch main) made from ductile iron, it appears that general conditions for failure are pervasive. Corrosive soils and other environmental conditions, according to the report, contribute to the risk of pipeline failure.

GLWA's water mains are no exception. Though the 120-inch main is constructed of Prestressed Concrete Cylinder Pipe (PCCP), environmental conditions remain a major factor in pipe condition. In fact, roughly 45% of the water mains in the GLWA system are constructed using PCCP, or roughly 389 miles worth, according to the Authority. This is the largest concentration of PCCP in the US. When the efforts to repair the 120-inch main were underway, three 16-foot sections of this massive pipe needed to be manufactured and rush-delivered to the site. Pipe this large is unusual, and therefore, not all the sections required are regularly kept in inventory at the manufacturer.

A condition assessment report of the damaged pipe, conducted by engineering firm HDR as part of GLWA's Linear System Integrity Program, attributes its failure to "... the mortar coating being adversely affected by the environment allowing for a combination of corrosion and hydrogen embrittlement (HE) induced damage of the prestressing wire." In other words, the conditions that plague many pipes across the continent also weakened this femoral artery of water mains.

That is why now, more than ever, effective and efficient teamwork is crucial to the success of the water sector. In a state of roughly 10 million people, Michigan has an advantage over many others that struggle with water scarcity, but aging infrastructure and limited financial resources are commonplace in cities across North America. GLWA has one of the largest service areas in the United States and the largest in Michigan. The impact of any major failure in the system has the potential to affect hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of people.

With stakes so high, system resiliency and emergency planning become extremely important. The GLWA Systems Control Center was a crucial component in identifying and responding to this event and any event that occurs in the system. As Director of Systems and Resiliency (including the System Control Center), Biren Saparia points out, they had a plan for this exact scenario.

"We successfully implemented the emergency plan that had been developed for such situations," Saparia said. "This involved re-routing flows from the North Service Center, balancing system demands, and ensuring appropriate pressure levels for our member partners."

Because the 120-inch main is the only conduit to distribute finished water from the Lake Huron Water Treatment Plant into the system, the only redundancy is to reverse flow from the Northeast Water Treatment Plant, which has not been done since 1982, the last time there was a disruption on the 120-inch main.

"Since none of our current staff have the direct experience with handling a supply loss from Lake Huron," Saparia said, "we had to address this lack of experience ... [to] ensure our response was well-prepared and effective."

How exactly? A step-by-step emergency operations plan that must be executed perfectly. The GLWA Systems Control Center and Field Services teams did just that. In addition, everyone involved played an important role in the emergency response.

"Everyone pulls together to do the right thing," said Todd King, System Resiliency Officer and Director of Field Services. "It was 'all-hands-on-deck.' Not just GLWA but our contractors, member partners, county, and state leaders," he said.

Unique challenges presented themselves as the situation unfolded. Getting potable water to the affected areas was also top-of-mind. GLWA water tanker trucks were deployed to the communities to help bring clean water to residents. Getting water to one small community was especially impressive. Not because of how much water was needed but because of how little water.

"The team at [Lake Huron] had the difficult task of supplying water to a single member partner on this side of the break," said Christopher Steary, Plant Manager at the Lake Huron Water Treatment Plant. "Using the facility to supply 0.2 MGD (200,000 gallons) of water per day [when it is] designed to produce up to 400 MGD was extremely challenging and unprecedented," he said.

Water quality was the main concern, but the experience of the team at the Lake Huron Water Treatment Plant was on full display as they operated the plant in "novel ways," according to Steary. "Their training and professionalism [were] equal to their teamwork and problem-solving during the crisis," he said.

At the Northeast Water Treatment Plant, operations were shifted on a dime as well. "Once the break happened, the team was catapulted into action," according to Lashone Bedford, Process and Strategic Planning Administrator (Northeast Water Treatment Plant Manager at the time of the 120-inch main break), "needing to put several pieces of equipment in operation at one time, and putting aging filters in service which had been maintained via a retooled preventative maintenance program," she said.

All the moving parts of an event of this scope and scale are overwhelming. But, GLWA Chief Executive Officer Suzanne R. Coffey said it best in the 21st and final update of the emergency:

"Although we encountered a number of obstacles along the way, I am so proud of how everyone involved dug in and used their knowledge, skills, and ingenuity to ensure that we made the repair as quickly as possible and kept our focus on protecting the public health."

At the end of the day, that is what it is all about – protecting public health. The dedicated team at the Great Lakes Water Authority is on the front lines of water quality not just on days like August 13, 2022, but all day, every day – come hell or high water.

Do you have a Water Warriors story to share for an upcoming issue? Email waterwarriors@mi-water.org with your article ideas. 💧



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WHAT EVERY OPERATOR MUST KNOW

THE VALUE OF APPRENTICESHIPS: NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF WATER PROFESSIONALS

Evita Parks

Introduction

Water is an invaluable resource, and the demand for professionals in the water industry is ever-increasing. As we face new challenges, such as water scarcity, pollution, and aging infrastructure, it is crucial to invest in the development of our workforce. One effective way to achieve this is through apprenticeships. Apprenticeships offer an opportunity for individuals to gain practical experience, technical knowledge, and a deep understanding of the water sector. In this article, we will explore apprenticeships in the water industry and why they are essential for fostering the next generation of water professionals.

Hands-On Learning

A key advantage of apprenticeships is the emphasis on hands-on learning. Apprentices work alongside experienced professionals, learning from their expertise and gaining practical skills that cannot be acquired solely through classroom education. Water industry apprenticeships provide a learning experience, allowing individuals to work with various technologies, equipment, and processes used in water treatment, distribution, and management. This hands-on approach not only accelerates learning but also instills a strong foundation in the apprentices, preparing them for real-world challenges.

Mentorship

Apprenticeships facilitate mentorship, enabling seasoned professionals to pass on their knowledge and experience to

the next generation. Mentors provide guidance, support, and valuable insights, helping apprentices navigate complex situations and develop critical thinking abilities. The water industry, with its unique set of challenges, requires a deep understanding of the intricacies involved in water treatment, distribution systems, and regulatory frameworks. Through mentorship, apprentices gain a wealth of practical knowledge and expertise that can only be gained through years of experience, accelerating their professional growth.

Bridging the Skills Gap

The water industry is facing a significant skills gap, with a number of retiring professionals and a shortage of skilled workers to replace them. Apprenticeships play a vital role in bridging this gap by creating a pipeline of well-trained and skilled water professionals. By offering structured training programs, apprenticeships enable individuals to acquire the specific skills and competencies needed to excel in various roles within the water sector. This bridge helps address the immediate staffing needs of water utilities and ensures a sustainable workforce for the future.

Building a Diverse Workforce

Diversity and inclusion are essential for any industry, including the water sector. Apprenticeships provide an opportunity to attract individuals from diverse backgrounds and promote inclusivity within the industry. By offering equal access to training and

employment opportunities, apprenticeships help break down barriers and create a more representative workforce. This diversity brings a range of perspectives, ideas, and problem-solving approaches to the water industry, fostering innovation and improving overall performance.

Career Advancement and Professional Development

Apprenticeships serve as a stepping stone to long-term career success in the water industry. As apprentices gain experience and knowledge, they become equipped to take on more responsible roles and contribute to solving complex water challenges. Many apprenticeship programs offer industry-recognized certifications, enhancing employability and opening doors to various career pathways. Additionally, apprenticeships often provide opportunities for continued professional development, ensuring water professionals stay abreast of the latest advancements and emerging technologies.

Conclusion

Apprenticeships offer immense value to the water industry by nurturing the next generation of skilled water professionals. Through hands-on learning, mentorship, and the acquisition of specialized skills, apprenticeships create a talented and diverse workforce. By bridging the skills gap and promoting career advancement, apprenticeships ensure the sustainability and resilience of the water sector in the face of evolving challenges. As we strive to secure our water resources and build a sustainable future, investing in apprenticeships is a crucial step towards achieving these goals. 💧

Above the Bridge

Projects Abound in Gladstone

Stacey Kukkonen,
Communications Coordinator

Standing in front of a large, white distribution map, meticulously sketched with local streets and buildings, Rob Spreitzer motions to an area of land surrounding the City of Gladstone Water Filtration Plant.

"This will give you a good idea of our area," he said, pointing to a bluff on the corner of the map.

Located at 22 Delta Avenue, washed in shades of green, the water filtration plant has been treating Little Bay de Noc water since 1970, and construction of the plant consisted of a wooden intake line, steam pump house, and several thousand feet of cast iron distribution pipe. Spreitzer is the superintendent at the water plant and has been on the staff for nearly 30 years, rounding out a crew of three.

"I think we're rated at 3 MGD (capacity)," he said of the plant. "In all my years here, I only remember one summer where we had over a million-gallon days."

The plant is a complete treatment facility that includes disinfection, coagulation/sedimentation, corrosion control, taste and odor control, fluoridation, filtration, and storage, according to the city's website. The plant has undergone maintenance and upgrades over the years to keep up with modern technology and to continuously improve water quality. Some of those improvements included a large painting project for spring 2023.

"The painters were kind enough to order it for us and ship it here, so it's ready to go," Spreitzer said, motioning to an area of the water plant where palettes of paint were stacked, tucked among the pipes. "We're going to go with a two-toned grey to match everything."



Despite being located on Lake Michigan, Gladstone's plant operates like many of the water plants in the Central Upper Peninsula, treating inland lakes or streams. His plant runs like a well-oiled machine; water pipes line neatly along the floors and walls of the facility, which operates and maintains the distribution system in addition to the filtration plant.

Gladstone's distribution system includes more than 37 miles of water main, 1,800 customer laterals, a 500,000-gallon ground storage tank, a one million-gallon underground elevated reservoir, a 200,000-gallon elevated storage tank with one booster station, and 265 fire hydrants. According to the city, the department also installs and maintains roughly 2,000 water meters.





“THE PLANT IS A COMPLETE TREATMENT FACILITY THAT INCLUDES DISINFECTION, COAGULATION/ SEDIMENTATION, CORROSION CONTROL, TASTE AND ODOR CONTROL, FLUORIDATION, FILTRATION, AND STORAGE.”

Just west outside the doors of the facility, Spreitzer can faintly see a tower where the one-million-gallon reservoir is buried into the side of the bluff.

“We actually have a change of maybe 150 feet of elevation between the lake and the bluff up there,” he said.

The water from the filtration plant is sent to the clear well, then to the high-service pump, and finally onto the one-million-gallon storage reservoir, which is made up of two half-million-gallon cells. The tower provides pressure to the bluff when the booster pump isn't being used.

New development can be tricky in Gladstone with the pre-existing water layout, but projects are always ongoing, including a 600-foot water main replacement project.

Private wells dot the area among city connections in Gladstone. In the 1990s, a large expansion on the bluff pushed water construction in that direction. Future projects could include developing more property, including land that is currently vacant along the water.

“The city would really like to get this going,” he said. 💧



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IMAGINE A DAY WITHOUT WATER – A CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS’ STUDENT WRITING CONTEST

Izamar Contreras-Alvarado



“THE CONTEST IS DESIGNED TO ENGAGE THIRD- TO TWELFTH-GRADE STUDENTS, ENCOURAGING THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN WATER AND ALLOWING THEM TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES CREATIVELY THROUGH WRITING.”



In recognition of water’s critical role in our lives and the necessity to raise awareness about its importance, the Grand Rapids Water System has adopted the worldwide “Imagine a Day Without Water” campaign and launched its Student Writing Contest in 2018. This contest allows us to celebrate creativity while highlighting the importance of water education. The contest is designed to engage third- to twelfth-grade students, encouraging them to think about the importance of clean water and allowing them to express themselves creatively through writing. The contest aims to promote the importance of water source protection, water infrastructure investments, and sustainable usage.

In addition to the contest, we actively participate in community outreach. During the month of October, we visit classrooms and hold interactive sessions, discussing the urban water cycle and the importance of protecting our source water,

Lake Michigan. These classroom visits provide a platform for students to learn firsthand about the stages of the urban water cycle and empower students to play an active role in becoming water stewards in their daily lives.

This October 19, 2023, we invite local organizations, elected officials, water utilities, and communities to participate in the “Imagine a Day Without Water” campaign to raise awareness about reliable water access for all. Access to safe and reliable water is essential for maintaining public health, promoting economic development, and a sustainable future. Without adequate water resources, communities could not thrive.

Learn more about the City of Grand Rapids’ Student Writing Contest at www.grcity.us/adaywithoutwater and the worldwide “Imagine a Day Without Water” campaign at www.imagineadaywithoutwater.org. 💧

THE DEEP END: A LEARNING SERIES FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Rachel Zywiczyński, Young Professionals Chair

We've most likely all seen this looming statistic from the Brookings Institution: Approximately 1/3 of US drinking water and wastewater operators will be eligible for retirement by 2028. Let's assume this is not only our operators but also our field staff, pump mechanics, engineers, plumbing inspectors, etc., who will take with them years of institutional knowledge.

As we slowly, yet hopefully, fill these positions, what will the onboarding process look like, and how can we preserve this institutional knowledge? After all, institutional knowledge covers the summation of processes in an entire organization, how it all works together, the know-how, and the big picture. For managers, it can be extremely hard and time-consuming to intentionally train new employees with this big picture in mind. So, onboarding transitions to on-the-job training or 'figuring it out as you go.'

It can take months, years even, for a new hire to start figuring things out, to feel comfortable asking questions, or to seek more context for the system our jobs are a part of. What if we changed onboarding from just on-the-job learning, the treading water in the deep end, to include better context from the start on which to build institutional knowledge and an understanding of one's purpose in the whole picture?

MI-AWWA would like to offer up a life ring to those starting their job in the deep end by launching a year-long series of technical and non-technical classes geared explicitly towards young or new professionals in the water industry called the 'Deep End' set to kick off in January 2024.

The Deep End program has been created for new hires who 'don't know what they don't know,' who want more than just on-the-job training, but more importantly, to learn from and feel empowered by seasoned professionals to remain and grow as a professional in our Section and industry. The program will offer a cohort-style learning experience, where participants can learn alongside other new hires and graduates having formed these personal connections over the course of the year.

Course topics in this yearlong training would cover the entire Human Water Cycle – the source water, water treatment, wastewater treatment, and infrastructure of a typical public utility system. The Deep End employs a module learning framework to introduce concepts and keep building on them each month. Participants will become familiar with concepts in basic treatment and distribution/collection techniques and tour facilities, then build upon that knowledge by diving into the regulations and business strategies that govern their systems.


Students would be instructed by 'seasoned' professionals who would act as both teacher and mentor to a cohort member. Mentors will be required to meet with mentees monthly, outside of classroom hours, to discuss course materials further, answer questions, and provide support to mentees (i.e., connecting mentees with other professionals to discuss topics outside of mentor's subject expertise, suggesting training or supplemental materials to further learning). It's crucial that mentors have the



ability and desire to connect with new or young professionals, specifically those that can recall and empathize with what it felt like to be new in the water industry (this could be a Senior YP member, a recent YP alumni, or a professional that has demonstrated a commitment to young people) *and* holds the technical expertise needed to lead the instruction of learning session.

This yearlong cohort would be a great natural onboarding process suggested by participants' managers, supervisors, or team leads within the first year of employment. I believe that showing an investment in younger staff of future generations will help address industry-wide issues of succession planning, preserving institutional knowledge, and staff retention – because learning together empowers us more than isolated struggles in the deep end.



Interested in joining the first cohort? Applications are OPEN for mentors/instructors and cohort participants. To apply or learn more, visit www.mi-water.org/the-deep-end or scan the QR code: 


GRAND RAPIDS RECEIVES \$5 MILLION GRANT TO REPLACE LEAD WATER LINES: A STEP TOWARDS SAFER DRINKING WATER

In early July 2023, a press conference was held in Grand Rapids with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Administrator, Michael Regan, to showcase the federal government's commitment to prioritizing public health investments. Also in attendance were Congresswoman Hillary Scholten, State Senator Winnie Brinks, Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss, and EGLE Chief Deputy Director Aaron Keatley.

At the event, Administrator Regan highlighted the Biden Administration's *Bipartisan Infrastructure Plan*, approved in 2021, that allocated \$14 billion nationwide to replace lead service lines, of which Michigan is set to receive \$73 million.

Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss explained that the city has been proactively replacing lead service lines since 2017,

but this additional funding will expedite the much-needed replacements. Presently, the City of Grand Rapids has 21,000 lead service lines, with more than half concentrated in the neighborhoods of focus. Neighborhoods of Focus (NOF) are 17 census tracts on the west and south sides of Grand Rapids that are intentionally invested in due to systemic and historic inequities.

This joint effort between the City of Grand Rapids and the EPA is a step forward in protecting public health and promoting clean and safe drinking water. For more information about the City of Grand Rapids Lead Line Replacement program, visit www.grandrapidsmi.gov/government/departments/water-system/lead-in-drinking-water#section-5. 




SWIE PLANNING ECUADOR TRIP FOR MARCH 2024

Mark DeHaan

In 2024, SWIE plans to return to Ecuador for the first time in more than four years. A trip is scheduled for some time in March, with the expected length at a week, give or take. For this trip, we are seeking individuals who have experience in asset management, submersible pump installation and maintenance, and source water testing, specifically in a field setting. The team on the ground in Ecuador would appreciate professional opinions on current installation methods of submersible pumps, and the Ecuadorian team would also like to incorporate the experience of SWIE members into training sessions for community water boards and operators, specifically around asset management and water testing.

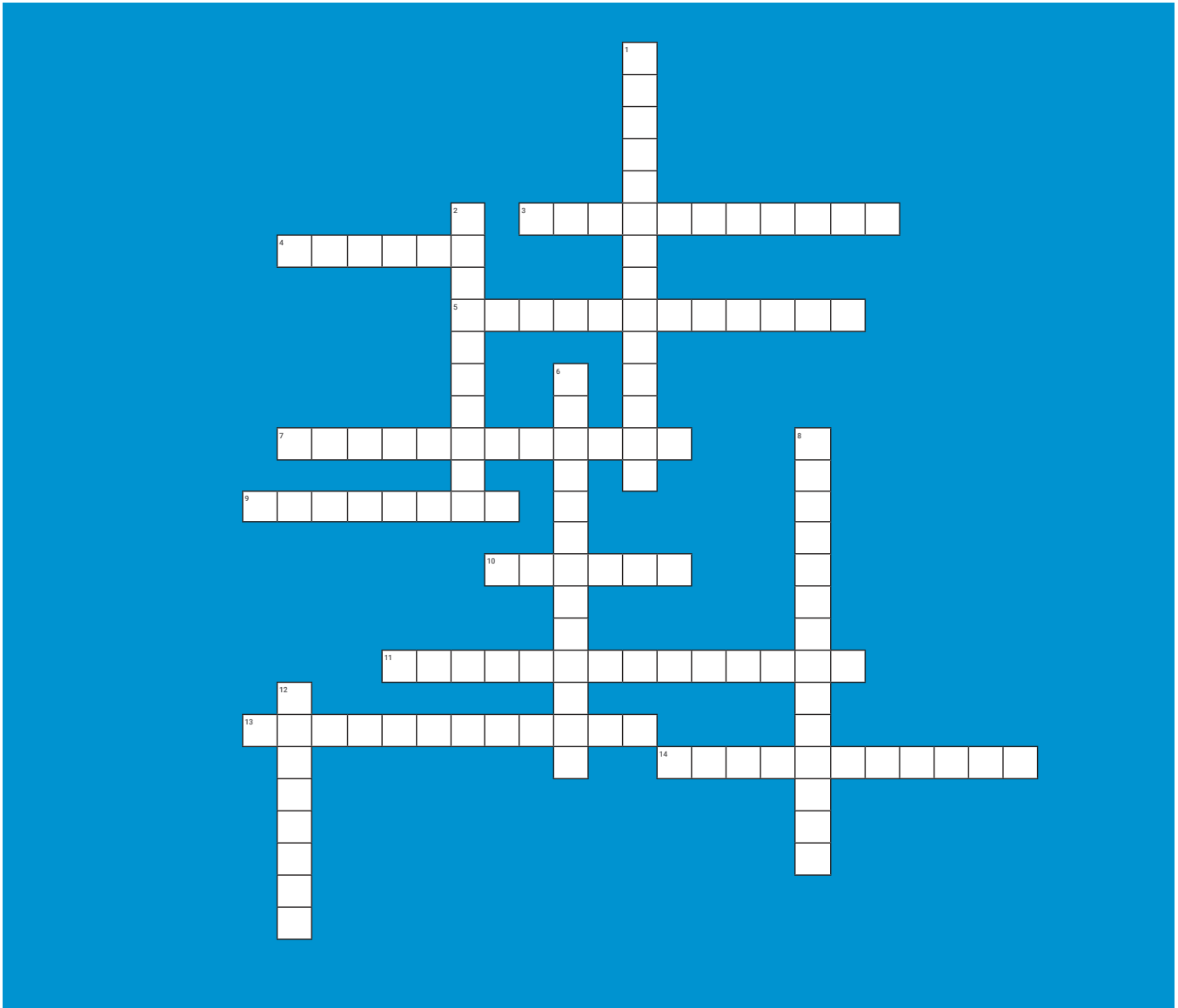
In order to apply for travel insurance through the Section, the team will have to be finalized by December. For this reason, we are asking that all interested individuals contact SWIE before the end of October. The team will then be finalized in November, and travel arrangements will be determined.

Costs for the trip will vary depending on chosen activities, but a rough estimate is approximately \$100-\$120 per day while on the ground in Ecuador, not including flights. A group of any size can be accommodated, but a group of 6-8 would be preferred.

Please send any questions to Mark De Haan at markdh92@gmail.com and Colin McCorkle at cmccorkle@fishbeck.com. 



CROSSWORD: WATER TREATMENT



ACROSS

3. The first step in water treatment, often involving the addition of chemicals to clump particles.
4. A tiny particle that serves as a nucleus for water droplet formation.
5. Device that measures the turbidity of water.
7. The removal of dissolved salts from water.
9. Chemical commonly used to disinfect water.
10. The main purpose of adding fluoride to drinking water.
11. Chemical process used to balance the pH of water.
13. The process of boiling water and then collecting the condensed vapor.
14. The process of a liquid passing through a material to remove impurities.

DOWN

1. Biological process where microorganisms consume organic matter in water.
2. The process of removing suspended particles from water.
6. A large tank where water is stored to allow particles to settle.
8. Water treatment method that uses membranes to remove ions, molecules, and particles.
12. Tiny organisms used in water treatment to consume harmful bacteria.


COMMUNICATION COUNCIL

Samarhia Giffel, Communications Chair

The Communication Council is working tirelessly to launch the Section's podcast *The Current*. We have topics that will elicit great conversations, hosts who bring amazing energy, and special guests who are experts in the water industry. Our 'Water Warrior' segment in *Water Works News* has been a hit, and we hope you submit people, teams, and projects to

be highlighted. This will be a great time to share what you have accomplished and show how proud you are of our Section's members. We have two campaigns this fall – 'Source Water Protection Week,' which ran September 24-30, 2023, and 'Imagine a Day Without Water,' on October 19, 2023. We would love to hear and see how your teams are promoting

and celebrating these campaigns with stories and pictures.

As always, we will keep you updated via *Water Works News*, *Water Weekly* updates, and our social media platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. For more information, please visit www.mi-water.org/communications-council. 

“THIS WILL BE A GREAT TIME TO SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED AND SHOW HOW PROUD YOU ARE OF OUR SECTION'S MEMBERS. WE HAVE TWO CAMPAIGNS THIS FALL – 'SOURCE WATER PROTECTION WEEK,' WHICH RAN SEPTEMBER 24-30, 2023, AND 'IMAGINE A DAY WITHOUT WATER,' ON OCTOBER 19, 2023.”



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EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL

The Education and Training Council (ETC) is in the process of developing new and exciting classes for the water professionals of Michigan. These classes will serve to prepare operators to excel on their State of Michigan

Licensing exams. The Education and Training Council will also be involved in conducting a needs survey of water workers in the state. Surveys, online, and in-person interviews will be conducted to get a feel for what operators want to see

and what they are expecting to get from their educational opportunities.

For more information, please visit www.mi-water.org/education-and-training-council. 💧

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Matt Kennedy, Chair

The Government Affairs Council has been working on two primary issues this summer: water affordability legislation and backflow preventer testing credential requirements (ASSE 5110 certification).

The GAC has formed a subcommittee to focus on five bills associated with water affordability. The bill topics revolve around shutoff protections for vulnerable populations, a statewide water affordability/assistance plan, rate transparency reporting requirements, and water/wastewater billing requirements. The GAC has been working with Senator Stephanie Chang's office (Michigan 3rd District) through the draft stages of these bills to ensure the technical aspects of the bills are correct and implementable. Representatives from MI-AWWA attend a stakeholder meeting each Friday hosted by Senator Chang to discuss the details of this pending legislation. There are versions of these bills that were introduced to the Committee in 2022 (SB343'22, SB344'22, SB 345'22, SB 348'22), and we expect at least a few of them to be reintroduced in the Senate with revisions before the end of 2023.

The GAC has also been working through the backflow preventor testing credential issue. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) recently reviewed a section of the *Skilled Trades Regulation Act 2016 PA 407* (STRA) and concluded that testing of backflow preventor must be performed by a licensed plumber. This conflicts

with the previous rule interpretation that allowed *unlicensed* plumbers with ASSE 5110 certification to test backflow preventers (allowed from January 2018 until summer 2023). Now, under the current interpretation, a tester must be a licensed plumber *and* have a valid ASSE 5110 certification. EGLE published a helpful FAQ on this subject in July 2023 (search term: *Michigan Backflow Prevention*

Assembly Tester Credentials). This interpretation is creating waves in many communities in Michigan due to the shortage of licensed plumbers who perform testing services. The GAC is actively pursuing a change to STRA legislation to require only ASSE 5110 certification for backflow preventor testing.

For more information, please visit www.mi-water.org/government-affairs-and-legislation-council. 💧



YP CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT


Kyle Tryan, Benton Charter Township

GET CONNECTED

The heart and soul of the Young Professionals group is social and networking events. These events allow you to build your network and knowledge while making some friends along the way. This is one of the biggest reasons I've stayed involved with the section and the YPs all these years. Recently, the

YPs put on a social mixer on the state's east side in Hazel Park, MI. The first annual cornhole tournament! This event was attended by MI-AWWA, MWEA, and GLWA folks. We had just over 20 people attend, and everyone had a great time. I got to make some new connections myself. And the best part is that I won the tournament with Zach/Ross as my

teammate (Ross filled in for Zach). Keep an eye out for upcoming YP events on the Calendar of Events tab on the Section website, and make sure to join us! The YPs also have monthly virtual meetings you can join.

For more information, please visit www.mi-water.org/young-professionals-committee. 



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IN MEMORIAM

The passing of David Stinson on July 1, 2023.

The passing of Bailey Papes on July 23, 2023.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Members who joined June 1, 2023, to September 30, 2023.

- Walter Barrett**, Trendset Communications Group, LLC
- Nicholas Battjes**, Fishbeck Bermex Inc.
- Daniel Evans**, City of Muskegon Water Filtration Plant
- Jeffrey Gier**, Hillsdale Board of Public Utilities
- Scott Lewis**, Lewis Municipal Sales
- Serinda Locklear**, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians – Utilities
- David Mack**, Bermex Inc.
- Ashley Merz**, City of Berkley
- Brian Pacillo**, Michigan Career & Technical Institute
- James Petrie**, City of Muskegon Water Filtration Plant
- Nickolas Portwine**, Spicer Group Inc.
- Joseph Primeau**, Spicer Group Inc.
- Jacob Roundy**, DN Tanks
- Mark Rushford**, Flexfab LLC
- Chad Sapp**, City of Mt. Pleasant
- Drew Saunders**, Clyde Township
- Eric Scanland**, Huron Township
- Mark Shankus**, City of Berkley
- Elliot Smith**, Motmot
- Haran Stanley**, Great Lakes Water Authority
- Frank Tistle**, Heraeus Noblelight America LLC
- Robbie Waddell**, DLZ Michigan Inc.
- Justin Weckesser**, City of Midland Water Distribution
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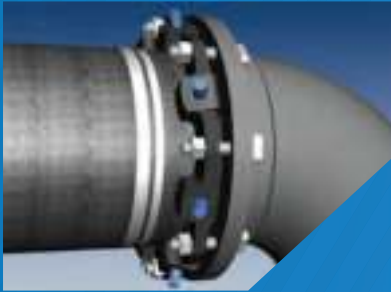
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BACKFLOW TESTING CREDENTIALS UPDATE

EGLE requires that all people testing backflow protection assemblies must have valid certification through the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), specifically ASSE 5110. Recently, the Bureau of Construction Codes (BCC) within the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs was asked to review the credential requirements for individuals testing backflow preventer assemblies. The BCC concluded that the *Michigan Plumbing Code and Skilled Trades and Regulation Act* require the testing of backflow prevention assemblies to be performed by a master plumber, journey plumber, or apprentice plumber under the direct supervision of a journey or master plumber.

This recent decision means that all backflow protection assembly testers must have valid ASSE 5110 certification and also be a master plumber, journey plumber, or apprentice plumber under the direct supervision of a journey or master plumber to test in Michigan. Public water supplies must now ensure that all backflow protection assembly testers have the proper credentials. Tester credentials should always be provided and verified on individual test report forms.

“PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES MUST NOW ENSURE THAT ALL BACKFLOW PROTECTION ASSEMBLY TESTERS HAVE THE PROPER CREDENTIALS. CREDENTIALS. TESTER CREDENTIALS SHOULD ALWAYS BE PROVIDED AND VERIFIED ON INDIVIDUAL TEST REPORT FORMS.”

EGLE understands that the change in interpretation will cause tester availability challenges in parts of the state and will consider local factors in enforcement decisions while public water supplies work through the transition. For additional information, please see the frequently asked questions (FAQ)

document posted to EGLE’s cross-connection control website (www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/drinking-water-and-environmental-health/community-water-supply/cross-connection-control) under the “Testing of Backflow Preventers” heading. If you have additional questions, please contact Mike Bolf at bolfm@michigan.gov. 



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EGLE SAMPLING VIDEOS

One common thread amongst all public water supplies is the need to monitor their water quality through routine sampling. To ensure the sample is collected properly, it is important that the sample collector follow the instructions that were provided. An improperly collected sample could result in a test that is not analyzed, contaminated, or a result that cannot be used for compliance purposes. To aid in sample collection, EGLE has developed and made available a series of sample collection videos. These videos are designed to complement the written instructions that would accompany the sample kit. It is important to follow the instructions that have been provided with your sample kit.



Current and upcoming drinking water sample collection videos include:

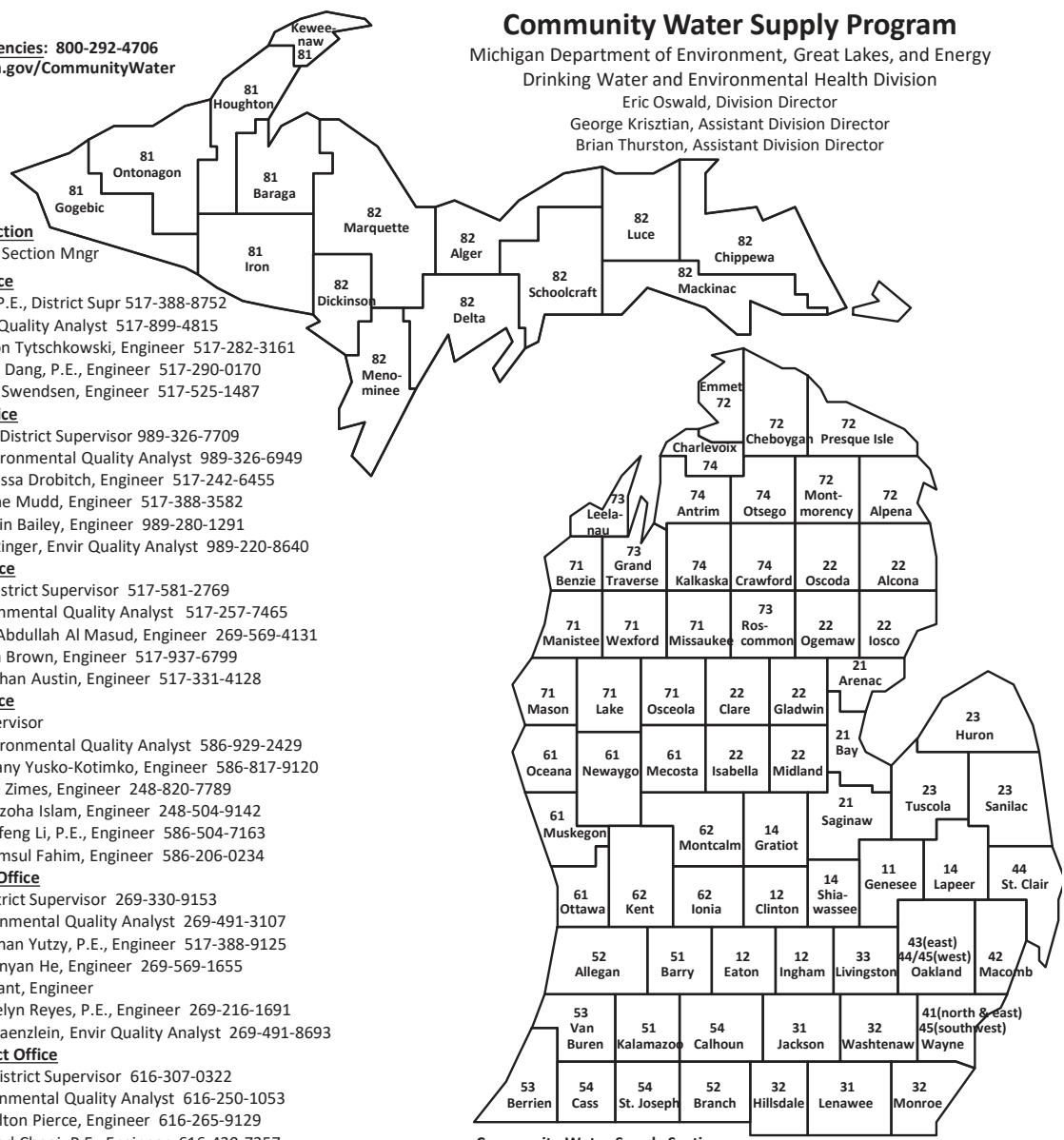
- Total Coliform
- Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
- Lead and Copper
- Volatile and Synthetic Organic Compounds
- Entry Point Chemical Monitoring (*coming soon*)
- Disinfectant/Disinfection Byproducts (*coming soon*)
- Radiological Contaminants (*coming soon*)

The list of available public water supply videos can be found by visiting the Community Water Supply program webpage at www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/drinking-water-and-environmental-health/community-water-supply and selecting the Drinking Water Videos and Recorded Webinars. Subscribe to EGLE's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/michiganegle to be alerted to new videos as they are released! 💧

After Hours Emergencies: 800-292-4706
Website: Michigan.gov/CommunityWater

Community Water Supply Program

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
 Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division
 Eric Oswald, Division Director
 George Krisztian, Assistant Division Director
 Brian Thurston, Assistant Division Director



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 Kylie Huitema, Environmental Quality Analyst 517-242-5328
 Steve Pennington, Environmental Quality Analyst 517-242-3923
 Tyler Postma, Environmental Quality Analyst 517-388-1833



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TRAINING CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Fall Regional Meeting – Kalamazoo	4 Fall Regional Meeting – Livonia	5	6	7
8	9	10 Advanced Math for Water Professionals – Livonia Managing Water Distribution – Lansing Advanced Water Treatment – Lansing	11	12 Water Solutions – Virtual	13	14
15	16	17 Fall Regional Meeting – Mt. Pleasant	18 Fall Regional Meeting – Gaylord	19	20	21
22	23	24 Lab School for Water Operators – Holland	25	26 Maintenance Seminar with MWEA – Lansing	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

NOVEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Public Speaking Like a Pro – Bay City MWEA/MI-AWWA Lab Practices Seminar – Bath	9 Principles of Water Department Financing – West Branch Water Solutions – ONLINE	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

DECEMBER 2023

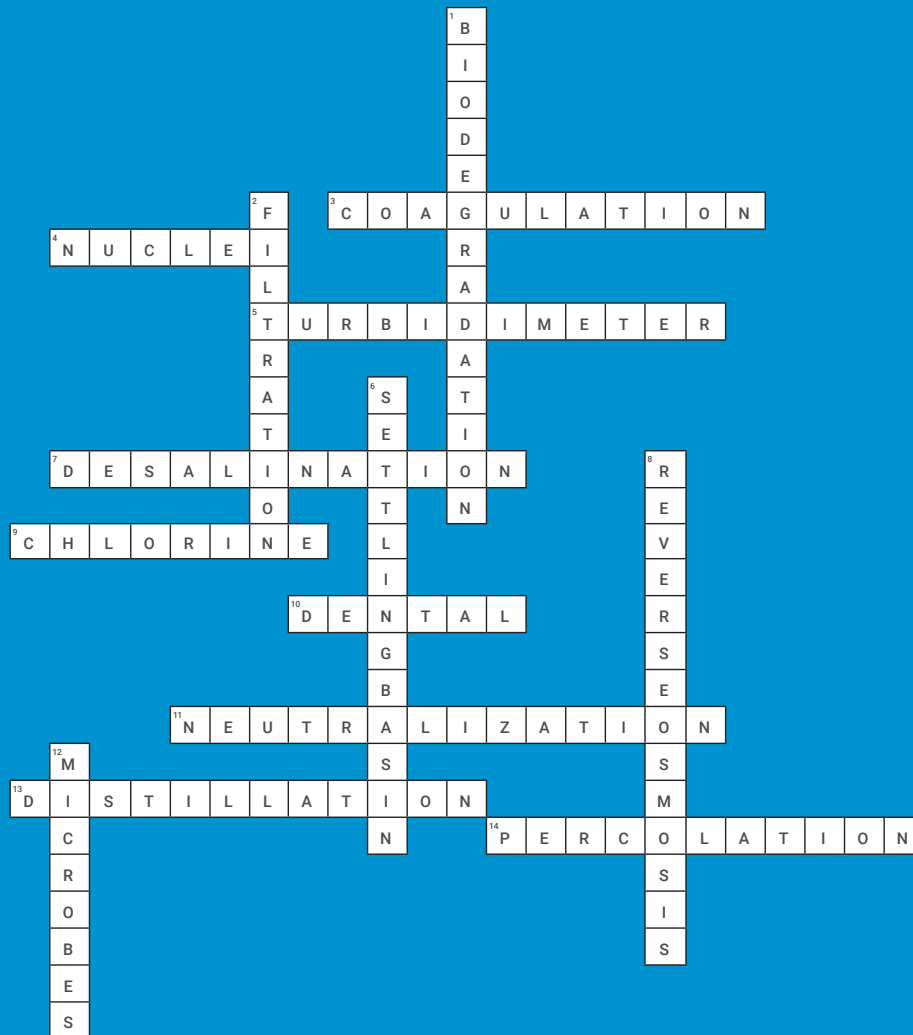
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	1 Cyber Security in the Water Sector – West Branch	2
3	4	5 Practical Communications for Water Professionals – Saginaw	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

JANUARY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

Visit www.mi-water.org/events to view all upcoming trainings.

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