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water works

FALL 2021

NEWS



New Chair

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WATER AFFORDABILITY
DISCUSSION SERIES

MI-ACE 2021
CONFERENCE RECAP

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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 the Winter 2022 issue is November 5, 2021.

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

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FALL 2021



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HYBRID MODELS WORKING WELL

Kelly Gleason, Editor

I cannot believe I've been editing *Water Works News* for five years now. Time sure does fly by!

In the last two years, a lot has changed. Because of the global pandemic and wanting to keep all members safe, ACE20 was cancelled, MI-ACE20 was virtual, and ACE21 was scheduled as hybrid but demoted to virtual. I'm so happy to say that MI-ACE21 gave the option of both in-person and virtual attendance. I had the pleasure of attending, and there is a recap on page 16 if you missed it.

During 2021, we have watched training go from all virtual to hybrid courses that include both in-person and virtual. The training calendar is on page 53 and there are a variety of classes available.

As always, I would love to hear from you. Is there content you would like to see covered in *Water Works News*? Send

pictures, stories, and updates to *kelly.gleason@lbwl.com* with the subject line *Water Works News*.

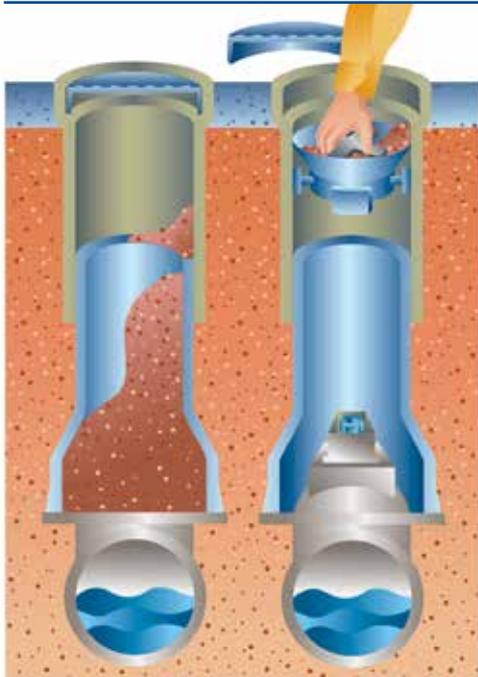
Articles and other content are due to the editor:

- Winter 2022 issue: November 6, 2021
- Spring 2022 issue: February 5, 2022 (tentative date) 

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WATER COMMUNITY: PANDEMIC YEARS

Aaron Uranga, Chair

In thinking about this article, I have struggled with the message to focus on after a year where everything has been overshadowed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The past year has certainly been challenging for everyone. But, as challenging as the year has been, there have been silver linings in the challenges, especially if we all take a moment to look for them.

As a parent of two teenagers, the pandemic has impacted not just my work, but my home life too, as it has for everyone. Finding out that our internet connection has a 'data cap' was a bit of a shock, but was ultimately a minor bump in the road as we pivoted to remote learning and working in new and unexpected ways.

I have watched in awe as teachers pivoted between remote and in-person learning. While some have focused on the negatives, I am forever grateful to teachers for continuing to provide instruction during an exceedingly challenging year.

The year of the pandemic – now going on a year and half – continued to be a productive one for MI-AWWA. I have been in awe of what both volunteer members and Section staff have accomplished this year in the face of challenges. Section staff adapted to the pandemic quickly by arranging for board meetings to be conducted virtually. While meeting virtually is sometimes not ideal, this allowed MI-AWWA board meetings and committee



meetings to continue mainly as normal and for the Section to continue to plan for training events.

Voting to cancel MI-ACE as an in-person event in 2020 was a gut-wrenching experience for the board. However, the Section still pulled off a virtual conference that far exceeded expectations. After 18 months of mainly virtual functions, 2020 MI-ACE stands out as an extremely well-executed event. Having had a behind the scenes look into the planning that went into this event, there was tremendous effort put forward by both Section staff and volunteers to make the virtual conference successful. Bonnifer Ballard and her team truly hit that event out of the park.

As much of the population adjusted to working from home, we have quietly witnessed the dedication of water system operators. Operators have been unsung heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic. These heroes continued to show up for work under the new title of 'essential workers.' Operators have persevered throughout the pandemic and carried on in the face of masks, social distancing, and remote meetings. They have continued to do the work that they are passionate about –

delivering clean drinking water to their communities. We should all take a moment to thank those who have allowed us to have uninterrupted access to water. We mostly take this for granted in our country, but it doesn't happen without our dedicated community of water professionals.

Many households throughout Michigan have struggled financially during the pandemic. This has led to MI-AWWA becoming involved in an exceedingly productive discussion on the affordability of water. MI-AWWA has a seat at the table and will be a voice in this discussion from the multi-layered perspective of its members. I look forward to seeing where the affordability discussion leads over the next year.

As Jaime Fleming noted last year, 'Change can be hard.' The Michigan water community has certainly weathered its share of changes in the last year. Having seen first-hand the dedication of this community, I am confident we will continue to weather whatever changes come our way in the next year. I look forward to my year as the Section Chair and anticipate I will continue to be in awe of the Michigan Section and its invaluable members. 💧

“OPERATORS HAVE PERSEVERED THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC AND CARRIED ON IN THE FACE OF MASKS, SOCIAL DISTANCING, AND REMOTE MEETINGS. THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO DO THE WORK THAT THEY ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT – DELIVERING CLEAN DRINKING WATER TO THEIR COMMUNITIES.”



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SUMMER BOARD MEETING UPDATE

Pat Staskiewicz, Director

The AWWA Board of Directors held the June 2021 meeting virtually since we were not able to meet in person. The following are a few highlights from the meeting:

The ad-hoc committee studying the Enterprise Model presented its final report. The Enterprise Model is one that provides, as part of a Utility Member benefit, unlimited numbers of membership for employees of the utility. The findings were a bit surprising.

The preliminary reports concluded that the Enterprise Model would be beneficial, but it would require an accommodation for revenue, expense, and operational impacts, both to AWWA and the Sections. The committee also recognized it could not simply pass along these costs to utilities without considering the utility membership price, especially while impacts from the pandemic exist. The final report confirmed the Enterprise Model does help to advance AWWA's mission and increase the member experience.

However, the demand is not uniform over utility size. In addition, it found there was too much variability among Sections to offer consistent pricing and services. And finally, as suspected, the utilities are not able to absorb the increase in cost for these additional services. Therefore, the committee did not recommend the wholesale adoption of the Enterprise Model and this idea will not be pursued.

The Water Equation continues to thrive under the leadership of Michelle

Hektor. Workforce development has been identified as a concern for the water industry, and scholarships are part of the solution. The Water Equation is raising funds for One AWWA Operator Scholarships and Academic Scholarships, in addition to funding the Community Engineering Corps, Student Education, and Young Professionals. The Water Equation has awarded 47 operator scholarships, totaling \$48,000 to water and wastewater operators in 23 Sections since ACE20. These scholarships also include a one-year membership to AWWA. They have also awarded 25 academic scholarships for a total of \$190,000. So, if you know someone that needs assistance, please check out these scholarship opportunities – and if you would like to donate to the cause, there are many ways to give to the Water Equation. One of my favorites, the WE Walk campaign, raised over \$33,000 and resulted in 191 members walking or running over 16,000 miles! If you missed WE Walk and would still like to donate, please visit the web page at www.awwa.org/water-equation.

The Partnership for Clean Water celebrated their five-year anniversary. More than 60 wastewater utilities, serving a total population of more than 10 million people across North America and beyond, have participated in the Partnership for Clean Water's voluntary programs for optimizing wastewater treatment plant performance and efficiency. The Partnership's unique

programs have supported utilities in applying the Partnership's optimization tools and resources to realize measurable improvements in operations and effluent quality, achieving this in as efficient a manner as possible to limit consumption of natural resources.

You may be wondering why AWWA is assisting wastewater utilities. First, the Partnership for Safe Water has achieved 25 years of success in providing the tools to help drinking water utilities to optimize systems to improve performance beyond even proposed regulatory levels. The same tools and processes are helpful to wastewater utilities. Second, this program supports many of our core principals, such as Protect Public Health, Safeguard the Environment, and Share Best Practices. It is exciting to see this program grow and see how it is helping to fulfill AWWA's vision of a better world through better water. 💧

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SO, WHAT DO YOU DO?

Bonnifer Ballard, Executive director

Have you ever been at a party or a networking event and someone asks you, 'So what do you do?' Do you have an answer?

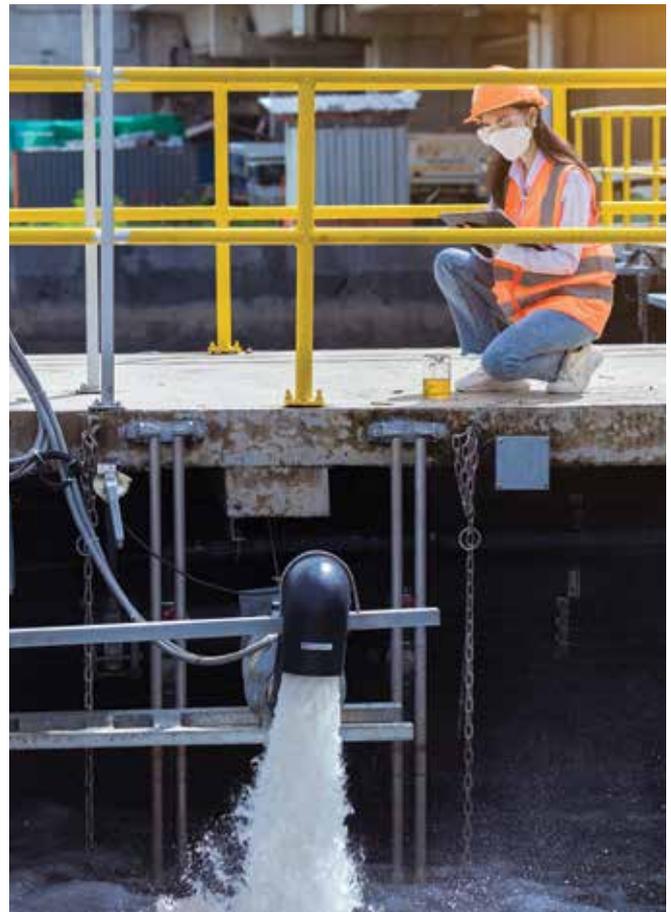
For some, this question is easy. 'I work at the water plant.' 'I work for the city.' 'I work for an engineering company.' Those all sound like fine answers, right? But you could be missing an opportunity.

The water sector – whether water treatment, water distribution, or water recovery – has always flown under the radar. Until 2015, that is. Once the Flint water crisis hit the national news, the days of flying under the radar were gone for anyone in Michigan's water sector.

Fast forward to today. You just spent the last nearly two years continuing to do your jobs during a global pandemic. You dealt with a lot. Half the team being remote. Different schedules. Ill colleagues. Little social relaxation. Kids learning from home, and much more. How cool are you?!

I continue to be blown away by those who work in water – and I want to tell people about it. I want to tell people just how selfless and dedicated you are. I want to tell people how much expertise goes into making sure they have water at their taps 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I am proud to be associated with the water sector. So, the next time someone asks, 'What do you do?' What will your answer be? 💧

**"THE NEXT TIME SOMEONE ASKS,
'SO, WHAT DO YOU DO?' WHAT WILL
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The full schedule and agenda for Operators Day and other training will be available later this fall. Booth space on sale beginning October 29, 2021.

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MI-ACE 2021 was a hybrid event, with the traditional sessions over two-and-a-half days presented in-person while simultaneously streaming them.

This year was particularly high energy. MI-ACE 2021 was a hybrid event, with the traditional sessions over two-and-a-half days presented in-person while simultaneously streaming them. All sessions, plus some bonus sessions, are available on demand throughout October.

Keynotes from Water Research Foundation, Plante Moran, and others kicked off the conference. Attendees heard about the latest research, innovations in workforce development, and got the State of the Water Sector from AWWA Vice President and Michigan's own Pat Staskiewicz before heading to the exhibit hall. Technical sessions followed and attendees had plenty of time to have some deep dive conversations with their fellow attendees.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS



AWARDS More than 40 water professionals were recognized for their service



SILVER WATER DROP AWARDEES

Pictured: Shawn Orlaske, Vicki Putala. Not Pictured: Terry Almquist, Kevin Armstrong, Bruce Bartley, Dennis Chegash, Martin Collins, Mark Daniel Daenzer, Paul Freedman, Kristin Goetze, Michael Helder, Mark Horgan, Phillip Kline, Christopher Knight, Robert Lindh, Keith McCormack, Ronald Melchert, Curt Michael Olar, Mark Prein, David Purkiss, James Solberg, Judy Westrick.

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LIFE MEMBER STATUS

Pictured: Don Petrovich. Not Pictured: Lynn G. Anderson, David Burkett, David Carson, Bryce E. Feighner, Timothy D. McNamara, Donald Petrovich, Mark A. Rose, Joellen C. Thompson.

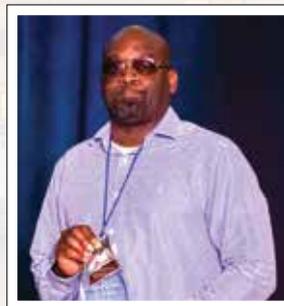
PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE ORGANIZATION AWARD

City of Wyoming Water Treatment Plant



PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE INDIVIDUAL AWARD

Pictured: Andrae Savage. Not Pictured: Aaron Kirt.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S AWARD

Sally Duffy



OPERATOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

Michigan's 2021 Operator Meritorious Service Awardee is Jeffrey Dorsey.

HALL OF FAME 2021 INDUCTEES

Inducted into the Michigan Water Utility Hall of Fame this year are Clyde Dugan, W. Elgar Brown, and Virgil Langworthy (posthumously). See details about their inductions on the Section website.

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Tom Smith



RAYMOND J. FAUST AWARD

Michael Williams



GEORGE WARREN FULLER AWARD

Pat Staskiewicz



Fuller Awardees past and present in attendance at the luncheon.



Congratulations Award Winners





*A good time
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by all!*

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CONTESTS

AWWA plays host to a number of competitions. Here in Michigan, we usually select the Best of the Best Tasting Water at MI-ACE. Due to pandemic-related restrictions, the regional competitions could not be held earlier this year. They are being held during the fall regional meetings and the state winner will be selected during the 2022 Joint Expo & Operators Day. Pipe Tapping, Hydrant Hysteria, and Meter Madness are expected to resume at 2022 Joint Expo & Operators Day as well. All competition state champions will move on to the national competition at ACE22 in San Antonio.

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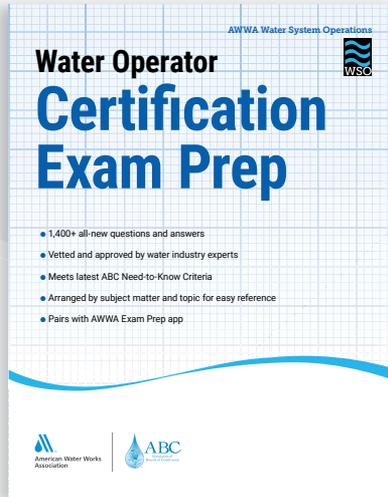
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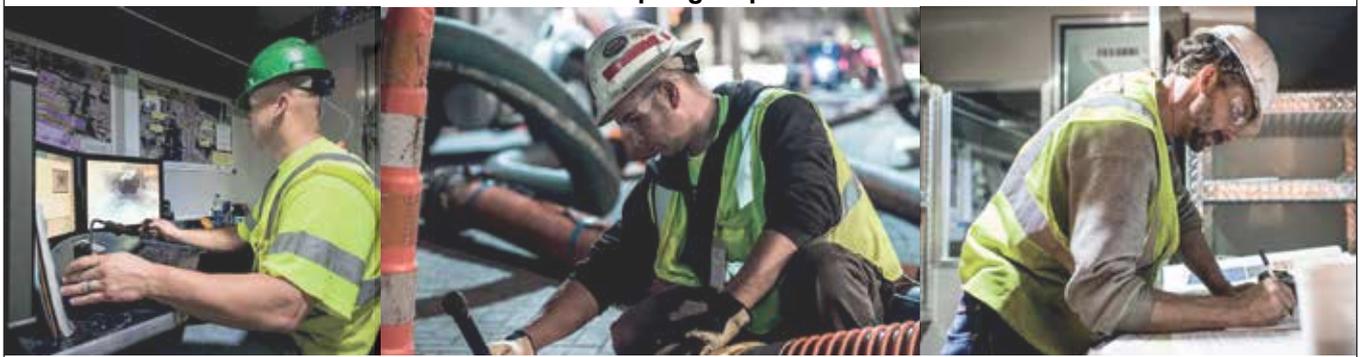
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WILL PFAS BE REGULATED FEDERALLY?

By Midwest Strategy Group

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a well-known family of water contaminants coming into the public eye nationally. These environmentally persistent chemicals are ubiquitous in our daily lives, in everything from Teflon pans to waterproof shoes, and they pose a real risk of contamination to water systems. Negative health effects from PFAS are now better understood, and the state and federal governments are taking regulatory action. The State of Michigan has already moved through the regulatory rulemaking process to limit eight known variations of PFAS compounds in water. Utilities across the state are complying and many are utilizing filtration to clean water.

In mid-July, the US House of Representatives also took action to pass legislation that would create new law surrounding the use and handling of PFAS. One of the key provisions would make PFAS compounds 'hazardous materials' under the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act* (CERCLA), better known as Superfund. This would grant the federal government the ability to create a new class of restrictions on the use and disposal of PFAS containing products. There is concern from the water community that this could force drinking water and wastewater systems to designate their filtration media as hazardous waste or be responsible for clean-up costs.

This bill, House Resolution 2467, sponsored by Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-Dearborn), would require national drinking water standards for some PFAS compounds to be created within two years. Other elements of the bill would require EPA to determine whether to designate other PFAS chemicals as hazardous within five years, set discharge limits on industrial releases and provide \$200 million annually for

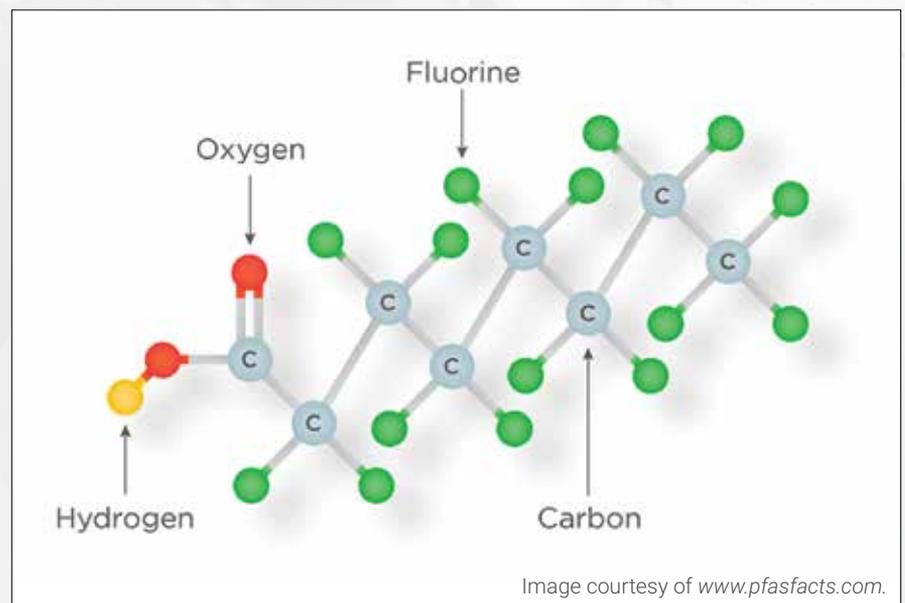
wastewater treatment systems and designate PFOS and PFOA as hazardous air pollutants within 180 days. The bill would also prohibit incineration of PFAS containing waste, create a moratorium on introduction of new PFAS compounds, and require comprehensive PFAS health testing, and create voluntary labels for cookware. Many of these changes could significantly impact operations for water utilities across the state.

This legislation still needs approval from the US Senate and signature by President Biden. That said, the Biden administration has signaled support for the bill. Should the legislation pass, the state will need to reconcile their existing regulation on PFAS compounds with any

new federal regulations. This process could take years as the legislation would allow the EPA to evaluate the thousands of PFAS compounds for safety over five years. Additional findings and EPA action could dramatically impact Michigan's existing regulatory landscape as the state currently regulates only a handful of PFAS compounds.

As with any state or federal regulatory move we are watching this legislation closely and working with the association to identify the best opportunities for engagement with regulators. Should you have any questions about this federal legislation, please don't hesitate to contact us at compagnoni@midweststrategy.com or hodgkins@midweststrategy.com. ♠

“Additional findings and EPA action could dramatically impact Michigan’s existing regulatory landscape, as the state currently regulates only a handful of PFAS compounds.”





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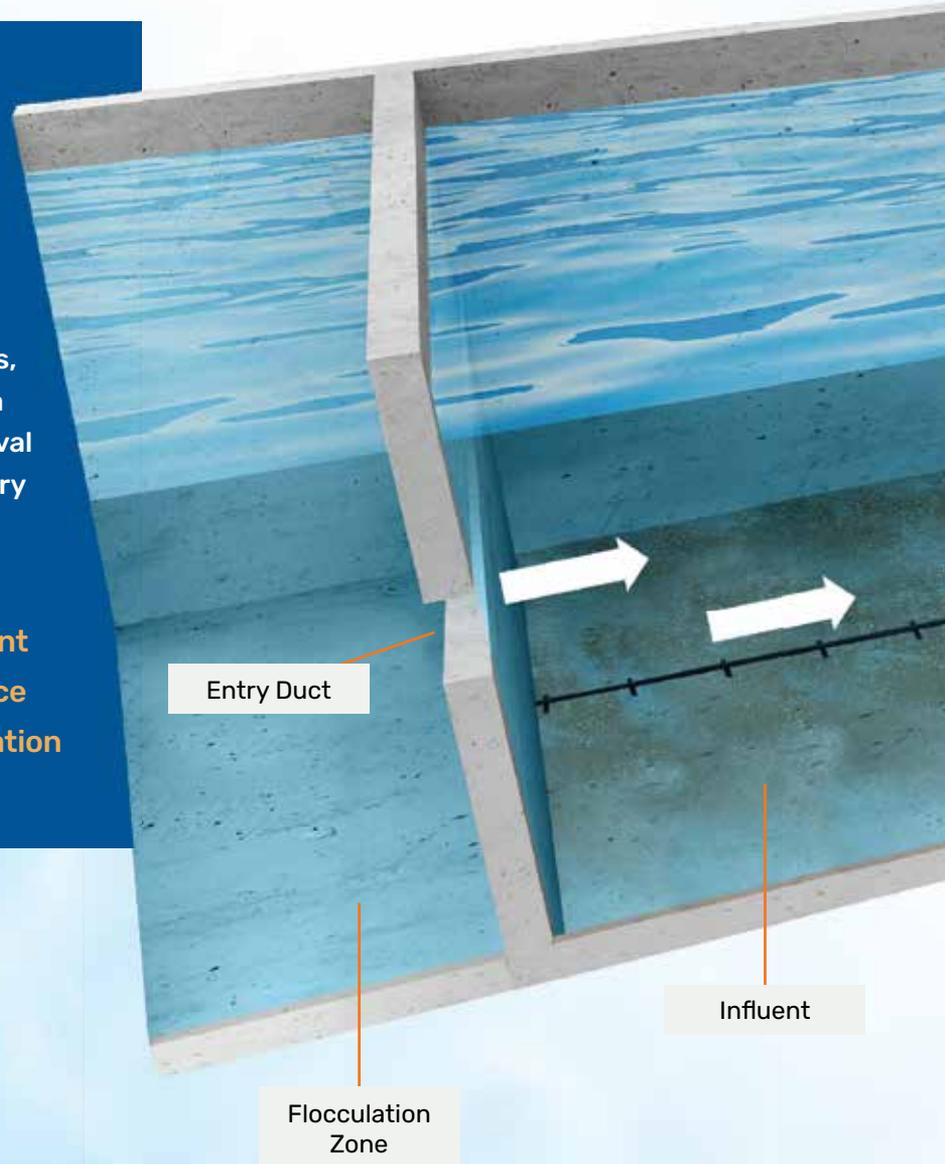
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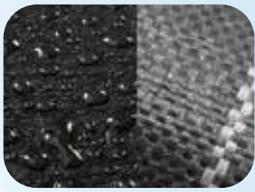
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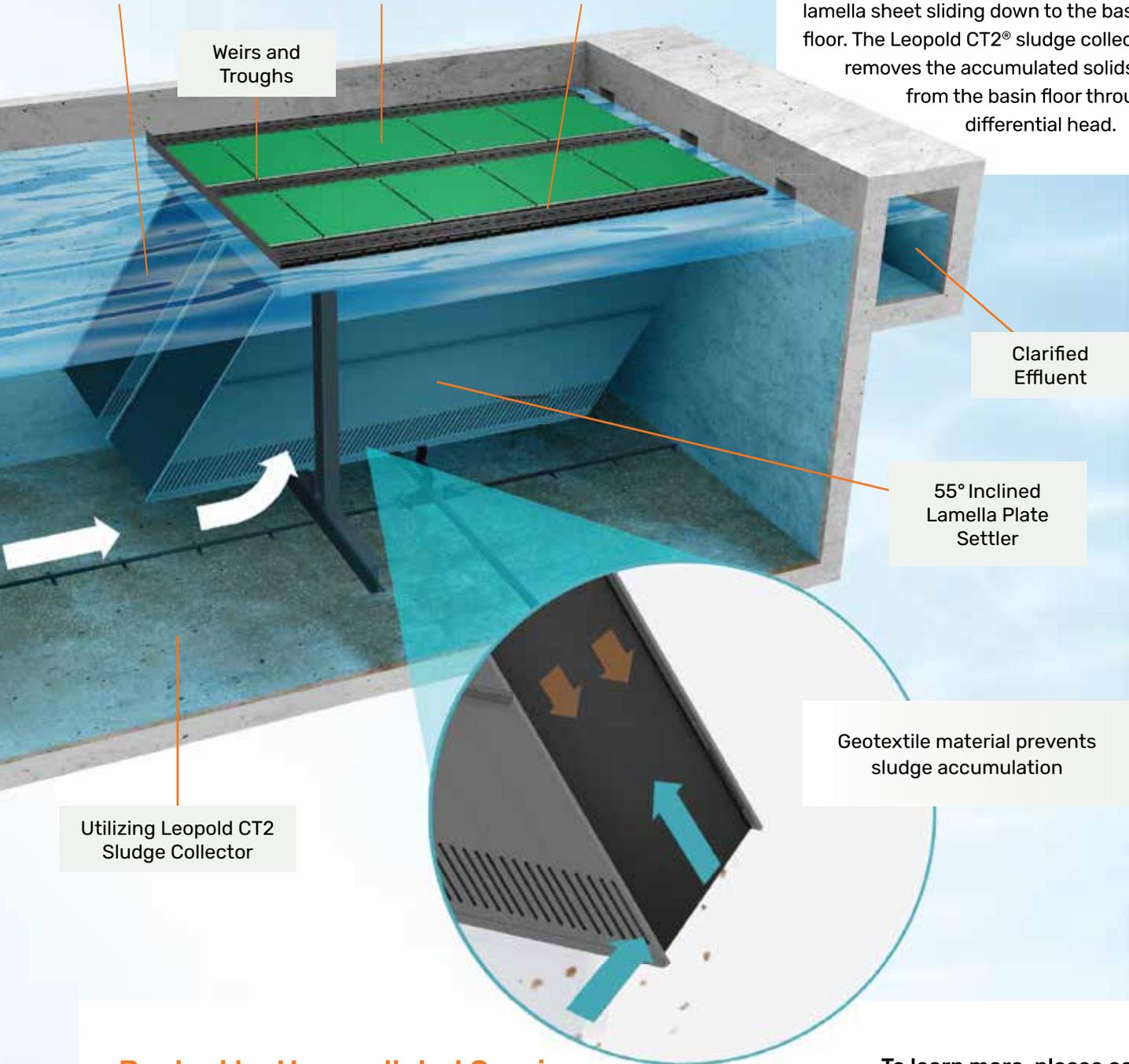
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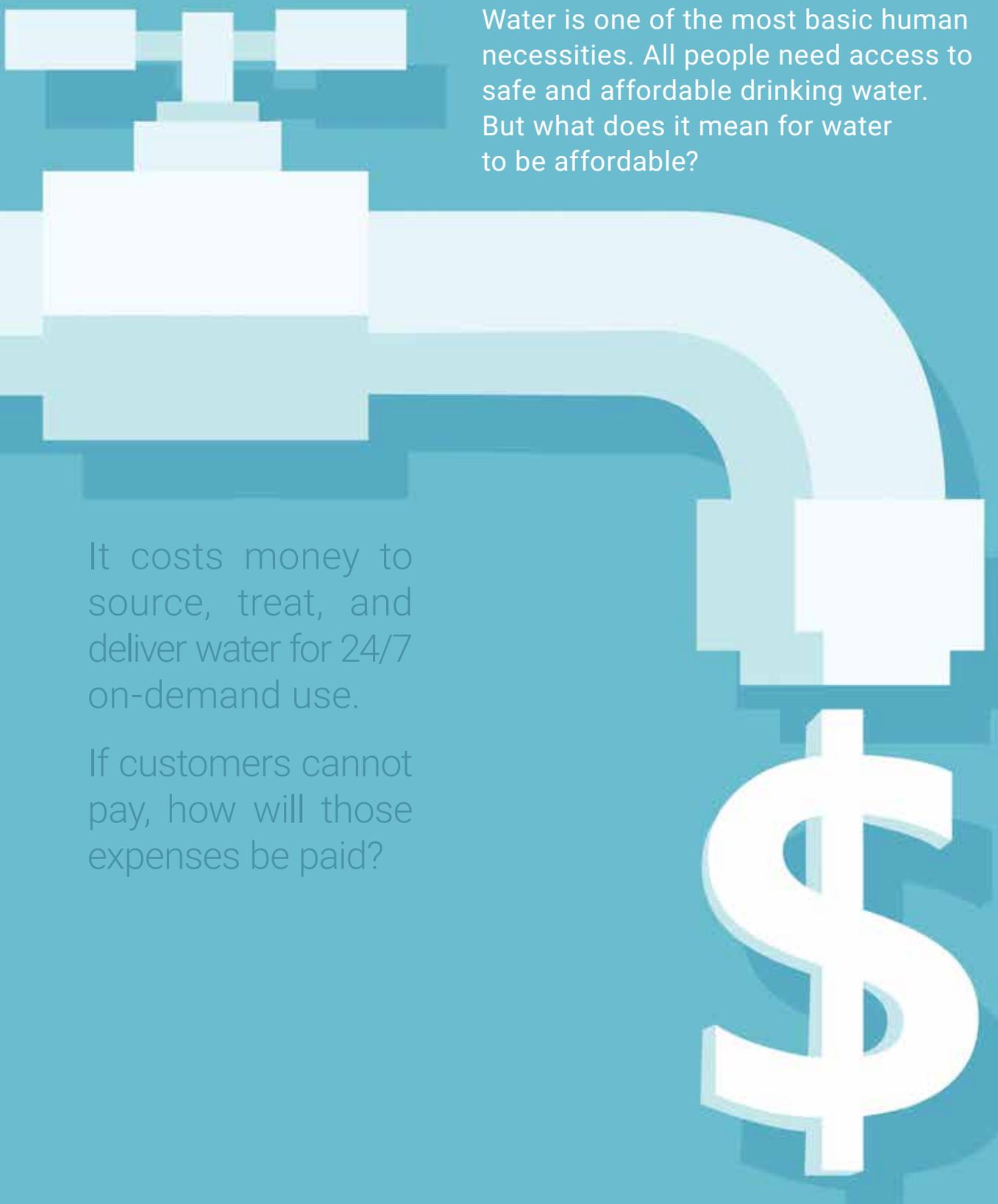


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Water Affordability Discussion Series



Water is one of the most basic human necessities. All people need access to safe and affordable drinking water. But what does it mean for water to be affordable?

It costs money to source, treat, and deliver water for 24/7 on-demand use.

If customers cannot pay, how will those expenses be paid?

A Strategic Initiative of MI-AWWA

By Jaime Fleming

The issue of water affordability arose during the Section's strategic planning process last year and came into sharp focus during the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent moratorium on water shutoffs. What a powerful illustration of how important water is to life! Yet, it costs money to source, treat, and deliver water for 24/7 on-demand use. If customers cannot pay, how will those expenses be paid?

To add to this landscape, a suite of bills was introduced into Michigan's legislature all relating to water. As then chair of the board, I had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the bill sponsor and other stakeholders. This helped me to understand just how complex the issue of water affordability is and how much we in the water sector have to learn before we can begin to help shape meaningful and sustainable solutions.

After some discussions among the MI-AWWA Board of Trustees, we decided to tackle this issue for Michigan by first engaging members. As I worked with others to put some structure around this issue, I realized that how utilities make decisions matters – it impacts people in a variety of ways. We need to think critically and look at this issue from all angles in order to avoid 'the way we've always done it' thinking, and we need a plurality of voices in this discussion since we live and operate in a multifaceted world.

For me, it is, first and foremost, about humans. We can't be our best selves without water – and we can't provide water without a way to pay for it. Over the last year, I began a personal journey to learn more and grow my own understanding of the concept of equity. I have learned that any formal system can impact different people in different ways.

With those ideas in mind, we have created a discussion series to help water professionals from across the

state to explore the issue of water affordability using six pillars as a foundation: funding and finance, rate setting, billing cycle and collection practices, data and transparency, public engagement, and water as an economic and community driver. This series will be virtual, culminating in an in-person water affordability summit.

Through these sessions, we hope to build a shared understanding and

engage in dialogue that will help our members, along with other important partners, work toward our vision of *A Better Michigan through Better Water*. I am lucky enough to be co-moderating these sessions with long-time AWWA member Mark Coleman. I look forward to partnering with you at an upcoming session. For details and to register for the series starting in November, visit the Section's website. 💧

Through these sessions, we hope to build a shared understanding and engage in dialogue that will help our members, along with other important partners, work toward our vision of *A Better Michigan through Better Water*.



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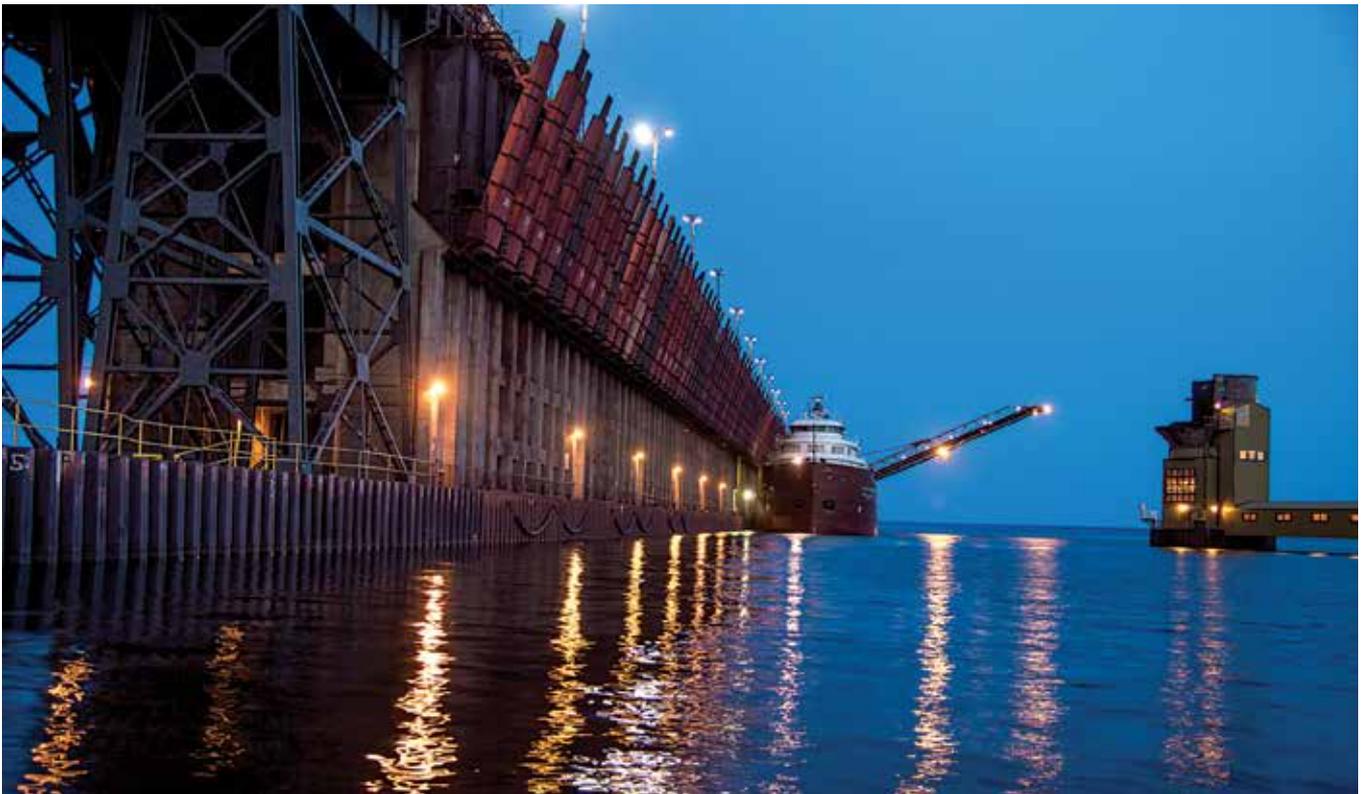
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Above the Bridge

Seeking Yoopers: How to Get Involved with MI-AWWA

By Stacey Kukkonen, Section Coordinator



Michigan's Upper Peninsula is known for many things: The birthplace of professional hockey, more than 80% of pristine forest, a vast land that borders three Great Lakes, a land separated from the Lower Peninsula and connected by a nearly five-mile-long bridge, two different time zones, and one shared 906 area code, among many others.

The UP is also home to dozens of water utilities, connected by the desire to provide safe and reliable drinking water to all UP residents and visitors no matter the conditions. The Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association is a good place to start when looking to get involved with UP water professions, starting with the Upper Peninsula Coordinating Committee, which meets to coordinate the spring and fall training seminars that are held in the north. Committee members are made up of volunteers who work together to come up with topics and speakers to develop a program and agenda for the seminars.

"There are many different reasons to volunteer," said Erika Ballard, Membership Coordinator with MI-AWWA. "Some people volunteer to grow their professional networks."

Others are interested in networking with their peers to find out solutions to local issues they may be experiencing or to learn what's happening in the industry, she said. Oftentimes, water professionals are looking to learn more about the industry for a new job, while some volunteer to build their resume.

"Maybe you are trying to give back to help the next generation," she said. "In some cases, people volunteer simply because they were told to. The good news is that for whatever reason you chose to volunteer, you can benefit in all these other ways as well. Additionally, volunteering to speak at an event will earn you a one-day comped registration to that event."

MI-AWWA is a member-driven organization. Most of what the organization does is through the great work of volunteers, Ballard said.

"Although we have a small staff, they are here to help keep the business-side of things running in the background," she said. "It's our volunteers that keep the organization moving forward."

So, what does the Section do for the UP?

"The Section does for the UP the same thing that it does for the folks in the mitten," Ballard said. "If you're ever unable to join us in person, we offer many opportunities for virtual or on-demand learning as well."

AWWA is the leading organization of water supply professionals in the world. Its membership is a vast network of water professionals across the country, in Canada, and even overseas in India. Volunteering is what gets water professionals connected to that network.

"Whether it's here in Michigan, or with our national Association, sitting on a committee introduces you to other water professionals that you might not have otherwise met if you weren't a part of our volunteer network," she said. "As a volunteer, you will also have the opportunity to participate in volunteer training events that could introduce you to a wider network of people."

Members can become involved with UP Section events just by reaching out.

"If you're ever unsure of who to reach out to, our Volunteer Coordinator can help get you connected," she said.

To learn about what volunteering can offer in membership, email Ballard at erika@mi-water.org. 💧



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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN: USING MICHIGAN'S FUNDING FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE FUTURE

By Dawn Lund, Vice President, Utility Financial Solutions, LLC

Michigan and its local governments are receiving American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to help coronavirus relief and economic recovery efforts. Governmental leaders have a unique opportunity to use federal funds to make a lasting impact on the lives of the people in their community.

The program is administered by the US Department of Treasury and available guidance can be found at the following web links:

- **Treasury's Interim Final Rule**
Effective May 17, 2021
www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-05-17/pdf/2021-10283.pdf

- **US Treasury SLFRF's Compliance and Reporting Guidance**
June 24, 2021
<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Compliance-and-Reporting-Guidance.pdf>

Both links offer important detailed information, however, be sure to review the spending deadlines, usage, and reporting requirements, which can be found in 'Compliance and Reporting Guidance.'

As a recipient of ARP funds, local decision makers have substantial discretion to use the award in the ways that best suit the needs of their community – as long as the use fits

into one of the four statutory categories described in general terms below:

- Providing funding for the response to the COVID-19 public health emergency or negative economic impacts.
- Providing essential workers premium pay or grants.
- Providing funding to offset reductions in revenue.
- Necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

The money will go to the local governmental unit, with local officials deciding how to distribute the funds. Water and wastewater utilities are not guaranteed funds, however, as one of the eligible statutory categories it is a good time to review capital needs and make them known.

The ARP *Final Interim Rulemaking* includes priorities for selecting potential projects. Most water and wastewater systems were recently required to develop an Asset Management Program (AMP). AMP planning required five-year and 20-year Capital Improvement Plans that were prioritized based on reducing overall capital operational risk. Your community may already have a list of prioritized eligible projects.

Below is a table of example projects, with priorities met by the project.

If you are interested in what funds your community is receiving, you may look this up using the following web link: www.nlc.org/resource/estimated-local-allocations-in-the-american-rescue-plan

With stimulus funding being an influx of money during a time of financial strain for many in the community, some decision makers may have the urge to 'give back' to ratepayers through a rate decrease or delay. This is circumventing what the money was intended for. It's important to work with financial personnel to project key financial targets, learn how they work together, and how stimulus money fits into this picture. There are short-term and long-term financial impacts that can have positive or negative effects depending on how the money is used, but it starts with how the money is viewed.

ARP funds are intended for investments that make a long-term positive financial impact on the community. Hopefully, your community will enjoy the long-term benefits of wise ARP spending, instead of only realizing short-term gain. It will take an informed analysis of needs and strategic implementation to be a community that secures a sustainable financial benefit. If community leaders think strategically, they'll have the opportunity to make a transformative difference in the lives of their residents and businesses.

If you have questions regarding this article, please contact AIM Committee member Dawn Lund, Vice-President, Utility Financial Solutions, LLC at dlund@ufswb.com. Dawn is a member of the joint MI-AWWA/MWEA Asset and Infrastructure Management Committee. If you would like more information on the joint MI-AWWA/MWEA AIM Committee, please contact Committee Secretary, Maureen Wegener (maureen.wegener@c2ae.com) or Co-Chairs Deann Falkowski (defalkowski@fishbeck.com) and Lindsey Kerkez (lindsey.kerkez@ohm-advisors.com). 💧

PROPOSED PROJECT	AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) PRIORITIES MET BY PROJECT						
	Meets eligibility requirements (CWSRF/DWSRF)	Necessary improvements to water/sewer to protect public health	Replacement of lead service lines to protect children	Assist areas with affordability issues	Offset impacts of climate change	Projects that are unlikely to be done using private sources of funding	Consolidation of systems
Combine Failing Water Wells —A regional plan to address several existing failing drinking water wells and connect them to a common treatment system.	🔴	🔴				🔴	🔴
Lead Water Service Line Replacements —Projects to replace existing lead service lines in drinking water distribution system and coordinate with replacement of aging water main pipes to reduce service interruptions. Many affected municipalities meet "disadvantaged" income criteria.	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴		🔴	
Sewage Retention Tank and Collection System Inflow and Infiltration Removal Program —WWTP and collection system projects to address sanitary sewer overflows during wet weather events which have been impacted by climate change.	🔴	🔴			🔴	🔴	
SSO Reductions —Project to address sanitary sewer overflows during wet weather events which have been impacted by climate change.	🔴	🔴			🔴	🔴	

Table courtesy of Sally Duffy of Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.

MI-AWWA ONLINE



The website has a lot to offer. Most people focus in on the Training and Events calendar. Did you know, though, that MI-AWWA is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization? That means, you can choose to donate to MI-AWWA and your donation may be tax deductible. Just click on the Donations menu to see all of the programs that you can designate your donation to. 💧

COLLEGE FRESHMAN SCHOLARSHIP

In appreciation for all our members do, the Michigan Section offers a scholarship specifically for



high school seniors of Michigan Section members entering their first year of college.

CHARLOTTE STEGLITZ
2021 Freshman Scholarship Awardee. 💧



RESEARCH AND TREATMENT PRACTICES FELLOW SHARES PROGRESS

RTP Fellow Alyssa Schubert, a student at the University of Michigan, received the MI-AWWA RTP Fellowship in January 2021. One of her objectives is to characterize physicochemical and biological changes in drinking water quality from WDS to premise plumbing using two real-time monitoring strategies.

In the first six months, she re-tested and finalized the design for the 12 water quality sensor nodes she built (Figure 1), improved the predictive power and reliability of the chlorine residual measurement toolchain by exploring different model structures and training methods, and recruited volunteers for the water quality study during which physicochemical and biological changes in drinking water quality will be characterized. She and other study team members recruited volunteers through presenting a display at the Hope Village Farmers Market weekly in Detroit. Seven volunteers were recruited and she anticipates deployment soon. 💧

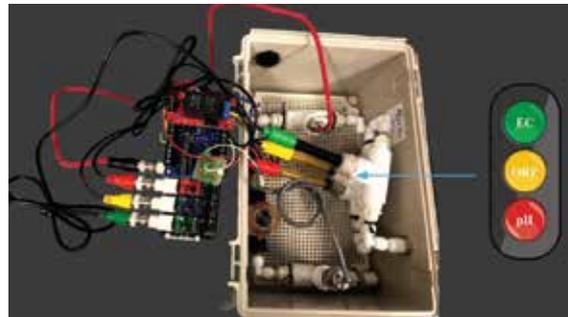


Figure 1. Water quality sensor node. Drinking water enters on the bottom right and travels through the plumbing. Plumbing includes a pressure sensor, temperature sensor, and pH, ORP, and EC probes. Water exits using the top right outlet. The 'electrical stack' pictured typically sits in the box, but is removed so the plumbing is more easily visualized.

RESEARCH AND TREATMENT PRACTICES FELLOWSHIP

The Michigan Section sponsors a fellowship for undergrad and graduate students. The goals of this fellowship are to stimulate greater involvement of Michigan's academic institutions and their graduate and undergraduate students in the study of drinking water related fields and to encourage innovative solutions to priority problems of the drinking water community. The Fellowship application will be available soon and is typically awarded by the end of the calendar year. 💧

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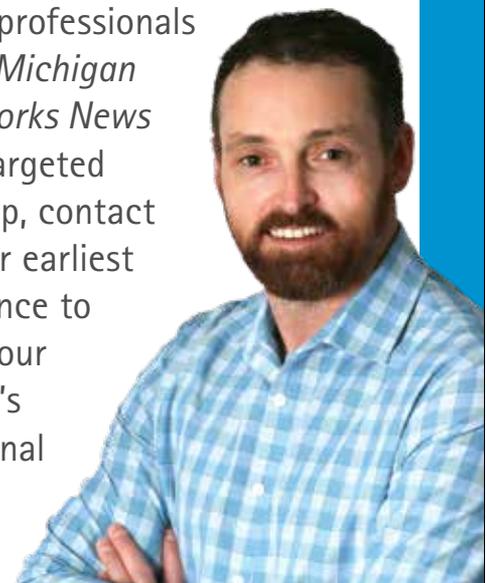
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COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL

The MI-AWWA Communications Council successfully conducted its second media workshop in May, covering four different topics for our audience.

The topics included:

- 1) emerging contaminants messaging.
- 2) communication during the new normal (lessons learned).
- 3) how to use your cellphone camera.
- 4) the value of infrastructure.

After conducting two such virtual workshops for our members, we are looking into the possibility of conducting our next workshop in person, given the conditions are right and in accordance with State guidelines.

One major topic that has emerged in our conversations for the next workshop is Cybersecurity.

If you have any comments/feedback about the workshop, would like to suggest any topics, or are interested in presenting at one of our sessions, please feel free to reach out at aftab.borka@glwater.org or lashone.bedford@glwater.org. 💧



EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL

The Council had an ambitious work plan for 2021. Here are the highlights of what the Council has accomplished this year, even through the COVID-19 shutdown:

- Conducted a training needs assessment.
- Drafted the structure of a comprehensive education program.
- Reviewed Academy class curriculum.
- Updated three-day class curriculum.
- Building out the learning management system.
- Reviewing Council-Committee communication.

The Council continues work on many of these projects, including Academy prep, and looks to a full launch of the Academy in the coming months.



If you would like to join the ETC, please contact MI-AWWA staff at info@mi-water.org or check the web calendar on the MI-AWWA website for information on the next meeting. 💧



MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

Hopefully by the time this update is posted, we will be fully back to in-person events and MI-AWWA members can begin seeing each other without a computer camera. During the AWWA Summer Workshop, Dean West from Association Laboratory, Inc., remarked that while there are benefits to being in an organization, such as discounts, periodicals, etc., most people stay members because of the networking and comradery they have with others in the organization. I find this very true with MI-AWWA.

The Membership Council has

continued to recruit, retain, and engage members in the virtual world. The council hosted a virtual networking event, where members could discuss a variety of topics and bounce ideas off one and other.

We also hosted our bi-annual new member coffee break. This allowed councils and committees to share information about their groups with new members.

The committees, under the Membership Council (Youth Education, Young Professionals, and Diversity and Inclusion), have been meeting regularly

and are very active. The Youth Education committee helped select a winner of the Stockholm Jr. Water Prize. The committee was hoping to have the winner present at MI-ACE – hopefully you were able to see the impressive project. The Young Professionals Committee was given board approval to begin in-person activities and hosted the first plant tour in some time, with a networking event to follow. I know everyone was excited to get back together.

As always, if you are interested in any type of volunteer activity with MI-AWWA, feel free to contact Amy Vail or Erika Ballard. 💧

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Lansing has been busy this summer with a variety of water-related legislation and the Government Affairs Council has had the opportunity to weigh in on some items. The Council and MI-AWWA leadership continue to work with State Senator Stephanie Chang’s office regarding a package of affordability-related bills. In

addition, MI-AWWA and the Michigan Municipal League (MML) provided comments to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services regarding their plan for administering Michigan’s Low Income Household Water Assistance Program.

MI-AWWA submitted a Card of Opposition for the Senate Aggregate

Mining Bill (SB 429), which was written in a way that could expose local aquifers to contamination. While that legislation did pass the Senate in June, it might not make it through the House. Another notable bill was introduced in the House, which will raise fees for operator certificates starting in EGLE fiscal year 2022. The fees are used by EGLE to administer the certification programs and many of the fees have not been raised in a decade or more.

MI-AWWA also worked with the Michigan Water Environment Federation (MWEA) in April to provide a framework for use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) resources for legislators.

The framework listed critical water system needs for issues such as aging water main replacement, lead service line replacements, water affordability for low-income residents, PFAS mitigation, and expansion of the Stormwater, Asset Management, and Wastewater (SAW) grant program to include water utilities.

MI-AWWA is currently working with MML and MWEA to sign on to support a broad stimulus spending plan for use of the ARP resources. 💧



MWEA/MI-AWWA JOINT ASSET AND INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT (AIM) COMMITTEE

Low-Cost, User-Friendly Asset Management Software Available to Support Michigan Infrastructure Programs

By Frank LaPierre, Director, DPW Services, South County Sewer and Water Authority

Challenges with decaying infrastructure is an urgent, well-publicized problem in Michigan and in the US.

Recently, President Biden announced a \$2.25 trillion infrastructure spending proposal, which calls for \$621 billion in new spending on roads, bridges, rail, ports, waterways, airports, public transportation and electric vehicles. Governor Whitmer has announced major spending initiatives for Michigan's infrastructure. According to the Governor, 43% of roads are in 'poor' or 'mediocre' condition and approximately 1,000 bridges are in 'poor' or 'critical' condition. She has announced plans to spend \$500 million on water infrastructure and included \$300 million in her budget to repair bridges throughout the state.

The SAW Program was instrumental in providing grant money for communities and consultants with the process to assess stormwater and wastewater systems. As the SAW Program concludes, the asset management plans created during the SAW Program are being expanded to include the asset management plans from other critical system assets, such as roads, bridges, water systems, etc.

This provides the ability for communities to systematically manage all system assets in order to efficiently plan, fund and manage the ongoing repair and replacement of multiple asset classes on a concurrent basis.

These multi-asset, communitywide asset management programs, or CAMPS, allow communities to develop strategic programs to pro-actively manage all of their asset classes and to reduce costs, and, are aligned with the structure of the Michigan Infrastructure Council's Asset Management Readiness Assessment ('Scale') Program.

While the SAW Program was very helpful for Michigan communities, it also identified various challenges that have become magnified as the SAW Program is expanded into CAMPS.

Many of these challenges can be reduced with effective asset management software, however, many of the asset management software

platforms assessed during the SAW grant are high priced (\$200,000 to \$1 million), complex, and, hard to configure and operate. This has made it difficult for small, medium, and even large communities to justify the purchase and use of asset management software to respond to the challenges discovered during the SAW programs.





A very important output of asset management plans is the forecasted, Capital Improvement Plans created for each of the asset classes. These 'CIPs' provide the long-range forecasts for the planning, timing, budgets and funding for the repair and replacement of the core assets within each of the system asset classes.

For effective management of the CAMPs, the various assets in each asset class are bundled, managed and repaired based on their location and proximity in the community. The large amount of data that is created for these five- to 20-year CIPs must be maintained, updated, and reported to reflect the actual repair and replacement that occurs on an annual or as-needed basis. Manual updating and manipulation of the data can be very time consuming and costly and can result in human error. Asset management software that can facilitate

the semi-automation of the ongoing updates and manipulation of the high volume of data, can be very valuable.

Additionally, the various asset condition rating systems used in different processes make it difficult to standardize on the evaluation and rating of asset conditions. The rating systems adopted in the MIC Scale (1-5), SAW Criticality (1-5), Roadsoft PASER (1-10), and NASSCO PACP and MACP (5-1) provide challenges which can be solved with a software that can translate these disparate rating systems into a common rating process.

Finally, the financial and operational resource challenges faced by small and mid-sized communities have made it difficult to justify the cost of the purchase and the adoption of asset management software. Emerging, favorable funding and grant programs, such as DWAM, provide incentives for communities to combine

or 'co-op' the purchase, training, and operation of the software with neighboring communities. Combined purchase and operation of asset management software and projects, among regional communities, is also consistent with the direction of the initiatives of the Michigan Infrastructure Scale.

There is good news. While the challenges identified in the SAW Program are numerous, asset management software has been introduced that is low cost (less than \$20,000), user friendly, and supports the expanded CAMPs and the MIC AM Scale. Software from companies such as Cartegraph and Dude Solutions are scalable and low priced and can be configured to support the MIC rating levels, the semi-automation of data updating and provide translation between the various numerical rating systems of SAW, Roadsoft, and NASSCO.

Finally, these emerging software programs can be purchased on a combined, co-op basis by neighboring communities. This will allow communities to embrace asset management, and, to reduce their cost of purchase, training and operation while allowing them to, more effectively and efficiently, combine asset management projects, that is also consistent with the direction of the Michigan Infrastructure Council Asset Management Scale Program.

If you would like more information on the joint MWEA/MI-AWWA AIM Committee, please contact Committee Secretary Maureen Wegener (maureen.wegener@c2ae.com) or Co-Chairs Deann Falkowski (defalkowski@fishbeck.com) and Lindsey Kerkez (lindsey.kerkez@ohm-advisors.com).

If you have questions regarding this article, please contact AIM committee member Frank LaPierre, Director, DPW Services, South County Sewer and Water Authority (scswa.director@gmail.com). 

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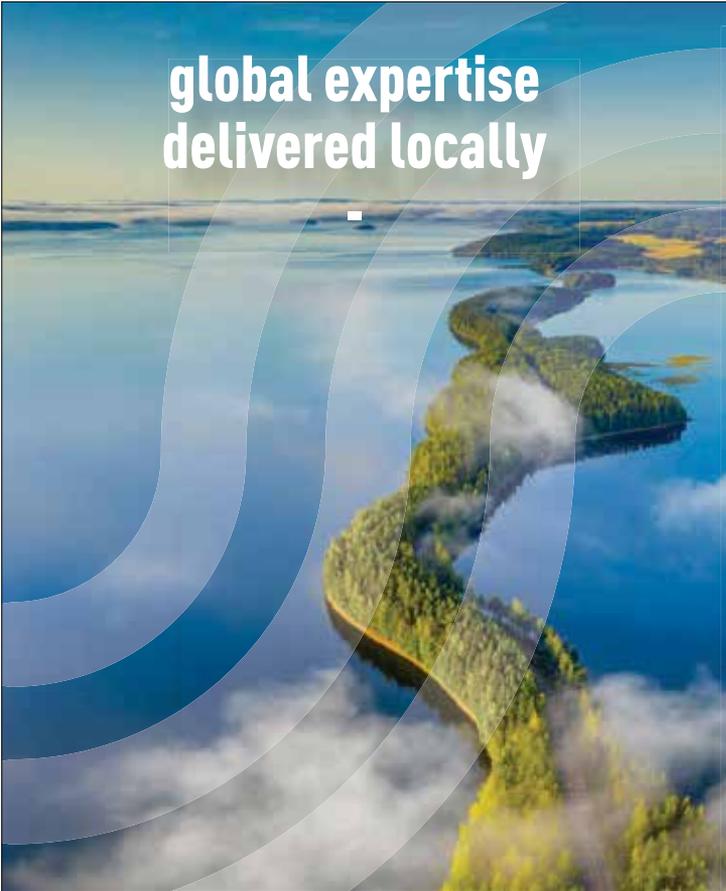
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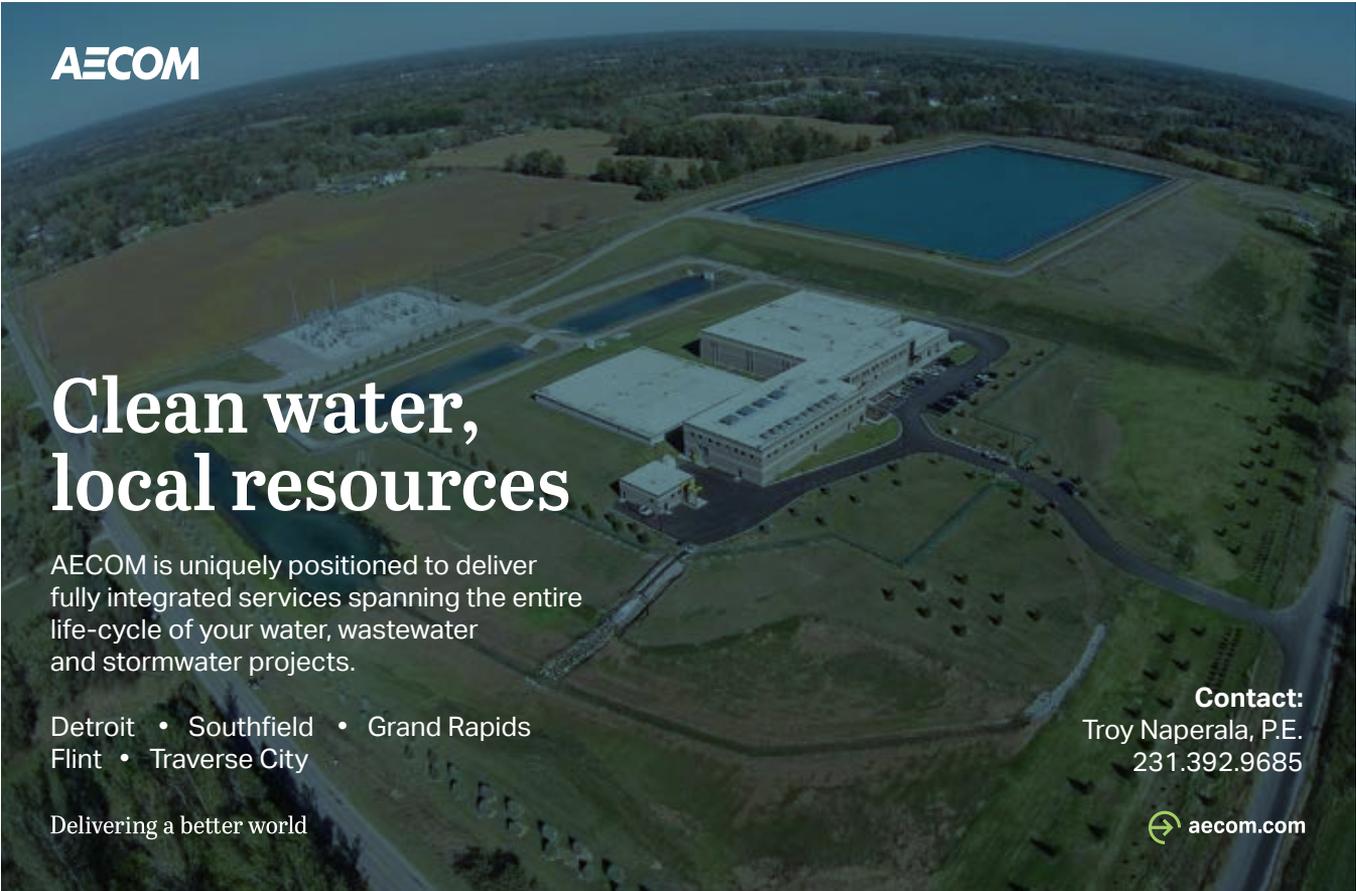
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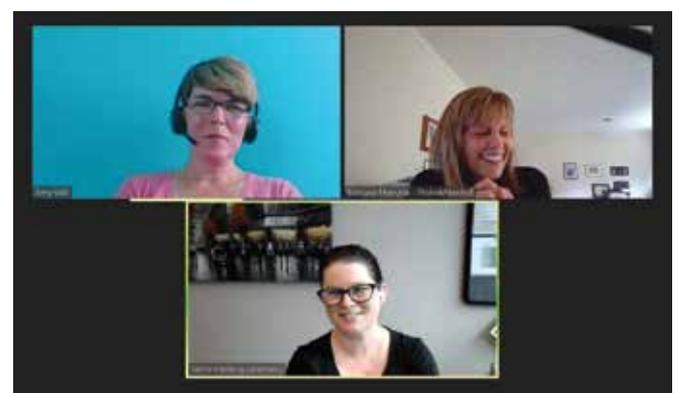
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VIRTUAL EVENTS KEEP MEMBERS CONNECTED

The Membership Council hosts New Member Coffee Hours virtually. These virtual meetings allow MI-AWWA leadership and new members to get acquainted and to help new members become familiar with MI-AWWA.

Also, earlier this year, the Membership Council began virtual regional roundtables. These virtual discussion forums were created to help extend the value of networking in our 'no travel' environment. These will continue periodically.

Check the web calendar for the next roundtable or coffee hour to join the discussion. 



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Members who joined June 1, 2021, to August 31, 2021.

- Nuha Alfahham**, Brown and Caldwell
- Michael Brown**, City of Flint
- John Cain**, GLWA
- Michael Deneen**
- Mike Donahue**
- Olyvia Green**, General Motors
- Carol Griesser**, Oakland County
Water Resources Commissioner
- Alexander Houston**, City of Port Huron Water Filtration Plant
- Angela Hysinger**, Bloomfield Township
- Dana Jones**, City of Rochester Hills Water Department
- Ryan Longstreet**, Infrastructure Alternatives, Inc.
- Jonathon Loomis**, Loomis Water Consultants
- Mike Luce**, Hartland Township
- ME Spencer Consulting Group**
- Wallace Mencvage**, F&V Operations

- Sylvia Orduno**, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization
- Theresa Passe**, Michigan Technological University
- Andrew Richmond**, Metro Consulting Associates, LLC
- Jennifer Robinson**
- Cindy Rogers**, Pinnacle Professional Services
- Deborah Rondon**, GH Sustainable Workplaces
- Henry Schnaidt**, City of Ann Arbor Water Treatment Department
- Paul Simpson**, City of Flint Water Department
- Leslie Sorensen**
- Mark Spencer**, ME Spencer Consulting Group
- Daniela Tapia**, University of Michigan Student
- Eric Urbaniak**, Central Michigan University Student
- Robert Villarreal**, Frontline Technical Sales Group, LLC
- Justin Westlake**, Waterford Township
- Steven Wyzgoski**, Scio Township
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Focus Areas and Strategic Goals

Professional Development

MI-AWWA will offer state-of-the-art and highly relevant learning experiences.

- Fully develop and launch the Michigan Water Academy®
- Acquire a learning management technology that supports member professional development
- Incorporate diversity training into our learning experiences

Public Trust

MI-AWWA will be a respected source of information about water in Michigan.

- Promote the value of water
- Provide tools for members to promote the value of water
- Educate water customers about the water sector

Advocacy

MI-AWWA will advocate for state and local policies that allow water supplies to effectively manage water.

- Continue to build MI-AWWA's recognition among state legislators as

a resource on water policy and water-related information

- Become a resource for local governments on water policy and water-related information
- Plan and conduct a Members' Advocacy Day annually

Innovation

MI-AWWA will create a culture of innovation within Michigan's water sector.

- Develop and host a forum for sharing innovative ideas among members
- Highlight innovation in member events and communication
- Create incentives to advance innovation in the Michigan water sector

Workforce

MI-AWWA will promote the water profession.

- Develop and provide tools to help members attract new and diverse employees
- Develop partnerships that can help to advance the water sector as a career path

Funding

MI-AWWA will promote solutions for adequately funding water supplies.

- Advocate practices utility members can implement to be financially sustainable while being affordable to customers
- Promote customer affordability solutions
- Advocate for infrastructure funding

Operations

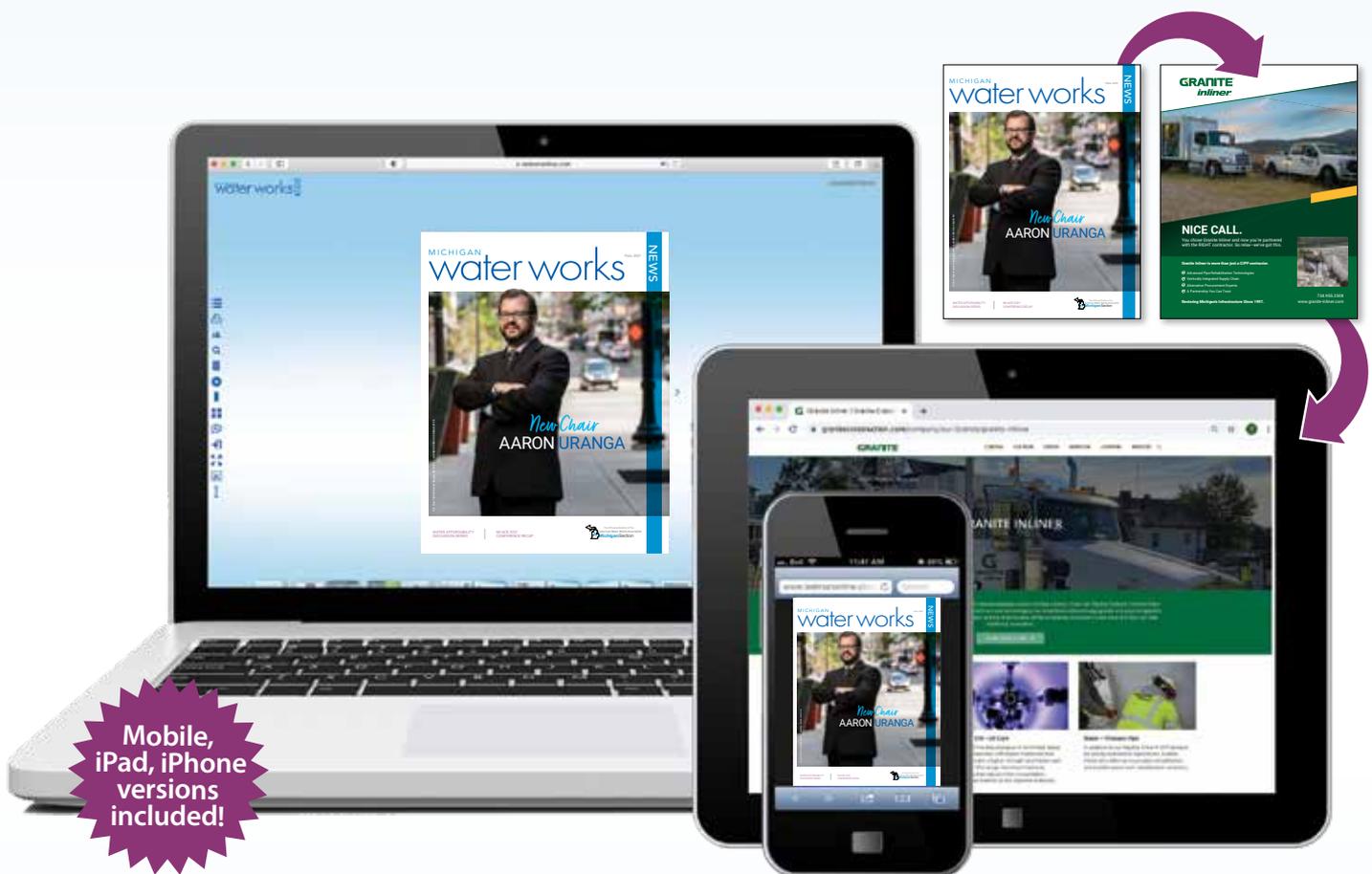
MI-AWWA will maintain a high level of customer service to its members.

- Maintain and grow membership over all membership categories
- Effectively manage resources to encourage growth of the Section's activities
- Pursue new methods of hosting events to protect attendee health

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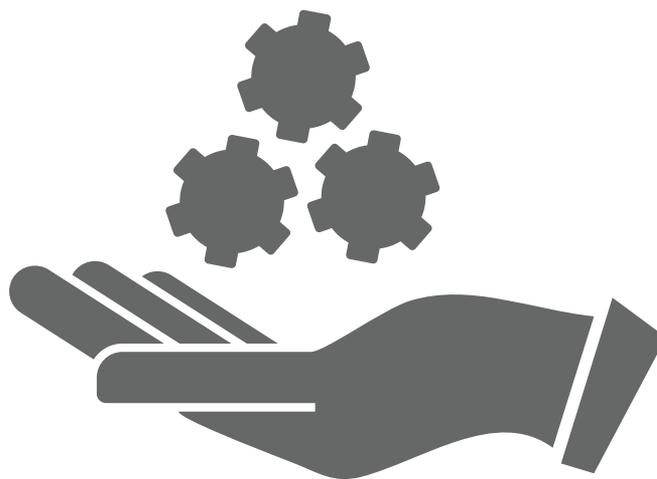
TECHNICAL, MANAGERIAL, AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY (TMF)

There is a fundamental, but little known, requirement of the Michigan *Safe Drinking Water Act* (325.1004(2)) that water supplies shall have adequate technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capacity. It is easy to picture adequate TMF capacity as the three legs needed to hold up a water supply and how the lack of any of the three would cause the supply to fail. Although assessing TMF can sometimes be difficult, EGLE looks at various indicators such as if the water supply has adequate water rates, qualified staff, and conducts needed maintenance routinely. Check out this link for information on assessing water supply managerial capacity: [Assessing Water System Managerial Capacity \(March 2012\) \(epa.gov\)](#). In reality, EGLE regularly identifies water supplies that struggle to meet their water quality goals, level of service goals, and even their regulatory obligations. Moreover, drinking water regulations and customer expectations continue to increase. Fortunately, there is an effective solution that is underutilized in Michigan.

Water supplies can utilize partnerships to enhance TMF capacity and to better protect public health. Water supply partnerships take many different forms including agreements as simple as emergency mutual aid, sharing equipment, and joint chemical purchases. On the other end of the spectrum partnerships can be comprehensive, including the formation of a regional water authority or decommissioning a water source to purchase from another utility. On paper, these types of partnerships make a lot of sense due to the economies of scale through shared services, consolidation of resources, and more favorable borrowing capacity. In practice, however, there are challenges anytime two or more political jurisdictions must negotiate terms of a mutual agreement.

In the interest of bolstering the TMF capacity and regulatory compliance of water supplies in the state, EGLE is exploring how we can better promote the benefits of water supply partnerships. One way is to ensure the funding we administer through the Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRP) loan program or through various state grants aligns with EGLE's goal of leveraging water supply partnerships. A simple starting point is for EGLE staff to make certain that the DWRP Project Plans include a detailed analysis of alternatives and that partnerships such as consolidation are considered in this analysis. Inclusion of the consolidation alternative has always been an element of the project plan, but moving forward, water supplies and consultants can expect more emphasis from EGLE when reviewing project plans and other EGLE-administered funding opportunities.

EGLE is making a concerted effort to ensure our funding is resulting in improvements that are in the best interest of public health and water supply sustainability. For example, investing in an aging water treatment plant with a vulnerable source usually does not make financial sense or improve water quality goals when a viable alternative water source is nearby. Here are a few



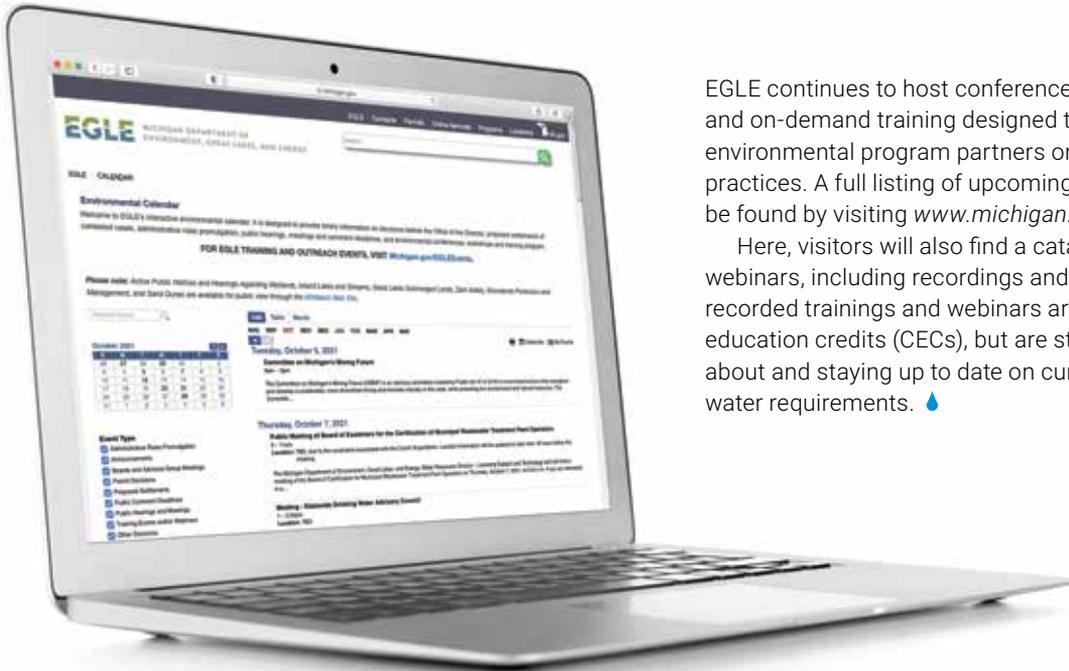
suggested considerations when preparing project plans with respect to the consolidation analysis:

- Were all water supplies (Type I-III) that are candidates for consolidation identified in the analysis?
- Was a high-level comparison of water quality provided? Would consolidation likely result in improved water quality for the supplies in consideration?
- Was a high-level cost comparison done between consolidating and water independence using a 20-year planning period? Initial capital costs of consolidation can be high, but in some cases is quickly paid back through savings of discontinued O&M of a water treatment plant. The cost analysis must consider all the source/treatment related liabilities detailed in recent sanitary surveys and asset management plans.
- Were ancillary factors considered such as certified operator availability, source water vulnerability, regulatory forecast, energy costs/availability, demand forecasts, water customer satisfaction, etc.

Finally, water supplies are encouraged to reach out to the Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) for an independent, third party assessment of partnership opportunities. RCAP can also assist with planning and negotiating partnership agreements. Interested parties may contact Mr. Leo Dion, Sr. Rural Development Specialist, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership at 231-492-0324 or lgdion@glcap.org.

EGLE is also exploring ways we can better promote water partnerships through financial incentives, and we would appreciate hearing suggestions from industry stakeholders. Questions and comments should be directed to Mr. Michael Bolf, Engineering Unit Supervisor in EGLE's Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division at 906-630-4107 or bolfm@michigan.gov. 💧

EGLE TRAINING CALENDAR



EGLE continues to host conferences, workshops, webinars, and on-demand training designed to help educate our environmental program partners on relevant requirements and practices. A full listing of upcoming events and trainings can be found by visiting www.michigan.gov/eglevents.

Here, visitors will also find a catalog of past events and webinars, including recordings and subject materials. Past recorded trainings and webinars are not eligible for continuing education credits (CECs), but are still a great tool for learning about and staying up to date on current and new drinking water requirements. 💧

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MICHIGAN WATER ACADEMY® FULL LAUNCH IN 2022

The Michigan Water Academy® has taken a great leap forward this past year. With a slew of content developed and more being developed over the coming months, MI-AWWA is looking at starting the first Academy cohort in spring of 2022.

A cohort will be a group of students who decide to take the entire Academy suite of courses and begin at the same time. This will allow students to build a strong connection with their fellow students while working toward the micro credentials that you earn along the way of completing Academy classes.



Not to worry. Even if you don't want to commit to the entire Academy suite of courses, you can still register for individual classes as they become available. Details will be available on the website soon. 💧

CLASSES MOVE TO HYBRID, BRINGS NEW FEATURES

With the pandemic came virtual trainings. MI-AWWA pivoted like many organizations to offering virtual trainings so that water professionals could continue to get professional development, even while their travel was restricted. Members participated. Some even enjoyed it. However, water professionals across the state let us know that they were ready for a return to in person learning opportunities.

In the summer, the Board adopted safety protocols to manage the health and safety of MI-AWWA staff, volunteers, and attendees of trainings. COVID-19 continues to rear its ugly little head, and so protocols are constantly being monitored and tweaked for conditions on the ground, in the location, and at the time of the event. To best manage this and to recognize that some people found advantage to virtual training, MI-AWWA has been offering hybrid trainings.

In some cases, this means simultaneously presenting the class material in person, while streaming it out to those watching via the Internet. In other cases, this means presenting the class materials in person, then making a recording available afterward for those who could not attend in person. The Board expects that the hybrid approach will continue for the foreseeable future.

A few things are a little different with the virtual learning have to do with continuing education credit:

- For live virtual, learners are required to stay engaged with the presentation, and the instructor provides a number of ways to do that throughout the class. (Can anyone say Zoom poll?)
- For recorded virtual, learners are required to do all of the activities, watch all instructional videos, and pass a quiz. Some of these features are making their way into the live trainings as well, because these features do represent good practice in professional development. Although none of us likes to take a quiz, practice makes perfect.

If you attended one of the long-standing three-day classes, you may have noticed some differences there as well. These classes have been updated to modernize the classes and to better prepare learners for exams. A new, more advanced distribution class is also being offered.

MI-AWWA is packing a lot of classes into a short amount of time. From mid-September through the beginning of November, there are many classes to choose from. There may even be a couple more in early December. If you haven't already registered for one, check out the training calendar on page 45 and register today.

A special thank you to the Education and Training Council and to the many people who worked on training materials and provided or continue to provide instruction. 💧

“A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL AND TO THE MANY PEOPLE WHO WORKED ON TRAINING MATERIALS AND PROVIDED OR CONTINUE TO PROVIDE INSTRUCTION.”

BE SURE TO TAP INTO REGIONAL TRAINING

The fall regional meetings are being held in person and the lower peninsula meetings will be available on demand after the last session.

- Regional Meeting Mt Pleasant: October 6
- Regional Meeting Gaylord: October 7
- Regional Meeting Livonia: October 20
- Regional Meeting Kalamazoo: October 21

Look for your mailer and emails for details on the agenda for the session near you. If you haven't already tapped in, register for one of the remaining sessions today! 



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UPCOMING TRAINING

The Section is planning to offer hybrid trainings after September 1, 2021, that include an in-person and online option. See what's coming up. Check the website for details.

October 2021

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				1
4	5 Fall Regional Meeting Mt Pleasant	6 Fall Regional Meeting Gaylord	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
	Advanced Water Treatment Managing the Distribution System		Water Solutions webinar	
18	19 Fall Regional Meeting Livonia	20 Fall Regional Meeting Kalamazoo	21	22
25	26 Maintenance Seminar with MWEA	27	28	29

November 2021

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11 Water Solutions Webinar	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30 Media Communication Workshop			

December 2021

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		1	2	3
6	7 Water Fluoridation Training	8 Diversity and Inclusion in the Water Sector	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS.





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