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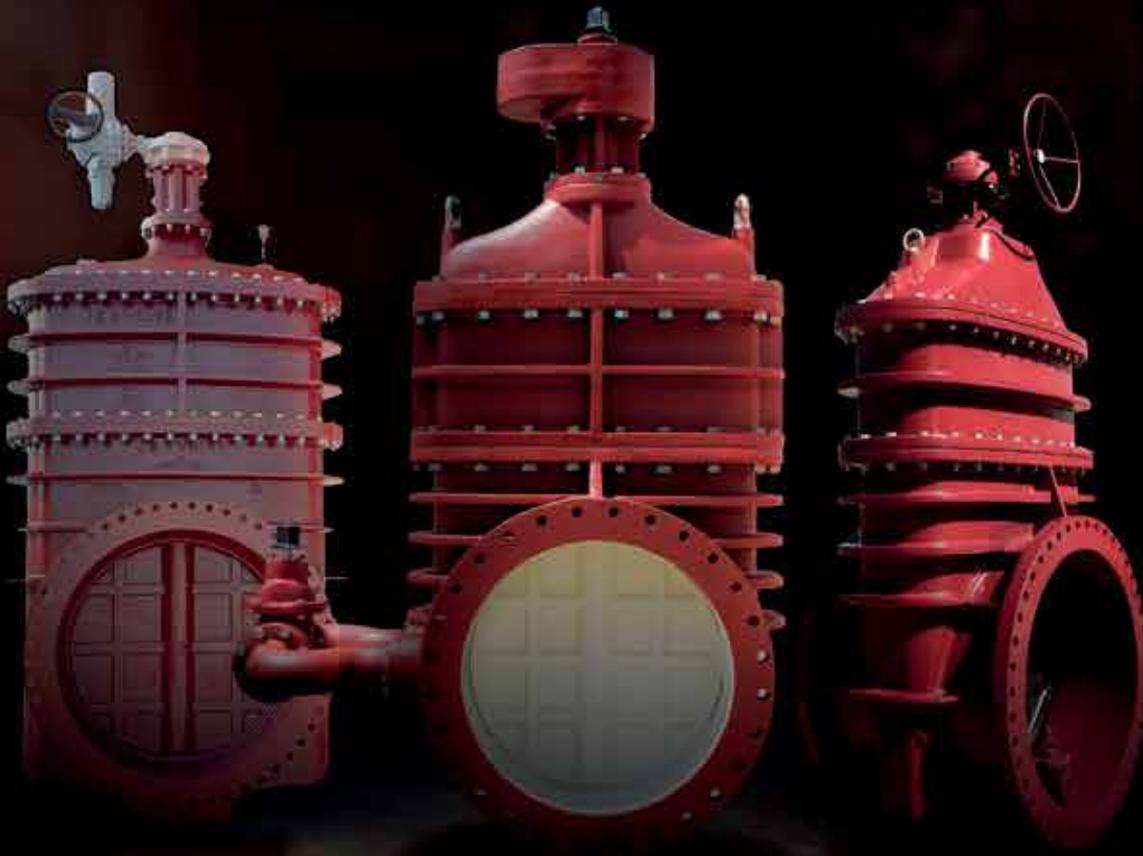
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contents

WINTER 2021



FEATURES

WATER MICROBIOLOGY COURSE	15
2021 VIRTUAL OPERATORS DAY PREVIEW	18
TODAY'S CONTEXT: COMMUNICATING IN AN ERA OF DISTRUST	20
COMPREHENSIVE CITYWIDE ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM SUCCEEDS	27

DEPARTMENTS

Editor's Note	8
Chair's Message	9
Director's Report	10
Executive Director's Message	13
News and Notes	33
Above the Bridge: Turning CECs into College Credit	36
Volunteer News	39
Member Update	41
EGLE News	42
Training	44
Advertiser Directory	45
Advertiser Information Center	46



CHALLENGING OBSTACLES AHEAD

Kelly Gleason, Editor

Happy New Year! Welcome to the winter issue of Michigan *Water Works News*! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season, had time to be with family, and celebrate. The year 2020 met us with some challenging obstacles. All in-person training and meetings were cancelled and transitioned to virtual online events, AWWA ACE20 in Orlando was cancelled. We were met with more virtual trainings and virtual regional meetings, MI-AWWA annual conference in Benton Harbor transitioned

to a virtual event – and The Section even held a virtual leadership retreat.

This year has only just begun, and the obstacles have not stopped. The decision was made to hold virtual events through April 2021, so Joint Expo and Operators Day will be different this year (check out page 27 for details). For additional training events, see page 44 for our training calendar.

As always, I would love to hear about what you have been up to in the water world. You can send pictures, stories and

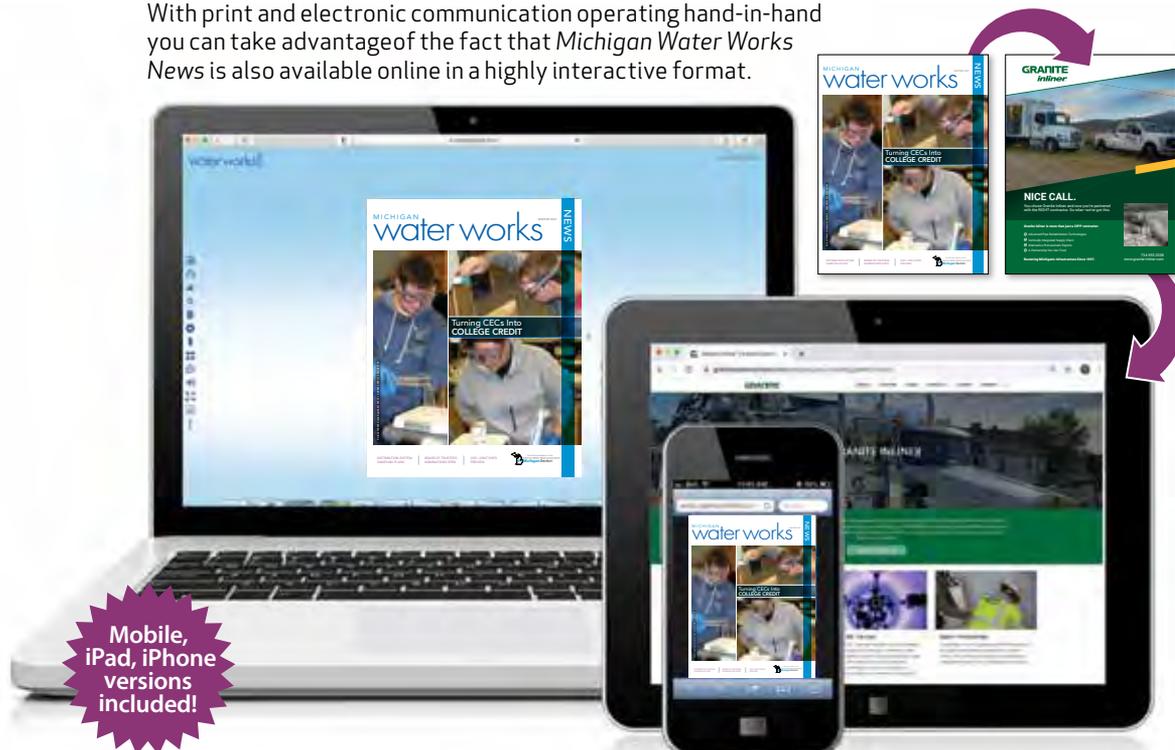
updates through the MI-AWWA website at www.mi-water.org/page/wwn.

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THE ABILITY TO EVOLVE

Jaime Fleming, Chair

Over the last year, the Michigan Section faced challenges that struck hard at the functions that support one of our core principles. The trainings, networking opportunities, and other activities that are at the heart of how knowledge and expertise is shared could no longer happen in the formats and venues that they always had. In the face of that kind of disruption, the ability to evolve is imperative to continued success.

The first fully virtual annual conference, virtual plant tours, trivia nights, new trainings, information and resource sharing platforms, and the continuation of vital Section functions were all possible because of innovative ideas. While this innovation was born out of necessity during a pandemic, many of the new opportunities will likely remain relevant and useful into the future. It is the network of people that provided the creativity and expertise to create new ways to access education and sharing.

Networks are vital to resiliency and innovation. They allow for more

“WHILE THIS INNOVATION WAS BORN OUT OF NECESSITY DURING A PANDEMIC, MANY OF THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES WILL LIKELY REMAIN RELEVANT AND USEFUL INTO THE FUTURE.”

expansive collaboration, access to greater resources and faster, more cost-effective implementation of ideas. Diverse networks have even greater potential for success.

In the Michigan water world, our network is built from all the people that come together under the same vision of creating a better Michigan through better water. This network provides support as we solve problems, educate, share expertise and resources, and protect public health. I would like to challenge each of you to engage in honest reflection on your own network connections – both in your own organization and in the Michigan Section. Do those networks represent true diversity? Or do they reflect a more homogeneous population? If it is the

latter, then I encourage you to give further thought to ways for your water network to be more diverse and inclusive. 💧

A diverse network is one that includes and values individuals that represent different races, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, languages, educational backgrounds, physical abilities and characteristics, political affiliations, veteran status, and faith traditions. It is the depth and breadth of perspectives, experiences, and styles that come from diversity that lead to the greatest creativity, innovation, and resiliency.

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LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

Pat Staskiewicz, Director

The Executive Committee of AWWA met on October 26, 2020. It was a good meeting that would have normally involved a trip to Denver, but Microsoft Teams is the new normal at AWWA. The main purpose of the meeting was to review and adopt the AWWA budget for 2021. As you would expect, much of the discussion involved the economical impacts from the pandemic. In addition to the budget, we also discussed the technology evolution at AWWA, a review of programs, and diversity and inclusion.

The 2020 budget forecast is projecting a deficit of about \$4.4 million. The bulk of that loss is due to the cancellation of in person training, such as ACE20. Fortunately, the Association was able to mitigate those loses with an insurance policy for event cancellation. The Association also participated in the Payroll Protection Program. If not for those two revenue sources, our loss would be much worse. The budget that was approved for 2021 includes a projected loss of about \$2.9 million. The 2022 projection also anticipates a smaller deficit, bringing the total financial impact of the pandemic to about \$8 million over three years. Fortunately, the Association has adequate reserves to help us to navigate these very difficult financial times while continuing to deliver on our mission.

The disruption from the pandemic has caused AWWA to speed up the transformation of the publication products that were already in the works. The print publications of *Journal* and *Opflow* are now available through Wiley Online. The *AWWA Standards and Manuals* will be available through the envoi platform. *AWWA Water Science*

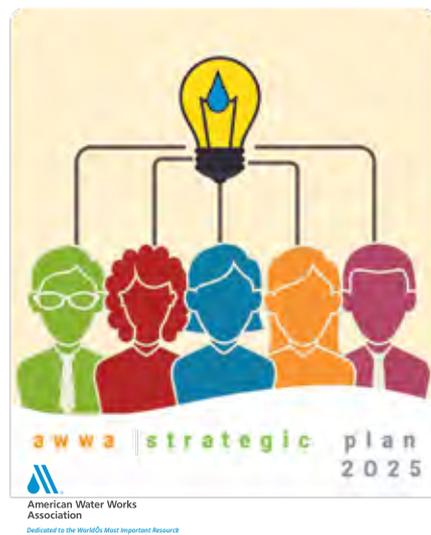
“A BIG PART OF ADVANCING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IS TO IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS.”

has been a digital-only publication and is also available through Wiley Online. The *Water System Operations and Exam Prep* materials are now available in print and mobile app. Lastly, the educational videos have transitioned from DVDs to streaming through the AWWA streaming platform. The good news for members is that it will be easy to access all these products.

The AWWA 2025 Strategic Plan, which I hope you have all downloaded from the AWWA website, includes an objective to continually evaluate the Association's programs for relevance, value, and investment in the future. AWWA will start a strategic program review in 2021 by focusing on high-quality, high-value programs that serve members best

and, given scarce resources, make the hard decisions about which programs provide the highest member value *and* are affordable. This three-part process involves subject matter experts, an evaluation committee, and a program strategy committee. By following this process, the Association can conduct these program reviews without disruption to the program that is being evaluated.

The last topic that I would like to discuss is diversity and inclusion. The previous AWWA strategic plan had five core principals, one of which was to *Foster Diversity and Inclusion*. The 2025 AWWA strategic plan changed this core principal to *Advance Diversity and Inclusion*. This change of wording deliberately forces us to think of actions that will promote positive change. The Diversity and Member Inclusion Committee will be working with the Association and Sections to promote training on this topic in 2021. However, we need more than training. A big part of advancing diversity and inclusion is to improve the diversity on the Board of Directors, Committees and Councils. Successful organizations have diversity within their ranks and leadership, and we all want AWWA to continue to be successful. So please, do your part to ADVANCE Diversity and Inclusion within AWWA. Get involved. We need your voice at the table. Working together we will make a better world through better water. 💧



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THE STATE OF MI-AWWA

Bonnifer Ballard, Executive director

MI-AWWA, like many small nonprofits, has had its challenges during the last nine months. COVID-19 hit just after Joint Expo & Operators Day and the triennial Borchardt Conference and brought a halt to in-person events for what turned out to be the remainder of 2020 and now into the first part of 2021. Since the Section gets a majority of its funding from training events, this took a toll. However, the Section also found new ways to serve members.

Early during the pandemic, MI-AWWA worked closely with the Michigan Water Assistance Response Network, Michigan Water Environment Association, and Michigan Rural Water Association to host webinars to help give water utilities a line on what was happening. The coalition solicited volunteers for an emergency operator pool to help fill gaps expected by the pandemic. Fortunately, few operators were tapped. However, more than 100 licensed water and wastewater operators volunteered to be available if a neighboring community's water operators became unable to work.

In April, staff and volunteers rallied to convert our traditional regional meetings in the lower peninsula to a virtual format. And the Section extended special COVID pricing so that as many operators as possible could participate. Not ideal. And we all had to learn how best to meet requirements that allowed for the granting of continuing education credit, but it worked pretty well right out of the gate.

Volunteers continued to work on other virtual offerings, including MI-ACE 2020. Although we couldn't offer the usual exhibit experience, vendors and consultants threw their support behind MI-AWWA in the form of sponsorships.

"WE ALL HOPE THIS COVID CHAOS ENDS SOON. JUST KNOW THAT MI-AWWA IS WITH YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY."



Their generosity allowed the Section to offer a top-notch virtual conference experience at an affordable registration rate. Staff worked tirelessly behind the scenes to coordinate recordings, brief speakers on the technology, help sponsors with their recognition, and prepare attendees for the experience. Gamification and an excellent agenda brought more than 200 attendees to the new venture.

By fall, we were all COVID fatigued, but the virus resurged and so events stayed virtual. MI-AWWA worked with EGLE to offer modified versions of the traditional three-day short courses. And volunteers did another bang up job of convening regional meeting virtual sessions. Several Councils rallied to bring additional virtual trainings in December, too.

MI-AWWA showed that it can deliver trainings virtually, but more is on the horizon. The Section acquired a learning management system and is in the process of getting that up and running.

This will eventually be the platform for all virtual and hybrid trainings, including self-directed courses.

All of this has taken a toll on the Section's bank account, but the Board remained committed to continuing to serve the needs of members. This was possible because of the wise management of previous leadership. The current Board is examining how best to continue delivering programs and services to members while remaining financially viable. We've retooled our pricing and are introducing more small system discounts, group discounts, subscriptions, and a rate freeze. We're creating a more robust sponsorship program and exploring grants that can help to create and deliver more professional development opportunities for members.

We all hope this COVID chaos ends soon. Just know that MI-AWWA is with you every step of the way. If you have an idea or feedback, please let us know. 💧



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PIECES FROM THE PAST

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COURSE HAS LONG AND DISTINGUISHED HISTORY

By Janice Skadsen, Historical Preservation Committee

The 'MSU Short Course on Bacteriology' (now the MSU Water Bacti Course) has a long and distinguished history. The course originated sometime in the 1930's – over 80 years ago – and is still going strong. It all began when Drs. Mallmann and Giltner asked the important question: 'How do we know that water is safe to drink?'

From that question began a research collaboration that would lead to this short course for water operators. Class sizes have ranged from 10 to 32 students (yes, 32 students in Giltner Hall was pretty crowded! And the walk-in incubator certainly smelled interesting after several days of incubating samples). Over the years, this course has reached at least a couple of thousand students. The course duration has varied from three to four days over time, based largely in incubation times for the organism being examined.



Photo, only Copyright 1964 by the Holograph Co.
Botanical and Bacteriological Laboratories, Agricultural College, Lansing, Mich.

“WHAT IS REMARKABLE ABOUT THIS COURSE IS BOTH ITS UNIQUENESS AND ITS LONGEVITY, IT HAS BEEN TAUGHT ANNUALLY, EXCEPT FOR JUST A FEW YEARS AND HAS EVEN BEEN OFFERED IN THE UP.”

The course has had four lead instructors over the years, starting with Drs. Mallmann and Giltner. Initially, the course focused on the multiple tube fermentation technique and media

refinements. But the course continued to evolve as new techniques became available. Dr. Peabody, a student of Drs. Mallmann and Giltner, and later a professor at Michigan State University,

took over the course in the 1970s. Under his leadership the course expanded to include additional organisms such as fecal streptococci, heterotrophic plate count and 'newer' techniques such as membrane filtration.

“ADVANCES IN FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS, SUCH AS THE TOTAL COLIFORM RULE AND THE SURFACE WATER TREATMENT RULE, BROUGHT NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO FURTHER EXPAND THE COURSE.”

Advances in federal and state regulations, such as the Total Coliform Rule and the Surface Water Treatment Rule, brought new opportunities to further expand the course.

After Dr. Peabody's passing in 1997, MSU's focus was no longer as extensive on drinking water and the course was transitioned to utility leadership under Janice Skadsen, Water Quality Manager at the City of Ann Arbor. She had a number of assistants over the years, most notably Lynn Adsit of the Lansing Board of Water and Light and Jamie Fleming of the City of Wyoming. Greg Lundy, Lab Certification Officer from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy joined the course to discuss lab certification and quality assurance.

The course continued to evolve and expanded its topics to include other microorganisms such as protozoa and viruses (though the name of the course was never successfully revised to reflect this change). Colilert and similar techniques were incorporated and discussions into genetic testing such as PCR were added. The course continued to be supported by MSU staff. The course followed a move by the Microbiology Department from Giltner Hall (yes named for Dr. Giltner) to the Biomedical and Physical Sciences Building. This provided brand new labs and a dedicated media room – and was right across the street from the MSU dairy with its delicious homemade ice cream. As of 2019, the course transitioned to Amy Vail and Brandon Onan of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

What is remarkable about this course is both its uniqueness and its longevity, it has been taught annually, except for just a few years and has even been offered in the UP. The combination of lecture and hands on lab is quite unique among the AWWA sections. If you have not taken this course in a while, it is worth revisiting, as it continues to change as the challenges to the industry and the technology advance. 💧

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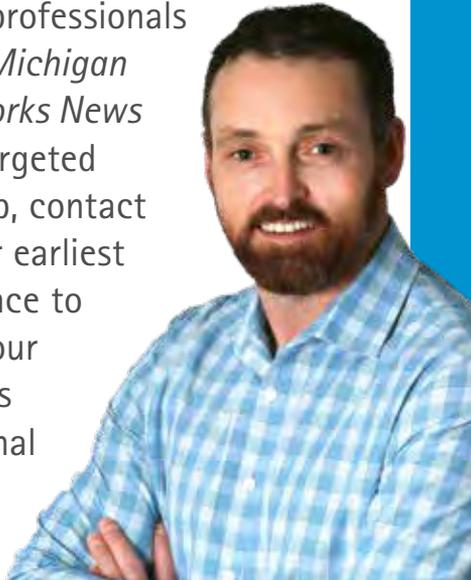
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Make a plan to participate in Operators Day 2021 without leaving your office! In addition to technical training, join our virtual networking mixer on Tuesday evening and network with sponsors and other attendees in the conference app.

Tuesday, February 2

Technical Program: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Networking Mixer: 4:00 PM

Sessions:

- ◆ MIOSHA Compliance Training
- ◆ Innovation Through People and Technology
- ◆ Using an Insertion Flow Meter as an Aid in Water Loss Detection
- ◆ On-Site Sodium Hypochlorite Generation

Wednesday, February 3

Technical Program: 11:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Sessions:

- ◆ Using the Sewer System to Help Predict Viral Outbreaks
- ◆ SCADA – Best Practices for Equipment Maintenance
- ◆ MISS DIG 811: Program Updates for 2021
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Today's Context: Communicating in an Era of Distrust

By American Water Works Association



While most utilities provide water and wastewater services that meet all standards, and even a short disruption of service is a rare event, utilities are seeing heightened anxieties about water quality and environmental concerns bubbling up from those they serve.

Media coverage of the Flint, MI, water crisis and the daily reports questioning water quality have had an impact. [According to a 2016 Kaiser Family Foundation poll, Americans ranked contaminated drinking water third – just behind heroin abuse and cancer – as the biggest risk to public health.](#) Most Americans report their trust in local government is much higher than their trust in state and federal governments; however, civility itself has become a concern, even for local jurisdictions.

Consumers are paying attention and increasingly seeking out information about the safety and quality of their water. Ideally, they receive information from you, and you are their trusted sources for water information. [However, if you are not](#)

[communicating, they may turn to Google for information or a Facebook friend may provide a link to a company promoting a product. If this happens, these sources can become your customers' trusted source for water information.](#) Social media sources may provide information that is incorrect, incomplete or without context. Investing in communication programs designed to build trust with consumers is an excellent way to insert yourself into a landscape crowded with self-proclaimed experts.

The Silent Service Provider

Many utilities have favored a reactive approach to communication focused on maintaining good, reliable water and wastewater service and answering customer questions as they arise. In fact, The Water Research Foundation has found that nearly half of all water utilities have no communication plan and no staff dedicated to communications and community outreach work.



Vasin Lee/shutterstock.com



The Rise of Social Media

The explosion of social media over the past decade has changed how we communicate, but water utilities have been slow adopters of these new communication channels. Social media provides a platform for consumers to engage and connect on a global scale. They can share information, raise awareness and rally support for issues they care about and reach beyond friends and family to hundreds or thousands of users on numerous social media platforms. This communication channel feeds the public's increasing expectation for engagement and information about decisions that affect them.

Indeed, social media has empowered the consumer. [If leveraged correctly, social media can build support for and provide understanding of public interest issues like drinking water and wastewater treatment. If ignored or used to spread](#)

[misinformation, the result can cause devastating impacts for a water utility.](#) Inadequate, inaccurate, and malicious information can cause reputational damage, a loss of support for a project, or worse, widespread panic.

For many utilities, communicating on social media is daunting. Few small- and medium-sized utilities have the resources required to maintain and manage a robust social media program. Even large utilities with professional public relations staff must dedicate resources to ensure two-way communication happens in real time. Some utilities have activity on platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter and balance that limited engagement with anecdotal reporting from employees who come across comments on their personal social media accounts. This can leave utility leaders informed about a conversation but with no opportunity to engage in or impact it.

Social Media's Influence



Facebook is the most widely-used social media platform among customers, and 74% of users visit at least once per day. (Source: Pew Research Center)



Twitter has emerged as a primary source for the news media. (Source: *The Washington Post*)



Nextdoor is available in more than 90% of neighborhoods across the United States and is a popular platform for local community conversations. (Source: *The Atlantic*)

- Advocacy organizations use a variety of social media platforms, but Facebook and Twitter dominate (Source: *HuffPost*).





Advocacy and Misinformation Campaigns

In today's media environment, utilities are competing for attention with accomplished advocacy voices that have leveraged social media and used water utilities' past silence to establish themselves as influencers on water issues. Many of these voices are helpful in raising awareness of important issues and have a genuine interest in improving water quality and protecting the environment. However, some of these influencers have an economic interest in capitalizing on the public's growing concern about water quality to sell various products and services. Others are political advocates aiming to build a policy platform to recruit new supporters or dues-paying members.

Many influencers use fear-based messaging as a highly effective tactic for establishing themselves as a credible voice to consumers. They then advance their position or product as a solution to the perceived "fearful" problem and recruit

supporters for their own political or economic gain.

[Scaring consumers and increasing skepticism around utility services is relatable and engaging to consumers and hard to refute with the fact-based, infrequent communication methods currently used by many water utilities.](#)

As a result, during a water quality event, other interested parties are successful in using their more established platforms and wide-ranging social media networks to drown out the often-quiet voice of the water utility. They can play off the fears of consumers to create sweeping misinformation campaigns that benefit their interests.

To combat this type of misinformation campaign, water service providers need to understand the motivations behind these interests and engage and reassure consumers through proactive risk communication.



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Risk Communication Strategies Can Help

In 2002, Daniel Kahneman and Vernon Smith won the Nobel Prize in Economics for research demonstrating that when fear is present, people process information differently, and the science of risk communication was born. This research showed that when people are emotional, they shift their brains' information processing to the primitive amygdala. The only decision under consideration in the amygdala is how to be safe: should I flee, freeze, or fight? When you are speaking with someone – in person or through social media – who is angry or emotional, it is critical to remember that they are processing everything as a fight response necessary to keep them safe. Risk communication best practices are designed to help people feel safe enough to return to reasoned

discourse where broader information and considerations beyond immediate safety can be applied to decisions.

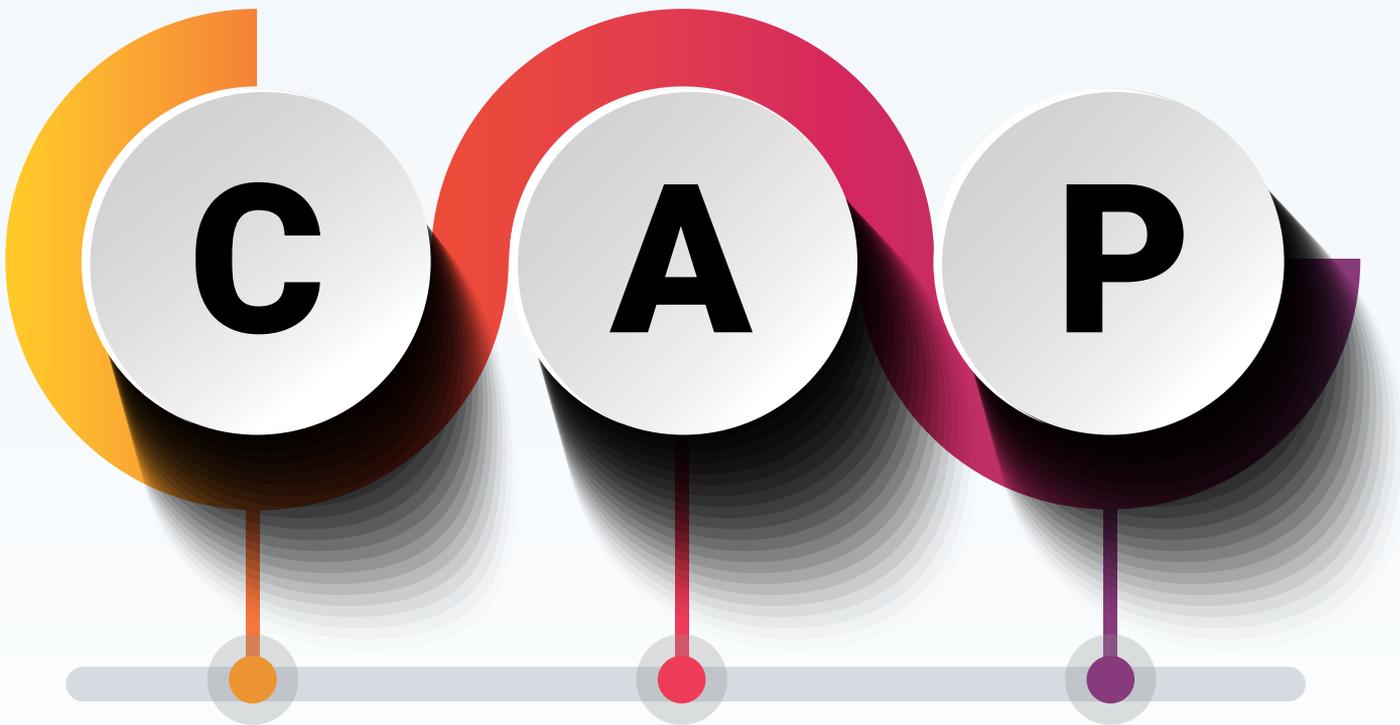
The ability to connect with audiences who are angry or emotional is an increasingly valuable leadership skill for utility professionals. Utilities can significantly diminish the consequences of the spotlight by applying risk communication best practices both proactively and during a crisis.

Science has found that specific communication techniques are effective for responding to people experiencing angst brought on by hype around an uncertain or unknown risk.

These techniques have been summarized into easy-to-use templates developed by the Center for Risk Communication. See figure below as an example template.

Example Template (CAP)

Use when responding to a high-concern question or statement.



Caring Message:

Provide a message indicating caring, concern, empathy or compassion. The message should communicate the seriousness of the situation.

Action Message:

State actions you have, are or will take to address the issue or problem. For example, the message might indicate you are cooperating with other organizations or investigating the situation.

Perspective Message:

Provide information that puts the issue in perspective or context.

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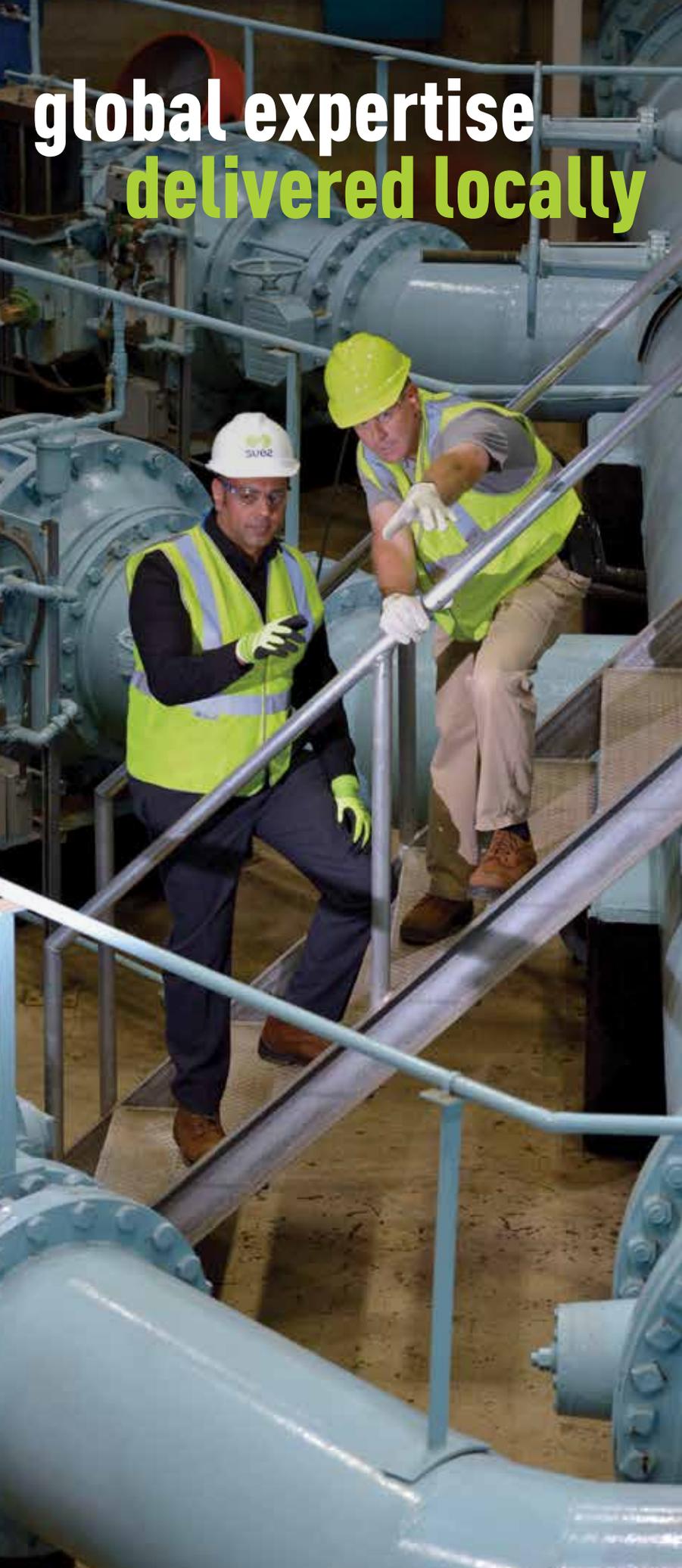


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Comprehensive CITYWIDE ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM Succeeds

By R. Tyler Dotson and Frank LaPierre, Joint MWEA/MI-AWWA AIM Committee

It is widely publicized that America's infrastructure is rapidly deteriorating and reaching the end of its useful life. In its 2017 report on the condition of America's infrastructure, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave America's infrastructure an overall grade of D+ and reported the nation would need to spend an additional \$4.5 Trillion by 2025 to raise the national infrastructure to a state of

good repair. With over 15,000 wastewater treatment plants and demand growing by 23% over the next 15 years, the US Wastewater infrastructure also received a grade of D+.

With the implementation of the Stormwater, Asset Management, and Wastewater Program (SAW), the State of Michigan provided funding for the assessment of Michigan's aging stormwater and wastewater infrastructure.

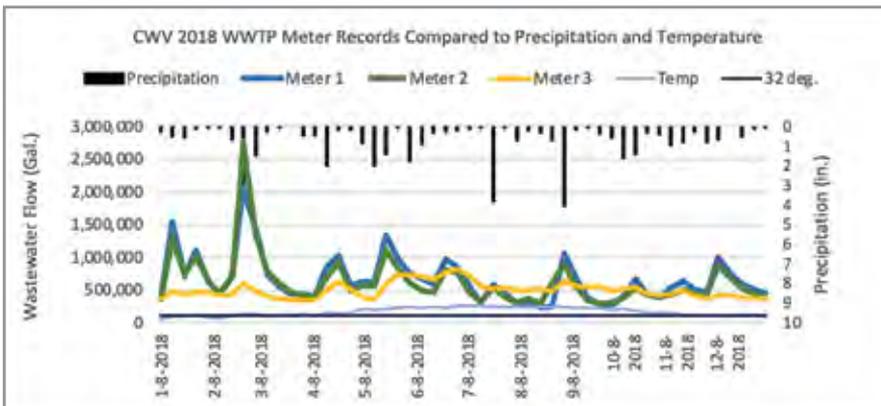
Wastewater, Stormwater, Inflow & Infiltration (I&I), and drainage issues have long plagued the City of Watervliet community. In 2013 we enlisted the services of Wightman to manage our SAW program. As part of the SAW program we were able to assess our wastewater and stormwater assets and collect valuable data, including a 20-year capital improvement plan (CIP).

Following the completion of the SAW program, Wightman proposed the City combine the findings from the SAW program and merge them with asset management plans for our water, roads and other above ground asset classes. By expanding the SAW program into a more comprehensive asset management program with all of the City's assets, a city-wide asset management program (CAMP) was created.

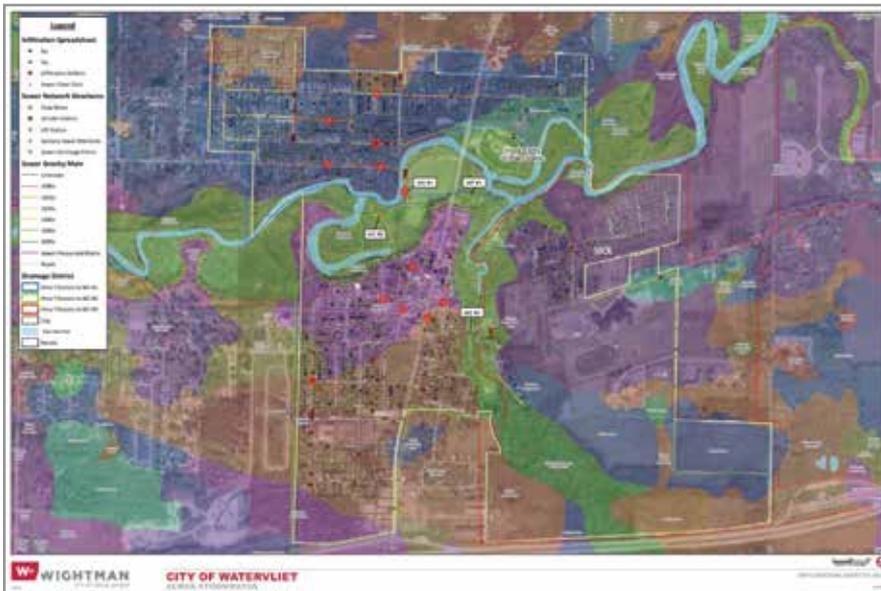
The CAMP merged the wastewater and stormwater CIPs, analysis, and GIS data with other community asset class CIPs, AMPs, and analysis providing a 20-year program to concurrently manage the forecasting, maintenance, repair, reporting, and funding of all assets. The CAMP is forecasted to provide cost reductions of over \$300,000. These savings are already evident as realized in the \$2.3 million South Watervliet Drain Project, which is currently underway, and a street project set to break ground in the summer of 2021 that was one of 23 communities in Michigan awarded a MDOT Category B Grant.

Mayor Dave Brinker and the City Commission have seen value in this process.

"For the past 10 years, we have been working with Wightman to identify the wide range of infrastructure problems that continue to grow in the City. With the CAMP program, we are now able to effectively and efficiently provide the



Preliminary Analysis of Watervliet Wastewater Collection System meter records.



Map of Watervliet custom flow meter locations.

CAMP



Map of water line replacements.



Map of LCR Home Inspections.

highest level of service at the lowest cost to our community,” shared Brinker.

Along with City staff, Wightman assembled a CAMP team that merged the SAW and water CIPs with the analysis of our drainage issues, I&I problems, lead water line mitigation and road repair program.

CAMP program engineer Andrew Rudd presented graphs created from

the I&I analysis to help illustrate the preliminary findings to the City Commission.

With the various flow tracking technologies and software, we were able to pinpoint the exact locations of the I&I problems. Eleven flow meter locations were identified based on our preliminary data. The following map reflects where the custom flow meters were placed.

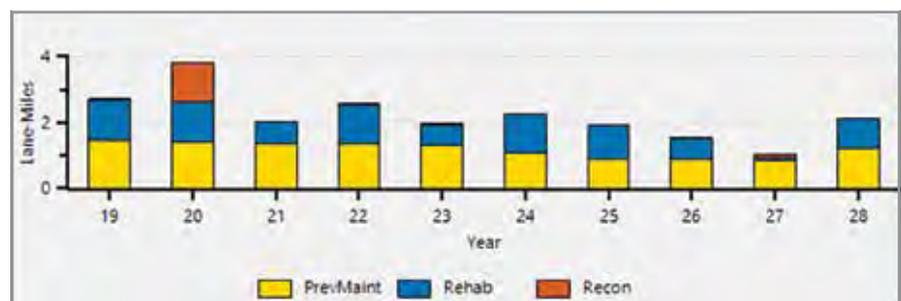
In addition to merging the planning, management and funding of all of our assets, we added the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) initiative,

mandated by the State of Michigan. The following are examples of the in-depth analysis for water, LCR mitigation, and road repair that were created.

Sam Leatch, Wightman Client Representative explains, “...with the CAMP, we were able to address the many infrastructure issues that Watervliet faced. In the end, we worked with the City’s Municipal Finance Advisor, Baker Tilly, to develop and secure approval for the implementation of creative rate and debt funding for public assets and private water lines. This resulted in a creative combination of USDA, DWSRF, SWQIF, and grant funding programs, forecasted to equate to a combined \$7.5 million in debt funding.”

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 Watervliet City Manager Tyler Dotson (citymanager@watervliet.org) or AIM Committee member Frank LaPierre, Infrastructure Manager, Wightman & Associates at (flapierre@gowightman.com). 💧



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September 14-17, 2021

Grand Rapids, MI
Amway Grand Plaza Hotel

Are you working on an interesting or challenging project? Have you found a way to solve a problem that others can benefit from? Did you just save your community money with a change you have made? The Annual Conference Program Committee is now accepting abstracts through February 28, 2021, and would love to hear from you.

Topic Ideas include:

- Asset management
- Automation
- Data Science
- Design, Construction and Delivery
- Distribution Practices
- Emerging Topics, New Technologies
- Finances, Affordability, and Rate Setting
- Instrumentation and Controls
- IT
- Operations and maintenance
- Pump and Valve maintenance
- Smart Water
- Source Water or Wellhead Protection
- Storm Water Management
- Utility Planning and Management
- Utility Risk and Resilience, and Cybersecurity
- Water Quality and Sampling Methods
- Water Treatment Processes
- Workforce Development
- Or your own fresh idea

Please visit the Section's Annual Conference page or www.surveymonkey.com/r/presentatmiace2021 to submit your abstract or presentation idea.



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GREAT NEWS IN COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

By Sandy Sutton

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released the list of public water systems (PWS) in the US that that have provided fluoridation in the Optimal Fluoridation Awards for 2019. As with most things currently, the awards were delayed due to COVID-19 because the CDC fluoridization staff were re-assigned to work on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Oral Health Program is pleased to announce that

we have 71 PWS receiving awards this year. That is a 25% increase over last year! Thanks to their due diligence, our residents are receiving the optimal level of fluoridation all year long. With so many people out of work and losing their benefits, combined with the slowing down and closing of dental offices, it is important that residents have the safety net of fluoridated water for their continued oral health.

Congratulations to all our awardees:

Ann Arbor	Lake Bella Vista
Bangor	Linden
Baraga	Lowell
Battle Creek-Verona System	Ludington
Bay Area Water System	Manchester
Belding	Manistique
Benton Charter Township	Marshall
Big Rapids	Mason
Blissfield	Menominee Water Department
Bridgman	MHOG (Marion, Howell, Oceola and Genoa) Sewer & Water Authority
Buchanan	Michigan State University
Clare	Midland
Dowagiac	Milford
East Jordan	Monroe
Eaton Rapids	Munising
Elk Rapids	Muskegon
Escanaba Water Department	Negaunee-Ishpeming Authority

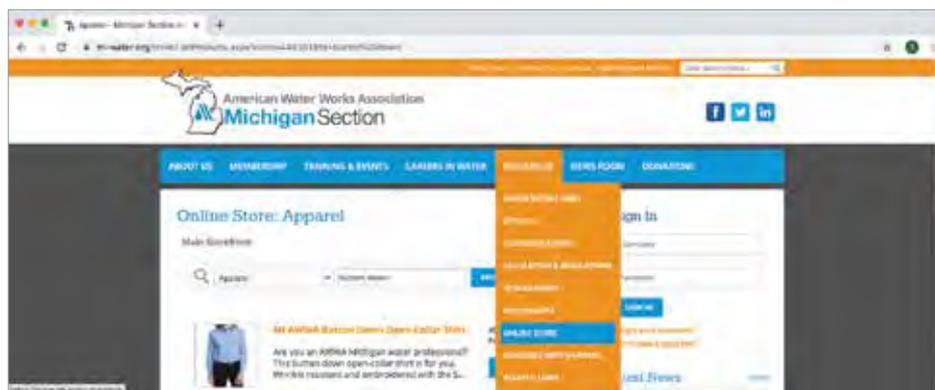
Fenton	New Buffalo
Fremont	Niles
Genesee County Water System	Plainfield Township
Gladstone Water Department	Plainwell
Grand Rapids	Saginaw
Gratiot Area Water Authority	Schoolcraft
Great Lakes Water Authority	Sparta
Harbor Springs	St. Clair
Hartford	St. Clair Water and Sewer Authority
Hastings	St. Ignace Water Treatment
Hillsdale	St. Johns
Holland Board of Public Works	St. Joseph
Howell	Standish
Huron Shore Reg. Util. Authority	Summit Township
Ionia	Traverse City
Jackson	Wakefield
Jonesville	Wayland
K I Sawyer	Wyoming
Kalamazoo	

There is a new fluoridation delivery system coming out shortly that uses compressed 'pucks' of sodium fluoride and is primarily aimed at smaller communities, those 5,000 or less. You should start seeing information on as we get into 2021! No massive storage tank required. The system uses the pucks in five-gallon buckets, in the same way pool chlorinator material is supplied.

The department is also in the final stages of securing funding to offer the 2021 Fluoridation Equipment Grants! If your system is needing replacement of equipment, please contact me, Sandy Sutton, at suttons2@michigan.gov for more information!

MI-AWWA ONLINE: APPAREL

The year 2020 put into sharp relief how important water professionals are. Designated as critical infrastructure employees, many of you not only kept your job and kept working but had to find new ways to work to minimize the risk of illness. Take a moment to celebrate your profession. Check out the latest Section: Apparel in the online store.

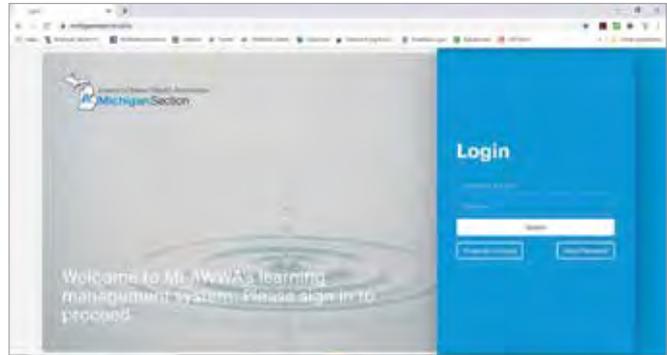


MI-AWWA PILOTS NEW TRAINING SUBSCRIPTION

MI-AWWA is announcing a limited number of seats to pilot its new training subscription program.

This (yet to be named) program includes unlimited access to the new learning management system (LMS), which has a number of self-directed online courses already available. The LMS will also be the platform where Regional Meeting sessions and the Water Solutions webinar series will be presented. More classes will be available in the system throughout the year.

The LMS offers the latest in virtual classroom technology as well as great interactive courses. The Section is looking for individuals who are willing to pay for an annual subscription rate, getting access to a number of trainings, while providing feedback to the Section throughout the year. Contact Eric Johnson at ejohnson@mi-water.org to sign up for this exciting new program.



MICHIGAN SECTION AWWA NEEDS YOU!

Nominations Solicited for the Michigan Section Board of Trustees

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for terms beginning in September 2021 (in conjunction with the Annual Conference) for the following positions:

Trustees – two each for three-year terms

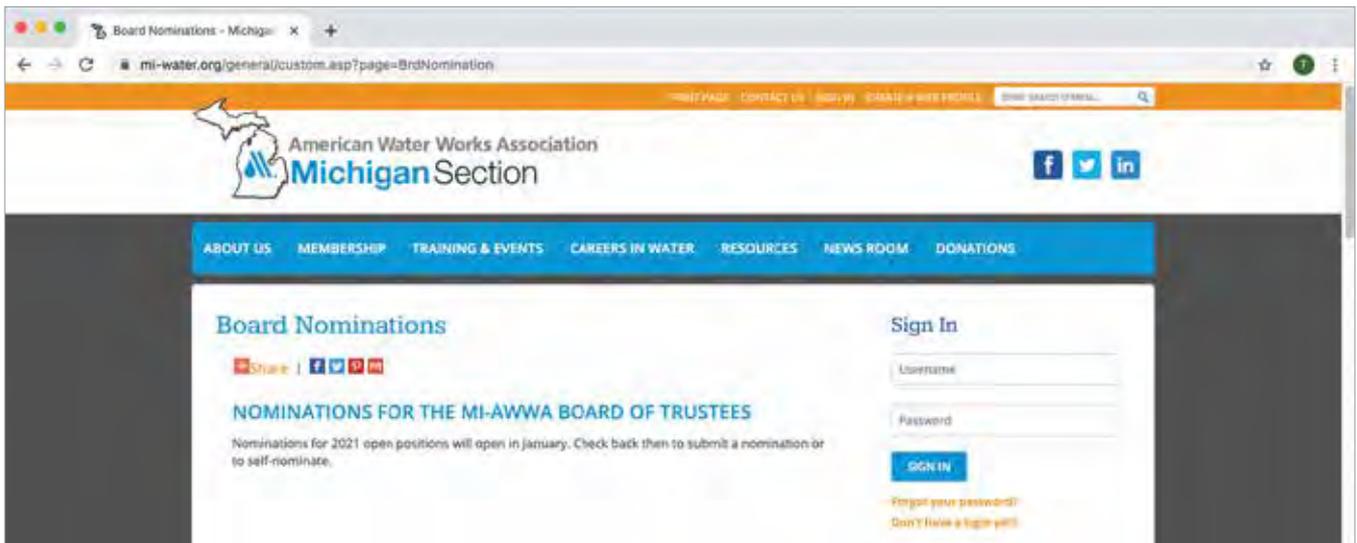
Chair Elect – three-year term

Self and peer nominations are both encouraged. Please also note the bylaws of the Section indicate that we should strive to have one Board member from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and one Board member either from the area of the Lower Peninsula north of Town Line Fifteen or from any district, area, or community in the Lower Peninsula maintaining water service to a population under 10,000 persons at the most recent Federal Census. The representation of the Board members is intended to reflect the diverse membership of the Section, including, but

not limited to, geographical locations, membership categories, utility size, gender, and ethnic origins. Any member in good standing of the Section, including a multi-section Member, are eligible to hold elective office in the Section.

Interested members are encouraged to contact any of the Nominating Committee members with any questions; committee members are Pat Staskiewicz (Chair), Aaron Uranga, Gary Wozniak, Molly Maciejewski, Rick Solle, Michelle Zdrodowski, and Randy Roost.

Nominations are due by **March 22, 2021**, and should be submitted using the form on the Section website at <https://mi-water.site-ym.com/general/custom.asp?page=BrdNomination>. Members who have submitted nominations in previous years and would like to be considered for this year should complete a new nomination form. 💧



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Above the Bridge

Turning CECs Into College Credit



Be it a mile down the road, or 440 miles away in Detroit, water professionals who have earned continuing education credits through the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association can now apply those credits toward a degree at Bay College in the Upper Peninsula.

Located along the shore of Little Bay de Noc, Bay College has made a home in Escanaba since 1962. For 58 years, students have walked through the doors at Bay and can now earn degrees virtually, applying CECs they have earned through the MI-AWWA toward college credit – thanks to a new agreement between both institutions.

The memorandum of understanding between MI-AWWA and Bay allows water professionals who attend MI-AWWA training to receive credit hours applicable to Bay's Associate in Applied Science Water Resource Management degree program.

“PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING EXPERIENCES THAT BOTH PREPARE OPERATORS FOR LICENSING EXAMS AND PROVIDE THE LATEST INFORMATION ON STANDARDS, PRACTICES, AND RESEARCH, IS HOW WE HELP OUR MEMBERS PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH.”

The Water Technologies program at Bay just celebrated its 50th anniversary and is well-known throughout the country, Troy Gallagher, instructor for the Water Technologies Programs said.

“Having this schooling provides opportunities all over the U.S., and not just the State of Michigan,” he said.

The agreement that's now in place will allow any operator that takes MI-AWWA courses that are approved, and transfer those hours into the Water Tech program at Bay College. This

will allow the operator to further their education using training they currently get through the Section.

“For example, if the operator has been taking classes for the last five years and they have 20, 30, hours of CEC work, they bring that in and we can transfer that in as a course into the program,” he said.

There are three program options to transfer hours, including an environmental management program and a water resource program, both which



offer an associate's degree, and also a one-year water technology certificate.

"This will allow them to bump up the ladder, get additional licensing, and all that good stuff," he said.

Gallagher called the agreement a perfect fit for anyone who has completed CECs and is looking for a degree to further apply their time to and provide future opportunities for these individuals.

Bay College is providing all programs online, which Gallagher said will benefit students from all over the state, from Grand Rapids to Detroit and the furthest regions of the U.P. There are even educational plans in place for laboratory work and assignments.

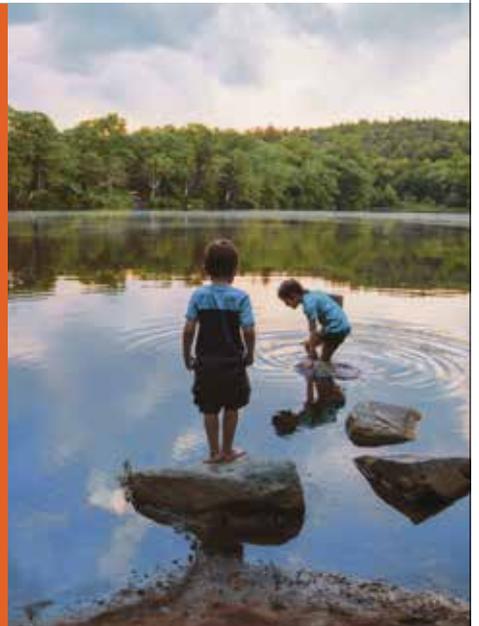
"Any of the hands-on components they can actually do at the facility where they work or down the road for example,"



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he said. "They can finish pretty much anything from their local area."

With a 100% placement rate, the Water Resource Management Program at Bay is designed for providing specialized training in water and wastewater treatment theory and application to entry-level and established water professionals. According to Bay College's website, those who complete degree requirements and gain work experience may qualify to progress through certification to the highest-grade licensure in municipal and industrial water treatment.

To participate in the program, the water operator will need to contact the coordinator of the Water Resource Management Program to apply for college credit once MI-AWWA training is completed.

"Providing high-quality training experiences that both prepare



operators for licensing exams and provide the latest information on standards, practices, and research, is how we help our members protect

public health," MI-AWWA Board Chair Jaime Fleming said. "I'm very proud that we are able to offer this to water operators across the state." 💧

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EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCIL RETOOLING

The Education and Training Council (ETC) developed a work plan for 2021 that includes a comprehensive needs assessment as well as a complete audit of all Section trainings. The goal is to identify gaps in available training, deficits in skills within the water sector, and removing duplication where needed.

If you haven't already, make sure you participate in the Needs Assessment

survey and other opportunities to share your training wants and needs so that ETC can make the needed improvements to the Section's training program.

The Council has also developed a peer review process to improve the likelihood of classes being approved for continuing education credit by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and

eventually being certified by The International Accreditors for Continuing Education and Trainings (IACET).

The Council is overseeing the development of many classes, including several for the Michigan Water Academy®. Keep your eyes on the web training calendar, future issues of *Michigan Water Works News*, and email for the latest trainings available. 💧

MI-AWWA COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL CREATES MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING

The MI-AWWA Communications Council has been working to plan and conduct the Section's first Media Workshop that took place in December. The virtual event provided an opportunity for members to learn the media best practices on four different important topics ranging from social media to communicating during

a crisis. Depending on how much value the members see in the workshop, the council hopes to conduct these sessions in 2021 as well.

The council has also been working to advocate for more public education on the value of replacing the State of Michigan's aging water infrastructure and how curtail

it is for a sustainable future. We've issued several OpEds to the local news outlets highlighting the urgent infrastructure needs.

As always, the council is open to more participation from section members and if anyone wants to join and help us in achieving the various goals we have, please feel free to reach out. – Aftab Borke. 💧

MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATE

The MI-AWWA and MWEA Youth Education Committee has been reinvigorated! Rachael Barlock and Alyssa Olson will co-chair the committee in a collaborative effort with committee members. The overarching goal is outreach and education on the water cycle, the communities within, the systems, as well as the careers that support it. To bring awareness to students who may not know about the water sector and highlight the importance the committee will focus on K-12, college students, and community youth groups such as the girl/boy scouts and 4-H. We are also hoping to partner with community watershed education programs like Project WET, water festivals, and science festivals. If you are interested and would like to join the committee, please reach out to Rachael Barlock at barlock@semcog.org or Alyssa Olson at aolson@golder.com. 💧



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ON THE MOVE



VICKI PUTALA
Vicki Putala, PE, Director of Environmental & Water Resources at OHM Advisors, was appointed

to the firm's Board of Directors. A professional engineer and firm shareholder who was born and grew up on the shores of Lake Superior, Vicki's lifelong passion for water shows in her enthusiasm for the benefits that a well-run, equitable water system can have on people's lives. Adept at understanding client and public needs and genuinely desiring to help move them forward, Vicki embodies the trusted advisor role which affords her a tremendous amount of leadership experience and integrity that she brings to her board appointment. Vicki is an active member of the American Water Works Association.

JOE VANDERSTEL retired from the city of Grand Haven.

SCOTT HAMELINK retired from Lansing Board of Water & Light after more than 40 years of service.

SANJEEV MUNGARWADI from City of Muskegon to the Lansing Board of Water & Light. 



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Members who joined September 1, 2020 - November 30, 2020

- Tracey Balint**, City of Rochester Hills Water Department
- Rebecca Bartlett**
- Douglas Carmona**
- David Devlaminck**, F&V Operations
- Roy Dixon**, Roy A. Dixon Plumbing Services Co.
- Matt Felspausch**, Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors, LLC
- Jaymee Hord**, Village of Webberville
- Ashlie House**, City of Auburn
- John Klimaszewski**, City of New Baltimore
- Nick Lionas**, D3W Industries, Inc.
- Steven Martinac**, Nelaunee/Ishpeming Water Authority
- Susan McGrattan**
- Sandra Monroe**
- Mark O'Neill**, City of Marquette
- Duane Priddy**, Plastic Expert Group
- Joe Reinke**, State of Michigan
- Chris Shepard**, City of Rochester Hills Water Department
- Jared Stewart**, Hazen and Sawyer
- Stephen Timmer**, Prein & Newhof
- Neil Traye**, City of Marquette
- Village of Milford**
- Rachel Woolcox**, Waterford Township Department of Public Works



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DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM SAMPLING PLANS

It takes planning to keep track of when and where samples need to be collected in a distribution system. The following rules associated with distribution system monitoring each require a unique sampling plan as described below.

The Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts (DDBP) rule requires a sampling plan for Trihalomethanes (TTHM) and Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) sampling. Samples must be collected at certain addresses representing the highest level of these contaminants. The collection of these samples must occur in a specific month based on the highest byproduct formation from past results. Monitoring frequency can be quarterly, annual, or triennial.

The Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) requires a sampling plan for monitoring lead and copper tap sampling. The plan identifies a pool of sampling sites grouped in tiers based on service line or interior plumbing construction material. Supplies should sample at the same locations each round unless a site has changed tier levels or is unavailable. Only kitchen or bathroom sinks may be used for sample collection at residential sites. Monitoring frequency can be semi-annual, annual, or triennial.

The Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) uses sample siting plans to identify total coliform bacteria sampling locations. Routine sample

locations must be representative of water throughout the distribution system. An upstream and downstream address must be identified for every routine location. For groundwater supplies, each well needs to be listed in a supply's sample siting plan.

Referring to these plans will help a supply know what, when, and where to collect compliance samples. Creating, maintaining, and submitting sampling plans for the rules discussed above is a requirement of the *Safe Drinking Water Act*. Questions or assistance with these sample plans can be obtained by contacting a Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy district analyst or engineer. 

STATEWIDE DRINKING WATER ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATES

The Statewide Drinking Water Advisory Council (SDWAC) was formed at the end of 2018 as part of the revised Michigan Lead and Copper Rule. The purpose of the SDWAC is to produce lead education materials and support local Water

System Advisory Councils' efforts to educate their communities about the risks of lead in drinking water.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced in October 2020 that \$500 million in funding was being allocated

for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Of the \$500 million, the SDWAC was awarded \$1 million to use towards public education about lead. SDWAC has decided to use this funding to hire a consultant to assist with the development of educational materials. A request for proposal (RFP) should be published in early 2021.

For more information on the SDWAC, including information on attending meetings, visit www.michigan.gov/communitywater. Click on Lead and Copper in Drinking Water and then Drinking Water Advisory Councils.

The SDWAC welcomes everyone to attend the meetings and provide feedback on any experiences you have with lead education in your community. 



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Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division

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George Krisztian, Assistant Division Director
Vacant, Assistant Division Director

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

Field Operations Section

Brian Thurston, P.E., Section Manager

Lansing District Office

Bethel Skinker, P.E., District Supervisor 517-290-0686
Ryan VanDerWoude, Envir Quality Analyst 517-648-7662
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District 12 - Mark Joseph, P.E., Engineer 517-290-0170
District 14 - Kurt Swendsen, Engineer 517-525-1487

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Rebecca Kaiser, Environmental Quality Analyst 989-326-6949
District 21 - Kristin Bailey, Engineer 989-280-1291
District 22 - Vacant, Engineer
District 23 - Vacant, Engineer
MHC* - Sue Huttlinger, Envir Quality Analyst 989-220-8640

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Taryn Simon, Environmental Quality Analyst 517-257-7465
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District 32 - Sean Brown, Engineer 517-937-6799
District 33 - Olivia Velzy, Engineer 517-740-6574

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Joshua Aden, Envir Quality Analyst / Engineer 248-794-2479
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District 42 - Will Disser, Engineer 586-506-6136
District 43 - Abuzoha Islam, Engineer 248-504-9142
District 44 - Jaiye Bridges, Engineer 586-206-0234

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Vacant, Environmental Quality Analyst
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District 72 - Bob Weir, Engineer 231-590-2050
District 73 - Jamie Wade, P.E., Engineer 231-878-8592
District 74 - Vacant, Engineer

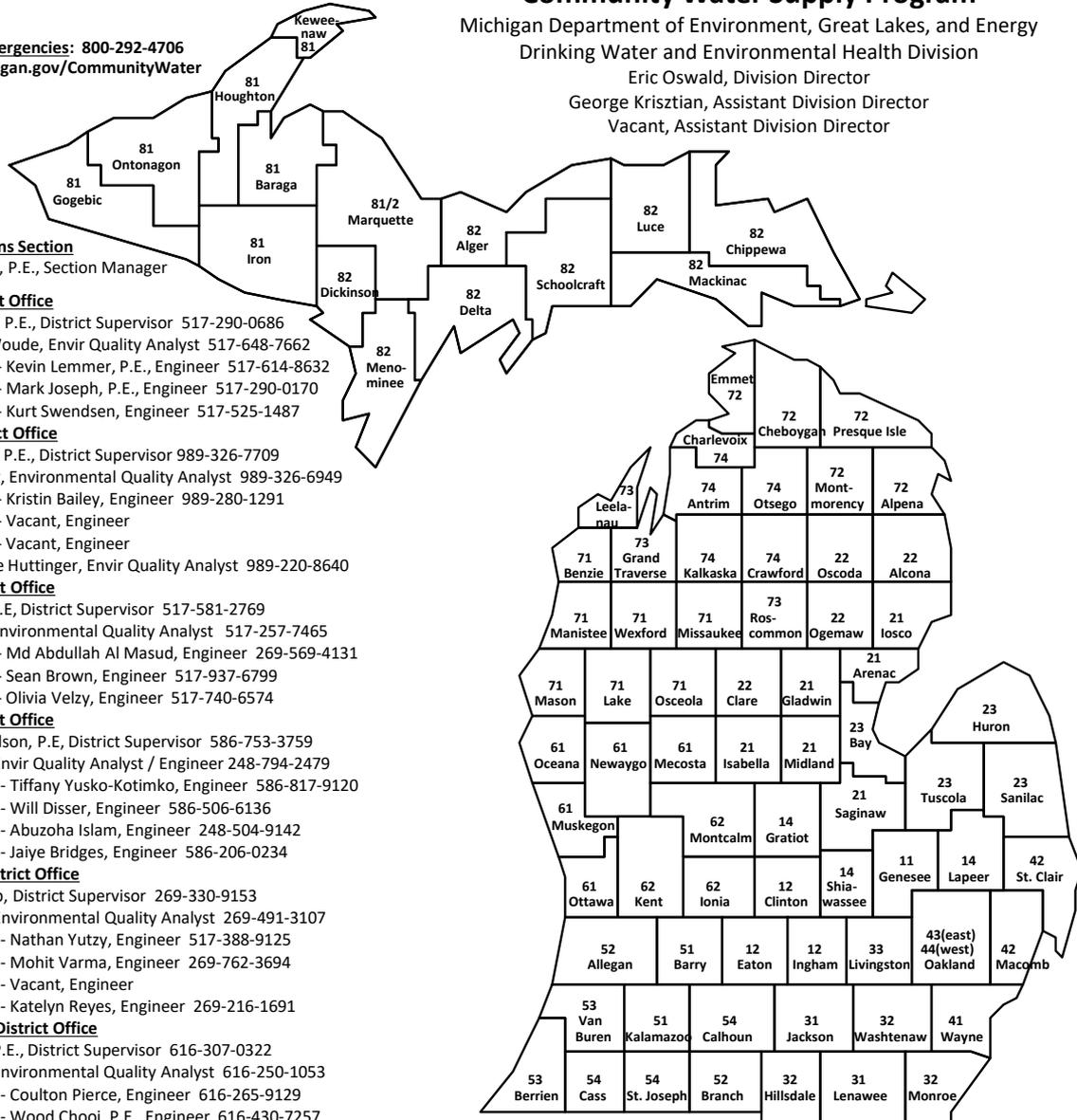
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Lori Schultz, Environmental Quality Analyst 906-869-6624
District 81 - Vacant, Engineer
District 82 - Amy Douville, Engineer 906-236-4277

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Vacant, P.E., Water Treatment Specialist
Ernie Sarkipato, P.E., Distribution System Specialist 616-307-0261
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Robert London, P.E., Surface Water Specialist (north) 989-450-7834
Ernie Sarkipato, P.E., Surface Water Specialist (west) 616-307-0261
Shannon Henderson, Surface Water Engineer 586-722-3150
Caitlin Bates, Surface Water Engineer 517-262-6795
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* MHC = Manufactured Housing Communities



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Matthew Sylvester, Corrosion Control Engineer 989-395-8567
Aislinn Deely, Environmental Quality Analyst 517-388-1816
Tyler Postma, Environmental Quality Analyst 517-388-1833



UPCOMING TRAINING

Although the Board has decided to keep events virtual through April 30, 2021, there are many training opportunities for water professionals. Here are some upcoming trainings for the next several months. For the complete list, checkout the training calendar on the Section website.

January

- 6 Asset Management (virtual with MWEA)
- 21 Asset Management

February

- 2-3 Virtual Operators Day Training
- 11 Water Solutions Webinar
- 23-24 Principles of Cross Connections (virtual)

March

- 3-4 USDA/AWWA Workshop:
Setting Effective Rates (virtual)
- 9-11 Overview of Math and Hydraulics
- 11 Water Solutions Webinar
- 16-18 Principles of Water Distribution (virtual)
- 23-25 Principles of Water Treatment (virtual)

April

- 6 Spring Regional Meeting Session 1 (virtual)
- 7 Spring Regional Meeting Session 2 (virtual)
- 8 Water Solutions Webinar
- 20 Spring Regional Meeting Session 3 (virtual)
- 21 Spring Regional Meeting Session 4 (virtual)



Here's What You Need to Know to be Ready to Participate in a Virtual Training Event:

Email: You will need an individual email account if you plan to participate by yourself. The join link is email dependent. If you are participating in a group, you'll need to have everyone sign in on a sign-in sheet and then have the senior person present sign the sign-in sheet and send it to staff.

Internet: You will want to have a reliable internet connection.

Permission: Make sure your computer has permissions to access the meeting application. The Section uses GoToWebinar, Zoom, and Tovuti. Check the event registration page for details you will need to know ahead of the event.

Computer: Make sure your computer does not go into sleep mode from non-use during the session. And you will need to participate in Q&A and in-session polls to demonstrate your participation. This is required along with taking and passing a quiz to meet EGLE conditions of approval for credit.

Resist Multitasking: The system provides an engagement score, so keep the platform as the active window on your computer. Any time you navigate away to check email or work on a document, your engagement score goes down. You have to achieve an engagement score of 70 or better – easy to do if you don't multitask and participate in the Q&A and polls.

The Section remains committed to bringing you opportunities to learn and share experiences that help you best manage your water system and your professional development. If you have an idea for a topic, please send it to info@mi-water.org.



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