



# Digester/Over the Spillway

*"for optimum operation/maintenance of all water and wastewater facilities"*

## State's Water Plant Operators Recognize Nine Peers as "Best" in Their Classes

### *Attendance Stays High At Water Operators Conference*

Drinking water plant operators in Streator (LaSalle and Livingston counties), Bethalto (Madison County) and Pocahontas (Bond County) have been recognized by their fellow operators and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency as the outstanding professionals in their individual categories of service.



*The drinking water Operators of the Year pose with their trophies. From left are Larry Goldsmith, Streator, surface water supplies; Kenneth Ragan, Bethalto, groundwater, and Sandy Kuhn, Pocahontas, distribution category.*

More than 1,000 members and guests of the Illinois Potable Water Operators Association (IPWSOA) honored Larry Goldsmith, Streator; Kenneth Ragan, Bethalto, and Sandy Kuhn, Pocahontas, for their work in providing plentiful, safe drinking water on a daily basis to users. Operators are rated on the day-to-day operation of facilities that use surface water or groundwater as their water source, or purchase

water from another source and distribute it to consumers. Usually, two runners-up are designated in each category.

The recognitions came during the group's 72nd annual conference that ran from Wednesday through Friday, highlighted by a street fair and recognition dinner in downtown Springfield's historic business district. Winners of the 2003 awards were announced and received their trophies during that event.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the IPWSOA co-sponsor by conference. The Agency oversees operations of approximately 1,800 public water supplies serving Illinois and their compliance with federal and state drinking water regulations..

"Operator of the Year" is the highest professional honor operators can receive in recognition of service and performance in the waterworks industry.

Nominees are interviewed by a selection committee during a fly-around of the state. Nominees are rated according to a numeric system by committee members, and results are



then tallied, and winners selected, by computer.

Goldsmith was recognized in the surface water category, Ragan for supplies using groundwater; and Kuhn took the award for distribution-only systems operation.

Runners-up were Burel Goodin, Carlyle, and Ronald Harcharik, Streator, in the surface water division; Leo Nolte, East Alton, and Tim Morgan, Niantic, in the groundwater classification, and Steve Fletcher, Nashville, Ill., and Wayne Rassman, New Lenox, in the distribution-only category.

Speakers and displays at the 2003 conference focused on the additional demands placed on local drinking water supply resources by unprecedented security planning, implementation and reporting requirements



*Sandy Kuhn, center, Bond Madison Water Company, holds the trophy and plaque she received as Operator of the Year in the distribution category. She is flanked by Wayne Rassman, New Lenox, second runner up at left, and Steve Fletcher, Washington County Water Co., first runner up.*



*Lou Allyn Byus, assistant in the public water supplies Field Operations Division, expresses her surprise as she prepares to open a "thank you" gift from IPSWOA officials for her work in arranging the drinking water operators conference.*



*First runner up Leo Nolte, left, of East Alton, helps Operator of the Year Kenneth Ragan of Bethalto hold the trophy for groundwater operations. Second runner up Tim Morgan of Niantic was unavailable during the photo session.*



*The lull before the run on ribs; wait staff get ready to keep the lines of diners moving efficiently.*



*Outgoing IPSWOA president Darrell "Whitey" Swanson, of Geneseo, passes the gavel to new president Larry Coloni, of Forsyth.*



*Members of the champion barbecue team Great Boars of Fire take a break during the distribution of hundreds of pounds of succulent smoked ribs that were the highlight of the awards banquet.*

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# Bloomington

## Site of 17th Annual Backflow Symposium

### *More than 200 attend popular event*

The Environmental Resources Training Center held a very successful Backflow Symposium at the Radisson Hotel in Bloomington, on Nov. 12. The event, marking its 17th year, brings together those concerned with backflow protection and cross-connection control. It is held in mid-November each year,

Approximately 240 water supply and plumbing professionals attended the 2003 gathering. Products and services were exhibited by Mid-Continent Marketing (Watts products), New-Tech Marketing (Conbraco products), Miller Sales, Inc. (Wilkins products), Dodge, Murphy & Associates (Amtrol expansion products), Illinois Chapter of the American Backflow Prevention Association and Test Gauge and Backflow, Inc.

David Ellet, American Backflow Management, Carterville, explained the benefits of having a contractor manage a water supply backflow program in his talk, "Managing a City's Backflow Program." Ellen Stormont, Illinois Department of Agriculture, described the microbial activity that can occur in a fire safety system, and outlined health concerns regarding

those bacteria.

An update on the amended Illinois Plumbing Code, expected to be available on the web by December or January, and in print by January 2004, was provided by Bob Schafer, Illinois Department of Public Health Plumbing Inspector. Lou Allyn Byus discussed procedures and problems with the Illinois backflow program, offered advice for those who make use of contractor services to administer a backflow program, and revisited a presentation made in 1997 regarding water supply and fire safety systems to observe progress on important issues. A historical chronology of backflow incidents, along with perspectives for current issues, was presented by Don Anderson, former director of the ERTC. Bev Potts, Illinois Plumbing Heating and Cooling Contractors Association Executive Director, provided insight into current legislative activity and continuing education for plumbers. Richard Peresky, sanitarian with the Kane County Health Department, discussed the role that sanitarians play in keeping drinking water safe. Kim Bateman, ERTC, provided an update in backflow training available.

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## Small Systems Conferences

### Serve Specific Needs

#### *Northern, Southern Conferences in October address needs of small plants*

The Northern and Southern Small Systems Conferences were held in October, reaching approximately 275 water operators, officials and industry professionals.

##### **Northern Small Systems Conference**

The Northwest Illinois Water Operators Association hosted the Northern Small Systems Conference at the Rock Falls Holiday Inn. The Wednesday evening session provided chills and thrills - Ted Knapp of the Internal Revenue Service informed the group about the educational outreach now being provided to water supplies to help them properly submit tax forms and revenues. Joe Lewiston, Illinois Department of Labor provided a second scare with a look at how NOT to practice trenching and shoring safety, traffic management, and many other actions that make up the rou-

tine activities of water supply operators. In closing, Louis Leffelman reviewed the biofilms nightmares that occurred during the process of pump maintenance and televising a well.

On Thursday, a combination program of exhibits and presentations was held. Illinois EPA representatives Mike Crumley and Amy Dragovich carried the scary theme forward with presentations on new and upcoming rules, and requirements for compliance in existing rules, while Lou Allyn Byus reviewed vulnerability assessments and emergency planning, and provided implementation tips for operators. Wayne Nelson, Illinois Rural Water Association, offered practical information on preparing emergency operations protocols and developing an emergency management plan. Consumers Illinois Vermilion Division representative Dave Cronk gave a personal look into emergency management by recounting the experience of the Danville water plant flood. The program



*So much information, so little time .....*

closed with a presentation by Ralph Gross, Association Technical Services, LTD, on leak detection and distribution operation. During the morning, exhibits were on display and representatives available so that participants could learn about new products and services available to them.

### Southern Small Systems Conference

Giant City Lodge provided beautiful fall colors, crisp but pleasant temperatures, delicious chicken, and an excellent program for the approximately 200 water operators, officials and industry professionals in attendance at the southern conference.

Keeping with the October Halloween theme, William Place, mayor of Tamaroa, and Chuck Genesio, director of the Perry County Emergency Services and Disaster Agency, gave their personal experiences and shared photos of the Tamaroa train wreck that spilled a significant mixture of chemicals on the ground in the center of town. Dan Roberts, Test, Inc., provided insight into his emergency response experience in restoring a distribution system contaminated with alachlor and atrazine at concentrations above long-term health effects levels. Lou Allyn Byus, Illinois EPA, and Barb Woods, Environmental Resources Training Center, finished the

evening program with information and assistance in preparing for emergencies and locating resources for assistance. Thursday's program provided a wide variety of topics. Mike Crumly, Illinois EPA, provided information on new regulations, and compliance issues and practices. Bob Frank, Collinsville, described the measures that Collinsville water crews take when working on the distribution system to maintain safe drinking water under repair or construction conditions. Mike Buss, Sparta, shared his experiences in piloting two types of membrane filter systems - but still won't reveal the City's final choice. Dave McMillan, Illinois EPA, provided an update on the Source Water Assessment Project that has been underway for some time, and reviewed the highlights of the federal Groundwater Rule that is expected to be promulgated next spring. Ken Yamamoto, Kincaid Reeds Creek Inter-City Water System, made his public speaking debut with an excellent presentation on his experiences with TOC



*Sharing the world load makes it go better.*

- Ken described what benefited him most as he worked to bring his supply into compliance with TOC levels. Ted Knapp, Internal Revenue Service, brought his message to Southern Illinois, amid grousing and groaning from the audience. Cheryl Norton, Illinois-American Water Company, shared the experiences she has had in locating, isolating, and treating distribution system biofilms, and gave operators a good suggestion for an excellent place to recover bacteria for study purposes. Bob Gonzenbach, Illinois Department of Labor, reviewed safety requirements, and shared priority safety information with the group. Joe Stuart completed the program with food for thought - Joe described some of the misconceptions that operators have regarding regulations, emphasized many of the important basic practices that have gone by the wayside, and assured operators that, while a good job is being done by most, there is still room for improvement. All presentations generated questions and considerable discussion.

The Southern Illinois Small Systems Conference will be held on October 20 and 21, 2004, at the Giant City Lodge.



*Exhibits and displays help keep operators up to speed.*

# Operator News

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## New Officers Elected to Head IPWSOA in 2003-2004

At the conclusion of the annual conference of the Illinois Public Water Supply Operators Association in Springfield in September, the following slate of new officers was elected to serve in 2003-2004.

### President

Larry Coloni  
Superintendent  
Village of Forsyth

### 1st Vice President

Robert W. Frank  
Collinsville Water Department Director

### 2nd Vice President

Patti Schaake  
Edwardsville

### 3rd Vice President

Pat Langan  
Illinois-American Water Company - Peoria

### Treasurer

Stan Sayre  
Water & Sewer Department  
Metamora

### Secretary

Louie Leffelman  
661 Inlet Road  
Amboy

### Past President

Darrell (Whitey) Swanson  
Water Superintendent  
City of Geneseo

IPWSOA ADDRESS: PO Box 3125, Springfield, Illinois 62708

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# ABC

## Developing Security-Related Questions for Certification Exams *Should be available in about a year*

Tracy Mehan, assistant administrator for the U.S. EPA's Office of Water, has announced a grant award of \$24,000 to the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC). ABC will use the funds to develop voluntary drinking water and wastewater security-related operator certification examination questions.

These questions will be shared

with all state operator certification programs and will be available for use in approximately one year.

For more information about this effort, contact Curt Baranowski in U.S. EPA's Water Security Division at 202-564-0636. For more information about either operator certification or drinking water security, contact Bridget O'Grady at ASDWA Headquarters.

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# Candidates Successfully Pass Potable Water Operator Tests

*During tests given between July and November*

The following candidates successfully passed the certification examination for potable water operators in tests given on July 7, July 30, Aug. 4, , Sept. 8, Oct. 6, Oct. 31 and Nov. 3:

## Class A

DeLay, Wayne L.	City Water, Light & Power
Hernandez, Charles	Lindenhurst
Hill, Clinton M.	Macomb
Hopper, William	Clinton
Hughes, Daniel	Fox River Grove
Luebke, Bradley	Carbondale
Mansfield, Mark	Highwood
Phillips, Brian	Forbo Adhesives LLC
Sage, Joseph R.	Bayles Lake Lot Owners Assn.

## Class B

Anderson, Brian	Baxter and Woodman
Beaty, Greg	Witt
LeClair, Mark	Paxton
Sawicki, Kevin P.	Spring Valley

## Class C

Abad, Emmanuel	Lockport
Boomsma, Robert	South Holland Public Works
Brooks, Chad	Franklin Park
Caprio, Nicholas	Bridgeview
Christ, James	
Churchill, David	
ClenDaniel, Frank	Rantoul
Cornell, Linbergh	Howe Center
Cronch, William	Bridgeview
DeLahr, Brian	ERH. Enterprises, Inc.
Dover, Daniel	O'Fallon
Eardley, Lloyd	
Fajman, David	Crete
Farrell, Kevin	Port Byron
Fike, Scott E.	Somonauk
Garrett, Tara L.	ERH Enterprises
Gavin, Kenneth	Worth
Gibson, Charles	Crete
Gilchrist, Nathana	Riverdale Public Works
Goravica, Sherri	Mokena
Hass, Kevin	
Karol, John	Lombard
Kingsland, Timothy	Mokena
Koehler, Nathan A.	Beckemeyer

Kolborn, Mark	Homewood
Koschetz, Jr., Richard	Mokena
Langston, Leonard	Chicago
Leonard, James M.	Greenville
Lewis, Larry	
Linnert, Gerald	Holy Family Villa
Ludwig, Jeffry	Rockford
Mancini, Joseph	Homewood
Martin, Jr., Charles	Homewood
Mayes, Jill	Bloomington
McBride, Sean	ERH Enterprises, Inc.
McDillon, Ryan M.	River Grove
McLain, Michael	
Mullen, Michael	
Murphy, Scott	Shorewood
Myhre, Brian	Crete
Narcisi, Paul	Park Forest
Noe, Roger G.	Wayne City
Osborn, Shane	Morrison
Overocker, David	Sauk Valley
Raymond, Chad E.	Augusta
Schymick, Donald	
Siron, Ralph C.	Melrose Park
Tosh, John C.	ERH. Enterprises, Inc.
Trost, Kevin D.	Stockton
Urban, Jr., Edward W.	Worth
Vaughn, Jonathan	Nauvoo
Warner, Joseph D.	Black Hawk College
Webb, David	
Weber, Nicholas E.	Franklin Park
Weller, Kevin	Sauk Valley

## Class D

Adams, Stanley	Mill Shoals
Alesi, Robert T.	West Dundee
Dunsing, Brian	
Green, Jr., William H.	Bridgeview
Huber, Philip J.	E.J. Water Corporation
Kirk, Michael J.	West Dundee
Koontz, David G.	T.E.S.T.
Kramer, John W.	Mulkeytown Water District
Martin, Brian G.	Ridgefarm
McCoy, Douglas G.	Sensiend Flavors
McGuigan, Timothy J.	Algonquin
Stahl, Dennis P.	American Water Company
Traylor, Craig	Nokomis
Woller, Grant	West Dundee
Yancey, Sr., Almer	Devils Kitchen Water District

# Security Training Opportunities Expanded

*Small, medium water systems may find training, travel help available*

Vulnerability assessment and emergency response training opportunities for small and medium sized community water systems have recently expanded, as both International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Water Environment Federation (WEF) have expanded their programs to include systems serving less than 50,000 which must meet requirements of the Bioterrorism Act.

Information released about the ICMA program says all water systems, small and medium sized, are now eligible to receive free water security training and travel scholarships from the association. The user-friendly training program and small class size for individualized assistance provides resources for water systems to make significant head way in completing their vulnerability assessments and emergency

response plans. The training will assist each system to comply with the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002.

To register for a training workshop and to learn more, see the water security website at [www.lgean.org/watersecurity](http://www.lgean.org/watersecurity).

## IEPA's Marcia Willhite Honored with IAWA Illinois Award

*Presentation made during annual IAWA meeting on September 25*

Marcia Willhite, chief of the Bureau of Water at the Illinois EPA, was the 2003 winner of the Illinois Award presented each year by the Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies for "outstanding contribution to the field of waste collection, treatment and purification and/or in the related fields of endeavor."

The presentation was made by Dennis Schmidt, outgoing president of IAWA, during the annual association banquet on Sept. 25 at Starved Rock State Park.

Willhite was assistant chief of the Environmental Health Division of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department in Lincoln, Nebraska, when she was named to the IEPA post in May of 2001. She had previously worked as an environmental toxicologist in Texas.

The Bureau of Water at IEPA has about 330 employees and administers a variety of state and federal program dealing with both wastewater and drinking water operations.

The IAWA awards the Illinois Award "on behalf of those who have strived to improve the environment in this select field and the people of the state of Illinois."

Selection of the award winner is made by an executive committee, from a field of nominees. Criteria for selection may include the development of technical knowledge unique to the wastewater field of endeavor which will improve or upgrade wastewater treatment processes; leadership in the

public sector which contributed to the betterment of the environment for the people of the state of Illinois or it may be for the individual who through personal effort has improved and elevated the position of the wastewater field of endeavor in the public eye.

Willhite said she was "both surprised and very, very honored" to receive the award.



*Dennis Schmidt Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District, and President of IAWA gives their award to Marcia Whillbite.*

In a surprise presentation, officers and members of the Illinois Association of Public Water Supply Operators recognized Anne Alexander during the awards presentation that highlighted the annual conference. Anne, who serves as secretary to Roger Selburg, manager of the Division of Public Water Supplies at the IEPA, has worked for the state of Illinois for 58 years. She is shown here with Selburg, left, and Brett Hanson, who heads up the drinking water programs in the IEPA's Rockford regional office. Though temporarily side-lined while she recovers from injuries she suffered in a fall at her home, she visits the IEPA headquarters from time to time while she convalesces



and was guest of honor at the Division's Thanksgiving lunch last month.

During the IPWSOA conference ceremonies, Anne was presented with a bouquet in an etched glass container that recognized her outstanding tenure as a public servant. She started work for the state on Sept. 1, 1945, in the Office of the Secretary of State, and subsequently served in the governor's office during the administration of Adlai Stevenson, before moving to the Illinois Department of

Public Health, and later being one of the initial 72 employees from IDPH who were the nucleus for the brand new Illinois EPA when it came into existence on July 1, 1970.

Fifty-eight years on the job! Wow!

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