Message from the Chair
Emilie Moore

Region IV is off to a great start in 2015. A record 25 companies have signed on as regional sponsors for 2015 and several other companies have committed to sponsor individual events and our quarterly newsletter. Please join me in thanking all of them for their sponsorship. Their support enables us to provide the trainings, events, and financial support to our charities, Roy Likins Scholarship and Water for People.

To date, we held our Winter Luncheon on January 28th (thanks to our speaker, Tracy Mercer from the City of Clearwater), the New Technology Showcase on February 19th (thank you Florida Section MAC for organizing the event and City of Oldsmar for hosting), and our 13th Annual Best Tasting Drinking Water Contest on February 27th (thank you City of Dunedin for hosting).

UPCOMING 2015 CALENDAR EVENTS

- March 26 – Water Conservation Strategies Workshop
- April 22 – Spring Luncheon (SRF Funding)
- May 3-6 – FWRC
- May 20 – FSAWWA WUED/WRF Water Loss Workshop
- June 8-10 – AWWA ACE
- June – 8hr Chemical Safety Handling Training
- Summer – Summer Luncheon
- August 15 – Membership Appreciation Baseball Event
- September – YP Event
- September – Fall Luncheon
- October 2 – Annual Golf Charity Event
- October 17 – Run4Water 5K / Water Festival
- October 24 – Model Water Tower Competition
- November 12 – 2nd Annual Regional Sponsors Networking Event
- November 29 - December 3 – FSAWWA Annual Conference
- December – Winter Luncheon

“...no substitute for an idea that’s done. So go. Do it. Make tracks. Leave a trail.”
– Author unknown

Please visit our website: www.fsawwa.org for event updates!
WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!

The annual Best Tasting Drinking Water Contest was a fantastic success again this year! The winner was: …drumroll please… Hernando County Utilities! Congratulations to the County for their win. The County is now going on to compete at the State Competition at the Florida Water Resource Conference in May, Good Luck.

There were 17 contestants this year from all over Region IV! Thank you to all of the operators and staff for taking the time to join us! The water samples were subjectively judged on taste, color and odor by the panel and the winner was clear.

A big thanks to our distinguished panel of judges: Doug Bevis, Mayor of the City of Oldsmar; Dave Eggers, Pinellas County Board of Commissioners – District 4; Ed Watson, Environmental Manager of the Compliance Assurance Program for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection – Southwest District Office; Nick Makris, Water Supply Specialist at Southwest Florida Water Management District; and Keisha Pickett, Owner and Senior Publicist of Pickett PR Group. Special thanks also to all of the volunteers. Without them an event like this would not be possible.

A huge thanks is due to the City of Dunedin and Honeymoon Island State Park for hosting the event this year and for providing such a stunning backdrop for this year’s competition! We were at a wonderful pavilion at the best State Park in Florida enjoying the outstanding, albeit windy, Florida weather and listening to Dunedin’s bagpipe quartet. Everyone had a great time networking and enjoying good food and plenty of refreshing tap water; it was a healthy competition for all. The event was also profiled on Channel 8 News and ABC Action News!

Of course events like this would not be possible without sponsors. Thanks to our Event Sponsors, King Engineering and Mars Company. Also, thanks to all of our great Regional Sponsors for providing the financial support needed to put on the event every year.

If you are able, go cheer on Hernando County Utilities at the State Competition in May and hopefully they can make it all the way to the National finals and be crowned best in America!

Region IV MAC New Technology Showcase By Rick Ratcliffe

Region IV MAC just completed a New Technology Showcase that was held last month in Oldsmar, FL. The meeting was held at TECO Hall at the Public Library. We had over fifty five registrants for the Showcase, a record for Region IV. We had six speakers that discussed a series of topics for the waterworks industry. I would like to give a special thank you to Lisa Rhea, Johna Jahn, and Charles Lee with the City of Oldsmar for allowing Region IV to host this event at their facility. It was another successful New Technology Showcase hosted by Region IV MAC. We will host another Showcase in spring of 2016.

The MAC is busy planning the Fall Conference for the Florida Section AWWA. This year’s theme is “We Are One Water”. It will be held at the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld. The conference dates are from November 29, 2015 to December 3, 2015. Please circle your calendar now to attend the conference. Exhibitor registration starts June 1, 2015. Hope to see you there.
Utility Committee

By Paul Smith, Utility Council Committee Chair

Staffing: The Future of the Water Industry

Many of you have probably heard the alarming statistics regarding the numbers of experienced staff that are, or will soon be, leaving our industry as they near retirement age. A general statistic often quoted is that approximately one-half of the workforce is eligible to retire in the next 10 years. This can have a crippling effect on our utilities if we are not prepared with an active succession plan. One area of focus is recruiting quality candidates and training and mentoring them to become our next experienced staff members. This process should include developing a sustainable structure that allows this cycle to continue into the future.

We have recently taken an important step in our utility at the City of Tarpon Springs. In December 2014, a comprehensive reorganization plan was approved that includes the addition of 6 permanent full-time apprenticeship positions. This includes 2 each of: treatment facility operators (to either work at our RO facility or advanced wastewater facility based upon projected needs), water service workers (to learn water distribution and get licensed), and wastewater service workers (to learn wastewater collection and get certification). Each of these positions is designed to provide on-the-job knowledge and training support to gain the required hours and successful testing results to add licenses and certifications to our organization and the industry.

Some of the items that we see as critical to this being successful and therefore included in our program are:

1. Competitive wages and benefits so as to attract the sort of talent needed for this technical field. We chose to make these positions full-time paid positions with benefits so that we would be able to offer something worthy of a candidate leaving another job to make a commitment to this industry.

2. A culture of mentoring and training throughout the organization. We met with employees to emphasize the importance of this program and we modified job descriptions to include mentoring/training as a job expectation, particularly for supervisory and higher level positions.

3. An Apprenticeship Policy that includes specific milestones and timelines for the apprentice to stay on track with obtaining licensure or certification.

4. Providing resources for success, including adequate training and education budgets.

These are modest steps taken by one utility towards solving a large-scale concern. I look forward to continuing a discussion and additional efforts to grow staffing resources in our vital industry.

REGION IV Charity Golf Event – Mark Your Calendars

October 2, 2015 By Ron Parker

The tenth annual Regional IV charity golf tournament is scheduled for Friday, October 2nd, 2015. This year the event will be played on the South Course at Lake Jovita Golf and Country Club in Pasco County. Last year’s event was held on Lake Jovita’s North Course with a record turnout. Both courses are very challenging and well maintained for an enjoyable day of golf and socializing.

Golf registration flyers will be sent out in August 2015. If you are a Region IV regional sponsor your sponsorship automatically includes one-foursome (if you sign up) and special recognition at the tournament. Proceeds from the event help sponsor the Likins Scholarship Fund and Water for People.

For more information on the event, please contact Ron Parker at 813-207-7940 or parkerre@bv.com.

Hope to see you at this year’s event!!!
Operator Scholarships!

Florida Drinking Water Treatment and Distributions System Plant Operators

By Steve Soltau

If you are taking some college classes, or ready to upgrade your license, THIS IS FOR YOU!

The Florida Section American Water Works Association Operators Council, annually makes available to Drinking Water Treatment and Distributions System Plant Operators, the following scholarships:

• Four scholarships of $500.00 per eligible student for upgrade of a drinking water or distribution system operator license.
• Two scholarships of $1,000.00 per eligible student pursuing a college degree relating to the drinking water industry.

The scholarship will provide reimbursement of tuition, books, and fees through the College/University Financial Aid Department over the upcoming two year period. Scholarships will be awarded in both undergraduate and graduate categories.

Education is important because it equips us with the skills necessary to help us realize our career goals. Education in our chosen field is "in-depth knowledge about a specific field and it ought to open doors to brilliant career opportunities." Education garners better prospects of career growth. Today, more than at any time in recent history, good education is an eligibility standard for employment in any sector of our industry.

So, Don’t Miss Out! Take advantage of free money!

Deadline for application is June 1, 2015.

http://fsawwa.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=374

Networking Happy Hour By Jordan Walker

The region participated in a Free Networking Happy Hour on March 16th located close to the University of South Florida at Peabody’s Billiards and Games. Many professionals and students attended, making connections with other industry leaders from the Tampa Bay Area. Everyone also participated in a social networking Bingo Game to test their knowledge of water treatment.
2015 FSAWWA Region IV Sponsors

Interested in becoming more active in Region IV?

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