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ISAWWA's
D&I Committee *Issue*



INSIDE:

- ISAWWA
Award Nominations

- Veterans Workforce Initiative

- A Mentoring Story



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About Illinois Section AWWA

Illinois Section AWWA
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Established in 1881, the American Water Works Association is the largest nonprofit, scientific and educational association dedicated to managing and treating water, the world's most important resource. With approximately 50,000 members, AWWA provides solutions to improve public health, protect the environment, strengthen the economy and enhance our quality of life.

The Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association (ISAWWA) has more than 2,400 members throughout the State of Illinois and is dedicated to safe and sustainable water for Illinois. The Association develops and delivers low-cost and convenient education seminars for water industry professionals in person and virtually.

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Who Are We?

Brian Jack

You, that's who. The total water industry and the IL Section AWWA are made up of people from all different backgrounds of culture, gender, nationality, religion, education, and race. This is what makes up our diverse workforce. Though one area you may not think of when we talk about diversity is in job classification. Our industry is made up of many different facets from Operators to Administrative Assistants, to Engineers and Chemists to Maintenance Workers, and much more. We all play a critical role in being good stewards of our planet's most important resource: water. Each and every area and function should be included in the mission and goals of the ISAWWA through education, training, and practices that encourage member inclusion, all to maintain an environment of diversity and inclusion within our industry. This issue of *Splash* is brought to you by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and focuses on diversity in our industry.

I challenge you to open your mind and fully take in what may be a new idea or thought of what you think diversity and inclusion is. What you may have been taught as a youngster or learned through society may be different from what you are reading and hearing about today. It's okay to have differences in opinions and ways of thinking, as long as everyone is open to listening to others' thoughts and views and is willing to accept each other for who we are. The ISAWWA Board of Trustees, committee chairs, and section staff are committed to improving diversity awareness and inclusion throughout our membership.

In late September, the Board of Trustees and committee chairs came together for a Leadership Retreat in Peoria, IL to continue planning the future



Leadership retreat in September

of the ISAWWA as well as updating the progress of the goals and goal outcomes of the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan as well as action planning for 2023. Haven't seen the Strategic Plan, you say? Well the plan focusses on:

- Increasing engagement of our membership across our diverse industry.
- Raising awareness of the total water cycle to promote positive public perception.
- Impacting state legislation and regulations through education, collaboration, and advocacy.
- Building the next generation of total water professionals.

You may see how diversity and inclusion plays into these goals, and if not, we hope you will after reading this issue of *Splash* magazine! You can see the full Strategic Plan on the Section's web page at www.isaww.org.

The retreat also included some exercises of reviewing the recently updated Policies and Procedures Manual, and breaking out some leadership motivators. These motivators apply to not just the leadership of the Illinois Section, but what you want to see in a leader and what you may aspire

to be as a leader in your organization. Passion led the way – with decision-making, inclusiveness, and commitment being high ranking as well.

Do you want to stay tuned in for events and new programs throughout the year? Download the ISAWWA 365 App from the Apple Store or Google Play; it's free and easy and more than just for WATERCON. We are continuing to build the app with more content and accessibility for our event calendar. In the meantime you can look for localized events in each district in Illinois for educational seminars and social events. Check out the No Water No... series including No Water No Beer, No Water No Wine, and the comeback of No Water No Hockey with a Total Water Professionals Night at the Chicago Wolves game on Jan. 28, 2023 in Rosemont, IL – and your ISAWWA Water Hammers traveling to the great white north of Ontario to take on the Ontario Section in a charity hockey game at ACE23 in Toronto! You aren't going to want to miss any of these great events! Also, don't forget to follow the Illinois Section on all the social media platforms for WATERCON updates, training, and social events as well as legislative alerts pending. 💧



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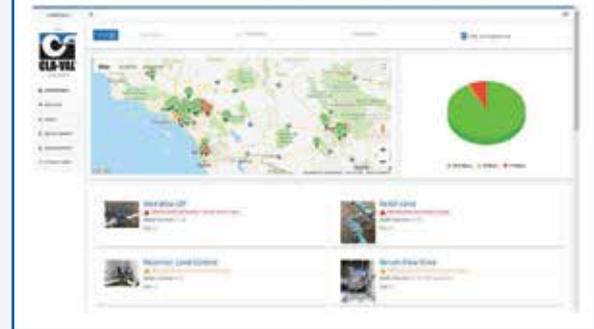
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WATERCON 2023 – Built By YOU

Melissa Olenick

Totally Water – WATERCON 2022 was quite the radical event for ISAWWA as we celebrated the total water cycle. Competitions returned to the annual conference and with educational sessions and the exhibit hall fully open again, this was truly a return to what we all remember WATERCON to be. The success of WATERCON each year is greatly due to all the utilities, consultants, manufacturers, regulators, students, and others that attend. You make the event what it is today! So, in honor of those who've helped to build ISAWWA and WATERCON into what they are today, the theme for WATERCON 2023 is Built By YOU. Mark your calendars and save the date for March 20–23, for WATERCON 2023 – Built By YOU!

We are going to be shaking things up a bit this time around. We are offering pre-conference workshops on Monday that focus on key topics

such as emerging contaminants, upcoming regulations, and leadership skills. Then, we will kick things off with an Exhibitor Opening Reception where you can network, meet with vendors, and pick up a few credit hours by attending express talks. Rest up Monday night because then WATERCON really takes off with the opening session beginning on Tuesday. Over the whole conference you will have an opportunity to gain over 15 RTCs from the educational sessions.

To round out the conference, we will be enjoying a section celebration that features the competitions on Wednesday. Join in all the fun as we cheer on all the hard-working teams. From meter challenge to tapping to hydrant hysteria or cornhole, there is something for everyone! You will also have the chance to learn about all the volunteer opportunities available through ISAWWA, and just by doing so become eligible to win some great prizes.

“ We are offering pre-conference workshops on Monday that focus on key topics such as emerging contaminants, upcoming regulations, and leadership skills.

The Illinois Section is dedicated to providing resources for the advocacy of safe and sustainable water through membership, mentoring, and increasing public awareness. This is only possible because of all of you – so come join us in March to celebrate all that we have accomplished. Book your hotel reservations early as rooms fill up quickly, and stay tuned for more information regarding WATERCON 2023 – Built By YOU! 💧

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Importance of Community

Annie Storey

Over the summer, I took the opportunity to travel by car to AWWA's Summer Workshop in Denver. Along the way on I-80, I passed common scenes here in the Midwest: small towns, stretches of corn, Interstate advertising, livestock with the sprinkle of larger cities in between. When I arrived in Denver, I was greeted by AWWA staff and other Section leaders – a new community for me. Over the course of the conference, I connected with more people who share a common passion – safe and sustainable water.

When I left Denver, I took a week to travel home to Nebraska and during this trip I reconnected with two friends who were part of one of my first leadership groups. While it's been 25 years since we served in that capacity, time didn't interfere with our ability to pick right up and reconnect. We literally have been there to support each other as we went from high school to college to building

“The Illinois Section has community. We're brought together based on our professions, but we form greater communities built on our shared experiences, our geography, and our personal growth.”

our careers and starting our families. Even though I don't live near them (or have for the past 20 years), I consider them part of my community.

On the way back to Illinois, as I passed those small towns and commented too frequently to my girls how great the corn looked, I had time to think about what a community is. To me, it's a group of people with a shared purpose – geography, profession, personal values, passions, etc. I believe that I'm part of a variety of communities and each one has given me opportunities to connect, build, grow, strengthen and be. This reflection, with Nebraska in my rear-view mirror (literally!), also made me realize that while some communities aren't meant to be forever, there is forever a connection to the people and growth you received.

The Illinois Section has community. We're brought together based on our professions, but we form greater communities built on our shared experiences, our geography, and our personal growth. Over the summer and fall, we've hosted a variety of in-person events that have elevated our community – TotalWaterU, No Water No Beer, emPOWERing Conference, Water Distribution and Sewer Collection conference, Water For People golf outing, committee meetings, and a variety of education seminars. I hope that you've been part of those opportunities to build your own community. We host these events because we value the connections we make, the learnings we take back to our own communities, and because we know that when we share information and resources, we make each other better. We build our communities.

There is always a place for you in our community. If you're unsure of where to get started, reach out to me and let's discuss your goals. And as this Splash issue demonstrates – we're committed to helping all of our members build their professional careers and bring greater strength to our industry. 💧

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Challenging Times

Dave Moody

This is my first article for *Splash*, which is somewhat surprising since I have been the District 2C trustee since April 2020, when I was

appointed to take over for Brian Jack who left his trustee position to become ISAWWA Vice-Chair. However, as we all know the last several years have been

anything but normal, and just when it seems to be improving, along comes another challenge. We all went through the challenges related to COVID-19, but there were plenty of others, too. Did you cancel or postpone any capital projects this year? If you found ductile iron pipe, please share your secret with me. As for materials for water main, water service lines, or storm and sanitary sewers – does a 12-week lead time sound familiar? And good luck ordering vehicles for your municipality or business, not to mention hiring new employees!

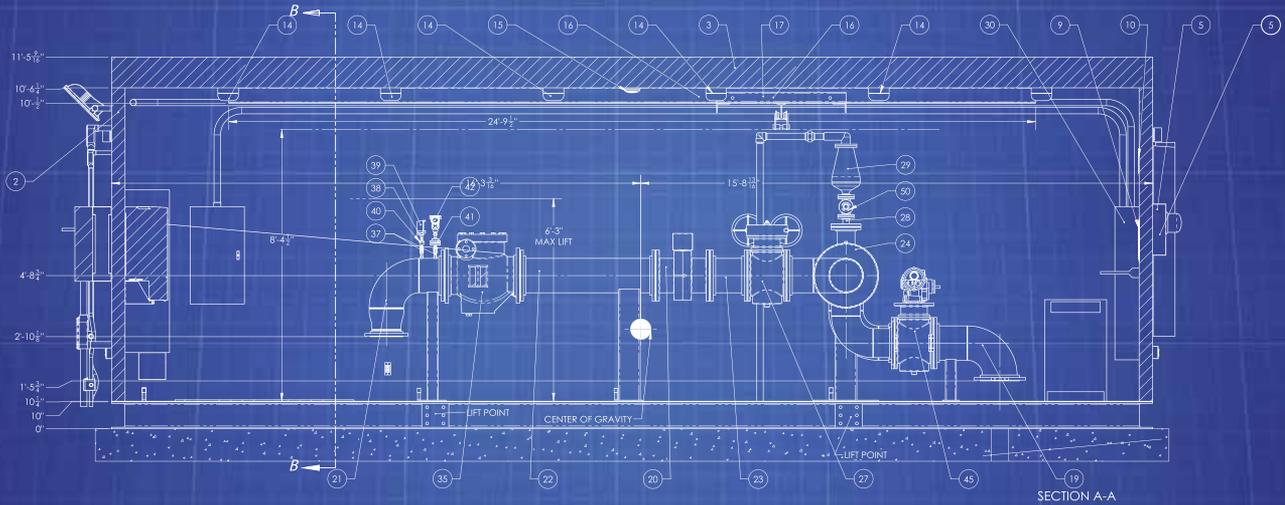
OK, you know all of this, so why do I bring it up? I want to take this opportunity to encourage you to take advantage of all the benefits that the Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association provides. Is your staff doing more these days? Look to ISAWWA to help provide the training that they need. Do you have a problem that your team can't figure out? Attend one of ISAWWA's events and maybe you will meet someone from another municipality, or a consultant who has already tackled that problem and can help provide some guidance. And don't forget the resources available on current industry issues like lead and PFAS. I make no promise that ISAWWA will solve all your problems, but it certainly is a great resource. As we all know, and as we can see in this Diversity and Inclusion-focused issue of *Splash*, the more resources and industry connections at our fingertips, the better off we will be. I know I can always use help making better decisions, problem solving more quickly, and increasing my creativity. What about you? 💧

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Reflecting on the Journey

Todd LaFountain

It is hard to believe, but when this is published I will have only about four months left of my second term as District 3 Trustee. So much has happened over the last four years, yet it seems like just yesterday I started this journey.

Reflecting on the journey I would offer anyone even remotely interested in getting involved in ISAWWA the advice memorialized by the Nike slogan from year years ago: "Just Do It!" Some of the barriers to getting involved seem to be the perception that "I need more seasoning" or "I have to

wait until things slow down in my life." More than 50 years of living has taught me that things never really slow down, they just change. The organization, now more than ever before, also values the perspective of individuals from different backgrounds and with different educational levels. So get involved.

“ Let’s celebrate the past and get excited about the future of the organization.”

Start on a small level, see what interests you, and build from there. No contribution is too small or too large.

At WATERCON 2023 let’s celebrate the past and get excited about the future of the organization. Let’s make the 2023 event the best conference we have had. I hope to see you in March. 💧



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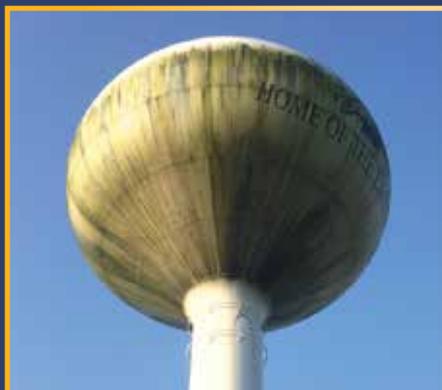
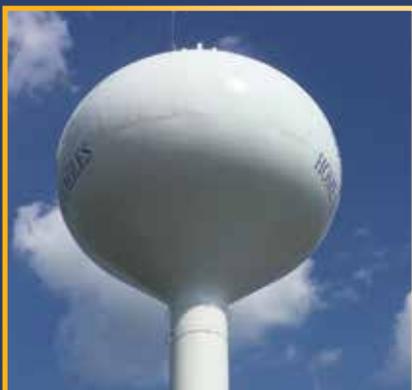
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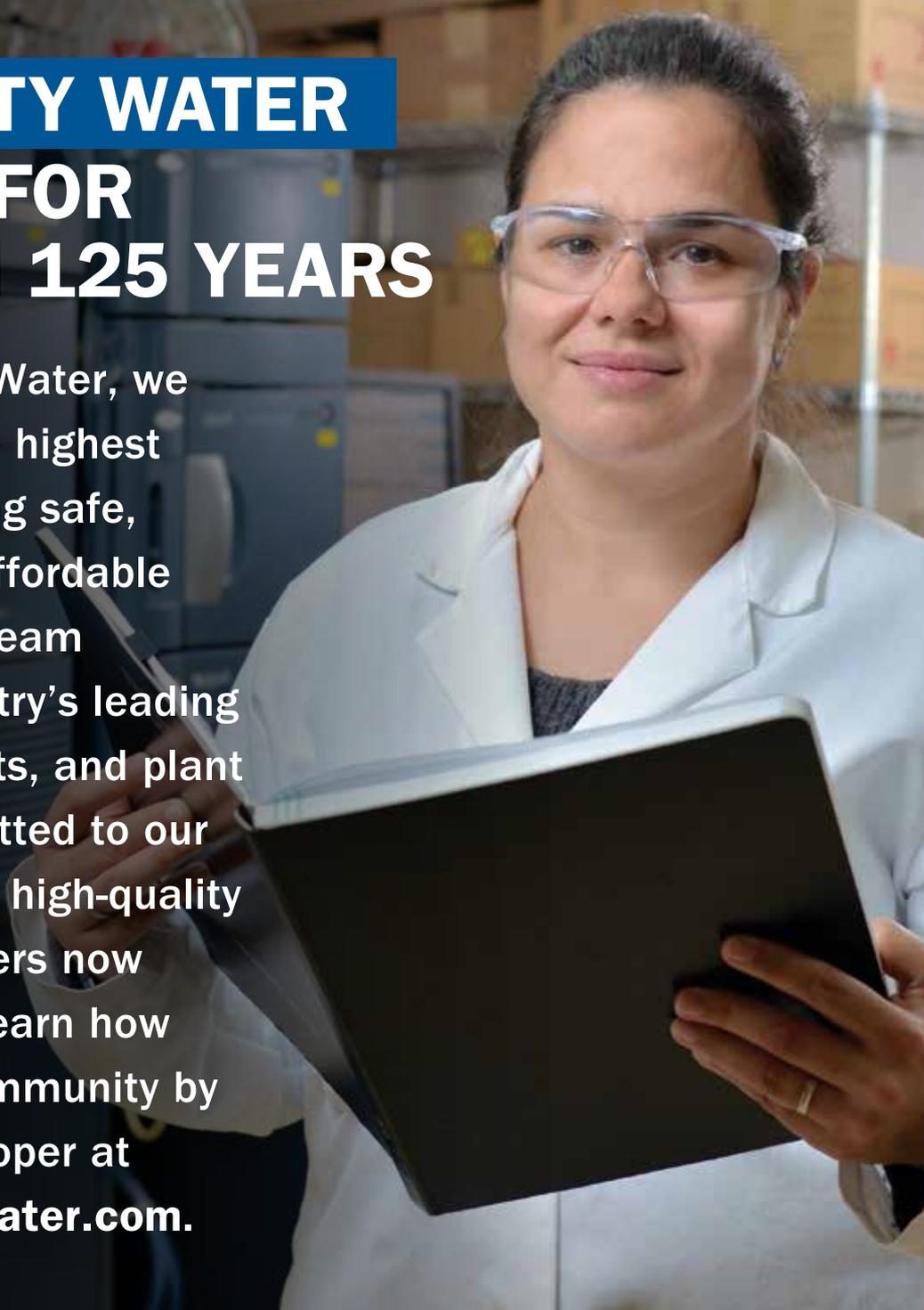
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WATERCON kicks off on Monday at Noon and concludes Thursday at Noon!



ISAWWA Award Nominations

ISAWWA is excitedly preparing to present awards at WATERCON 2023. We encourage you to submit nominations for deserving candidates. This year, all award nomination forms must be completed online. Be sure to include an electronic photo of the nominee and documents to support your candidate's nomination.

To submit a candidate nomination, fill out an application form, which can be found on the ISAWWA website. Nominations are due December 31, 2022. Awardees will be announced by late February and will be celebrated at WATERCON 2023.

WATER INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME AWARD

The Water Industry Hall of Fame was established to perpetuate the memory of those living and deceased who have made significant contributions to the field of public water supply. To be eligible for the award, the candidate should meet the following requirements: majority of their career was spent in the state of Illinois, retired, over 60 years of age, a member of the AWWA for at least 15 years, has well established achievements, character, and professionalism. The candidate's influence upon the water supply profession must still be felt in the practices, inventions, or literature for which he/she was responsible. Contributions may have been in any of the many facets and disciplines in the field as long as they are significant and have stood the test of time.

GEORGE WARREN FULLER AWARD

The American Water Works Association asks each state section to select one of their members to receive the prestigious George Warren Fuller Award, one of the highest honors bestowed on a water industry professional annually. This award honors an individual for their distinguished service to the water industry in commemoration of the sound engineering skills, diplomatic talent, and constructive leadership which characterized the life of George Warren Fuller. Candidates must be a member of the Illinois Section AWWA.

ISAWWA CLIFFORD H. FORE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This award is presented to an ISAWWA member who reflects Clifford H. Fore's consistent commitment to provide public service above and beyond required duties. This award recognizes a professional who has made state-of-the-art advancements for the total water industry. Possible areas of advancement may include equipment or process innovation, the publishing of books or educational materials, professional association or officer/committee chair participation, etc.

WATER PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award is presented to any professional in the water industry including engineers, lab analysts, designers, representatives, educators, etc., who has demonstrated dedication and motivation to encouraging people to pursue a career in the water industry. Section members will select one awardee.

OPERATOR'S MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

This award recognizes the dedicated performance of an ISAWWA operator working as a shift supervisor or superintendent. Special performance should be recognized in one or more of the following areas:

- continuous compliance with public health standards in finished water
- consistent and outstanding contribution to plant maintenance thereby prolonging the longevity of equipment
- development of new and/or modified equipment or significant process modifications to provide for a more efficient or effective treatment
- special efforts in the training of treatment plant operators
- special acts not directly related to water treatment, but which demonstrate dedication to the public beyond the normal operating responsibilities, or consistent and outstanding contribution to operation and/or maintenance of distribution lines, pump stations, and/or reservoirs

ROBERT T. SASMAN VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AWARD

This award recognizes an ISAWWA member who has demonstrated Robert T. Sasman's dedication to the ISAWWA and his contributions to helping the Section achieve its goals. Outstanding service includes making time commitments, generating new ideas, and making an effort to improve any aspect of the Section including membership, image, organization, etc. This award is limited to non-board members.

WATER SAVER UTILITY AWARD

Each year, the Water Efficiency Committee will honor one ISAWWA member affiliated utility that is making significant contributions to water efficiency. This award will recognize outstanding achievements in any of the following areas:

- Water efficiency master plans
- Renewable water policies and practices
- Watershed protection
- Environmental stewardship
- Community outreach programs
- Water loss reduction
- Retrofit programs
- Rate measures
- Process optimization
- Employee education
- Conservation
- Public education



SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

This award recognizes an organization in Illinois who has developed and implemented exemplary source water protection programs. The drinking water supply sources must be associated with a water system or authority that is regulated by a federal, state, province, or tribal government agency. The award applies to systems using surface water and/or groundwater as their source. Any organization or drinking water system that performs source water protection for drinking water supplies in North America is eligible to apply for the award.

VETERAN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE – NEW!

This award will be presented to anyone in the total water industry who has served or is currently serving in the U.S. Military. Members of the ISAWWA Veterans Initiative will select a recipient who exemplifies the military values of duty, honor, and service in his/her professionalism, initiative, and performance.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

This award recognizes one outstanding YP for his or her participation in the IL Section. Nominees should have participated in outreach to other YPs and/or have made improvements or a significant impact on the committee or the total water profession. The awardee is chosen by ISAWWA members.

WiWOW AWARD

The ISAWWA Women in Water Outstanding Woman Award is designed to recognize one woman’s distinguished service in the Illinois water industry. This award recognizes the following achievements: female leadership, advancement of the Women in Water Committee’s mission, inspiring participation in the industry, and participation in community outreach programs specifically designed for school-aged girls and women.

OUTREACH AWARD

This award recognizes individuals and organizations who make outstanding contributions toward meeting the ISAWWA’s outreach goals by implementing outreach programs and/or going the extra mile to promote youth outreach activities. This award can be given to an individual or a utility.

WATERWORKS QUARTER CENTURY SERVICE AWARD – 25 YEAR AWARD

Each year the Illinois Section AWWA and IEPA jointly present the Quarter Century Service Award to individuals who have served in the water supply industry in any capacity for 25 years or more. This award recognizes that all facets of the water supply operation play a vital role. Nominees might include secretarial staff, budget personnel, electricians, plumbers, pipefitters, operators, laboratory staff, maintenance personnel, management, and regulatory personnel. You do not have to be a member of ISAWWA to receive this award.

AWWA 100 YEAR CLUB

This award is presented to municipalities who have operated a public water supply for 100 years. While records for the start date of municipal water supplies are kept by the IEPA and the Illinois Water Survey, it is possible that these records are not complete. If your supply has not been notified of this recognition by January 1, please send a letter outlining the history of the supply establishment and copies of any available supporting documents to laura@isawwa.org.

For more information about ISAWWA awards, please visit www.isawwa.org/page/awards. For questions, please contact Laura Morgan, Outreach Specialist, at laura@isawwa.org.

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- 11/8 **Sanitary Lift Station and Water Booster Pump Station 101** | Virtual
- 11/9 **Coffee & Conversation** | Virtual
- 11/10 **Sexual Harassment Prevention Training** | Virtual
- 11/15 **SCADA 101 – Introduction to SCADA** | Joliet
- 11/17 **Annual Water Loss Seminar** | Elgin and Virtual | **NEW DATE!**
- 11/21 **Mission Monday – Making the Most of Your Lead Service Line Replacement Plan** | Virtual

DECEMBER

- 12/6 **Control Valves O&M** | Norridge
- 12/7 **Do's and Dont's of Professional Communication** | Naperville
ISAWWA Mentoring Committee Sponsored Event
- 12/8 **Understanding Electrical Drawings** | Virtual
- 12/13 **Cheers, Beers & Peers!** | Naperville and Virtual
ISAWWA Member Holiday Social
- 12/13 **Water Leak Detection** | TBD
- 12/14 **Water Distribution Committee Sponsored Webinar** | Virtual
- 12/15 **Evaluating CCTV Videos** | Virtual
- 12/19 **Mission Monday – Optimizing Lead Service Line Replacement with Machine Learning** | Virtual

*Be sure to check our website regularly for up-to-date information!
We are always looking for new education topics. If you would like share your ideas, please contact **Haylee Young** at haylee@isawwa.org*

WINTER/SPRING 2023

Upcoming Training Schedule

VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON!

SEMINARS | WEBINARS | CONFERENCES

JANUARY

- 1/12 **SCADA 202** | Virtual
- 1/19 **Part 1 – Water Utility Operations, Maintenance and Management for Small Systems** | Virtual
- 1/17 **Cybersecurity for Operators & Engineers – How to Live Safely in a SmartWater World** | Virtual
- 1/26 **Part 2 – Water Utility Operations, Maintenance and Management for Small Systems** | Virtual
- 1/28 **Total Water Professionals Night (Chicago Wolves Game)** | Rosemont

FEBRUARY

- 2/2 **Part 3 – Water Utility Operations, Maintenance and Management for Small Systems** | Virtual
- 2/7 **3-Day Water Distribution O&M for Class C/D (Day 1)** | Virtual
- 2/8 **Coffee & Conversation** | Virtual
- 2/8 **Veteran Recruitment and Retention** | Virtual
- 2/9 **Part 4 – Water Utility Operations, Maintenance and Management for Small Systems** | Virtual
- 2/14 **3-Day Water Distribution O&M for Class C/D (Day 2)** | Virtual
- 2/21 **3-Day Water Distribution O&M for Class C/D (Day 3)** | Virtual

MARCH

- 3/7 **Controlling Algae and Organics** | TBD
- 3/20-3/23 **WATERCON 2023** | Springfield

APRIL

- 4/18 **Water Loss – Hands-on Leak Detection and Meter Testing** | Decatur

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Built From Your Suggestions

Brandon Thomas

This summer and fall have been a busy time for the Education Committee. We have held larger training events including the Plant Maintenance Technologist Conference in May, Mission Mondays (the current Lead Service Replacement Line training series held monthly), and the Meter Symposium and Regulatory Update in October.

The Illinois Section Annual Conference, WATERCON, will be held in Springfield again this year from March 20–23 at the Crowne Plaza. Preparations have begun to provide an interesting, diverse, and informative Operator Track as well as overall programming surrounding this year's theme, "Built by YOU."

There are many ways to interpret this theme, but from an educational perspective, our programs, webinars, and seminars are built from your suggestions. We want to provide the training and resources you need to be successful within the water community. This issue of *Splash* is themed around diversity and inclusion. When diversity and inclusion are mentioned, it is common to think about gender and race, but as a Section, our backgrounds, our stories, and each of our roles, interests, educational and training needs are different.

The labor shortages across our industry may require recruitment outside of the normal channels, and thus the diversity of the educational materials

we offer will have to adapt as well. The Education Committee is here to help every one of our members get the training they need. By providing feedback and topic suggestions, you – the members – can help make trainings as relevant as possible.

Our goal is to continue providing excellent training and educational opportunities for our members. We are always looking for training session ideas, additional volunteers, and increased participation from our members. Please feel free to reach out and contact me (b.thomas@trotter-inc.com) or Steve Dennison (sdennison@eeiweb.com) if you have any ideas or are interested in more information on the committee. ♠

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Resourcing the world





'Come As You Are'

By Carolyn A. Grieves, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Vice Chair

True confession— I love '80s music. I love all of it: hair bands, rock ballad bands, punk rock bands, I could keep going. As I sit down to write this article, though, a '90s Nirvana is stuck in my head. At first you just hear the bass and then there is the distinct voice and the opening line, "Come as you are." I can't get that phrase out of my head because it perfectly captures the message of inclusivity.

In this issue of *Splash*, the focus is on the benefits of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in our Section and the total water industry. Many of the articles are brought to you by the Section's D&I Committee, as our Chair Robyn Doescher explains in her article. I think while people often understand the benefits of diversity and what it means, Inclusion can be sidelined. I started doing some research and I discovered that inclusion is "The state of being valued, respected, and supported for one's authentic self."* Wow, what a powerful statement! I think we all strive to achieve this for ourselves and others. In order to be your authentic self and "come as you are," you must first feel included. Here are some ways that individuals feel included:

- They are able to voice their opinions, ideas, and thoughts
- They are able to participate in decision making
- They are able to feel like they belong

We face industry challenges like workforce development and the "silver tsunami" of retirements. We also strive to grow as a Section and bring in new ideas, voices, and people to learn from. We want to share what we do every day to keep people's water clean and let them flush their toilet without a thought, all while educating the public and earning their trust. In order to do all these things and many more, we need to welcome a new and growing diverse workforce to our industry.

Now that I'm singing along with a 1990s song, I'm reflecting on my very first WATERCON. I went as a new graduate and had just started working at Baxter & Woodman. I walked into the first day of the exhibit hall and thought, "Whoa! I don't know anyone here other than a few friends from school and work." Everyone seemed to know each other, and I felt like I was on the outside looking in. I left the conference not feeling connected to the Section or the industry. Luckily, several years later I was invited to join the Safety and Emergency Planning committee. I started to volunteer with some awesome people and felt like I belonged. Since that moment there hasn't been a WATERCON that I have not looked forward to. I really believe the power of inclusion and belonging with the Section helped me grow my career and feel like a connected part of an industry I truly love.

How do we continue to promote the feeling of inclusion with others? The Section is working hard to create a volunteer space where all people feel they can be themselves and where they are supported, respected, and valued both for who they are as individuals and for their contributions. As members, how awesome is it that we each get to participate in creating a space and a culture that fosters inclusivity? Here are a few ideas for you to consider and incorporate in your interactions with others:

1. Embrace inclusion as part of our industry's culture.
2. Recognize that inclusion starts with our leadership. Thank you to our Illinois Section administration and Board who all work hard every day to set a tone of inclusivity.
3. Think about inclusion during your committee meetings or activities. Some people tend to dominate meetings, while others can be excluded, dismissed, or even talked over.
4. Exemplify inclusion in roles of leadership or mentorship. Leaders who share stories about themselves can make a powerful connection. This simple act demonstrates to everyone else that it is safe to do the same. Being your authentic self also builds trust, opens discussion, and enriches understanding of differences.
5. Invite a young professional. Next time you attend an event invite a YP or someone new to the industry to attend with you and take some time to introduce them to your friends and contacts.
6. Be aware! Look around the room at your next seminar or event and be aware that there may be someone new to AWWA. Consider one simple action to help that person feel included. Walk up, introduce yourself, and invite them to sit at your table or join a conversation.

Thank you for helping us strengthen our culture of inclusivity. Who knows? That person you just greeted may become your next best hire or a new committee member! I look forward to seeing old friends and welcoming new ones in the upcoming year with the Section – do not forget that you are always welcome to come as you are. 💧

* www.diversityresources.com/benefits-of-inclusion-in-the-workplace

COLLABORATING *Beyond Traditional* BOUNDARIES LEADS TO BETTER RESULTS



By Danielle Gallet, Founding Principal of Waterwell, LLC – A WBE water sector consulting firm

When we talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) these days, we are often referring to individuals or groups of individuals. That’s as it should be, and it is nice to see continued progress on inclusionary actions and approaches within the water industry. There is also an opportunity to expand our way of thinking about DEI and its benefits at a larger scale – a cross-organizational scale if you will. Following are two ideas for your consideration.

IDEA #1: PARTNER AND SUPPORT OTHER WATER SECTOR UTILITIES IN YOUR REGION

Why? Water service-related issues often cross utility and municipal boundaries. Forging alliances with neighboring

utilities to share resources and collaborate on initiatives will help to build more water resilient regions that include every community. Remember, we are all in this together – especially when it comes to climate-related impacts.

Resource constraints impact all utilities – though some more than others. Be a good neighbor. Identify and reach out to smaller-sized and/or lower-capacity water sector utilities in your region. Work together to ensure all communities within the region are thriving. This could include:

- Getting to know other water-sector utilities in your region, and meeting regularly to chat about what you are working on, common concerns and/or issues, and ideas to partner on;

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Welcome to WATERCON: A Reflection

By Anthena Gore – Diversity & Inclusion Committee Member

Totally Water 2022 (WATERCON) was the first conference I attended in person since the March 2020 shutdown. I was not sure what to expect, and it felt jarring to prepare for a live conference after two years of being at home. I was prepping with my supervisor and partners on our presentations, rummaging through my closet for conference clothes, and deeply thinking about how it would feel to be away from my family for the first time since the shutdown. More than anything, I wanted to have an enriching learning experience at my first WATERCON.

When I entered the conference hotel, immediately to the left were badge ribbons. "First Time Attendee" caught my eye. This label would allow me to engage more meaningfully, without

having to stumble through the "it's my first time" part of the small talk. The second ribbon that stood out was "YP" for young professional, communicating to me that I could share my curiosities and experiences without the shadow of comparison or inadequacy. The badge ribbons sent a strong signal that diversity and inclusion are priorities for ISAWWA, and were a thoughtful, tangible, and inclusive welcome to the conference. As I navigated the conference, I felt able to spark, join, or invite conversations. I remember speaking with people who were presenting or sitting on panels; receiving greetings and committee info from AWWA committee leaders; and taking in the overall atmosphere of camaraderie.



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“ Diversity and inclusion are critical practices that aid in receiving and extending grace with those who are having different experiences.

I was grateful for the opportunity to re-emerge into conference life while being at ease with my full self. As a new member of the ISAWWA and of its Diversity and Inclusion Committee, I wanted to share this experience because diversity and inclusion initiatives heavily focus on race, gender, and various socio-political constructs and systems that complicate relationship building. I would like to posit that in addition to those important facets, diversity and inclusion are critical practices that aid in receiving and extending grace with those who are having different experiences.

I navigate this world as a six-foot-tall Black woman, so there was no doubt I would be noticeable at WATERCON. However, the

nuances of how we come into space create opportunities for connection. There were some parents there who, like me, were thinking about what it meant to be away from family, and there were others who were enthused to be among their colleagues and friends after not seeing them for so long. There were some folks who were prepared and rehearsed, ready to lead their sessions, and others who were filling in for colleagues who were no longer able to attend. Connecting in and through these experiences helps build more inclusive environments, and the badge ribbons were a small but impactful way to welcome those opportunities.

Thank you ISAWWA, for demonstrating an atmosphere of warmth, welcome, and grace at WATERCON 2022. 💧

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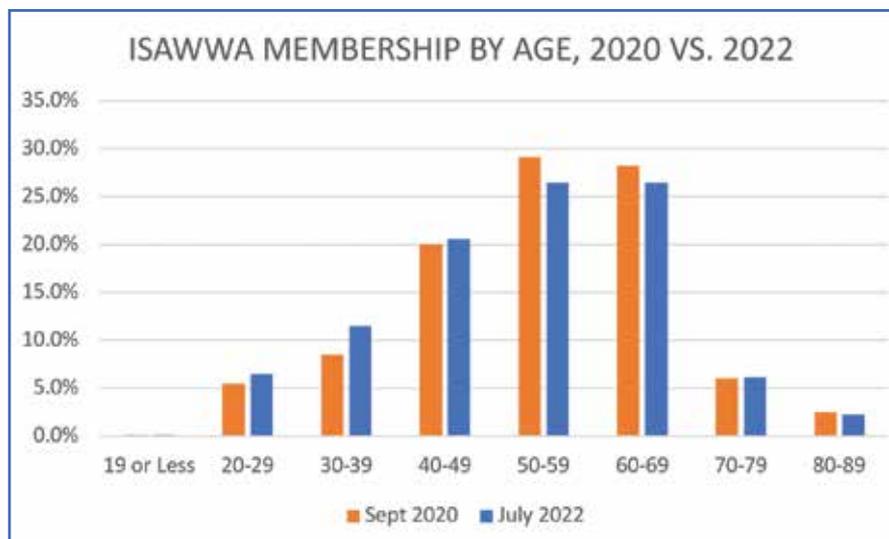
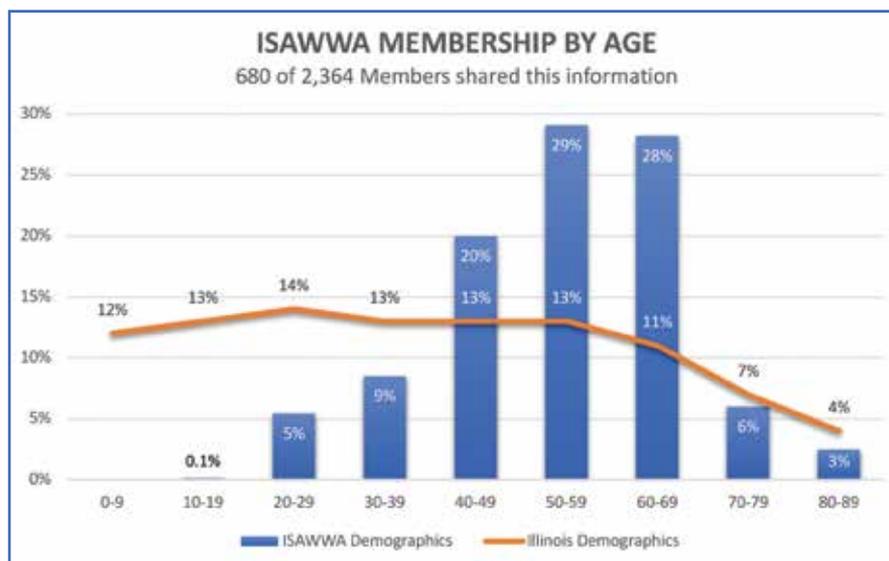
By Elisa Bonkowski, Member, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

At the Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association, we are striving to create a more diverse community for our members. Creating a diverse community can foster greater creativity and innovation. Differently minded people will share unique perspectives and spark fresh ideas whenever they work together, and we want to harness that energy to make the Section better for all of us. In addition, the welcoming environment that diversity and inclusion create can help maintain and build our membership.

So, how is ISAWWA doing? In order to better understand our current levels of diversity, we compiled and categorized our membership statistics by age, gender, and ethnicity.

Age

We compared age group data from September 2020 of ISAWWA membership against Illinois demographics. As you would expect, most members are of working age, and the percentage of members between the ages of 40 and 70 is significantly higher than the Illinois population percentage. Perhaps this demographic has been in the industry long enough to appreciate the value of membership! The Section has very few members under the age of 20 and a disproportionately low percentage of members under 40.



We also compared age group data from September 2020 to July 2022 and found no significant change in membership by age. This suggests that initiatives during that time have not noticeably altered the average age of our members.

COR Ignites Change

By Jamie Rott, ISAWWA Chair-Elect, Co-Chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee



One of the City of Rockford's objectives is to collaboratively work together to foster a culture of both positive intergroup and intragroup communication around the topics of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. This is done when leadership commits to fostering an environment where all employees feel valued. The Leadership of the City of Rockford has done just that – committing to leadership values that included equity for all employees and residents.

Even the most progressive companies struggle to create truly diverse, equitable, inclusive, and belonging workplaces. But it doesn't have to be that way. In 2020, we implemented our first women's Employee Resource Group (ERG) and in 2021, we launched three additional employee resource groups. These groups are supported by the HR department and leadership – this support ensures the groups are integrated into the organization and aligned to the City and its values.

Over the last couple of years, we have implemented several diversity pieces of training and held courageous conversations with management and staff in the City around the topics of diversity and inclusivity.

However, in 2021 the Human Resource Department partnered with Ignite Change Solution to develop an equity planning process. Our emphasis is distinguished by its inclusivity to ensure that we reach deep into the organization's roots for the best outcome. To accomplish this task, we started with a plan to connect with every moving part of the organization. In collaboration with Ignite Change Solutions, the HR department met with upper leadership to draft the first steps of interaction. After feedback was provided, the direction was drafted. We have been intentional about welcoming all voices through inclusivity workshops and believe that every celebration and growth opportunities are what tell the story for a seamless contribution to the final outcome. Therefore, we created workshops to share the plan and gain the entire organization's support. The response has been positive, and we feel confident about moving forward with the subsequent phases of the project. In our equity planning process, we will think "big picture" about planning, using broad definitions of inclusion, and supporting our goals.



What are we doing?

After concluding our final workshops, we are preparing for our survey launch. The goal is to uncover strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Once we have connected with all employees, we will recommend an engagement process moving forward and finalize that process. The data collected will be used to create a comprehensive plan that the City of Rockford can live out for the next five years and beyond.

“We have been intentional about welcoming all voices through inclusivity workshops and believe that every celebration and growth opportunities are what tell the story.”

Where are we going?

We will evaluate existing processes, policies, procedures, and activities to understand the City’s strengths and concerns. We will also identify potential gaps that currently exist in the plan. We will develop our training and an overall strategic plan around the data collected through the surveys. Based on the background research, meetings with our team will help us create an outreach strategy. The outreach strategy will identify target audiences within the organization, a schedule, and anticipated opportunities for engagement within the community.

We expect our equity plan to energize the City of Rockford and those involved, ultimately strengthening the employees, community partnerships, community participation, and leaders. 💧

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Veterans Initiative

By Chris Rebone, Chair, Veterans Initiative

The Veterans Initiative was formed to assist Service members of all branches in transitioning from military service into public service with a focus on water/wastewater treatment. There are tens of thousands of service members across the 1.3 million currently serving on active duty that provide everyday services as you'd see in any Public Works department. For example, positions like "Water Treatment Specialists" (92W) in the Army or "Water and Fuel Systems Maintenance Specialists" (3E4X1) in the Air Force mirror Water Supply Operators in Public Works. Because the day-to-day skills involved in distribution, maintenance, sampling, and ensuring regulatory compliance are synonymous between the military and civilian sectors, veterans can be an asset to Public Works departments.

Despite this, more private sector than public works opportunities are presented to Service members

Military Occupational Code/ Specialty (MOC/MOS)	Civilian Equivalent
Army 91D – Tactical Power Generation Specialist	Electrical Utility Engineer/Technician
USMC 3521 – Automotive Maintenance Tech	Fleet Technician
Navy IT – Navy Information Systems Tech	IT/Communication Operator
USAF 6FOX1 – Financial Management and Comptroller	Finance Department
Army 92Y – Unit Supply Specialist	Purchasing Manager/Inventory Control

as they transition back to civilian life. I'm pleased to share that through due diligence and commitment to this cause, ISAWWA's Veterans Initiative committee has begun to change that.

Our focus this year will be three-phased. The first phase will be to identify key partners at Great Lakes Naval, Rock Island Arsenal, and Scott Air Force Base. The second phase will be to develop our presentation to the service members and lay the foundation for our third phase. This third phase will consist

of developing tools and resources to aid any service member in joining our workforce. We are well on our way to accomplishing these goals, and I look forward to sharing future updates with the Splash community. If you or someone you know is aware of any service member interested in bringing their skills to our community, feel free to point them in our direction. Below are just a few more examples of how a military career can transition directly into public service. 💧

Honoring Veterans in Water

In commemoration of Veterans Day, ISAWWA expresses gratitude to all who have served in the Armed Forces. We honor you and are grateful for your service to our country. We interviewed a few of our veteran members and asked them to share their insights about their time in the military and their experience in the industry. If you would like to join our Veterans Initiative, please contact laura@isawwa.org.

Robert Lee Wenger

Current Employer: Village of Hanover Park, served in the military for 22 years.

How did you initially get involved with water and wastewater?

I started working for Hanover Park Public Works working in all areas of water: sanitary sewer, storm and sewer, and street blacktop/pothole patching.

What advice would you give veterans entering this field?

Get the training you need. It is important to understand what maintaining excellent water quality is all about.

What advice would you share with potential employers/HR on hiring veterans?

I would say that veterans stepped up and served their country. By serving their country, they have proven their worth in the military. Now, they need to transition into the private sector.

Share one or two fun facts about yourself.

I like sailing and motorcycling.

What has been a military highlight or a career accomplishment?

I have been working for Hanover Park for 50 years.

Harold Keaton

Current Employer: City of Chicago Department of Water, served in the U.S. Navy for six years.

How did you initially get involved with water and wastewater?

I participated in an internship through UIC.

What advice would you give veterans entering this field?

It is like some of the better parts of the military; like having something important to do... along with the ability to go to McDonald's whenever you want.

What advice would you share with potential employers/HR on hiring veterans?

Military veterans have shown that they want to serve a higher purpose. Your best fit is going to be someone who has that sense of purpose.

Share one or two fun facts about yourself.

I once succeeded in burning water.

Other comments you'd like to share with ISAWWA members.

One coat for rust; two coats for dust.



Brent Madison

Current Employer: Village of Northbrook, served in the U.S. Marine Corps for six years.

How did you initially get involved with water and wastewater?

I got involved with water in 2016 when I applied for a maintenance worker position for the Village of Northbrook.

What advice would you give veterans entering this field?

If you want a sense of community, family, and belonging, joining the water industry can provide all that and more.

What advice would you share with potential employers/HR on hiring veterans?

If you want detail oriented, hardworking candidates with exceptional time management skills, you should look into interviewing veterans. Another benefit of hiring veterans is that you are giving them the chance to join a family and continue giving back to their community.

Share one or two fun facts about yourself.

I've met one of my best friends in the water industry, with whom I get to work every day. I served in the USMC-R while working for the Village of Northbrook and deployed to Afghanistan.

What has been a military highlight or a career accomplishment?

I had the opportunity to train in basic infantry tactics as a Foreign Security Force Advisor (0570) in countless different countries.





Amy Wrigley

Current Employer: City of Naperville, served in the U.S. Army for six years on active duty and four years in the reserves.

How did you initially get involved with water and wastewater?

Completely by chance. I quit my environmental consulting job of 16 years and was preparing to move out west. I had a conversation with someone about my plans to seek federal employment such as with the VA, EPA, FEMA, or USACE, and we got to talking about local government. That night I went to my city's website and there was an opening for the position I have now. Plans changed!

What advice would you give veterans entering this field?

The soft skills we learn in the military go a long way to supplement the experience employers list as required and preferred. Don't hesitate to apply even if you don't fully meet the minimum qualifications.

What advice would you share with potential employers/HR on hiring veterans?

Veterans are typically reliable, motivated, and dedicated. A huge part of their military career involved training and problem solving. Consider them a good fit for your organization based on their personality and solid background, even if they fall shy of some requirements. Expect that they will achieve proficiency on the job quickly.

Share one or two fun facts about yourself.

My team won the water tower building contest at my first WATERCON in 2018.



What has been a military highlight or a career accomplishment?

Becoming a paratrooper.

Other comments you'd like to share with ISAWWA members.

Thank you to the employers who hire veterans and thank you to ISAWWA for starting a Veterans Initiative! As a new group member, I can already tell that this group is going to provide a valuable connection between veterans and the water/wastewater sector. 💧



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Municipal Operators

Enthusiastic and Inquisitive

By Patrick Walsh,
Village of Mundelein
Vice Chair, ISAWWA
Mentoring Committee

Young Operators Today

My personal perspective

I recently took a position at the Village of Mundelein where I will be focusing my attention on projects including commercial development, roadway rehab, and parks.

In this position I will be working closely with several departments within the Village. These departments consist of teams with different ages and experience.

I was pleasantly surprised at the talent that individuals possessed within the various departments. However, I was also surprised how many were unwilling to express what they knew or had learned in the scope of the job.



“In this position I will be working closely with several departments within the Village.”

In my younger days, it seemed like the old dogs didn't care for young operators. Meanwhile, old dogs felt the young dogs would not listen even if they gave advice. Now I think both parties were wrong – the young dogs wanted to find their way and the old dogs wanted to lead.

Due to my personality, I tend to provide knowledge to others even if they do not ask. Many in our field are not this way. They do not openly share what they know. There are many reasons for this, including cultural background, confidence, upbringing, or apathy.

I believe that we all need to make a tangible effort in starting and continuing

valuable conversations. For their part, the next generations need to speak up and know that they bring an important voice to how things should or could be done.

I have found that many organizations offer great programs for personal

growth, project resolution, and goal setting – but few if any employees participate. We need to do a better job linking those we see in our organization to available resources and partnering with them through the training.

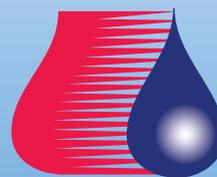
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A Mentoring Story



By Corinne Benton, Ciorba Group
Committee Chair, ISAWWA Mentoring Committee

In his article on page 41, Patrick Walsh explains the importance of participating in programs that support personal and professional growth. The ISAWWA's Mentoring Program is one such offering. I had the pleasure of sitting down and individually interviewing Hanting Wang and Gregory Swanson, two mentoring participants. Hanting (the mentee) – and Greg (the mentor) began meeting in the fall of 2020 and continue to maintain their mentoring relationship today. Hanting and Greg believe their time in the program has been extremely beneficial both personally and professionally. Both professionals are inspirational people who forged a connection with each other and, in the process, learned more about themselves and others in their community.



Hanting has been working in the water industry for about seven years as an engineering consultant. Before consulting, Hanting spent four years researching virus removal from drinking water using biosand filters at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she also obtained her Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering and Master of Science

in Environmental Engineering. When I asked Hanting what she is passionate about, she explained that helping people is what drives her every day. It is why she is part of the water industry. She explained, "Everything we do impacts millions of people positively and most people don't even know it."

Hanting learned about the Mentoring Program when she joined ISAWWA's Mentoring Committee, where she served as Mentoring Committee Chair for several years. After helping launch the program, Hanting entered and was matched.

Greg retired from over 39 years in the water industry in 2016. When he retired, he was the Utilities General Manager for the City of Moline. During the course of his career, Greg served as the Chair of ISAWWA, was recognized by various professional organizations, and received awards including

the George Warren Fuller Award. Outside of work, Greg also co-founded Spandan: a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting knowledge and appreciation of the North Indian music in the Midwest.

Greg began his career on a very different path than Hanting. Greg did not obtain a college degree before entering the industry. He applied to work for the City of Moline with no relevant experience or relevant education, but was hired when they created a new position for him – lower in rank than what he had originally applied for. From there, Greg worked his way up from the lowest position possible in the City to maintenance, to the treatment plant, and ultimately to Utilities General Manager.

Hanting and Greg first met when they were matched in fall of 2020. After receiving an email with each other's information, they agreed to meet once a month virtually for an hour. Both participants believe that meeting for an hour each month has been a perfect amount of time. The hour provides each party with a great deal to think about over the next month but is still manageable to schedule. By meeting virtually, the pair can see each other "face to face." This has helped their relationship and their discussion.



Greg was excited when Hanting reached out to him for the initial point of connection. As Hanting's new mentor, he felt Hanting showed initiative by reaching out. When I asked Hanting how she felt when she was matched with Greg, she explained she was very excited. She was aware Greg was well known and well respected in the industry. When Hanting met Greg for the first time,

her first impression was that he lived up to his outstanding reputation. Greg's first impression of Hanting was that she was intelligent, dedicated, and a little reserved.

For a few months, Hanting was apprehensive about opening up to Greg because he was so well connected in the industry. Over time, they built the trust needed for effective mentoring. During their monthly hour, Hanting and Greg have been discussing problems Hanting is facing, potential solutions to those problems, and then the outcomes of implementing solutions. For each call, Hanting personally prepares one

“Since their first meeting, Hanting and Greg’s mentorship has grown into a friendship.”

or two topics she wants to discuss with Greg. By being prepared, the hour they set aside each month flies by incredibly quickly. Hanting explained that Greg is highly skilled at listening to what she says and connecting it to a relevant experience he has had or an article he had read. His examples help Hanting understand different ways to move forward. Greg also follows up their monthly meetings by sending Hanting videos or articles expanding on what they discussed during their meetings.

During this time, Hanting joined ISAWWA’s Board of Trustees as Secretary/Treasurer. Because Greg had been through the process himself, he was able to act as a sounding board for Hanting. He was able to advise and explain certain things she needed in order to succeed. She has a passion for helping people and understands that ISAWWA leaders have the ability to do community outreach and host events with the public. Mentorship helped to guide Hanting and give her the confidence to follow this passion.

Since their first meeting, Hanting and Greg’s mentorship has grown into a friendship. Greg and Hanting now text and email articles about the things they are interested in and they consider each other good friends.

At the end of my interviews with Hanting and Greg, I asked how they benefited from their mentoring relationship.

Hanting explained she learned more than she could believe. According to Hanting, Greg provided an immense wealth of information, both from firsthand experiences and from the links and articles he sent her. Hanting has been able to turn to Greg to discuss difficulties she encounters and workshop possible solutions. Hanting appreciates being able to learn from someone who has more experience and knowledge different ideas and opportunities. Overall, Greg is a source of support, insight, and friendship for Hanting.

Greg was pleasantly surprised at how much he is learning from Hanting. He has learned about office innovations like standing desks, and also has learned things about himself, like how to be a better listener. Greg explained that mentoring has helped him avoid stagnation and to expand his own knowledge, while also sharing it. He explained that the mentoring experience has been revitalizing and formative on both sides.

Greg and Hanting both strongly encourage any ISAWWA members interested in serving the next generation, expanding their network, or learning from others in the water industry to apply for the Mentoring Program through ISAWWA’s website. The next round of mentor/mentee matching will occur in November 2022, and again in April 2023. 💧

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What Do you Get When High-Performance Coatings and Quality Craftsmanship Meet to Take on Settling Basins?

By Paul Powers, Induron North Central Regional Manager

Back in 2018, Induron teamed up with Texarkana Water Utilities (TWU) to develop specifications for several of their uncoated aging settling basins, which were in critical need of refurbishment. After several discussions, reviewing the condition of the basins, and working within the regulations unique to the region, the specifications for refurbishing the settling basins were ready to go.

The Coating Solution

Like many utilities, TWU originally considered membrane urethane systems. However, when they learned that Induron's Perma-Clean 100 Ceramic NSF 61/600 Approved Epoxy's approval is up to 150 Mils, which was the same thickness as the membranes they reviewed initially, they changed their minds. We showed TWU the test data on the flexibility of this ceramic-pigmented product, which is unmatched by other epoxies. All in all, Perma-Clean 100 was an excellent choice for this project because it provided the protection of an epoxy with more flexibility than even needed for this concrete project.

Perma-Clean 100 is a fast-curing, 100% solids epoxy tank lining for potable water applications. It provides enhanced edge retention, which improves corrosion protection on corners and sharp angles. Competitive products are not enhanced with ceramic pigment into an amine-cured epoxy resin for maximum corrosion protection of immersed substrates and can take up to seven days or longer to cure for full immersion service.



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The Project Team

For this refurbishing project, I recommended the contractors, worked with each of them on all three basins, and provided pricing and technical support. One contractor partner completed the refurbishment of the first basin, and another trusted partner, Thomas Industrial Coatings located out of the St. Louis Metro Area, completed the other two basins.

I have had the privilege of working with Don Thomas, the owner of Thomas Industrial Coatings, and his team even before he launched his company back in 1991. Since then, I have worked on a wide range of diverse projects with their team. My trust in their abilities and dedication to their craft was why I opted to bring to the table on TWU's behalf and one of the reasons that they have grown to be the company that they are today. Partnering with contractors that share the "do it right the first time" mentality is key to a successful project, and that these guys did not disappoint!

Our third partner in these projects, the owners (TWU), could not be more pleased with the performance, craftsmanship and value that these projects delivered. Another large-scale concrete project case history complete!

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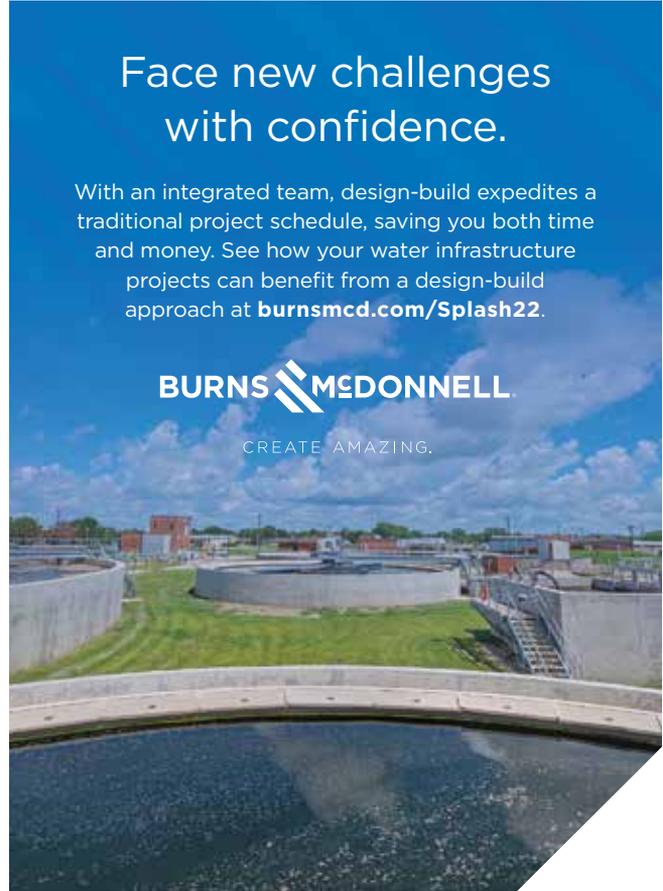
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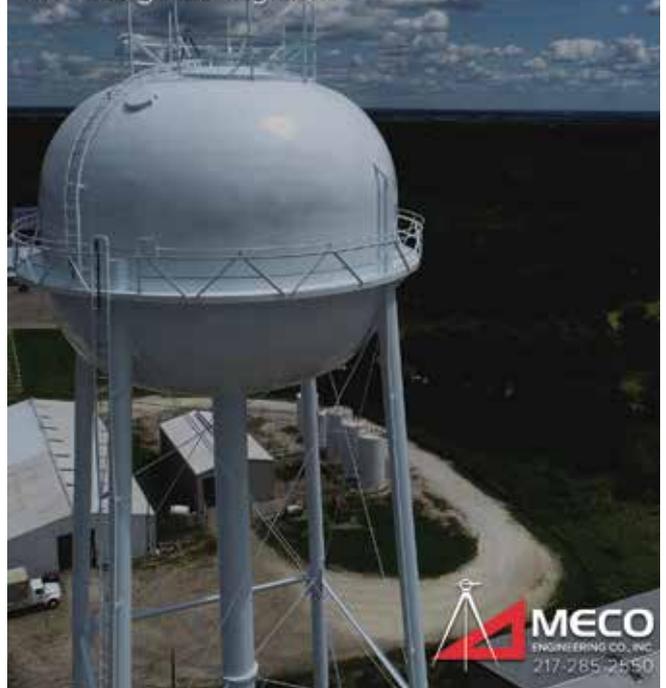
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Source Water Protection at the Strategic Level

By G. Tracy Mehan III
First published: 04 October 2022
From JournalAWWA

The concept of source water protection for potable water – embodied in AWWA’s Utility Management Standard G300, Source Water Protection, and

originally highlighted in the 1996 amendments to the *Safe Drinking Water Act* (SDWA) – is making a comeback. Yet so many challenges to the provision

of healthy drinking water are out of the control of utility operators. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of persistent, bioaccumulative toxins (commonly referred to as “forever chemicals”) that are driving new regulations at the state and federal levels, most particularly under the SDWA and Superfund program, which will materially affect utility operations. Inevitably, these regulations will affect customers because of increased costs related to treatment, carbon residue disposal, and long-term operations and maintenance. All of these PFAS compounds found in source waters are the result of industrial and consumer products that have been commercially available for decades.

And while PFAS tend to get a lot of media attention, recall the shutdown of the Toledo water system in 2015 due to harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie, largely the result of unregulated agricultural runoff that polluted the city’s source water. Added to the list of source water threats are deforestation, forest fires, wastewater discharges, stormwater, and bromide from power plants trying to comply with the *Clean Air Act*. In all of these cases, drinking water systems are at the mercy of other parties over whom they have no control or influence. Utilities are dependent on a collection of watershed and out-of-watershed players who may not be doing their part to protect sources of safe drinking water. These players include regulators in areas outside of drinking water. For instance, bromide discharges from power plants might be regulated under the *Clean Water Act* (CWA), and PFAS should have been addressed before entering commerce under the *Toxic Substances Control Act* (TSCA).

AWWA has provided technical comments to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the



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opportunities for protecting drinking water from PFAS under TSCA, and we will continue to press the case in that program, which is not part of EPA's Office of Water. This is not to discourage the efforts of many AWWA members who labor at the watershed level to practice sound source water protection, using their own resources, expertise, and the networks of related partners. But a strategic focus on source water protection by industry, government, agriculture, and municipalities can put the wind at the backs of these local efforts in ways that utilize these sectors' own knowledge, financial assets, and in the case of regulators, regulatory authorities.

AWWA's Government Affairs office in Washington, D.C., has worked for several years now to operationalize strategic source water protection at the federal level. For example, the revisions embodied in the 2018 Farm Bill recognized the importance of source water protection for the first time in conversations at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the bill mandated an allocation of 10% of its funds specifically for source water protection. Before the 2018 revisions to the Farm Bill, USDA focused almost entirely on CWA goals pertaining to ambient water quality that centered on impaired waters ("the worst first") and total maximum daily loads for pollutants allowed to enter a water body. But implementing these new provisions of the Farm Bill has not been easy. It takes time to build relationships with each state conservationist and his or her State Technical Committee, and mutual understanding between the agricultural and water sectors requires hard work and patience. Still, drinking water utilities now have a seat at the table, and many are benefitting financially from several conservation programs. Discussions are also underway for the next reauthorization of the Farm Bill, and there's focus on how to more fully optimize source water protection.

Not forgetting about the opportunities under the CWA, AWWA has also provided comments on EPA's Preliminary Effluent Guidelines Program Plan 15. Effluent limitations guidelines (ELGs) can work to manage pollutants at the source, or at

least upstream of a drinking water intake, and can protect receiving waters as part of the comprehensive protection of source waters. Unfortunately, the average age of an ELG is more than 30 years, and the program merits a review with a focus on current issues, and most urgently, source water protection.

Source water protection needs to be implemented at the strategic level

to maximize the benefit to the nation's drinking water supply and keep water affordable for consumers. 💧

G. Tracy Mehan III

is executive director of government affairs at AWWA. He may be contacted at tmehan@awwa.org.

A graphic showing a laptop, a tablet, and two smartphones floating in the air against a blue background.

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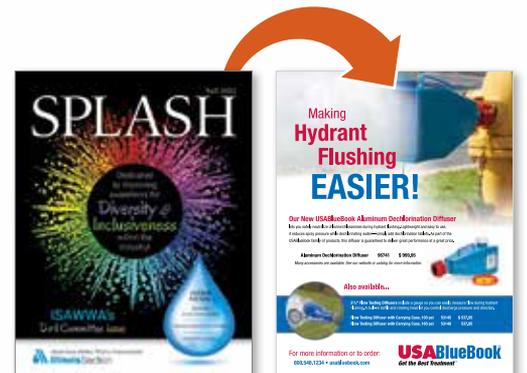
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