



# ABPA News

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020

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## Board of Directors

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*International President*

Blake Anderson  
*International Vice President*

Billie Vines  
*Secretary*

Jerry Cook  
*Treasurer*

Tim Brown  
*International Past President*

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*Region 1 Director (CT, NY, ME, MA, NH, NJ, RI, VT)*

Kevin Turcotte  
*Region 2 Director (D.C., DE, MD, PA, VA, WV)*

Kathy Riley  
*Region 3 Director (AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN)*

## A Message from ABPA President Frank Snyder Do your due diligence for this 2020 election



*ABPA President Frank Snyder*

For more than a month, I've struggled with finding a suitable topic for this issue of the newsletter. Patti suggested I remind members to vote. I thought that should be an easy subject – until I tried to write it.

I could just do the media version of "get out and vote." Nah, too cliché. I could do a rant; but nobody wants to hear my political bias. So, what do I write?

To start with, it must be politically neutral... and factual. If I voice my opinion, it must be evident as such. It must not contain hype.

A word of disclosure: I do not belong to any political party... I don't vote straight party ticket... and I use the Constitution as my candidates' litmus test. I frequently hear people complain about the government. But, when I ask if they voted, they say 'no,' with some lame excuse. To that, I do agree with a couple of other clichés: "Every vote counts" and "If you don't vote, you have no right to complain."

If your area is anything like where I live, most of the advertising these days is political – and largely negative. But it is all hype. Do not listen to it. Do your own research. Everyone running for office has voiced opinions and has a voting history. It takes a little effort on your part; but you can find where every candidate stands on issues... and not just the public lies, because all politicians lie. Yes, I am a cynic.

Remember, politicians are your elected representatives. They work for you and are supposed to be your voice in Congress. Make sure they represent your values and not some party line.

What may be even more important to ABPA members are local races. Who do we elect for city council or county commission? I know different states have different names for them. But they do the same job. If the wrong individual is elected, an effective cross connection control program can be gutted.

Michigan has tried a couple of times in the last few years to stop testing backflows, even after the Flint fiasco. It was stopped due to the efforts of the Michigan chapter. In smaller communities, the inspector is also the dog catcher (pun intended) or has some other additional duty. A newly-

*A Message from the*  
**PRESIDENT**

## Board of Directors Continued...

Troy Baird

*Region 4 Director (AR, LA, OK, TX)*

Jesse Bockhouse

*Region 5 Director (CO, NM, UT, WY)*

Lyle Greenhill

*Region 6 Director (AZ, CA, HI, NV)*

Allen Wilder

*Region 7 Director (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA)*

Open at this time

*Region 8 Director (AB, BC, MB, NT, NU, SK, YT Canada)*

*Region 9 Director (ON, PEI, PQ, NB, NL, NS Canada)*

*Region 10 Director (MN, ND, SD, WI)*

Danny Jurkowitz

*Region 11 Director (IL, IN, KY, MI, OH)*

Rich Koenig

*Region 12 Director (IA, KS, MO, NE)*

Mike Lueck

*Director-at-Large*

## Useful ABPA Resources

[ABPA Membership Brochure](#)

[Online Dues Renewal Instructions](#)

[Certification Program Resources](#)

[View the ABPA Community Calendar featuring upcoming Certification exam information and other local chapter events.](#)

## Contact Us

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<http://www.abpa.org>

elected council member may have an agenda that keeps the inspector from doing inspections and enforcement.

Worse is the city council that “fixes” a backflow incident by firing the inspector who “allowed” it to happen, rather than investigating the policies that led to the cross connection.

So do your research and vote your conscience. Every vote counts. If you do not vote, don’t complain about the results. Please, please, please, do not listen to the lies on TV.

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## A Message from ABPA Vice President Blake Anderson Water professionals do a critical job - let’s tell people

I am excited to introduce myself as your newly-elected vice president, honored to be a part of this wonderful organization and pleased to have the opportunity to serve you.

To share a little bit about myself, I am the father of seven children, six daughters and one son. My wife, Lauralee, and I recently celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Our family lives in Utah, on the beautiful Wasatch Front, just a few miles north of Salt Lake City.

I have been employed by West Bountiful City for the past 21 years as head of its water department. I take pride in providing high-quality drinking water to my community. In 2015, West Bountiful was recognized as having the “best tasting water in Utah.” I am passionate about water and serving the community.



*ABPA Vice President Blake Anderson*

*“I am thrilled to be a part of the ABPA national board and to work with all of you.”*

I am thrilled to be a part of the ABPA national board and to work with all of you. I have been a member of my Utah ABPA Chapter board for the past several years.

One of my primary goals aligns with our President Frank Snyder’s goal, to increase membership and participation in local ABPA chapters. Our president has stated, each of us should identify one colleague, friend or associate to invite to join our association.

I feel, in our association as backflow professionals – especially among our veteran members – we have a wealth of knowledge that can be shared with new members, elected officials and others. It’s important we share our message with the community, explain cross-connection and backflow issues and describe the protective measures we take to keep our drinking water clean, safe and pure.

We value our members and I encourage our ABPA veterans to become mentors to our newer members. You have a wealth of knowledge and experience that is invaluable in helping to develop the next generation of our association.

As water professionals, I believe we do an excellent job providing clean and safe drinking water. When people turn on their faucet, they expect clean water, without giving it much thought. We go to great lengths to allow them that assumption.

Now it is vital we share the efforts we make to maintain high-quality water with the world. As you know, it only takes one unprotected garden hose to contaminate an entire water system. We have a noble cause, to educate, protect and provide clean and safe drinking water to our communities.



My challenge to each of you is to open your mouth and let your voice be heard. I challenge each of you to take the opportunity to share our backflow and cross connection message with everyone.

*“My challenge to each of you is to take the opportunity to share our backflow and cross connection message.”*

I would like to recognize the efforts of past presidents, board members, regional directors, committee members and individual ABPA members for their efforts in protecting our drinking water supply.

I would also like to thank Patti Fauver and her Advanced Management Solutions team for the great job they are doing.

I look forward to working with all of you. We have a bright future before us.

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## Letter from the Editor Fires, elections, hurricanes and 'rona

By Carl Fauver, Communication Director

Fires to the left of me... hurricanes to the right... here I am, stuck in the 'rona with you. My kids introduced me to that COVID-19 nickname. I guess next it will be “arma”(geddon) and “apoc”(alypse), right? Oh well, at least we have the election coming. Surely that will be a soothing and peaceful national event.

Despite all our current challenges, your ABPA chapters are doing what they can to keep their ships afloat. At the end of this newsletter, we'll share updates on what's being done in Arkansas, North Texas and Hawaii.

Ahead of that final article you will...

- Be reminded of your looming deadlines related to the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018
- Meet outgoing ABPA board member (and basketball coach) Danny Jurkowitz
- Learn how past Meritorious Service Award winner Tony Ippolito's 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary went
- Gain some insight on backflow assembly testing during our pandemic from your past ABPA president and current secretary, and
- Get some sage gauge advice from your Certification Programs Administrator Mike Ahlee



We appreciate the positive feedback we've received regarding our first three ABPA newsletters. We're also encouraged to hear, some of you are interested in contributing stories to this quarterly publication. We invite you to share ideas for future articles – or to offer any other comments – at [info@abpa.org](mailto:info@abpa.org).

For story ideas, it would be very helpful if you include contact information for one or two individuals who can contribute to an article or would be available for an interview.

As we 'rona stagger into this fourth quarter of 2020 (yes, rumor has it, our difficult year WILL actually end), here's hoping you and yours enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving and joyous holiday season. Before that...Halloween? Who knows what that will look like? It's likely EVERY trick-or-treater will look as much like a stagecoach robber as you and I do when we visit the grocery store.

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## Headquarters Update

# Our daylight may be getting shorter, but the to do list never does

By Patti Fauver, Executive Director



Time just keeps marching on...although it sometimes feels like swimming in molasses!

Lots of updates and information, so let's just jump right to it:

**Public Water Systems** – It is very difficult to take off my primacy regulator hat – trying to provide sufficient information to keep water systems abreast of their requirements and provide or steer them to the correct tools to help them comply.

Looming just ahead for many public systems are the new requirements for vulnerability assessments and emergency response plans – please read the articles provided below. 2020 has been a banner year to illustrate our need to be prepared for the unexpected!

**Update Your Membership Profile** – I am reiterating this plea – to please, PLEASE, PLEASE update your snail- and e-mail addresses in your membership profile. Not only is this contact information used as listed below... but a number of you have also called to request new certification wallet cards where the information is correct, but people would like the address on the card changed from either the home address to the work address or vice versa.

ABPA is happy to correct any errors made in the address. But please keep in mind, the home address is the one pulled into the tester/specialist application and is the one printed on your card. There are personnel and material costs involved with reprinting a card to switch between two correct addresses. ABPA does charge a \$20 administrative fee for this service.

Correct profile information is the only way ABPA can contact you about critical issues, such as:

**Voting** - The home address in your profile is used to send your ballot. This is how you express your voice about who you want to represent your member interests.

**Membership Renewals** - ABPA sends out automated reminder emails 90 and 60 days before your membership expiration, as well as the day after it expires. We have also reestablished a snail-mail reminder letter, sent about a month prior to your expiration date.

**Certification Reminders** - ABPA sends reminders at various times prior to your expiration date, in order for you to register for a recertification exam.

**Announcements and Breaking News** - ABPA regularly emails announcements for Board meetings, ABPA events and items of industry interest.

**Newsletter** - Distribution of this quarterly newsletter is to your email.

If your email or physical addresses are not current, the national office is limited in ways to effectively communicate with you.

**2020 Conference** – I sound like Ripley, but, 'believe it or not' we still have a final few conference registration refunds to process. We have reached out to registered attendees and exhibitors twice for information. If you were registered – and have not seen the emails (or responded to them) – please call your national headquarters, at **801-436-7238** or email **patti@abpa.gov**.

We are excited to hopefully be in Charlotte for the 2021 conference (knock wood), April 19-21. Hope to see you there! Further information will be available as we finalize plans.

**Certification** – Latest update from the Certification Programs:

**Notice to ABPA certified Testers, Specialists and all interested parties:**

As you may be aware, ABPA was forced to postpone and reformat all Tester and Specialists exams as a

result of the global pandemic. We are pleased to announce, exams are now being formatted to comply with CDC guidelines for everyone's safety.

We are currently arranging exam dates and locations with limited seating and posting them on the ABPA website calendar ([www.abpa.org](http://www.abpa.org)). We encourage you to sign up for exams as early as possible to avoid further delays.

Unfortunately, exam locations may not be as close and convenient as in the past. While exams are being scheduled, ongoing pandemic restrictions are severely limiting our exam locations as well as the number of people permitted to be at each exam site.

For these reasons, ABPA has adjusted expiration extension periods for Testers and Specialists to December 31, 2020. **All ABPA Testers or Specialists whose certification expired anytime in this calendar year, after February 29, now have until December 31, 2020 to complete their certification exam process.**

[Click here](#) to download a copy of the official extension letter.

We anticipate this extension will provide the time necessary for all in need to schedule and complete the exam process required to maintain your certification.

**Stay safe out there... and keep up the good work!**

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**\*\*\* BIG NEWS! \*\*\***

**Please Join our Informational Webinar**

## **ABPA Backflow Prevention Assembly Field Test Procedures**

**Demo and Discussion**

As a means of providing testers, specialists, water agencies and administrative authorities with the most current information, ABPA is offering a 2-hour informational webinar designed to provide:

- A comprehensive review of ABPA field test procedures with the foremost industry experts.
- Detailed discussion of some of the most common problem areas testers encounter during the ABPA hands-on performance exam.
- A format allowing attendees to ask questions and get answers.

As certifications reach and go beyond their expiration dates, some administrative authorities may request proof of efforts to stay current with field test procedures or some type of contact hours (CEU). To help you with this task, the webinar will provide:

- A detailed webinar outline
- Speaker names & biographies
- A certificate of registration



ABPA has designed this informational webinar specifically to help get information to those who need an update or refresher. We are also looking to the future, knowing full well we may be moving part of our

exam, as much as possible, to on-line formats. We view this webinar as the first step in exploring that inevitable path.

We strongly recommend you register for the next available Tester or Specialist exam, even if it's not as convenient as usual. We believe your attendance at one of the two informational webinars will be helpful as you prepare for your next certification exam.

**Two dates are being offered for this webinar:**

**ABPA Backflow Prevention Assembly Field Test Procedures - Demo and Discussion**

**Saturday, October 24, 2020** [Register Here](#)

- 10:00 am to 12:00 pm Pacific time
- 11:00 am to 1:00 pm Mountain time
- 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm Central time
- 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm Eastern time
- 7:00 am to 9:00 am Hawaii time

**Thursday, October 29, 2020** [Register Here](#)

- 11:00 am to 1:00 pm Pacific time
- 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm Mountain time
- 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm Central time
- 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm Eastern time
- 8:00 am to 10:00 am Hawaii time

**Webinar cost: \$25.00**

**Hope to virtually see you there!**

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**Industry News You Can Use**  
**America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA): Risk & Resilience Assessments and Emergency Response Plans**

In this crazy year of hurricanes in the Southeast, wildfires in the West, earthquakes in unexpected places and coronavirus everywhere, some important, federally-mandated deadlines may have slipped off your radar. But these natural disasters – and the damage they inflict – should remind everyone, cross connection control programs and emergency response plans are critical to all water systems.

Section 2013 of America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA) requires community water systems serving more than 3,300 people to complete a risk and resilience assessment and develop an emergency response plan. These requirements are phased in based on populations served by the water utility.

The first certification deadline is for a completed risk and resilience assessment. The second deadline can be no later than six months after the initial certification. View the AWIA in its entirety on the EPA website, at [www.epa.gov/waterresilience/americas-water-infrastructure-act-risk-assessments-and-emergency-response-plans](http://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/americas-water-infrastructure-act-risk-assessments-and-emergency-response-plans).

Population Served by Water Utility	Deadline: Risk and Resilience Assessment	Emergency Response Plan (no later than 6 months after certification of risk and resilience assessment)
100,000 or more	March 31, 2020	September 30, 2020
50,000 to 99,999	December 31, 2020	June 30, 2021
3,301 to 49,999	June 30, 2021	December 30, 2021

**Risk and resilience assessments** evaluate vulnerabilities, threats and consequences from potential hazards, including:

- ✓ Natural hazards and malevolent acts
  - Storm events (hurricanes, tornados, extreme precipitation, etc.)
  - Earthquakes
  - Fires (natural/man-caused)
  - Backflow incidents (deliberate and unintentional)

- ✓ Resilience of water facility infrastructure
  - Pipes
  - Physical barriers
  - Water sources and collection
  - Treatment, storage and distribution
  - Electronic, computers and other automated systems
- ✓ Monitoring practices
- ✓ Financial systems
- ✓ Chemical storage and handling
- ✓ Operation and maintenance

**Emergency response plans** include:

- ✓ Strategies and resources to improve resilience, including physical security and cybersecurity.
- ✓ Plans and procedures for responding to a natural hazard or malevolent act threatening safe drinking water.
- ✓ Actions and equipment to lessen the impact of a malevolent act or natural hazard, including alternate water sources, relocating intakes and flood protection barriers.
- ✓ Strategies to detect malevolent acts or natural hazards that threaten the system.

Utilities must coordinate risk and resilience assessments, and emergency response plans, with local emergency planning committees. These assessments and plans must be reviewed and recertified to the EPA every 5 years. More details can be found at [dwresilience@epa.gov](mailto:dwresilience@epa.gov)

**EPA links to tools and resources**

[Frequently asked questions – AWIA](#)  
[Fact sheet – AWIA](#)

**Conducting a risk and resilience assessment**

[U.S. EPA baseline information on malevolent acts for community water systems](#)  
[U.S. EPA vulnerability self-assessment tool](#)

**Certification process**

[U.S. EPA instructions on how to certify your risk and resilience assessment and ERP](#)  
[Risk and resilience assessment certification statement](#)  
[ERP certification statement](#)

**Developing an Emergency Response Plan**

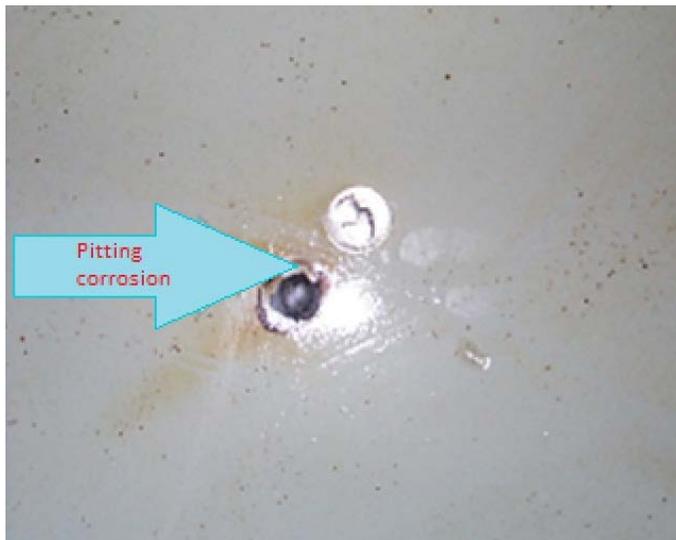
[U.S. EPA ERP template and instructions](#)  
[Local emergency planning committees \(LEPCs\)](#)

**National Rural Water Association – Disaster response tools**

**American Water Works Association – Utility risk & resilience certificate program**

These are not new requirements. Vulnerability assessments and ERPs were first required in the 2002 Bioterrorism Act, after 9/11. They have always been good industry practice. Also keep in mind, many if not all of the significant deficiencies or sanitary defects found during either a sanitary survey or triggered assessment of your water system will need to be identified in your risk and resilience assessment and addressed in your water system’s ERP.

With this in mind, below we are reprinting a 2007 newsletter article on this topic by former ABPA President John Oakeson. John is a retired environmental scientist with the Utah Division of Drinking



Deterioration of water tank found during an inspection.



Actual cross connection found during a water system inspection.

Water with 17 years of service. Oakeson also retired from a large water system, after more than 30 years of service. John's article lays out his thoughts on what needs to be included in an effective ERP.

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## Industry News You Can Use

### Security Assessments and Cross Connection Control

By John Oakeson, former ABPA President (first printed in 2007)

We have all become more aware of security issues in recent years. Security has become a part of our daily lives. It affects travel, the way we conduct business, even the way we live.

Water utilities have incorporated many security measures into their daily operations. Large sums of money have been spent to conduct vulnerability assessments (VA), develop emergency response plans (ERP) and secure water system facilities.

Most water utility personnel have received some type of security training. Many utilities have changed the way they operate, implementing security measures as part of their normal operating procedures. All of this has been done in an effort to protect public drinking water.

Cross connection control and backflow prevention is often overlooked when a water utility considers system security. Most utilities do not address cross connection control in their ERP. A number of utilities don't even give cross connection control and backflow prevention a second thought until after a backflow incident has occurred.

*"Cross connection control and backflow prevention is often overlooked when a water utility considers system security."*

*"Water systems should seriously consider cross connection control and backflow prevention as they develop and implement security measures."*

Even those who have incorporated cross connection control and backflow prevention into their daily operations and ERPs have not, in many cases, made an effort to educate those outside of the utility about the dangers posed by unprotected cross connections.

Water systems should seriously consider cross connection control and backflow prevention as they develop and implement security measures. It is important for them to include backflow incident responses in their ERP.

As a (former) Utah Division of Drinking Water staff member, I had the opportunity to participate in tabletop exercises to test several utility ERPs. Participants in one exercise included representatives from local law enforcement, fire officials and city personnel from other city departments as well as local government and health officials.

Early in the exercise, a police officer asked the question "Just how many places could a person contaminate our drinking water system?" The water system manager responded "Oh, about 20,000." He went on to explain, in addition to each water source, storage facility, etc., every fire hydrant, service connection and distribution system drain or flush out could be used to contaminate a drinking water system.

*"A police officer asked, 'How many places could a person contaminate our drinking water system?' The water manager responded 'Oh, about 20,000.' The police officer was flabbergasted."*

All it would take is someone connecting a pressure pump to the water system to pump contaminants into the water distribution system. The police officer was flabbergasted. He had no idea of the number of potential contamination sites in a water system.

I have also participated in a number of security training sessions with the Rural Water Association of Utah. During one series of training sessions, a tabletop exercise was conducted with a scenario developed by the EPA.



The fictitious city used in this scenario had a population of 90,000. Information was provided to the participants – mostly water system operators and managers – describing the location of residential areas, businesses, churches, schools, city facilities, medical facilities, etc. A layout of the drinking water system – and details of recent events that had taken place in the area – were also provided.

Participants were assigned to play various roles: water purveyor, police, fire, health officials, etc. The exercise started with a call from an area hospital to the local health department director, saying a number of people had come into the emergency room with severe cases of vomiting, diarrhea, cramps, etc.

As the exercise continued, a message was interjected that an extremist group had put something into the water. The message gave a specific location where this may have occurred.



When law enforcement personnel responded, they found the extremist group had broken into a vacant apartment and connected chemical pumps to the bathtub faucet. Several empty 5-gallon buckets were also discovered. It was later determined, the extremist group had injected a bacteriological contaminant into the water distribution system through the cross connection they had created.

This example shows how easy it would be for someone to contaminate a drinking water system through a cross connection. Obviously, we can't protect drinking water systems from every potential situation. If terrorists are determined to contaminate a water system there is little a utility can do to stop them. However, an effective cross connection control program may lessen the effects of such an attack. A comprehensive ERP will provide guidance for timely and effective terrorism responses.



Components of a good water system ERP should include baseline monitoring of distribution systems. This monitoring may include pH, chlorine residuals and routine system water pressure readings. Any time contamination of the water system is suspected, these parameters would serve as early indicators to help determine if a problem exists and where it took place. Some contaminants affect the pH of the water. The chlorine residual may be spent trying to destroy the contaminant. A change in routine water pressures may also indicate something has taken place.

Most utilities conduct routine security inspections of their facilities. Some also check vacant facilities for suspicious activities. One of the best resources a utility can utilize is local law enforcement. These individuals are continuously patrolling the community looking for suspicious activities.

Many law enforcement agencies are not aware of the security risks associated with a drinking water system. It would be prudent for the utility to meet with law enforcement representatives to explain their concerns and risks associated with the water system. They may also wish to provide law enforcement personnel with a tour of the water system so they are aware of the locations of various facilities.

*"A comprehensive ERP will provide guidance for timely and effective terrorism responses."*

Once law enforcement personnel have been made aware of the risks and the location of water system facilities, they can be an effective member of the utility's security team.

Local neighborhood watch groups – and neighbors living in close proximity to water system facilities – should also be made aware of nearby water system facilities. They should be encouraged to watch for suspicious activity and report it to police or the utility.

*"Many law enforcement agencies are not aware of the security risks associated with a drinking water system. They can be an effective member of the utility's security team."*

Water utility personnel should also be trained to respond to backflow incidents. This training should include: what to look for... appropriate questions to ask... and what indicators may be present as they respond to a backflow incident. It is also imperative they know what actions should be taken while responding. They must be aware of all necessary safety precautions.

Those who receive initial backflow incident, water contamination or criminal activity reports are also often overlooked in the training process. These individuals need to be trained on the types of questions to ask the caller. They must collect as much information as possible to assist responders.

Many utilities have developed check lists to aid in this process. The call may be from someone who intentionally contaminated the system. Any background noise, tone of voice, accents, etc. should also be noted by the call takers. Those call receivers also need to know who to relay the information to, and what protocols should be followed.

Those preparing an ERP must consider a number of things during the planning process. They should have an idea of the different types of chemical and biological samples that may be required to identify the contaminant(s) involved.

Utility operators may consider contacting laboratories to find out what their analytical capabilities are, their availability for afterhours responses and how long analysis results will take. If specific chemical monitoring is required, those collecting the samples must have proper training and be provided with adequate personal protective equipment in order to collect samples safely. If utility personnel are not properly trained or do not have adequate personal protective equipment, arrangements should be made for someone else with the proper training and protective equipment to collect samples.

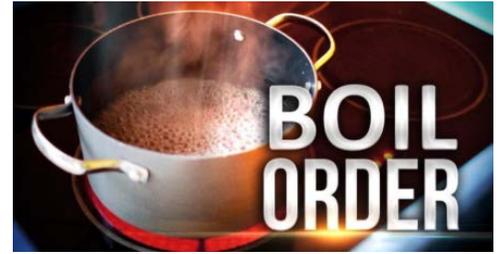
If vandalism, sabotage or terrorist activity is suspected, the site will undoubtedly become a crime scene. Responders should not disturb or destroy possible evidence.

Depending upon the situation, the media may also become involved. Many utilities have a spokesperson or public information officer (PIO) designated to deal with reporters. In some instances, public notification may be required. This can be in the form of a public health notice or advisory, such as, a "boil water order", "do not consume order" or "do not use water order."



*Signage encouraging reports of suspicious activity is a good security practice.*

It may become necessary to issue a news release. It is advisable for a utility to develop templates for public notices and news releases before they are needed. If the event is newsworthy, the media will try to gather as much information as possible. A policy on releasing information to the media is something water utilities should consider.



During an incident, it is important to keep the PIO informed, so accurate information is disseminated. If the incident is going to be long-term, the PIO may elect to schedule press conferences at set times to keep the public and media up to date.

One often overlooked detail is to notify utility administrators early of an incident. You do not want the mayor, board chairman or company president learning of an incident from a reporter or concerned customer.

Each utility must develop their ERP to include different types of responses. Response situations include: backflow incidents, natural disasters and terrorist threats.

Communication is critical during a response. Current contact information – including telephone numbers and email addresses – must be maintained. Contacts may include utility personnel, people from other departments within the organization, police and fire departments, other government agencies, health officials, neighboring utilities, vendors, contractors and suppliers.

*"You do not want the mayor, board chairman or company president learning of an incident from a reporter or concerned customer."*

Utilities should establish communication protocols and telephone call trees. Communication equipment must also be considered. The utility ought to identify what equipment is available including portable 2-way radios, telephone equipment, laptop computers and other

mobile devices. Someone should also be assigned to make sure batteries are kept charged and equipment is working properly.

One common communication failure during an emergency response is the inability of different responding agencies to communicate. Efforts should be made to have a common radio frequency when 2-way radios are deployed. When responding to any type of incident or emergency, it is advisable to implement the Incident Command System (ICS) or National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Response protocols will be specific to each utility. The utility may elect to keep general information in the ERP. An ERP is generally considered a public record and is available for public review under public records access laws.

Due to security concerns, a utility may want to disperse plans for specific types of responses on a need-to-know basis. Detailed operating procedures and response protocols for specific situations can be contained in annexes or appendices to the general ERP. In many organizations, annexes and appendices can be classified as sensitive information, not subject to public review. Utilities may want to consult their legal counsel to see what laws apply to them.



After any emergency response or backflow incident, it is a good idea for the utility to debrief. This provides an opportunity to evaluate the response, identifying what tactics worked well and what could be improved.

The debriefing should expose both strengths and weaknesses in an ERP. The utility can then update or modify their ERP based upon debriefing results. In any case, an ERP should be reviewed and updated as necessary. Many utilities conduct an annual review of their ERP.

Hopefully your water utility will never experience a breach of security, natural or man-made disaster or a backflow incident. However, we all know, it is not if, but when such a situation will occur. The public

expects water purveyors to protect their drinking water. Protecting our drinking water systems must be a primary concern of all water utilities.

*“When it comes to implementing security measures to protect drinking water systems, failure is not an option.”*

Effective cross connection control programs and ERPs are vital components of every utility’s operation. To quote Russ Donoghue, former Utah Rural Water Association executive director, “When it comes to implementing security measures to protect drinking water systems, failure is not an option.”

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## Board Member Profile

### ABPA Board member Danny Jurkowitz knows backflow and basketball

When you move out of your parents’ home at age 17 and purchase your own by age 20, life is moving along pretty quickly. So perhaps it’s not surprising, 4-year ABPA Region 11 Director Danny Jurkowitz has already chosen to retire from that post, at the ripe old age of 41.

The Cincinnati father of two will tell you, it’s the right time for a change. That is, if you can get him to talk at all.

“This is the most I have talked about myself...EVER,” Jurkowitz said, following his chat for this article. “I usually make every attempt to stay out of any spotlight.”

A former region director himself – and ABPA Past President – Ken Kerr recruited Danny to the Region 11 directorship in 2017. Jurkowitz said, when a past Meritorious Service Award winner (2013) asks for your help, it’s hard to say no.

“My 4-year experience has been a lot of fun and I have been able to meet many wonderful people from all over the country,” Danny added. “I have learned more than I ever thought I would about backflow prevention. I don’t really think of this as ‘leaving.’ I just feel I have taken my turn serving. It has been very educational to see all of the perspectives and passion people have for the backflow industry.”

Jurkowitz knows a little about living life with a passion. After graduating high school in 1997, he earned his University of Cincinnati communication degree just four years later, despite working more than full time.

*“My 4-year experience has been a lot of fun and I have been able to meet many wonderful people from all over the country.”*

“I was working about 50 hours per week all through college, taking mostly night classes at the university,” he said. “I was also starting my work as an assistant high school basketball coach at that time.”

Jurkowitz was a member of the Archbishop Moeller varsity basketball team his last two years at the school. However, an injury in his senior year relegated him to the bench, where he also developed an affinity for coaching. That very first winter after graduating, Crusaders head basketball coach Carl Kremer named him an assistant coach. Nearly 25 years later, they are both still there.

“We weren’t a very strong program back when I was playing and my first few years coaching,” Danny said. “But we have built the program and now win league titles every year. The other schools hate us with an unbelievable passion. We are 110-5 over the past four years.”

The Moeller basketball program is so strong, the team routinely travels out of Ohio in search of quality competition.



*ABPA Region 11 Director Danny Jurkowitz plans to leave that post at the end of the year.*



*Coach Jurkowitz talks with one of his players.*

*"The other schools hate us with an unbelievable passion. We are 110-5 over the past four years."*

"Over the years we have taken the team to about 20 different states, including way out west to Utah, Arizona and California," he added. "And teams from even more states have come to play us here in Ohio."

Somehow in the midst of working 50 hours a week, earning his college degree and helping to build a basketball dynasty, Jurkowitz also found time to meet and marry his wife, Jessica, a fellow Cincinnati University communication major. Their children – Jackson 11 and Emma 9 – recently returned to their elementary school classrooms, though Danny was pessimistic about how long that would last, thanks to COVID-19.

"We were given the choice of having the kids return to school or study on line and it was not a tough choice," Danny explained. "There is little to no risk to kids and we really wanted to send them back. However, the school has said if they get three (coronavirus positive) cases they will shut the school down. So, we'll see how long it lasts."

For the record, Jackson is more interested in football than Dad's sport, basketball. And Emma is following in Mom's footsteps, with a passion for horses.

"Jessica is a professional equestrian; her entire life has been horses," Jurkowitz said. "She used to compete throughout the Cincinnati and Lexington (KY) areas. She's even competed in Florida and (Washington) DC. She is supposedly very good at (riding). People (who actually understand the sport) tell me that."



*Football, basketball and horses keep the Jurkowitz family busy when not at work and school.*

Danny explains, his wife works at Clover Hill Farm equine facility and boarding stable outside Cincinnati, training the animals and giving riding lessons.



*For the record, that is NOT Danny with his wife of 14 years, Jessica.*

Back to his own career, Jurkowitz is owner and president of Winstel Controls, a wholesale distributor of backflow prevention equipment, along with pumps, HVAC supplies, boilers, furnaces, air conditioners and other equipment. He also owns Nicholson Lab, Inc. which provides factory recalibrations and replacement parts for a wide array of test equipment.

"I am a little different than a majority of ABPA members because backflow prevention is only a small part of my business," Danny added. "I became involved with ABPA in 2010. But I am not a certified tester. I feel that's a conflict of interest, because I sell equipment to testers. I am also not a certified teacher, although I

teach under certified teachers at four different schools in Cincinnati and northern Kentucky."

As for his imminent departure from the Region 11 directorship, Jurkowitz added, "I am now looking to find someone to take on the position. I am not going to leave (the ABPA board of directors) high and dry."

As he prepares to depart, Danny has also given thought to how ABPA can strengthen its membership numbers, moving forward.

"It is clear we have to continue creating value for our members in new ways," he concluded. "There are many opportunities for the association to make an impact in the industry. Fortunately, many of the obstacles that have stood in the way during my time have recently been removed, by way of the tireless work of Tim Brown and others. I believe with our new management company, and increased capabilities, the organization is positioned well to start taking advantage of available opportunities."

*"There are many opportunities for the association to make an impact in the industry. The organization is positioned well to start taking advantage of available opportunities."*

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*Past Meritorious Service Award Winner Profile*

## Family and travel keep former ABPA stalwart Tony Ippolito hopping at 81

You would think long time ABPA member Tony Ippolito likes balance in his life. After all, he has four children – two boys and two girls... six grandkids – three and three... and he had two different 20+ year careers – with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Cambridge Water Department.

*"I'm so proud of Tony's energy, his enthusiasm, his work ethic. Whenever anyone needs a volunteer, he's the first one to step up."  
-Jean Ippolito*

But that balance goes out the window when you see Tony in his New England Patriots protective face mask! Everyone south or west of Connecticut knows that dynasty has been completely unbalanced for a generation. Still, if you can get past his taste in NFL teams, this past president of the New England ABPA chapter seems like someone you might want along for good humor, as you travel the world.

At least Jean – Tony's 'better half' for 60 years – thinks so.

"I'm so proud of Tony's energy, his enthusiasm, his work ethic," Jean Ippolito said. "Even in retirement, he is president of our condo association. And whenever anyone needs a volunteer, he's the first one to step up."

Ippolito retired from his water works engineer position with the Cambridge Water Department in 2004, after working for the municipality 28 years. For more than ten of those 28 years he was also active as the ABPA Region 1 director.

"Other organizations compete with ABPA for membership; but, in my heart, ABPA is the leading (water quality) organization in the United States," Tony said. "Water is a natural resource and protecting it is critical. ABPA has a very strong ability to do this."

*"Water is a natural resource and protecting it is critical. ABPA has a very strong ability to do this."*

Ippolito served on a variety of ABPA committees during his time with the organization. Even now, at age 81, he's a member of the certification committee.

Last May 15, the former East Boston High School sweethearts Tony and Jean celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with what they thought was going to be a quiet, COVID-quarantined dinner for two at home. But their children and a few friends had other plans.

"We were enjoying our anniversary dinner when one of our kids called and told us to go to the front door," he said. "There was a whole string of cars driving by, honking and waving to help us celebrate. About 25 people came to the back yard for a socially-distanced celebration. It was quite a nice surprise!"



*Jean and Tony Ippolito celebrated their anniversary last May.*

Over the course of his career, Ippolito earned a number of the top honors ABPA bestows upon its most active members. In 1998, Tony earned the Golden Eagle award. In 2002, he was named the Region Director of the Year. And in 2007, Ippolito earned ABPA's highest honor, the Meritorious Service Award.

Before any of those, he was also proud to earn the national testing championship in 1992.

"There were about 20 contestants and we were judged on time and accuracy," Tony explained. "I was proud to win it. They gave me a huge test kit and a nice plaque."

Our global coronavirus pandemic has both Tony and Jean chomping at the bit to get back to their favorite retirement activity – travelling.

*"I believe we have visited at least 35 countries. An ABPA speaking engagement got me to New Zealand."*

"I believe we have visited at least 35 countries," Ippolito said. "We have been all through Europe and to Japan, Egypt, Russia, Japan, Morocco, Australia and other places. We also cruised the Panama Canal. An ABPA speaking engagement got me to New Zealand. Traveling is definitely our biggest hobby. I guess after that it would be golf."

Most recently, just last year, Tony and Jean visited Aruba and other Caribbean locales. He also estimates they have touched "about three-quarters" of our 50 states.



*Italy (L) and Ireland (R) are two of the countries Jean and Tony have visited.*

"We have been to Hawaii, but not Alaska – yet," he added. "It is definitely on our radar – on the bucket list."

However, Tony and Jean both agree, professional accomplishments, travel and golf all fall below what they consider to be their biggest achievement.

"All four of our children are college graduates along with four of the six grandkids, while the other two are still working toward their degrees," Jean said. "Our

oldest son has an engineering degree and works for IBM. Our other son is the physical plant engineer at the Museum of Science in Boston. Our daughters are a junior high science teacher and a nurse. Our biggest accomplishment in life has been raising educated, successful kids."

"I've raised a wonderful family and had a great career," Tony concluded.

Perhaps Ippolito is a Patriots' fan we can tolerate after all.



*When he's not travelling the seven seas with Jean, his wife of 60 years, Tony (middle) also finds time to drive, putt and chat, closer to home with his favorite golf partners.*

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## A Message from ABPA Past President Tim Brown Backflow assembly test report timeliness during a pandemic

As I approached the end of my three-year term as ABPA President with the arrival of 2020, and began turning over the reins to Frank, I had already compiled my list of items related to my "day job" that I planned to address over the next few to several months. Oh, I had juggled the multiple balls of my job with ABPA duties fairly well over the past few years, but – in addition to my family – there were areas on which I now needed to focus, including certain aspects of my municipal backflow prevention program. I would dive right in this spring after my term ended.

Ah, the best laid plans of mice and men!!

These plans apparently didn't know about a world-wide pandemic. As you are aware, we couldn't even reach the point where my term ended, and Frank's began, at an on-site, annual conference... the way ABPA has done things for more than 30 years.

But COVID-19 certainly **did** force my immediate attention to the backflow prevention program.



ABPA Past President Tim Brown

First, some quick background... I oversee some 4,000 assemblies among the nearly 21,000 customers of my county water authority. Backflow protection on the domestic water feed is required of all commercial, institutional and industrial customers. Fire and irrigation system protection are mandated for all customers, including residential. Backflow assembly protection of residential domestic water is not required in my system at this point, although education is a part of our program. Annual testing is required on all assemblies.

I will preface my comments below by saying, what I faced with my municipal program was/is likely very similar to what any program manager in the country faced this spring and summer. In addition, I recognize my system is what I would describe as "mid-sized," certainly dwarfed by systems some of my ABPA colleagues handle.

Reminder-to-test letters for 4,000 assemblies average about 330 per month. However, in March through June, more than 400 reminders per month go out, due in large part to irrigation system start-up. Interestingly, these four months were also the peak of the pandemic.

*"Customers were obviously uncomfortable with testers coming into their homes or businesses."*

My reminder – and especially the follow-up non-compliance and notice of violation (NOV) letters – had to be immediately revised in April. I removed threats of a fine, and the ultimate "hammer" of water service termination, if a test report was not delivered to us.

I assume most jurisdictions across the country put a freeze on water terminations for customers who were unable to make timely payments on their utility bill. I also assume these termination freezes extended to the failure to test backflow assemblies. The reminder-to-test letters did state the critical importance of testing if an irrigation system was to be used.

Customers were obviously uncomfortable with testers coming into their homes or businesses. Contractors, while trying to maintain some level of a workload, were equally concerned with proper social distancing.

Because of these very challenging conditions – and with no good way to overcome them – any backflow program manager worth his or her salt had to be wary of a possible backflow incident in the system, and probably suffered through at least a few restless nights.

It is fortuitous there is minimal "heavy" industry in my jurisdiction. But this is not to say I don't have any high hazard water usage. Our sizable customers include: two large hospitals, University of Virginia satellite facilities and a large federal Army intelligence complex.

However, my greatest concern this spring and summer with the lack of timely testing centered around residential and commercial irrigation customers. My fear was, they might decide to start up their systems without having the backflow assembly tested, especially if we had an early hot or dry period.



Fortunately, central Virginia temperatures and rainfall proved to be seasonable in March through June, limiting irrigation where backflow assemblies had not been tested. By mid-August, some 160 assemblies (4%) were severely past due for testing, and normally would have already been penalized.

Instead, my colleague Eric – who handles our day-to-day backflow program operations and hand-enters the 4,000 annual test reports – contacted the customers of these 160 assemblies. As of mid-September, still with no threats of a fine or service termination, he had reduced the number to just over 40 assemblies.

Fourteen (14) of these are assemblies associated with irrigation systems. However, since we have received significant, and regular, rainfall for the past six weeks, I doubt these systems are now being used, if they were ever used at all this season.

We will continue our effort to receive test reports for the remaining non-compliant assemblies. But we are certainly seeing the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. I am drafting yet another set of reminder, non-compliance and NOV letters to send October 1. The wording gets us back to that of the normal letters, but still without the threat of water service termination.

I would enjoy hearing from other system managers on your experiences with testing compliance during the pandemic ([tbrown@serviceauthority.org](mailto:tbrown@serviceauthority.org)).

*“By mid-August, some 160 assemblies (4%) were severely past due for testing, and normally would have already been penalized.”*

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## A Message from ABPA Secretary Billie Vines Backflow testing in our COVID-19 world

Thanks to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for sending out several missives indicating the nature of “essential work.” Although the need to be sensitive to testing and service mandates in light of measures in place to limit non-essential activities, the specification that infrastructure remains a high priority has been met with some resistance in many work spaces.



ABPA Secretary Billie Vines Some are genuinely concerned for the safety of their personnel and patients, while others are just trying to “hang on” through the throes of this pandemic without spending any more than is absolutely necessary. While some do not see the “need” to perform irrigation testing, this is taken in light of the fact that irrigation itself is pretty well understood to be “non-essential.”

However, because culinary water system protection remains a high priority, this can cause a conflict or misunderstanding among those who have non-essential irrigation connections isolated from our water systems by essential protection which do require annual service (see recommended best practices for backflow prevention testing – position statements/ABPA).

On a number of occasions, my office has been asked to “suspend” enforcement of testing/service requirements until pandemic restrictions are lifted. While some accept the lack of necessity to irrigate turf and landscapes, the need to ensure all connections to public water systems are protected remains critical. This is not difficult to overcome where mechanical and fire protection systems are protected from backflow. But even in these instances, there has been some pushback on service requirement enforcement.

The confusion is not just with backflow device owners, but has also extended to some service providers who test/service backflow prevention devices. One of our fire protection companies suspended operations for more than two months, believing they would not be permitted access to the facilities they service.

*“While some accept the lack of necessity to irrigate turf and landscapes, the need to ensure all connections to public water systems are protected remains critical.”*

This also mistakenly included the belief that since their primary occupation was fire protection and a low hazard enterprise, they should not be considered an essential provider. Spreading the word, this service is also considered "essential," took some effort when you consider their offices were closed and no one was responding to messages!

In some cases, providers waited for direction from utilities and municipalities before continuing to provide customer service. We released several notices containing the CDC opinion that backflow prevention and other essential services remained a priority. The notices also reiterated the need to take precautions to protect employees, device owners and their patrons from coronavirus.



We supported these actions by providing our service providers with notices to give to their customers, stating that service requirements did remain in effect. We also actually stepped up enforcement to clean up delinquent devices.

Fortunately, in our jurisdiction and I hope in yours, we have not heard of any associated cluster activity as a result of the backflow service provision. Plenty of activity in various types of facilities continue to erupt.

*"Local testers have been very good about protecting their customers by using personal protective equipment and social distancing."*

However, there have been very few coronavirus infections among testers, although there was one COVID-19 death among our testers.

While the potential is there for someone to be asymptomatic – but able to transmit coronavirus – use of proper precautions have, thus far, prevented that from occurring. Local testers have been very good about protecting their customers by using personal protective equipment and social distancing. That can be a difficult task when

we want to use facial expressions to convey confidence to customers. But, obviously, for the time being that is the new normal.

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## Certification Program Update

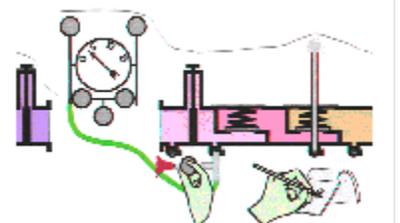
### Hands on hints: Properly elevate your gauge

By Mike Ahlee, Certification Programs Administrator

Even if you have recertified 3, 4 or 5 times, your nerves and sweat glands can still get a major workout during hands-on performance testing. However, if you prepare ahead of time... relax... don't get in a hurry... and don't use "short cuts," you should do just fine.

We are all familiar with Double Check valve field test procedures and the requirement to hold the field test kit at the proper elevation. The field test procedures specify the exact moment when the field test kit must be placed at the proper elevation. **That critical moment is before the #1 shutoff valve is closed.**

This can be done any time before closing the #1 shutoff valve. But, if the field test kit is not at the proper elevation when the #1 shutoff valve is closed, your proctor must consider that an error.



The logic behind this is fairly simple. If you close the #2 shutoff valve and that shutoff valve is leaking, the field test kit will remain virtually unchanged because the #1 shutoff valve is still open, supplying constant pressure. As soon as you close the #1 shutoff valve (with the #2 shutoff valve still leaking), the differential pressure reading on the field test kit will begin to drop.

*"If the field test kit is not at the proper elevation when the #1 shutoff valve is closed, the differential pressure reading will be inaccurate."*

If you position the field test kit at the proper elevation before closing the #1 shutoff valve, you will get an accurate differential pressure reading for the check valve. However, if the field test kit is not at the proper elevation when the #1 shutoff valve is closed, the differential pressure reading will be inaccurate.

By the way, the critical moment for positioning the field test kit at the proper elevation while testing the PVB (or SVB) is exactly the same – before you close the #1 shutoff valve. Remember, ABPA proctors are required to view your actions to determine whether they could have caused erroneous results. Whether or not your action actually did cause inaccurate results is not the issue.

Your proctors all hope you do well. We know how upsetting it can be when you make a mistake, especially when it's due to nerves or being in a hurry. So, stay away from the double cappuccinos and remember, no one ever died from failing a Hands-On Performance Test.....yet.

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## Chapters' Corner

### North Texas, Arkansas & Hawaii Chapters treading 'rona waters as best they can

OK, time to address the elephant in the room – and no, not the political one. Fact is, spotlighting individual ABPA chapters – more than half a year into a global pandemic – is no picnic. Training? "No." Monthly meetings? "No." State conferences? "Are you serious?"

Nonetheless, the newsletter must go on. Here's a sampling of what some of your ABPA chapters are trying to do, during these difficult times.

#### North Texas ABPA Chapter

Despite our coronavirus limitations, the greater Dallas area ABPA chapter recently filled two vacated board of director positions. Fort Worth Senior Environmental Specialist James (Jimmy) Burgdorf will fill a term through next May. Meantime, licensed backflow tester and landscape irrigator Jeff Amon takes over a board term that runs through May 2022.

Robert Hockenberry has been a member of the North Texas ABPA chapter since 2008 and its treasurer for the past six years. An environmental compliance

specialist for the Irving Water Utilities Department, Hockenberry says the next pressing matter for his chapter is to elect a new president.



*North Texas ABPA Chapter  
Treasurer Robert Hockenberry.*

"Our previous president moved out of the area, to Austin, leaving the position open," he said. "We are now reaching out to our members about it, through our newsletter. We hope to elect the new president during our November meeting, whether that is in person or over Zoom. I hope we can meet in person, because that November meeting is always a lot of fun. We get vendors to donate lots of door prizes. Everyone leaves with some kind of gift."

The North Texas chapter normally meets quarterly, in February, May, August and November. However, after the pre-virus February meeting drew 53 of the chapter's 64 members, the next two sessions had to be cancelled. But they are committed to that November session, even if it cannot be face-to-face.

Hockenberry says the key to his chapter's growth has been a focus on giving members value for their \$88 annual membership fee.

"We used to move our meetings around to several different locations, years ago," he explained. "But six years ago, we began hosting all of our meetings at the Irving Water Utilities conference room, which has great audio-visual equipment. Then we started offering continuing education classes during our meetings, which the members love."



*North Texas ABPA chapter officials credit part of their recent membership success to this comfortable, hi-tech meeting room.*

Also, at each meeting, members can bring their gauges and test kits in for inspection. They give the equipment to Brian Fiorisi, owner of Test Gauge Incorporated, who inspects the hardware and returns it to

the members, the same day.

*"More than anything, we focus on coming up with all we can to give our members a bang for their buck."*

"Brian drives the equipment to his shop, checks it for accuracy and returns it on time," Hockenberry said. "Then he explains to members what repairs, if any, are needed."

Robert says the success of the North Texas ABPA chapter is a team effort.

"Everyone is helping out and pitching in to make our chapter a success," he concluded. "We have had three or four new members sign up during the COVID shutdown. More than anything, we focus on coming up with all we can to give our members a bang for their buck."

## Arkansas ABPA Chapter



*Stephen Bitely is Arkansas ABPA Chapter President for a third time.*

A member of the Arkansas ABPA chapter nearly 20 years, Stephen Bitely is now on his third go-round as president (2007 & 2015). He says active membership has declined over that time; and COVID-19 has only made things more challenging. The chapter currently has 48 paid members.

"When I first started attending chapter meetings, we had 50 to 100 participants," Bitely said. "But now we are lucky to get 30 people out. One problem we have is that we are not able to offer our members the type of continuing education hours they need for recertification. We offer 'indirect' hours; but what they need are 'direct' hours. So, we are looking into changing this if we can."

Stephen is regional vice president of VSC Fire and Security, which installs and inspects fire alarm, sprinkler and security systems. With four locations in Arkansas, he spends a lot of time on the road.

"We test about 7,000 backflow units each year," he added.

ABPA chapter officials are still hopeful the pandemic will be under control enough that they can host their annual conference December 10, at the Arkansas Environmental Academy, on the campus of Southern Arkansas University Tech, in Camden.

*"We've had a couple of Zoom meetings since coronavirus hit, but nothing face-to-face."*

"We've had a couple of Zoom meetings since coronavirus hit, but nothing face-to-face," Bitely said. "I think we could maintain social distancing for the December meeting. If not a full membership meeting, we're at least hoping our board can meet together."

The board is expected to discuss a couple of options, with the aim of growing their membership. For starters, Stephen wants to discuss comingling their members with another group in the state that's enjoying more success.



*This September 2019 seminar is one of the last events Arkansas ABPA members were able to attend, face to face.*

"I think we should team up with the Arkansas Rural Water Association based in Lonoke," he said. "I have attended some of their conferences and they had probably four times the number of people attend that we do. I know there has been some friction between the groups in the past. But we have been bridging that gap. Like everything else though, COVID slowed that down this year."

Bitely and his board also want to take another run at convincing decision makers to allow Arkansas to host an upcoming ABPA national conference.

"We've been trying for four years now, to host the national conference," he concluded. "We have three different cities with great hotels, public transportation and things for visitors to do. We also have great relationships with the hotels and other vendors so we could negotiate great rates. I think hosting the conference could really boost our state membership. So, we will probably discuss that again."

The Arkansas cities Bitely hopes to be considered to host a future ABPA national conference are Hot Springs, Bentonville or Little Rock.

### Hawaii ABPA Chapter

Conditions for the Hawaii ABPA chapter are much more dire than Arkansas, with only 11 current members. Moreover, the man trying to hold it all together has been retired for 14 years.

Past ABPA Meritorious Service Award winner (2017) Bill Wong founded the Hawaii chapter years ago. He retired in 2006 after working 34 years for his state's health department. During his career, Wong also brought the ABPA's Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Certification program to his state.



*Bill Wong basically "is" ABPA out on the islands.*

"I do everything for the chapter: write checks, organize meetings and maintain contacts," Wong said. "I'm the only one crazy enough to still hang around, after being retired 14 years. But I enjoy it."

The Hawaii chapter had planned to offer recertification training to its members in June, but were unable to because of coronavirus.

*"We will schedule new training as soon as we are allowed; but right now we are in chop suey territory. COVID has just brought everything to a standstill."*

"We will schedule new training as soon as we are allowed; but right now, we are in chop suey territory," he added. "We try to have a conference here every two years. But it's been four years now since our last one. COVID has just brought everything to a standstill."

Bill admits, his ABPA chapter is in the midst of some very difficult times.

"This is a crisis situation because we are so isolated and can't provide the training our members need," Wong said. "Coronavirus has devastated our membership; and the members we do have are getting older. The chapter could die out if we don't get through COVID soon. And our state health department is not recognizing the urgency of this situation."

Like the Arkansas chapter, Wong would love it if Hawaii could host a future ABPA national conference. But he's the first to admit, that can be a hard sell for member employers to fund.



*They take backflow equipment security pretty serious out in Hawaii.*

"Many people believe conferences in Hawaii are just for play and that's hard to overcome," he said.

Moreover, Bill said the pandemic is devastating many aspects of island life, where tourism is such a critical part of their economy.

“We have huge Waikiki hotels that are completely closed,” he said. “We also have very high unemployment because of the virus. These are tough times.”

Nonetheless, Wong remains optimistic and, like the rest of us, is just waiting for virus numbers to fall.

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