The Florida Section has grown by leaps and bounds in the past few years, thanks to sound planning and meeting the needs of our membership, which includes a variety of different water-related interest groups. Increasing our board of directors to include representatives from both the Contractors Council and the Operators Council has given us a broader voice on industry issues and will create a more effective organization for the long term.

There is no doubt in my mind that the strength of this organization is due to the support and commitment of our volunteer members. The drinking water community is facing exciting and challenging times. The FSAWWA is well-organized and prepare to work with its members to meet both current challenges and those in the future.

It’s not good enough, however, to just be on the right track; to succeed we need to be sure that the light at the end of the tunnel is not a train coming at us! To stay a vital and viable group, one of the section’s highest priorities is to increase the number of member volunteers. With more volunteers, there is more experience and knowledge that are available to the section. New people bring new ideas, and new ideas strengthen any organization.

Unfortunately, the current economic climate is forcing employees to make tough decisions to survive. More and more companies are limiting the amount of volunteer participation, travel, and support of employees compared to past years. This trend is most disturbing when we think about the energy and enthusiasm of younger professionals, or those new to the industry.

In order to ensure the success of the Florida drinking water industry in the future, strong support needs to be given to young professionals who want to get involved. Long-term industry success depends on it, and as industry managers we must continue to support and encourage new volunteers—or the train will run over us.

If you’re a utility industry manager I encourage you to support your workers who have the interest, drive, and ambition to serve the section in any way they would like. Their involvement will benefit themselves and their companies, and make our water community a better place.

The Conference is Almost Here!

The FSAWWA 2012 fall conference, “Managing Responsibly: It’s All One Water,” will be held November 25-29 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Hotel in Orlando. If you’re interested in joining a committee, or would just like more information about FSAWWA, stop by the section booth in the exhibit hall.

Technical sessions and workshops will be held throughout the conference, offering a variety of topics, including water conversation, membranes, maintaining infrastructure, water distribution, regulatory compliance, and other water issues.

The Florida 2030 Water Summit, which will be held at the conference, is an open opportunity for key water providers, managers, and other stakeholders to discuss the most significant and challenging water issues that we face, and create a new set of action steps and priorities for the 2013 legislative session. We need your input, so please plan on attending.

The section will also host fun and lively competitions among Florida municipalities to find the most skilled person or team in the Back Hoe Rodeo, Meter Madness, and Tapping Contest.

Another contest is the Water Bowl, a question-and-answer competition like TV’s Jeopardy! game show, for students from Florida universities. Teams compete against each other to see who can answer the most questions correctly in the least amount of time.

The “Fresh Ideas” poster session encourages participation at the conference by young professionals, and the author of the winning poster will receive a free trip to the 2013 AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE) in Denver.

Don’t Pass Up a Free Exhibit Hall Pass

The Florida Section is increasing its efforts to make the conference and exhibit hall accessible to as many utility employees as possible. Complimentary exhibit hall passes will be provided to all utility staff simply by contacting our section office. If you are a utility manager or supervisor, this is a great way to reward your key staff at virtually no cost, while at the same time providing them with the best technical and networking resources in our industry. For your complimentary passes, contact the FSAWWA administrative office at 407-957-8448 or at fsawwa@gmail.com.

I hope to see you in Orlando!