The AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE) held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia in June provided valuable learning and networking opportunities for all of our water professionals. If you haven’t yet attended this conference, I strongly urge you to consider attending next year’s event, which will be held June 11-14 in Las Vegas.

State-of-the-art technical sessions, exhibitors from around the world, exciting networking events, and world-class competitions all combine to teach and inspire you in your profession. This four-day conference is always well worth your time and money.

Here are some of the Florida Section highlights from ACE17.

City of Palm Coast Team is AWWA Top Ops Champion

For the second year in a row, our own “Palm Coast Water Buoys” from the City of Palm Coast took first place in the AWWA Top Ops competition at ACE. The champions included Peter Roussell (team captain), Jim Hogan (coach), Fred Greiner, and Tom Martens. This is their seventh first-place title since 2006 and they have been in the Top Ops Hall of Fame since 2005.

Top Ops is a fast-paced question-and-answer tournament for AWWA section teams of water operators and laboratory personnel. The teams compete by correctly answering a broad range of technical questions and math problems, and the one scoring the most points in the championship round is awarded the Top Ops championship.

Congratulations Palm Coast Water Buoys—you are the best!

Beverly Medina Takes Second Place in AWWA Fresh Ideas Poster Contest

The Florida Section is proud that Beverly Medina’s Fresh Ideas Poster placed second at ACE. A student at the University of Florida, Beverly’s poster was entitled, “Evaluating Options for Regenerant Brine Reuse in Ion Exchange Systems for Dissolved Organic Carbon Renewal.” Congratulations and great job Beverly!

Ana Maria Gonzalez Named AWWA Director

Ana Maria Gonzalez, P.E., with Hazen and Sawyer, is the new AWWA director from the Florida Section.

At this year’s ACE, Ana Maria Gonzalez, FSAWWA past chair, began her tenure as a member of the AWWA board of directors. Her term is 2017 to 2020. She follows Jacqueline Torbert, FSAWWA past chair, who capably served as AWWA director from 2014 to 2017. Congratulations, and thank you Ana Maria and Jackie for your service to AWWA and the Florida Section.

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Jacqueline Torbert is Chair of AWWA Diversity and Member Inclusion Committee

Announced at ACE, Jackie Torbert will lead AWWA and its sections as chair of the Diversity and Member Inclusion Committee. The committee’s mission is to create a diverse membership and establish an organizational environment that recognizes, encourages, celebrates, and effectively utilizes each individual member’s talents. Over the years Jackie has consistently and fully supported AWWA and the Florida Section and she continues to be a source of knowledge and inspiration. She also serves on AWWA’s Governance Review Committee and its campaign for “The Water Equation.” She recently completed her two-year term as AWWA vice president and her three-year term as AWWA director. Congratulations and thank you Jackie.

Jason Parrillo Receives Fuller Award at Breakfast Ceremony

Jason Parrillo of the Hillsborough County Public Utilities Department received the Fuller Award for his distinguished service to the water supply field in commemoration of the sound engineering skills, brilliant diplomatic talent, and constructive leadership that characterized the life of George Warren Fuller. Jason has a long history of dedicated service to FSAWWA, having served as Public Affairs Council chair, Region III chair, and section chair. Thanks and congratulations Jason!

Jay Madigan Receives Zenno A. Gorder Membership Recruiting Award

Jay Madigan, FSAWWA’s Membership Committee chair, received the prestigious Zenno A. Gorder Membership Recruiting Award at the ACE opening general session for his success in recruiting the most new AWWA members of any AWWA member in 2016. Congratulations and thank you Jay.
Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department Recognized for 50 Years of Service to the Water Industry

The Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department received special recognition at ACE for its 50 years of service to the water industry. This award recognizes organization members who provided valuable support for AWWA programs and goals through their long-standing AWWA membership. Over the years the department’s employees have provided many valuable volunteer service hours in training and inspiring water professionals throughout Florida and the United States. We thank the department leadership and personnel for their hard work and dedication to the mission of AWWA and the Florida Section.

Destin Water Users Water Tower 1 Receives AWWA Landmark Award

Destin Water Users Water Tower 1 received the AWWA Landmark Award for its continuing service after 50 years. The tower is still fully operational and is a tribute to Destin Water Users as it manages its water supply infrastructure for generations to come.

FSAWWA Receives Club 7 Award for Highest Percent Membership Growth

In 2016, FSAWWA exceeded its overall membership growth goal of 2 percent, with 7.6 percent actual growth relative to 2015. This is the highest growth rate of the AWWA sections in Division 1, which includes the largest of the AWWA sections. The FSAWWA is officially the third largest AWWA section, with 2,464 members as of Dec. 31, 2016. We extend a huge thank you to Jay Madigan, Membership Committee chair; Becky Cook, committee vice-chair; Casey Cumiskey, FSAWWA training coordinator/membership specialist, and other Membership Committee volunteers who work hard to keep our membership strong.

Florida Section’s Annual Luncheon at ACE17

The Florida Section hosted its annual luncheon at ACE to encourage networking among the section members. The 67 members and guests shared their conference experiences and our competition teams were recognized and encouraged. Also featured were two students from the University of Central Florida and one from the University of Florida who gave presentations and competed at ACE. We gave a special thank you to Steven Duranceau, AWWA member and associate professor of environmental engineering at the University of Central Florida, for mentoring two of these students and bringing them to the luncheon. The FSAWWA luncheon was a lively networking and sharing event.

FSAWWA receives the Club 7 Membership award at ACE. Pictured left to right are David LaFrance, AWWA chief executive officer; Grace Johns, FSAWWA chair; Peggy Guingona, FSAWWA executive director; Kim Kunihiro, FSAWWA past chair; and Jeanne Bennett-Bailey, AWWA president.

Above: Several Florida college students interact with water utility professionals at the FSAWWA luncheon.

At left: FSAWWA hosts a lively luncheon at ACE.