Each year the Florida Section accepts applications for the following:

- Meritorious Operator Award
- Outstanding Water Treatment Plant Award
- Most Improved Water Treatment Plant Award

Understandably, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not receive applications for all categories. The priority and focus of the water utilities were—and still are—to continue to provide clean and safe tap water during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Awards Presentation and Criteria

The awards are usually presented at the yearly Florida Water Resources Conference (FWRC) in the spring. This year, due to the coronavirus, FWRC was canceled; therefore, the awards will be presented at the FSAWWA Fall Conference later this year.

All of the application forms for 2019, both hard copies and electronic submissions, were sent out to the four-member panel of judges and reviewers to score each category on a scale of 0 to 10. The scores were then totaled, with the highest overall score being the winner in its respective class.

The categories are:

- Part 1 - General
- Part 2 - Water Quality
- Part 3 - Operation Records
- Part 4 - Maintenance
- Part 5 - Professional
- Part 6 - Safety
- Part 7 - Emergency Preparedness
- Part 8 - Public Relations
- Part 9 – Most Improved

Wayne Schoenfeld is chief operator at the City of St. Petersburg Cosme Water Treatment Plant. Prior to employment at the city, Wayne worked for the U.S. Navy Submarine Service for six years and two years at Halex Microcircuits in the manufacturing and testing electronic equipment division. He has been a member of AWWA since 2016.

The accomplishments which entitle him to receive this award are:

- 30 years of service in operations.
- Coordinates with maintenance staff for shutdowns to perform corrective and preventative maintenance.
- Increased flushing velocity using plant water pressure on slurry line hoses, eliminating the pigging of these lines.
- Comes in on other shifts to train operators and fills in when the city is short-staffed.
- Conducts plant tours.
- Maintains continuous compliance with public health standards.
- Contributes his valuable knowledge of valves, piping, water flow, etc., to help when developing projects with consultants and staff.

The following citation was provided by Waunda C. Barcus, water treatment and distribution manager, City of St. Petersburg:

“Wayne Schoenfeld has worked his way up from plant operator, through the ranks, to chief operator. He is reliable and has demonstrated his ability as an operator many times over. Even when the going gets tough, he continues to have a positive attitude and always looks on the bright side. His experience has enabled us to overcome many obstacles. His contributions to the City of St. Petersburg and staff are too numerous to mention. Wayne always finds a way to get things done.”

The City of Deerfield Beach West Water Treatment Plant provides water to nearly 80,000 residents citywide. It uses three different processes for treatment: reverse osmosis (RO), nanofiltration (NF), and lime softening. The lime softening facility was completed in 1984, with a treatment capacity of 7.5 million gallons per day (mgd). In 2004, the plant was expanded to include a 10.5-mgd NF membrane plant. This facility increased the total treatment capacity of the plant from 7.5 to 18 mgd. To support water supply sustainability, an RO treatment facility was completed in 2012 and placed into service, increasing the reported total treatment capacity of the plant to 19 mgd.

In 2019, the treatment plant underwent a makeover, which included rehabilitation of the accelerator, a bypass blending line installation, new chemical dosing pumps, new instrumentation, and fluoride analyzers. The elevated storage tanks for both plants were also rehabilitated.

The plant has always had great bones, which has enabled the city staff to produce high-quality water for many years. These improvements will now help to move the operation forward with technology and tools that continue to modernize it.
Outstanding Water Treatment Plant, Class A
City of Boca Raton
(information provided by Kara Mills, program policy coordinator)

The City of Boca Raton’s water treatment facilities utilize two types of water treatment processes: lime softening and membrane softening. They are blended to provide a high-quality final water product. As raw water from the City’s 52 groundwater wells enters the facilities, approximately two-thirds of the water is treated by a state-of-the-art membrane softening process, while a lime softening process treats the other one-third. The treated water is then blended to provide the finished product.

Treating a large percentage of the flow via membrane softening surpasses regulatory requirements by removing more than 90 percent of the organic material, producing clear, colorless water. Because of the blending capability, the city can produce over 70 mgd of water. After treatment, this high-quality water is pumped through the water distribution network or stored to meet peak demands.

Utilizing the storage tanks ensures meeting the early morning peak demands and allows the treatment facility to operate at a constant rate during the day, providing a more efficient and effective operation. There are 675 miles of pipe in the distribution system, and the city serves approximately 130,000 people with 37,000 connections.

Outstanding Water Treatment Plant, Class C
Hillsborough County Lake Park Water Treatment Plant
(information provided by Paul Kavanagh, plant manager)

The mission of the Hillsborough County Lake Park Water Treatment Plant is to provide safe drinking water efficiently and reliably to its customers in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner.

The treatment plant is in the northwest portion of Hillsborough County and has an average daily flow of approximately 11 mgd and serves 206,485 people with 55,270 service connections.

The plant is supplied by two different water sources from its regional supplier, Tampa Bay Water. The regional supplies, and a raw groundwater from the Section 21 wellfield, are the two source waters in use. Both source waters are treated with chloramines, fluoride, sodium hydroxide, and polyorthophosphate.

The Lake Park plant is a Hurricane IV-rated facility, with an onsite sodium hypochlorite generator, and its capacity was recently rerated from 15.5 to 31 mgd. The facility is also in the process of starting up a total organic carbon (TOC) pilot project, where performance of TOC removal will be measured independently by both a granular activated carbon and an ion exchange system.

The plant is staffed by seven water plant operators, including a plant manager and plant supervisor, as well as a water quality team consisting of a water quality manager and four licensed plant operators who are cross-trained to operate the plant, should the need arise.

Thank You Florida Water Utilities!

Over the past months, much of the United States has remained sheltered in place, at home, not working; but you, the water utility workers, the unsung heroes, have remained at work and kept the water on! Thank you for all that you are doing for us!

As things begin to open back up, please know that FSAWWA is at work to support you, because you are at work! The FSAWWA remains fully committed to providing training and resources to all utilities in Florida when you need us, wherever you need us!

Please feel free to reach out to the dedicated FSAWWA staff directly with any questions or any concerns that you might have.

On behalf of FSAWWA, I want to thank you for your dedication and hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic!

As always, thank you, too, to our volunteers; the section could not do what it does without you. Please continue to stay safe and healthy!