Welcome to 2022! It was great seeing everyone at our FSAWWA 2021 Fall Conference in Orlando. More than 1,500 people attended the conference and over 500 people attended the Monday night BBQ Challenge! That’s incredible attendance and it was so fantastic to see everyone at all of the events.

Our FSAWWA staff and volunteers worked behind the scenes months in advance (and the week of) the conference to make it a success. Thank you to our FSAWWA staff (Peggy Guingona, Jenny Arguello, Casey Cumiskey, and Donna Metherall) and their families, all prepping for and facilitating the conference.

Thanks go to our Manufacturers/Associates Council (MAC) volunteers (Kim Kowalski, Kevin Stine, Mike George, and countless others) who brought together a sold-out exhibit hall and the biggest BBQ Challenge yet. Thank you to Dr. Chi Ho Sham, president of AWWA, for joining our conference in person—it was our honor to have you with us.

Thank you also to Fred Bloetscher, now FSAWWA past chair, for leading the conference’s technical program and for his mentorship and leadership throughout 2021 getting us back to the “new normal.”

During the Opening General Session at the 2021 Fall Conference, we recognized many volunteers for membership, contributions, and distinguished service, and we also recognized the best water treatment plants and operators in Florida for the most recent full year of service (2020).

Let’s take a closer look at what it takes to be recognized for a water treatment plant (WTP) award and a WTP operator award.

### Water Treatment Plant Awards

For the Outstanding Water Treatment Plant Award, each application is evaluated for the WTP’s water quality, operation records, maintenance, professionalism, safety, emergency preparedness, and public relations. In addition, the WTP can be considered for the Most Improved Water Treatment Plant Award based on demonstrated improvements to the WTP during the last 12 months. Water and wastewater treatment plant capacities are defined in F.A.C. 62-699.310, with Class A water treatment plants as the largest WTPs.

Our Water Treatment Plant Award winners are:

**Most Improved WTP Class A**
Coral Springs Improvement District

Left to right: Fred Bloetscher, FSAWWA chair; Christian McShea, chief operator; and Chi Ho Sham, AWWA president.

**Outstanding WTP Class A**
Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority

Left to right: Fred Bloetscher, FSAWWA chair; Richard Anderson, director of operations; and Chi Ho Sham, AWWA president.

**Most Improved WTP Class B**
City of Clearwater

Left to right: Fred Bloetscher, FSAWWA chair; Fred Hemerick; Timothy Ferlanie; and Chi Ho Sham, AWWA president.

**Outstanding WTP Class B**
City of Clearwater

Left to right: Fred Bloetscher, FSAWWA chair; Fred Hemerick; Timothy Ferlanie; and Chi Ho Sham, AWWA president.

**Outstanding WTP Class C**
Peter’s Creek, Clay County

Left to right: Fred Bloetscher, FSAWWA chair; Dwight Garth; Ross Bland; and Chi Ho Sham, AWWA president.

**Most Improved WTP Class C**
City of Lynn Haven

Left to right: Fred Bloetscher, FSAWWA chair; Derek Rizzuto, lead water operator; and Chi Ho Sham, AWWA president.
Congratulations to the Water Treatment Plant Award winners!

**Water Treatment Plant Operator Awards**

Operators are eligible for the Marvin N. Kaden Outstanding Water Treatment Plant Operator Award and the AWWA Operator’s Meritorious Service Award. Selection is based on six categories of accomplishments:

- Public health standards continuous compliance
- Outstanding plant maintenance contributions
- Equipment/process modifications for treatment improvements
- Special training efforts
- Special acts demonstrating public dedication
- Outstanding contribution to the distribution system

Justification is also based on their accomplishments, biographical data (e.g., employment history, civic organization memberships, year joining AWWA, professional organization memberships, professional awards or honors, educational background, and publications), and a citation of their accomplishments.

Our WTP Operator Award winners are:

**Outstanding WTP Operator**
Robert Nelson, City of Palm Coast

Robert Nelson has an associate of science degree in engineering technology and has worked as an operator for the City of Palm Coast for over seven years. In 2019, during Robert’s first year of participating on the Palm Coast Top Ops team, he helped secure a state championship, while placing second in the national Top Ops competition during the AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition (ACE) in Denver. In Robert’s spare time, he studies programmable logic controller programming and volunteers his time training and educating future operators/trainees in the four-month water treatment study group in Palm Coast.

**Meritorious WTP Operator**
Karla Berroteran-Castellon, Village of Wellington

Karla Berroteran-Castellon has a degree in chemical engineering, with a minor in environmental engineering. She has worked with Wellington’s water treatment plant since 2006, beginning as an operator apprentice; she then earned her Class A operator’s license and was promoted to water plant superintendent in 2013. In 2017, under Karla’s leadership, the water treatment plant was awarded the Most Improved Class A Water Treatment Plant from FSAWWA. Karla is currently the president of the Southeast Desalting Association (SEDA) and is dedicated to the training and certification of water plant operators in membrane treatment.

Sam Stone, Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority

Sam Stone has been employed at the Peace River facility for 40 years, working with General Development Utilities for 10 years and then with the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority for the past 30 years. Sam has served in almost every capacity, beginning with operator, then moving to project manager, laboratory director, and environmental compliance officer; he is now the authority’s land and environmental services manager. His 40 years of experience has established him as the historian of the Peace River facility. Sam continues to be a mentor to all the employees he has coached and understands that the most-valuable part of an organization is the people.

Congratulations to these awardees and thank you for demonstrating water excellence! Thank you to Paul Kavanagh with the FSAWWA Operators and Maintenance Council for receiving the nominations and orchestrating the evaluation of the applications with the review team. Please reach out to these professionals and congratulate them! (I’ve included their photos here.) They are the horsepower behind producing the best drinking water and have shown outstanding dedication to our world of water.

I’m looking forward to sharing a great 2022 with you and what may lay ahead! Let’s make this a year to remember. Blessings and be well.

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**Florida Section**

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