

Water Utilities and FSAWWA



Bill Young
Chair, FSAWWA

As many of you may know, I have worked with the St. Johns County Utility Dept. for over 30 years. For 20 of those years, I have been the director. It's from that perspective that I look at the role of the Florida Section of the American Water Works Association (FSAWWA) in our state.

The key to any successful water utility is the skills and qualifications of its employees. Our utility takes advantage of the FSAWWA training and technical sessions that are offered in order to remain competitive and to assure our customers that the men and women who treat their drinking water are the best employees we can have. Over the years, FSAWWA has aggressively expanded its continuing education options, and more and more water professionals are enhancing their futures by taking advantage of these many options.

The methods of education can come in many forms, from online courses to regional, state, and national seminars and conferences. These conferences also provide a wonderful opportunity to meet vendors and discuss the latest equipment advances. Moreover, a utility employee obtains excellent networking opportunities and is often times able to discuss current issues with other utility personnel in order to analyze the best options available. Obviously, this ability to research equipment and services offers huge advantages for utilities.

Another avenue of participation is our very active Utility Council. This council tracks and participates in critically important regulatory and political issues that can impact all utilities. The council is always open to new participants, and under current leadership is poised to do great things. The many advantages that come with working with this group, and better understanding our many challenges, are too numerous to count.

Many of the nation's best engineering consulting firms participate in FSAWWA activities. This provides additional opportunities to learn more about what they do and the services they offer. This ongoing relationship between our



section and these firms is critical to our success, at both the regional and state levels. Again, much like with our equipment vendors, our coworkers get an excellent opportunity to receive a deeper knowledge of these firms, and the expertise they can provide.

In my opinion, as a utility director, one of the primary benefits of participating in FSAWWA is to encourage and foster leadership paths for our staff. Every utility would benefit greatly from its employees participating in the section. I know my utility is all the better for joining FSAWWA, and I strongly urge your utility to get involved!

