

Fall 2023

# SPLASH

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Established in 1881, the American Water Works Association is the largest nonprofit, scientific and educational association dedicated to managing and treating water, the world's most important resource. With approximately 50,000 members, AWWA provides solutions to improve public health, protect the environment, strengthen the economy and enhance our quality of life.

The Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association (ISAWWA) has more than 2,400 members throughout the State of Illinois and is dedicated to safe and sustainable water for Illinois. The Association develops and delivers low-cost and convenient education seminars for water industry professionals in person and virtually.

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To submit an article for inclusion, email articles and photo files to: [tracy@isawwa.org](mailto:tracy@isawwa.org).

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## Planning for the Future

Jamie Rott

As summer turns into fall, the days grow shorter, the nights get longer, and there begins to be a chill in the air. Many water utilities, firms, and municipalities begin preparing for the winter months and the upcoming year. Planning begins for snow operations, main and service breaks, winter maintenance activities readying facilities for next year, designing plans for bidding, budgets, and projects to come.

ISAWWA leadership gathered in late September at Starved Rock outside of Utica to continue planning for the future by reviewing the progress of our goals and goal outcomes of the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan as well as action planning for 2024 so that we continue to move forward as an organization. What does our strategic plan focus on?

Our strategic plan focuses on four goals:

- Increase engagement of our membership across our diverse industry.
- Raise awareness of the total water cycle to promote positive public perception.
- Impact state legislation and regulations through education, collaboration, and advocacy.
- Build the next generation of total water industry professionals.

The retreat also included discussions surrounding our current programs and services, leadership development, and potential industry disruptors and emerging trends – trends that we are not currently focusing on but may be impacting our members. These trends included not enough contractors, a reduction in consumer usage, a decreasing water supply, an increase in contract operators, supply chain issues, flexible work locations, and so forth. The conversation was engaging and highlighted that while we actively focus on lead service line replacements, PFAS, and workforce development, our members are continuing to keep an eye on what is to come – maybe we will see some of these topics in our next strategic plan!

As the year wraps up, ISAWWA has many events planned! The Fall Regulatory Update was held on October 26 in Palatine (and virtually), followed by a No Water No Bourbon event in Algonquin that evening, a No Water No Hockey game on November 12 at the Allstate Arena in Rosemont, and No Water No Beer event on November 16 in Libertyville. In addition, there are many great in-person and virtual training opportunities – keep checking the ISAWWA app and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and/or X (formerly Twitter) at Illinois Section AWWA (ISAWWA) to stay up-to-date! 💧

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## Big News About WATERCON 2024

Todd LaFountain

By the time you read this article, summer will have come and gone in an instant. As the weather gets cooler and the leaves begin to change, ISAWWA staff and board members are beginning to ramp up planning efforts for WATERCON 2024. This will mark the end of a successful two-decade run at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. The changes at WATERCON 2024 will be many, but the mission of the conference will remain the same: to assemble a dedicated group of total water professionals to network, teach, learn, and ultimately advance the industry.

The first big WATERCON 2024 change to highlight is the time, date, and event venue. WATERCON will be held April 15–17 in Peoria at the downtown Civic Center. The mid-spring timeslot will usher in some better and more predictable weather for a few of the conference's planned outdoor activities. The venue will offer new opportunities for the organization such as a larger exhibit floor and hotels within walking distance. The Civic Center will allow the competitions to be held concurrently with the exhibit hall activities, which mirrors the competition schedule and activities typically done at the AWWA ACE conference.

We will kick off the conference with our opening session and dive into our theme – Value, Impact, Perception (VIP). This is a session you will not want to miss! I will be your emcee and have booked some great industry professionals to provide insights and inspiration on how we as industry leaders can promote the value of water in our communities

“Let's make WATERCON 2024 the biggest and best event in the history of this great organization!”

and across the state. Tracy Mehan, AWWA Executive Director of Government Affairs, will be flying in from the nation's capital to participate in the opening session. Kelly Dearing Smith, Communications and Marketing Vice President at Louisville Water, will be making the trek north to Peoria to offer her industry leading marketing experience and insights. The opening session will conclude with the opening of the vendor exhibit hall. It should be a festive and memorable afternoon! The rest of the conference will include a shorter, but more concentrated schedule.

Event activities will be held on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Get to the conference early and be ready to hit the ground running!

In summary, be ready for some changes at WATERCON 2024. Rest assured, however, that the foundation of what has made this event one of the premier water conferences in the nation will remain. Be sure to look for and explore some new opportunities at this year's event. Let's make WATERCON 2024 the biggest and best event in the history of this great organization! 💧



**MELISSA OLENICK**  
Chair-Elect

### **CORRECTION:** *We Missed Our Chair-Elect in the Summer Issue!*

A Laboratory Supervisor and Safety Coordinator at CLCJAWA and volunteer at ISAWWA for 10 years, Melissa is currently serving as Chair Elect on our Board of Trustees. For this upcoming term, she's most looking forward to hitting the targets on strategic plans and working towards providing more value for members.

Melissa has really enjoyed being a part of the Section, interacting with other professionals, and learning about how important the Section is to the Illinois total water industry. For her, the educational opportunities have allowed her to grow in the industry have been very valuable.

Her advice for members interested in volunteering with ISAWWA is to just go for it. If you wait for the right time to make a commitment, you will never make the leap.

Fun fact about Melissa – she got to be an extra in a movie called *Vice Versa* with Judge Reinhold and Fred Savage, but her acting career was short-lived when the scene she was in got cut. She did meet Judge Reinhold though!





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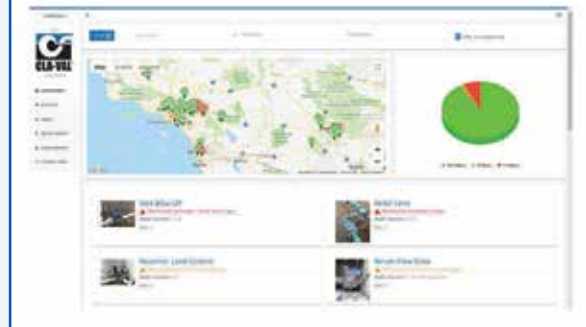
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## Eyes on the Horizon

Carolyn Grieves

I'm excited to be back on the Illinois Section Board and honored to be your Director for the next three years. My responsibility is to represent Illinois at AWWA and aligns with my desire to bring relevant information about AWWA to the Section. I'd like to share a little about myself to get this first article started and will eventually bring us back to this magazine's theme of water efficiency.

You might be surprised that the first fact I'm going to share about myself with you as the Section's Director revolves around sea sickness! I love water. I have said many times the water industry is hands down the best industry. It's comprised of dedicated individuals who prioritize the wellbeing and safety of others, often working behind the scenes without seeking recognition. However, despite my passion for water and the water industry, I'm not a "water" person. Or I should clarify, I'm not a boat person, despite my persistent efforts to become one! I've tried all the tricks including

firmly keeping my eyes on the horizon, Dramamine, ginger gum, pressure point wrist bands, and the list goes on. Unfortunately, I have fed many fish over the years! Once I'm gratefully back on dry land I am always convinced that the horizon view was worth the journey, and I'll do it again... eventually!

My somewhat fishy segue (sorry couldn't resist) brings me to the concept of looking to the future, in particular, the future availability of water. Sometimes it's hard to imagine water efficiency is a topic of significant importance here in Illinois. We have a Great Lake to our east and seemingly abundant groundwater under our towns. However, there is a limit to how much Lake Michigan water the communities are allocated, and utilities need to work hard every day to minimize the loss of that precious resource. Some communities in the Chicago suburbs are already witnessing a reduction in their aquifer levels and are actively strategizing and implementing

alternative water sources to secure their future water supply, all while adopting more efficient water usage practices.

AWWA's **Water 2050** initiative seeks to establish a long-term vision of the future of water. Over the past year and a half, water leaders around the country have collaborated to develop five think tank reports that are available online ([www.awwa.org/resources-tools/water-2050](http://www.awwa.org/resources-tools/water-2050)). In particular, I'd like to highlight the first report focused on Sustainability. The Sustainability report addresses topics of watershed-based thinking, climate resilience, and the value of water. As you consider your own water efficiency programs and think about the sustainability of your water system, I recommend reading these reports for ideas and maybe even a little inspiration. As members of the water industry, one of the most significant contributions we can make is to think about the future, gaze toward the horizon, and plan for the consistent availability of water for future generations. 💧



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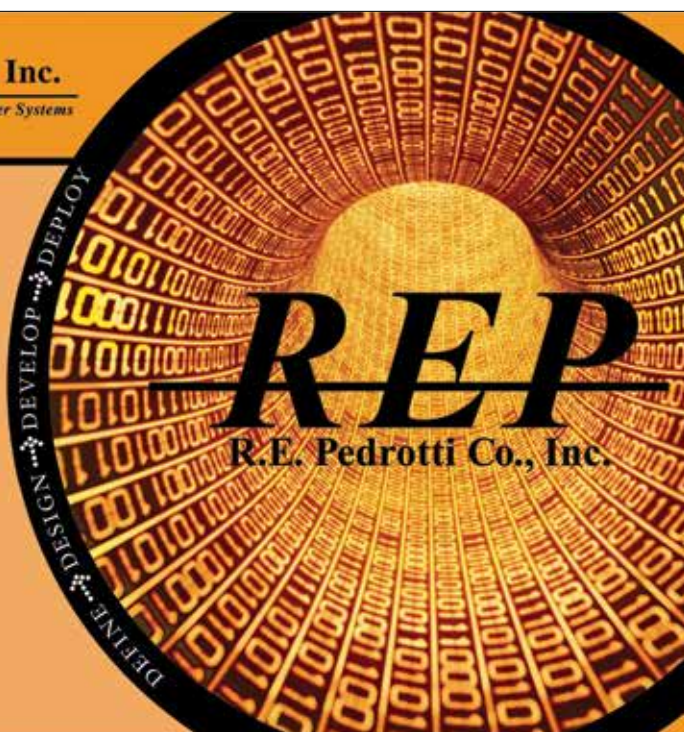


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## Efficiency at the Section

Annie Storey

Our organization often equates efficiency to our key resource – water. As the organization's Executive Director, I look to efficiency to ensure that we are doing our jobs well and using our time and resources to the best of our ability.

I've now been with you for over three years, and we have elevated the Illinois Section American Water Works Association in many ways. One key component of the changes we have made has been efficiency.

There are many things unseen in any organization. Given this *Splash* magazine's theme on efficiency, I thought I'd take a few moments to share with you some of the operational efficiencies we have worked on in the past three years.

WATERCON, our annual conference, is definitely one of our favorite events to work toward each year. It's fun to

“If you aren't a part of a committee, join us!  
Learn more at [www.isawwa.org/committees](http://www.isawwa.org/committees).

connect with our Vice Chair to pick a theme, to work with our MAC to sell our exhibit spaces, and to review all the program sessions we receive. A few changes that we've made in the recent years that allow us to be more efficient and effective with our time include:

- An online session submission process that allows us to review sessions easily and build the calendar once our sessions are selected.
- An interactive exhibit hall map, which allows our exhibiting companies to view their booth neighbors and select and reserve their booth.

- Onsite badge printing – we debuted this last year and not only does it make it easy to print badges, it saves staff hours on preparation and mailing costs.

We're also working closely with AWWA on streamlining membership renewals. We provide you with voicemail reminders before your membership expires, emails right after, and a final postcard reminder for you to renew. By directing you to AWWA for renewal, you're able to work with Customer Service directly to process your membership at AWWA and with the Illinois Section.

Just this year we underwent a committee restructuring. Our goal is to align your volunteer experience on committees with our strategic plan and leadership. As a volunteer, you share your interests with us annually. Your committee leaders have annual goals to work toward and ways for you to engage with the Section. If you aren't a part of a committee, join us! Learn more at [www.isawwa.org/committees](http://www.isawwa.org/committees).

What's more, we improved our website with you in mind. We wanted you to easily find what you're looking for and to make it mobile friendly. We hope that when you visit [www.isawwa.org](http://www.isawwa.org), you can easily sign in and see what the Section offers you as members.

As our staff has implemented new technologies and processes, we've been able to devote time and energy to our strategic plan's key objectives. We hope that if you notice the changes we are making; they are positive reflections of operating more efficiently. 💧

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Kelly Saunders

## Water Efficiency Begins with Us

When we think about water efficiency, the first thing that comes to mind is water conservation – but there is so much more to water efficiency than just conservation! The topic spans from efficient use and production of water to sustainability, reuse, resiliency, and beyond. With only 2.5% of the earth's water being fresh water – 30.1% of which is groundwater, and 68.7% of which is contained in glaciers and ice caps (USGS), we have a duty to protect this vital resource. Historically, in the Midwest we have treated fresh water as an infinite resource, so how do we change that perception and bring about meaningful change in protecting our earth's most vital resource?

**Resource:**

[www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science-school/science/where-earths-water](http://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science-school/science/where-earths-water)

### MANAGING SUSTAINABLE UTILITIES AND COMMUNITIES

#### Stakeholder Education and Engagement

The Water Ambassador Program is a wonderful place to start. The program is rooted in elevating public perception

through educating elected officials and consumers. Connecting with your stakeholders through bill stuffers, newsletters, social media posts, etc., is a fantastic way to start a conversation on the true value of water and the need for water efficiency, sustainability, and resiliency. EPA's **WaterSense** is also another great resource to use for educating stakeholders.

**Resources:**

Water Ambassador Program, **WaterSense**:

[www.isawwa.org/general/custom.asp?page=waterambassador](http://www.isawwa.org/general/custom.asp?page=waterambassador),  
[https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/www3/watersense/our\\_water/why\\_water\\_efficiency.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/www3/watersense/our_water/why_water_efficiency.html)

#### Effective Utility Management Initiative

Most of our utilities are facing enormous challenges with limited resources. Aging infrastructure, extreme weather events, population shifts, regulatory changes, you name it – we are facing it. Planning to tackle all these challenges can be challenging. AWWA (American Water Works Association), along with several other organizations developed the "Effective Utility Management" initiative (EUM)

to help with just that – tackling the most challenging topics we are faced with and prioritizing how we address them to make them slightly more manageable. The document provides utilities with a cohesive structure to help them systematically address various challenges proactively and with confidence to create an individualized 'roadmap' as they move toward sustainable operations over time. I highly recommend at least reading the free primer – in all the chaos of the numerous challenges we face – this helped us focus our attention on what's most important and gave our team a unified direction in pursuing solutions.

As a side note, if you are looking for a terrific book, **Be Where Your Feet Are** is a personal favorite.

**Resource:** Effective Utility Management (AWWA):

[www.awwa.org/resources-tools/programs/effective-utility-management-program](http://www.awwa.org/resources-tools/programs/effective-utility-management-program)

### BUILDING AND MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

As put by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), "Drinking water and wastewater systems should





use robust and comprehensive planning processes to pursue water infrastructure investments that are cost-effective over their life cycle, are resource efficient, and are consistent with community sustainability goals. Systems should also employ effective utility management practices (see above), including consideration of alternatives such as natural or 'green' systems and potential climate change impacts, to build and maintain the technical, financial, and managerial capacity necessary to ensure long-term sustainability."

If money were no object, I'm sure we would all have highly efficient, "green" systems – but for many of us, our challenges outpace our financial and workforce capabilities. For small systems, EPA and AWWA have great resources to assist in educating and financing projects. For medium and large utilities, there are fewer resources BUT we also have larger customer bases who have a quicker impact on our funding capabilities. Rate adjustments (I know – we all shudder) are not the only resource we have, though; the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act** (IIJA or 'Bipartisan Infrastructure Law'), WIFIA, Clean Water SRF (sanitary), Drinking Water SRF (potable water), and EPA community grants can provide great subsidization resources to our communities. Grants are an important option for many utilities and allow investments for the community that are not possible using local resources alone. Unfortunately, grants are not "free money," and can end up costing more money if not managed and monitored properly. Another great resource here would be the Government Finance Officer's Association's (GFOA) *10 Steps to Managing Grants Effectively*.  
**Resources:** IEPA SRF Programs, WIFIA, and GFOA's 10 Steps to Managing Grants Effectively:

<https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/grants-loans/state-revolving-fund.html>,

[www.epa.gov/wifia](http://www.epa.gov/wifia),  
[www.gfoa.org/materials/gfr0423-10steps](http://www.gfoa.org/materials/gfr0423-10steps)

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## A Top-Notch Experience

Ralph L. Gross

Greetings one and all. This is my first article submission as a new member of the Board of Trustees. So far, my first term on the ISAWWA Board of Trustees has been busy, enlightening, and enjoyable. I represent District 2C, which essentially encompasses DuPage County's 39 municipalities, nine townships, and approximately 930,000 residents. Many of you have known me over the years. I've chaired several committees and been an active member of many others since the days of big hair, skinny ties, and new wave music. Many of you have also had to put up with me with a microphone in hand, either giving a presentation or emceeding one of our exciting annual competitions. My new position on the board as a Trustee is a great opportunity for me to serve our Illinois Section members. This has also been my first real opportunity to work closely with our "new" Section staff. Annie and her team have been great to work with, and they waste no time helping me and my fellow board members stay organized, on schedule, and busy serving our Section. Getting to know my fellow board members has been a real pleasure. I've served with many boards over the years, and this one is top notch. I could not have taken on this role without the support and tremendous talent of our staff at Associated Technical Services Ltd. I can't thank them enough for all they do.

Peoria here we come! No sooner did we put a bow on another successful WATERCON when our focus moved on the WATERCON 2024. We are very excited about the new location at the Peoria Civic Center. Booth spaces are selling quickly so we urge you to select and reserve your booth space as soon as you can. We have exciting plans in the works that we hope will make WATERCON 2024 the best one yet.

This spring I attended my first Regional Meeting of Section Officers at beautiful Custer State Park in South Dakota. Meeting over the course of three days with visiting AWWA dignitaries and fellow Section officers from 12 states within Midwest Region III was a personal and professionally enlightening experience. In between meetings we were also able to tour the park and visit Mt. Rushmore while getting to know each other outside of our action-packed sessions.

I have also had the opportunity to participate in our Water Ambassador Gold Award presentations. Twelve municipal water utilities achieved Gold Status this year, and six of them achieved this distinction for the second consecutive year. I had the honor of making presentations at the board meetings for the DuPage Water Commission, City of Elmhurst, Village of Glen Ellyn, and

the Village of LaGrange Park. Having a long personal history with each of these utilities made the award presentation all the better. The Water Ambassador Program is available to every Illinois water utility. Its objective is to elevate public perception of the water industry and promote conservation and consumer education to a municipality's government and citizens. It's also great public relations material. If you're interested in more information, please contact our Section office or me and we'll be pleased get you started.

More recently, I participated in the ISAWWA Leaders Retreat at Starved Rock. Our schedule was packed with educational and thought-provoking content.

Among the new goals I've set for myself is to meet with every water utility within my district to discover if the Section is serving their needs and to obtain any suggestions they may have so that we can continue to better serve and improve the value of Section membership. After all, the Illinois Section AWWA is **your** Section. Our mission has been and will always be to provide educational, networking, and personal growth opportunities that are in the best interests of serving our members. Please feel free to contact me anytime with your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. 💧

“I have also had the opportunity to participate in our Water Ambassador Gold Award presentations. Twelve municipal water utilities achieved Gold Status this year.”



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# Strengthening Small Community Water Supplies in Illinois

Joe Hogan

Illinois boasts a multitude of vibrant communities, each with its own unique charm and character. While these communities thrive on their distinct identities, they also face common challenges, particularly in managing their water supplies. I recently took part in a roundtable hosted by U.S. Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski. The focus of the discussion was looking into the needs of Macoupin County's water infrastructure and how water supplies finance those improvements and upgrades. It became clear many communities are struggling to keep up with regulatory compliance and capital improvements.

As the need for sustainable water management grows more critical, the concepts of shared resources, mutual aid, and regionalization have emerged as vital strategies for ensuring a secure and reliable water supply in Illinois communities, large and small.

Small communities often lack the resources and expertise required to manage their water supplies effectively. Fortunately, shared resources and regionalization – the collaboration between neighboring communities to collectively manage water resources – offers a solution. By combining efforts, communities can pool their resources, knowledge, and infrastructure to create a more resilient and efficient water supply system. This approach not only ensures better water quality and infrastructure maintenance, but also spreads the financial burden of system upgrades across multiple communities, making them more affordable and feasible.

Water treatment plants, distribution networks, and maintenance facilities are capital-intensive investments that small communities might struggle to afford individually.

“If you haven't already, I highly recommend looking into the Illinois Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (ILWARN).”

Shared resources entail the joint use of these facilities, allowing communities to benefit from economies of scale. This approach minimizes redundancy in infrastructure and equipment, reducing costs while maintaining or even improving the quality of water services. Additionally, shared resources facilitate technology sharing and skills exchange among neighboring communities, leading to enhanced operational efficiencies and increased water management expertise.

Along with the ongoing struggle to keep water systems up to date and compliant, communities also must deal with the unpredictability of natural disasters, infrastructure failures, and contamination events. These scenarios highlight the importance of mutual aid agreements among communities. In times of crisis, neighboring communities can provide each other with critical assistance, whether in terms of emergency water supply, technical expertise, or resources. Mutual aid agreements establish a framework for coordinated response, enabling swift and effective actions that can mitigate the impact of water-related emergencies and ensure the safety of residents. If you haven't already, I highly recommend looking into the Illinois Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (ILWARN). Their mission is “to support and promote statewide emergency preparedness, disaster response, and mutual assistance matters for public and private water and wastewater utilities for natural and man-made events.” For more information, please visit [www.ilwarn.org](http://www.ilwarn.org).

Beyond technical and financial benefits, shared resources and mutual aid promote a sense of unity among neighboring communities. By working together to address common water supply challenges, these communities foster relationships and build trust among residents, local governments, and water utilities. This collaborative spirit enhances community strength not only in the face of water-related challenges, but also in other aspects of overall community development. 💧



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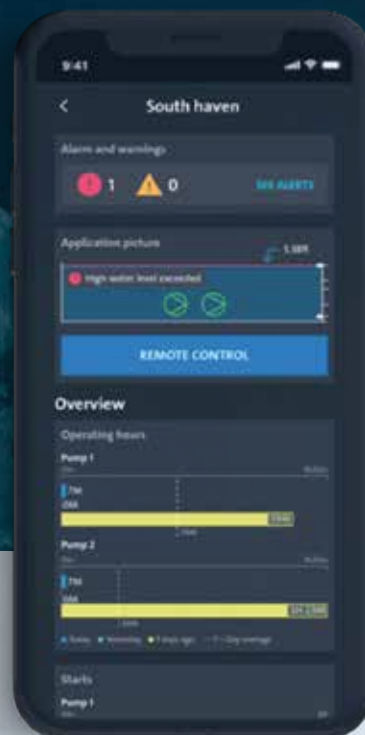
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### NOVEMBER

- 11/14 **Utility Math Refresher** | Sugar Grove
- 11/14 **Leadership Series – Part 3** | Virtual  
*Cultivating a Coaching Culture*
- 11/16 **Young Professional Leadership & Innovation Day 2023** | Lake Bluff
- 11/16 **No Water No Beer – Joint Section (IL & WI)** | Libertyville
- 11/20 **Mission Monday: Water Rate Setting Across Illinois** | Virtual  
*Affordability, Policy Impact, and Coordination Strategies*
- 11/28 **Leadership Series – Part 4** | Virtual  
*Become a Better Delegator*
- 11/30-12/14 **Water Dist. System O&M-Class C/D - 3-Day Course** | Virtual  
Thursday's ONLY – Nov. 30 through Dec. 14

### DECEMBER

- 12/6 **Water Main Replacement Planning** | Webinar
- 12/7 **Sanitary Lift Station and Water Booster Pump Station 101** | Virtual
- 12/7 **Cheers, Beers & Peers!** | Naperville
- 12/11 **Mission Monday: LSL Replacement Overview for Elected Officials** | Virtual
- 12/12 **Leadership Series – Part 5** | Virtual  
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- 12/14 **Infrastructure Funding Options for Wastewater and Water** | Virtual  
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#### JANUARY

- 1/8-3/25 **Water Dist. System O&M-Class C/D - 10-Wk Night Class** | Springfield  
Monday Night's ONLY\* – Jan. 8 through March 25  
**\*NO CLASS ON JANUARY 15TH AND FEBRUARY 12TH**
- 1/10 **Communicating Value to our Communities** | Webinar  
Water Ambassador Program Overview
- 1/11 **ISAWWA A/B Exam Refresher Course** | Virtual  
Thursday's ONLY\* – Jan. 11, Jan. 18 and Jan. 25.
- 1/18 **Asset Management** | Virtual  
**FOR SMALL SYSTEMS ONLY!**

#### FEBRUARY

- 2/8 **SCADA 203** | Virtual
- 2/29-3/1 **Water Dist. System O&M-Class C/D - 2-Day Course** | Crystal Lake

#### MARCH

- 3/7-3/21 **Water Dist. System O&M-Class C/D - 3-Day Course\*** | South Suburbs  
Thursday's ONLY – March 7, March 14 and March 21
- 3/12 **Water Leak Detection** | Girard
- 3/14 **Multimeter Training Class** | Arlington Heights
- 3/26 **Introduction to AC Motor Starters** | TBD





# ISAWWA Award Nominations



**CELEBRATE A TOTAL WATER INDUSTRY V.I.P.! Show you value an ISAWWA member's impact on the industry by nominating him or her for an ISAWWA award.**

A list of awards and nomination forms can be found on the ISAWWA website, [www.isawwa.org](http://www.isawwa.org). Nominations are due December 31, 2023.

Awardees will be announced by March and will be celebrated at WATERCON during the opening and closing sessions.

## ★ 100 YEAR CLUB AWARD

This award is presented to municipalities who have operated a public water supply for 100 years. While records for the start date of municipal water supplies are kept by the IEPA and the Illinois Water Survey, it is possible that these records are not complete. If your supply has not been notified of this recognition by January 1, please send a letter outlining the history of the supply establishment and copies of any available supporting documents to [laura@isawwa.org](mailto:laura@isawwa.org).

## ★ CLIFFORD H. FORE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This award is presented to an Illinois Section member who reflects Clifford H. Fore's consistent commitment to provide public service above and beyond required duties. This award is presented to a professional who has made state-of-the-art advancements for the total water industry. Possible areas of advancement may include equipment or process innovation, the publishing of books or educational materials, professional association or officer/committee chair participation, etc.

## ★ OPERATOR'S MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

This award recognizes the dedicated performance of an Illinois Section operator working as a shift supervisor or superintendent. Special performance should be recognized in one or more of the following areas:

- continuous compliance with public health standards in finished water
- consistent and outstanding contribution to plant maintenance thereby prolonging the longevity of equipment
- development of new and/or modified equipment or significant process modifications to provide for a more efficient or effective treatment
- special efforts in the training of treatment plant operators
- special acts not directly related to water treatment, but which demonstrate dedication to the public beyond the normal operating responsibilities, or consistent and outstanding contribution to operation and/or maintenance of distribution lines, pump stations, and/or reservoirs

## ★ QUARTER CENTURY SERVICE AWARD – 25 YEAR AWARD

Each year the Illinois Section AWWA and IEPA jointly present the Quarter Century Service Award to individuals who have served in the water supply industry in any capacity for 25 years or more. This award recognizes that all facets of the water supply operation play a vital role. Nominees might include secretarial staff, budget personnel, electricians, plumbers, pipefitters, operators, laboratory staff, maintenance personnel, management, and regulatory personnel. You do not have to be a member of the Illinois Section to receive this award.

## ★ ROBERT T. SASMAN VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AWARD

This award recognizes an Illinois Section member who has demonstrated Robert T. Sasman's dedication to the ISAWWA and his contributions to helping the Section achieve its goals. Outstanding service includes making time commitments, generating new ideas, and making an effort to improve any aspect of the Section including membership, image, organization, etc. This award is limited to non-board members.

## ★ VETERAN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

This award will be presented to anyone in the total water industry who has served or is currently serving in the U.S. Military. Members of the ISAWWA Veterans Initiative will select a recipient who exemplifies the military values of duty, honor, and service in his/her professionalism, initiative, and performance.



## ★ OUTREACH AWARD

This award recognizes individuals and organizations who make outstanding contributions toward meeting the ISAWWA's outreach goals by implementing outreach programs and/or going the extra mile to promote youth outreach activities. This award can be given to an individual or a utility.



### ★ **WATER PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD**

This award is presented to a professional in the water industry, such as engineers, lab analysts, designers, representatives, educators, etc., who has demonstrated dedication and motivation to encouraging people to pursue a career in the water industry. Section members will select one awardee.

### ★ **WIWOW AWARD**

The ISAWWA Women in Water Outstanding Woman Award is designed to recognize one woman's distinguished service in the Illinois water industry. This award recognizes the following achievements: female leadership, advancement of the Women in Water Committee's mission, inspiring participation in the industry, and participation in community outreach programs specifically designed for school-aged girls and women.

## **AWARDS WITH INDIVIDUAL NOMINATION FORMS**

### ★ **GEORGE WARREN FULLER AWARD**

The American Water Works Association asks each state section to select one of their members to receive the prestigious George Warren Fuller Award, one of the highest honors bestowed on a water industry professional annually.

This award honors an individual for their distinguished service to the water industry in commemoration of the sound engineering skills, diplomatic talent, and constructive leadership which characterized the life of George Warren Fuller. Candidates must be a member of the Illinois Section AWWA.

### ★ **SOURCE WATER PROTECTION AWARD**

This award recognizes an organization in Illinois who has developed and implemented exemplary source water

protection programs. The drinking water supply sources must be associated with a water system or authority that is regulated by a federal, state, province, or tribal government agency. The award applies to systems using surface water and/or groundwater as their source. Any organization or drinking water system that performs source water protection for drinking water supplies in North America is eligible to apply for the award.

### ★ **WATER INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME AWARD**

The Water Industry Hall of Fame was established at WATERCON 2020 to perpetuate the memory of those living and deceased who have made significant contributions to the field of public water supply. To be eligible for the award, the candidate should meet the following requirements: majority of their career was spent in the State of Illinois,



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retired, over 60 years of age, a member of the AWWA for at least 15 years, has well established achievements, character, and professionalism. The candidate's influence upon the water supply profession must still be felt in the practices, inventions, or literature for which he/she was responsible. Contributions may have been in any of the many facets and disciplines in the

field as long as they are significant and have stood the test of time.

### ★ **WATER SAVER UTILITY AWARD**

Each year, the Water Efficiency Committee will honor one ISAWWA member affiliated utility that is making significant contributions to water efficiency within the water industry. This award will recognize outstanding achievements in

any of the following areas:

- Water efficiency master plans
- Renewable water policies and practices
- Watershed protection
- Environmental stewardship
- Community outreach programs
- Water loss reduction
- Retrofit programs
- Rate measures
- Process optimization
- Employee education
- Conservation
- Public education

### ★ **YOUNG PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD**

This award recognizes one outstanding YP for his/her participation in the Illinois Section. Nominees should have participated in outreach to other YPs and/or have made improvements or have had a significant impact on the committee or the water profession. The awardee is chosen by Illinois Section members.

For more information about ISAWWA awards, please visit [www.isawwa.org/page/awards](http://www.isawwa.org/page/awards).

For questions, please contact Laura Morgan, Outreach Specialist at [laura@isawwa.org](mailto:laura@isawwa.org). 💧



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# What Is the WEC and What Are We Up To?

By Michele Piotrowski, Water Efficiency Committee Chair



**T**he WEC is the **Water Efficiency Committee** of the Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association. We are an active group who works to provide resources and educational materials about water efficiency for utilities.

The Committee typically meets virtually on a monthly basis and also aims to meet in-person once or twice a year. Our committee members' passions generally drive our initiatives. Some of our initiatives include the development and coordination of the Water Saver Award, hosting an annual Water Loss Seminar and Water Audit Trainings, and development of the Water Energy Nexus Survey and Analysis.


The Water Saver Award was developed to recognize leaders in water efficiency while also allowing those leaders to share with others their current and effective water efficiency practices. The annual Water Loss Seminar theme changes year to year, but we have had success in the last few years in bringing in national speakers to present ideas being implemented beyond Illinois. We hope you were able to join us on October 19 at Medinah Banquets for our recent Water Loss Seminar and water audit training.

The Water Energy Nexus is a survey conducted to learn more about the energy intensity of Illinois' water supplies and how it has changed over time to assist utilities interested in increasing their energy efficiency.

We are open and encourage new ideas and initiatives consistent with our objectives. Come join us!

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# Water Efficiency and Public Utilities

By Michael Nosbisch

Processes or actions are considered efficient when they produce desired results while expending little to no waste, which could be material, time, or energy. Water efficiency is the smart use of water resources. In households, this is accomplished with conservation practices and water-saving technologies. Improved technology allows people to accomplish tasks like flushing the toilet, washing dishes, and showering with less water. This reduced water usage translates to lower utility bills for consumers. Some statistics even show that a household can save hundreds of dollars per year by retrofitting or swapping appliances with more efficient counterparts.

In a world with water scarcity, water insecurity, and threats of drought, water efficiency is becoming more and more important. It helps protect sources of water used by public water systems and water treatment plants. This is great news! However, with less water being used by consumers, it makes operational efficiency even more important. From a business perspective, lower utility bills mean less revenue. While utilities are not designed to maximize profits, enough money needs to be made to cover current and future costs. Increasing efficiency can help by reducing lost material, time, and energy.

One of the most important means of operational efficiency is understanding and reducing water loss. Water treatment plants should know how much water is brought in and treated, and billing departments should know how much is sold each month. The difference between what is produced and what is sold is the water loss. Some water loss should be expected with flushing programs, which are important for water quality, but an effort should be made to track that amount. Any other unknown loss may indicate a leak.

Reviewing the data each month is important, but technology, such as smart meters, SCADA, and GIS mapping should also be leveraged by utilities to increase their efficiency. These tools will allow utilities to take a proactive approach and highlight and locate issues, thus enabling quicker response times. These increased efficiencies help reduce loss, meaning time, energy, and materials are saved.



Technology is advancing in all aspects of life and should also be used to help protect our environment. Water is a natural resource, but there are limits on what society can demand of it. Water efficiency is the key to protecting this resource, and water utilities can play their part by increasing their operational efficiencies, reviewing their data, and implementing new technologies.

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[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/efficient](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/efficient)

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# Water-Energy Nexus

By Margaret Schneemann and Don Jensen

The interdependence of water and energy has gained attention over the past decade due to growing concern over the potential environmental and economic impacts of rising resource demands. Understanding the water-energy nexus can benefit sustainable resource management and policy development. While the primary responsibility of water utility managers is to provide a clean, safe water supply, water managers are *de facto* energy managers, as supplying water requires energy to move and treat water.

In this article, we present the findings of a survey conducted by the Illinois Section American Water Works Association (ISAWWA), and co-funded by Illinois Indiana Sea Grant, that followed up on the 2010 water-energy nexus survey to further explore this issue in Illinois.



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The updated water-energy nexus survey included questions on system characteristics, water and energy use, costs, water sources, treatment processes, distribution systems, energy sources, and efficiency measures. From October 2021 to May 2022, the committee reached out through the ISAWWA member lists, committee member contacts, water-related professional organizations, and local government organizations to promote and deploy the survey. A total of 36 usable surveys were received from a diverse group of water utility professionals, including engineers, managers, and operators, compared to 44 in 2010. Note that, due to the small sample sizes and different utilities responding to the two surveys, caution must be exercised in interpreting and comparing these results.

Preliminary findings include:

1. **Energy Intensity of Water:** The energy required to produce and deliver a given volume of water in Illinois appears to have slightly improved over the past decade, from an average of 2,145 to 1,922 kWh/MG. This finding is consistent with an overarching pattern of increasing energy-efficiency and may be partially attributable to water supplier participation in conservation programs offered by electric providers.
2. **Energy Cost:** Energy costs of the survey respondents comprise a significant portion of the utility operating budget. Average reported energy costs were 7.43% in 2022, down from 9.31% ten years prior, a trend that may be partially attributable to declining energy intensity. The percentages of utilities' operating budgets dedicated to energy costs varies widely, however, for smaller utilities, energy costs comprise as much as 30% of their operating budget.
3. **Resiliency:** All water utilities surveyed mainly rely on electricity from the grid as their primary energy source, with natural gas being used on site for site heating, dehumidification, and for back up generation. No respondents are exploring alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind, to reduce their carbon footprint and achieve energy self-sufficiency.
4. **Water Loss:** Water loss as a percent of gallons of water produced increased by 7% on average over the past decade for the utilities surveyed, from 10% to 17%. Lost water equates not only to lost energy, but also other impacts such as lost revenue and stress on source water. This increasing water loss is believed to be due to aging infrastructure outpacing the ability of systems to invest in

necessary repair and replacement. Another contributing factor may be regulatory changes in how water loss is measured among Lake Michigan permittees. From the survey respondents, 6,892 MGY were reported lost in 2022, approximating 13 million kilowatt hours (MKWh) and almost \$60 million in lost revenue. Considering that our sample of 36 water suppliers is a small subset of the 1,200 community water systems in the state, this amount reflects a small percentage of the statewide total lost water, energy, and revenue.

5. **Impact of COVID-19:** Stated impacts of the pandemic on water production patterns varied, with the majority of water suppliers indicating that COVID-19 had no impact. Other respondents reported a variety of impacts ranging from decreases in water sales to shifts in consumption patterns (from the nonresidential sector to the residential sector) to slight increases in water sales. COVID-19 impacted different



water suppliers in different ways, with the longer-term patterns and permanence of the impacts still unknown.

While this ISAWWA survey provides valuable insights into the water-energy nexus in Illinois, the findings' usefulness to utility managers is limited by the low survey response rate. A larger sample size would allow for more accurate energy

intensity benchmarking for the various types of utilities in Illinois, accounting for system attributes expected to impact energy use, such as water system size, source water, type of treatment system, and pumping volumes. Recognizing the energy intensity of water utilities can inform strategies to enhance energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact of water supply in Illinois.

You can help by completing a water-energy nexus survey for your system here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R5H7PSP>, and taking advantage of facility assessment assistance offered by ComEd and Ameren. 💧



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# Are Your Master Meters on the Money?

By Orlando Velasquez

**N**ot knowing your master meter is inaccurate can quickly become the bane of your existence. Expected meter accuracies can vary based on the type and size of the meter. However, it is in your interest to ensure that your master meters are measuring as close to 100% as possible. Below are things for you to keep an eye on and tips regarding master meters.

An over-registering master meter is problematic in many ways. The most apparent issue is the potential for overpayment to the utility selling the water. Without routinely testing your master meters, it can be difficult to identify when it becomes out of tolerance. It is possible for years to go by until a utility becomes aware that their master meter is over-registering. This results in great overpayments for water that was not actually received, and these overpayments can be very difficult, if not

impossible, to recover. An over-registering or “fast” master meter can also negatively impact your non-revenue water (NRW). NRW, in its simplest form, is the difference between the amount of water purchased and the amount of water sold. It’s possible for a fast meter to result in an inaccurately high NRW. That’s why it’s important to consider this possibility when performing an NRW audit. Failure to consider this can result in wrongly assuming that the NRW is a result of real losses from the distribution system, ultimately, and chasing “phantom” or nonexistent leaks.

Several factors can impact a master meter’s accuracy. A meter’s accuracy and dependability drastically relies on its installation. Always follow the manufacturer’s installation guidelines and recommendations. Proper upstream and downstream piping from the meter are critical components to the meter’s optimal operation. This is because meters are calibrated with a flow profile particular to that of which is produced by a long upstream piping condition. Master meters shouldn’t be installed too close to a valve, bend, or other fitting that could distort the flow profile. In some cases, a flow straightener may be helpful – contact your meter manufacturer if this is a concern. Clogged or dirty strainers can also distort the flow profile, so inspecting and cleaning these on a routine basis is imperative. Electrical outputs from meters can also be impacted by many field conditions, such as improper wiring, electromagnetic signal interference from other current carrying conductors, and increased resistance – routinely inspect electrical connections and always follow applicable manufacturer’s recommendations.

Even properly installed master meters can become out of tolerance and should be routinely tested routinely to avoid this. Due to their typically large size and importance, removal of a master meter can be difficult, even for testing purposes. Fortunately, types of tests exist which allow the meter to be tested in its normal application/setting. One popular method is a volumetric test. This can be achieved if a master meter is directly upstream of a storage structure with an engineer-calculated graduated volume. In this scenario, the storage structure is isolated to only the master meter’s fill line. First, the initial static level is accurately and precisely measured. Next, the master meter’s reading is recorded. Once recorded, the storage structure is filled to a known volume – longer tests can yield more accurate results. After the structure is adequately filled, close the structure’s fill line. Once stable, record the storage structure’s new static level and the master meter’s new reading. Calculate the volume introduced into the storage structure and compare to



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the volume measured by the master meter. If there are no known leaks in the storage structure, then its calculated volume can be considered the true volume.


The other popular form of in-line testing is used with a pitot tube or rod. Pitot testing consists of an insertion pitot tube, pressure-sensing lines, and a differential pressure sensor. When the water flows past the pitot tube, it generates a difference in pressure across the tube, which is proportional to the flow velocity. The measured flow velocity and the measured cross-sectional pipe area is then used to calculate the volumetric flow rate. This flow rate is then compared to the meter's flow rate. Certain hydraulic conditions must exist for a proper pitot test. It's recommended that a minimum of 10 pipe diameters upstream and five pipe diameters downstream exist from the test site.

In summary, an inaccurate master meter can be incredibly problematic, resulting in compounding pecuniary issues, such as overpayments and redirection of funds, and an inaccurately high non-revenue water figure. Several field conditions can impact a master meter's accuracy and reliability, such as piping configurations, electrical interference, and distorted flow profiles. For this reason, it's important that master meters be tested routinely. Fortunately, testing methods such as a volumetric or a pitot test can be performed without removing the master meter from its pipeline. Furthermore, these tests provide accurate data on the meter's performance. Meters should be repaired



or replaced if they are found to be out of tolerance. A planned maintenance or replacement program is strongly encouraged, depending on the meter's inaccuracy; the dollars might make "cents." Have you checked your cash registers lately?

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# Water Audits (AWWA M36) and the “Buckets” of NRW: Understanding the Calculations and Impacts on the Results

By Michele Piotrowski

Non-revenue water (NRW): Water produced and lost before it reaches customers, through leaks or metering inaccuracies.

Many utilities have performed some level of water auditing throughout the history of multi-user water systems. However, around the year 2000, the International Water Association Water Loss Task Force developed a free water audit software to standardize the approach to water audits which the American Water Works Association (AWWA) subsequently adopted. This software, based off the AWWA M36 Manual (Water Audits and Loss Control Programs), offers a starting point to track water loss within the distribution system. This top-down, or high level audit form allows a utility not only to understand the amount of NRW that is inherent in their system, but also allows a utility to separate the NRW into categories or “buckets” of water to then prioritize initiatives to reduce NRW. The key, however, is understanding how this software calculates these buckets and

making sure it is placed in the correct bucket. So, let’s review some of these basic calculations.

In simple terms, NRW is calculated by simply subtracting the *Billed Authorized Consumption* from the *Water Supplied* to the system. Please see the general formula below:

## **NRW = Water Supplied – Billed Authorized Consumption**

Once the NRW volume is determined, then the audit software begins to break the NRW into different categories which include *Unbilled Authorized Consumption*, *Apparent Losses*, and *Real Losses*. For those who like formulas, please see below to further clarify.

## **NRW = Unbilled Authorized**

## **Consumption + Apparent Losses + Real Losses**

The audit software then allows the utility to further break these down further:

*Unbilled Authorized Consumption* includes both unmetered and metered water that is not billed. Some typical sources of *Unbilled Authorized Consumption* can, but do not always, include water use associated with hydrant flushing, firefighting, municipal buildings and facilities, water treatment plant losses, sewer jetting, street cleaning, etc. The audit software does not break this down into the individual types, but it is highly recommended that a utility track and make efforts to calculate/estimate this water use to the best of their ability. Any default value may not do justice to the outcome of the utility’s audit results. In Version 5 of the audit software, the default value for *Unbilled Metered Water* is 1.25%, and was reduced to 0.25% in Version 6, a relatively minimal amount.

*Apparent Losses* include *Unauthorized Consumption*, *Customer Metering Inaccuracies*, and *Systematic Data Handling Error*.

## **Apparent Losses = Unauthorized Consumption + Customer Metering Inaccuracies + Systematic Data Handling Error**

In terms of *Unauthorized Consumption*, this is illegal water use and can often be challenging to identify or calculate a definitive volume for the audit. Often, a utility may use the default in the audit form of 0.25% of the *Water Supplied*. *Customer Metering Inaccuracies* should be investigated and determined for an individual utility because every utility’s metering system and conditions vary. All too often, a utility does not take the time to calculate/determine an appropriate accuracy for the customer meters. By not making this effort to obtain an appropriate accuracy, this portion of the NRW is not being placed into the correct bucket of water and future efforts to reduce NRW may be misdirected. Similarly,

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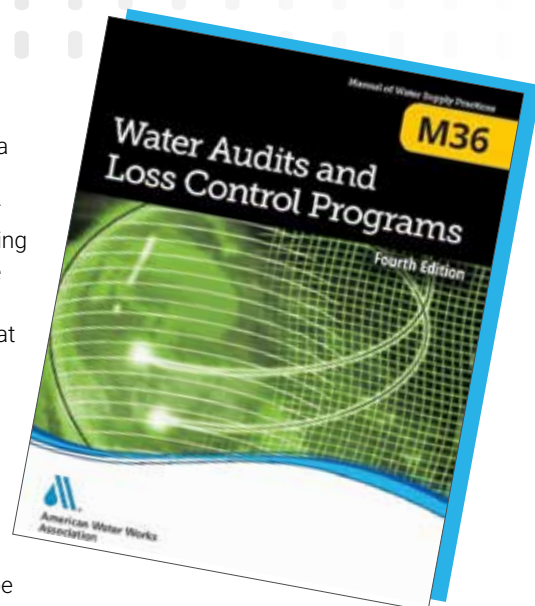
*Systematic Data Handling Error*, which is primarily associated with billing/accounting/reporting errors, is assumed to be minimal based on the default value in the software (0.25% of the *Billed Metered Consumption*).

Once assumptions and/or calculations are made for *Unbilled Authorized Consumption* and *Apparent Losses*, *Real Losses* equate to the remaining portion of the NRW volume by default as shown in the formula below:

$$\text{Real Losses} = \text{NRW} - \text{Unbilled Authorized Consumption} - \text{Apparent Losses}$$

*Real Losses* are those losses that typically result from water main leaks, water service leaks, and storage tank overflows. If a utility is not taking the time and effort to accurately determine and enter the *Unbilled Authorized Consumption* and *Apparent Losses* into the audit software, then the volume of *Real Losses* may not be accurate and potentially be inflated. For example, if a utility assumes that the *Customer Metering Inaccuracies* equated to 3% historically, but then a study is completed to determine that it is actually 9%, then the subsequent 6% ( $9\% - 3\% = 6\%$ ) of NRW was historically incorrectly categorized as *Real Losses*. Addressing *Real Losses* is often significantly more expensive and time consuming than addressing *Unbilled Authorized Consumption* and *Apparent Losses*. In other words, it pays to make sure the NRW is categorized into the right buckets.

When completing a water audit, the Utility Supervisor or Director should also be reviewing the audit to determine if the results make sense. If it appears that NRW is high and that most of the NRW is associated with *Real Losses* per the audit, but the most recent leak detection survey only found a handful of leaks to be addressed, then the utility needs to review the entries and assumptions in the audit. This potential for mis-categorizing the NRW is one of the reasons why a focal point of the Free Water Audit Software based in the AWWA M36 Manual (*Water Audits and Loss Control Programs*) is data validity and making sure that the numbers and volumes are correct, meaning that the rate payers' funds are appropriately being applied to the correct components of the overall water and billing systems. Therefore, when completing the audit, understand the entries and associated results together. 💧



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# What's Up with WaterSense?

By Cary McElhinney

WaterSense is a voluntary product specification and partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help communities and consumers save water. Here in Illinois, there are over 50 water utilities and local government partners working with WaterSense to promote water efficiency to their customers and stakeholders. I'd like to provide a few updates to remind Illinois Section AWWA members about the partnership program and introduce others to this resource available to help your local demand management and water conservation efforts. WaterSense is working hard on specifications to increase the categories of labeled products, has made major changes to its homes program, is updating best management practices (BMPs) for commercial buildings, and continues to release materials to help you communicate with customers.

In December of 2022, WaterSense released a draft specification to label reverse osmosis (RO) home water treatment systems. There are many options that can be used to treat water in the home, and RO devices are typically the most water-intensive – with some devices wasting as much as six gallons of water for every treated gallon. With the goal of reducing that waste, WaterSense is looking towards criteria that would generate closer to two gallons of waste for every gallon of treated water. Because WaterSense also wants to help consumers make more informed decisions, we are considering requirements that all products have a label to clearly describe the water use associated with the product and its effectiveness at removing a number of key contaminants of concern, such as arsenic and lead. The program hopes to issue a final specification in early 2024.

In the outdoor space, the program is planning to release a draft specification for irrigation system sprinkler nozzles before the end of this year. When combined with WaterSense-labeled sprinkler bodies and a labeled irrigation system controller, a consumer could see considerable savings in outdoor water use!

Most recently, WaterSense is considering an update to its existing specification for tank-type toilets and issued a



notice of intent earlier this year that describes the potential changes. Learn more about all our specifications in development at [www.epa.gov/watersense/products-development](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/products-development).

WaterSense updated its homes program two years ago and we are seeing increases in WaterSense labeled homes. Labeled homes are expected to reduce water use by at least 30% compared to typical homes, are third party certified, and can be a great tool for communities looking to sustain growth and provide housing in the face of water availability issues. We just released a Technical

Reference Manual which includes fact sheets that focus on products, practices, or systems that can make a residence more water-efficient. Learn more about the updated program at [www.epa.gov/watersense/homes](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/homes).

To assist with commercial property water efficiency, EPA released in 2012 **WaterSense at Work: Best Management Practices for Commercial and Institutional Facilities**. WaterSense is updating the BMP guides and making them available as standalone documents to ease their use. The first new set was released in the summer of 2023 and more updates are coming this fall. You can find these resources at [www.epa.gov/watersense/best-management-practices](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/best-management-practices).

And as more utilities adopt Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI), there is a need to understand all the benefits that can come from its use. We released a guide for facility managers to help them understand how they can use AMI to help manage their building water use. The WaterSense guide and links to additional AWWA guides on AMI adoption for water utilities is available at [www.epa.gov/watersense/advanced-metering-infrastructure](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/advanced-metering-infrastructure).

Last, but not least, don't forget all the resources that WaterSense has to help partners communicate with customers. Whether you are looking to help consumers find and fix leaks, check irrigation systems, or transform landscapes into one that is beautiful and needs less water, we have you covered. If you're not already a WaterSense partner... well, why not? It's free and it's here for you! You can find out more about partnering with WaterSense at [www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-partners](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-partners). 💧



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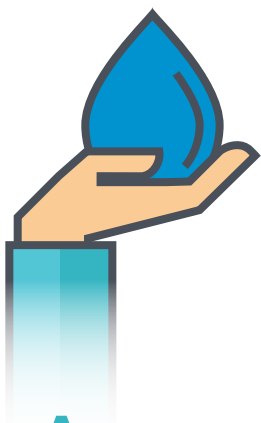


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# Water Conservation – What It Means to Me and Its Vital Importance

By Carlos Covarrubius, ISAWWA Outreach Committee

**A**WWA defines water conservation as the focus on taking action to improve the effectiveness of water use through various means, such as choosing to change behavior by using fixtures and appliances that use less water. I look at it from a slightly different view. Water conservation is not just an individual responsibility, it's a global imperative.

Water scarcity affects millions of people worldwide, leading to poverty, displacement, and conflict. Water is the lifeblood of our planet; it is essential for all living beings and our precious ecosystems. Most of the public does not realize how scarce drinking water is. Seventy percent of earth's surface is covered in water; however, only 2.5% is freshwater, which is the amount needed for life to survive. Moreover, of that freshwater, only 1.2% is surface water. As our population grows and housing needs continue to strain the environment, our demand for this invaluable resource exponentially increases. It has been said that "water is the new oil."

Sadly, this statement has more truth than many of us realize. There are a significant number of companies purchasing land for the sole reason to profit from the water rights of that land, like the oil rush of 1859. We are now seeing investment and trading vehicles attached to water rights. In my opinion, this is the most overlooked long-term issue our public will have in water conservation. As water professionals, we have the responsibility to bring more attention to our world being held captive by for-profit organizations controlling our limited access to groundwater. Government agencies have protected our public access to surface water but have not necessarily protected our public access to groundwater. In the United States, we already have many examples of just how complicated and litigious water rights can get in our growing state of scarcity.

By conserving water, we contribute to:

- 1. Reducing Water Stress:** Lowering the pressure on water sources helps ensure a sustainable supply for future generations.
- 2. Biodiversity Conservation:** Protecting aquatic ecosystems safeguards the incredible diversity of life on Earth.
- 3. Sustainable Agriculture:** Efficient water use in agriculture supports food production without depleting water resources.
- 4. Climate Resilience:** Water conservation strategies make communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change, such as droughts and water shortages.

Water Conservation is not a choice, it's an ethical and environmental responsibility. As individuals and water professionals, we need to adopt and implement water-saving practices in our daily lives and, more importantly, advocate for responsible water use on a broader scale. We can then ensure

**It has been said that  
"water is the new oil."**

that this invaluable resource remains available for generations to come. So please, let's take a moment to recognize and join ISAWWA's effort to preserve and conserve this essential element of life on this rock we all call Earth by speaking to one person in the public every day on the importance of water conservation.

#### Reference:

*Igor Shiklomanov's chapter "World fresh water resources" in Peter H. Gleick (editor), 1993, Water in Crisis: A Guide to the World's Fresh Water Resources (Oxford University Press, New York).* 💧

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# Leadership in Total Water

By Todd LaFountain

What is the most valuable and rare commodity on earth? Is it food, water, oil, or minerals? Some would argue leadership is the most valuable and rare commodity on the planet, not just any kind of leadership, but true inspirational and empowering leadership.

So, what is leadership? Management in the traditional sense is not leadership. Things like quality, time, and money are managed. People can't be effectively managed, but rather they must be led. Leadership is therefore the art of empowering, motivating, and inspiring people to be the best version of themselves.

The concept of leadership is simple, but it is one of the hardest life skills to master. One theory suggests that leadership can be summarized in two simple, but contradictory statements:

1. It's not about you.
2. It's all about you.

What can "It's not about you" possibly mean to leadership? It suggests that an empowering leader does not make the team success about him or her. An empowering leader is not ego driven, but rather revels in the self-actualization and independence of team members.

What can "It's all about you" possibly mean to leadership? It means that the environment, inspiration, and tools you provide to the people you lead are the keys to unlocking their potential.

The ISAWWA Leadership Committee meets on a quarterly basis to discuss these and various other topics on leadership and consists of all levels of water industry professionals. Everyone learns something through sharing our unique and diverse work and life experiences.

To assist members in sharpening their leadership skills, the committee

scheduled a series of five Tuesday morning webinars through the balance of 2023. The remaining webinar topics, times, and dates are provided below.

1. Cultivating a Coaching Culture, Derek Mulhern  
Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 11:30 a.m.
2. You Can't Do It All By Yourself, Rebeca Malotke-Meslin  
Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at 11:30 a.m.
3. Improving Your Leadership Communication Skills to Build Trust and Advance Equity, Johnathan Meagher-Zayas and Gregory Kwaczala  
Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 11:30 a.m.

We are all leaders in one of the most essential industries in the world. Regardless of whether you supervise 500 employees or no one, you are still a leader. Everyone wins when a leader gets better. We hope that you will consider joining us in this leadership journey! 💧

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# Energy Summit 2023 Recap



**W**ater and wastewater operations demand over half of a municipality's energy output. So, can we be good stewards of both water and the environment by reducing energy consumption? The Energy Summit 2023 tackled this question and much more including presentations and remarks from 13 different people on a various topics including: ISAWWA's Water Energy Nexus Report, understanding your electric bill, state funding resources, energy efficiency programs, solar panels, and grid interconnectivity.

Participants learned the importance of tracking your energy usage and demand to inform when you can reduce your energy load to increase annual savings. Demand is the maximum amount of energy used during an incremental period of time. Demand management systems monitor energy efficiency and help companies navigate the relationship between energy generators, suppliers, and interconnectivity grids.

The Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC), Commonwealth Edison, and the Department of Energy SWIFT Program offer energy saving assessments and resources to help utilities learn where they can reduce energy costs and find funding for projects.

Many of these resources are free and there are funding opportunities available for your energy efficiency goals.

Small changes can make a big difference on your utility's bill!

Thank you to our speakers and attendees for making our first Energy Summit a success!

If you missed the Energy Summit, you can still earn credit by listening to it on-demand! 5 DCT hours available – [www.isawwa.org/store/viewproduct.aspx?id=22617975](http://www.isawwa.org/store/viewproduct.aspx?id=22617975)

Visit the following websites to learn more about energy savings:  
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(<https://smartenergy.illinois.edu>)

SWIFT Toolkit Training Fact Sheet and Sign-Up | Better Buildings Initiative (<https://betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov/resources/swift-toolkit-training-fact-sheet-and-sign>)

ComEd Ways to Save ([www.comed.com/waystosave/foryourbusiness/pages/default.aspx](http://www.comed.com/waystosave/foryourbusiness/pages/default.aspx))



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# Listen, Learn, and Advance

By Patrick Walsh, Ramesh Kanapareddy, and Michael Fontanez



As the next generation of workers start to pursue their careers, knowledge is a critical factor in their success. There are numerous outlets to pursue knowledge including taking classes at a junior college, participating in an internship, researching an industry of interest, shadowing or learning from a mentor, and attending conferences and workshops. The internet has allowed us to research opportunities in the pursuit of a career path and provides us with opportunities for career advancements; however, no one is

going to do this for you. The onus is on you to learn about your career path and seek professional assistance. If you're looking to advance your career or want a better understanding of career options in water or wastewater, then look no further than the ISAWWA. Organizations like ISAWWA offer a variety of programs, training, and networking opportunities to meet new people trained in the water or wastewater profession.

One of the best resources to help you navigate your career and another benefit of being an ISAWWA member is mentorship. So, how do you find a

mentor? Visit the Mentoring Program webpage and complete the application form. You will be asked to share your experiences, interests, and goals so that you can be paired with a mentor who will be able to answer your questions. Mentors are experienced professionals dedicated to sharing their challenges and successes in the industry and creating a safe space for people to ask questions.

Make an investment in yourself by joining the Mentoring Program as a mentee or by giving back to the industry as a mentor. 💧

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## Water Efficiency and Water Ambassadors

David Vavrek

Greetings, *Splash* readers. Here we are yet again at the end of summer as the days are getting shorter, the nights longer, and the temperatures definitely cooler. I always look forward to fall/winter and the new opportunities ahead.

Speaking of new opportunities, I'd like to talk to you about water efficiency and the Water Ambassador Program. To start, what is the definition of water efficiency? According to Wikipedia, it is "the practice of reducing water consumption by measuring the amount of water required for a particular purpose and is proportionate to the amount of essential water used." That's definitely a lot to think about! So, what are the opportunities when looking at water efficiency?

The biggest opportunity comes when we understand that water is not an unlimited resource. As professionals in the water industry, we have the opportunity to protect this precious resource. That protection comes when we work to educate our consumers, local, state, and national political leaders, and even continue to educate ourselves. One of the best ways to do this is to take advantage of the ISAWWA's Water Ambassador Program.

The Water Ambassador Program was created to provide a new communication and engagement platform to elevate public perception, knowledge, and consumer education for the water

industry. The programs provide a platform of educational and promotional content that is relevant, engaging, and consistent among its participants. The program is open to public and private water utilities of all system sizes. To learn more about the Water Ambassador Program and how it can help you educate our consumers on water efficiency, please visit [www.isawwa.org/page/waterambassador](http://www.isawwa.org/page/waterambassador).

In closing, I'd like to encourage everyone to take advantage of all the resources ISAWWA offers, but most of all I'd like to encourage you even more to step up and volunteer! There are many opportunities to volunteer depending on the time you have. They range from micro-volunteering to a committee position or even running to be on the ISAWWA Board. To learn more about what opportunities there are, visit the Section's website at [www.isawwa.org](http://www.isawwa.org). 💧

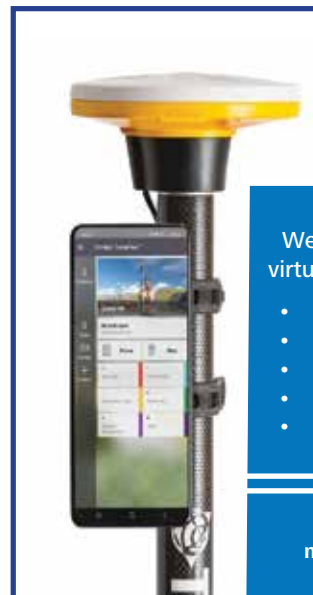


“ The Water Ambassador Program was created to provide a new communication and engagement platform to elevate public perception, knowledge, and consumer education for the water industry.



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Information regarding the  
2024 Total Water U Program  
will be available in April 2024.

*Stay Tuned!*

## ISAWWA Award Recognition in 2023

The Illinois Section was presented an AWWA Education Award for conducting an activity that is innovative, effective, beneficial to the water industry and public, and is practically applicable for other Sections.

ISAWWA Mission Monday Webinar Series held once a month, features education on current topics that matter most as you continue to supply safe and sustainable water to all of Illinois.

Join us live or visit our archived sessions on our website.



The ISAWWA Water Ambassador Program was recognized for program excellence in enhancing public awareness by the *American Society of Association Executives*.

Since its launch in 2021, 49 communities have received the honor of becoming Water Ambassadors by communicating the importance of the Total Water Industry and making a positive impact on public perception.

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# 2023 Plant Maintenance Technologist Conference Recap

By Matt Sokolowski


The great Kurt Vonnegut once said, "Another flaw in the human character is that everybody wants to build, and nobody wants to do maintenance." Maintenance staff are truly the unsung heroes of the water industry, keeping equipment up and running so that utilities can serve our communities with reliability and efficiency. At our Plant Maintenance Technologist (PMT) Conference we strive to create a collaborative environment to educate and train maintenance personnel. If you've never been to our PMT Conference, you'll not only learn about a wide range of equipment, but you'll discover how it's built, and how/when to perform maintenance. The conference also highlights important technology for maintenance diagnostics and tools that staff can use to perform their responsibilities more efficiently. While the conference primarily serves to educate plant maintenance staff and technicians, it's also a great resource for engineers learning to incorporate more maintenance-friendly elements into designs and to utility administrators looking to establish more proactive maintenance programs. The conference offers both dual credit technical hours for water and wastewater operators, as well as professional development hours for engineers.

This year's event was held on May 18 at Medinah Shriners in Addison. Nearly 100 attendees from utilities across Illinois attended the full-day event, which covered a wide range of topics related to maintenance of water and wastewater equipment, including:

- Pump Seals with Mike Racine, *Novaspec*
- Vibration Analysis, Infrared Scanning, and Ultrasonic Testing with Mike Gilley, *Fox River Systems*
- Electrical Distribution System Maintenance with Brent Studnicka, *Strand Associates*
- UV Maintenance with Wayne Hotham, *Trojan Technologies*
- AWWA Butterfly, Swing Check, and Air Valve Installation and Maintenance with Aaron Kielar, *Val-Matic*
- Proactive Maintenance with Anthony Jarvis, *Grundfos*


The Section's education committee is already planning our next PMT Conference, which will be held around the same time next year. We're always looking for presenters, so if you have a topic please reach out to Matt Sokolowski ([msokolowski@carollo.com](mailto:msokolowski@carollo.com)).

Topics rotate annually so we can continue to bring fresh content to attendees. We're looking forward to holding another great conference next spring. Stay tuned for the announcement in early 2024. 💧



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# PROTECTING THE SOURCE

Set in the rustic Lake Springfield Beach House, the Source Water Committee hosted thirteen different guest speakers as part of the 2023 Source Water Summit held this September. With the overarching theme of “protecting the source,” presenters shared a wide range of information about the history and ecology of Lake Springfield, soil health and tillage methods, cyanobacteria, sedimentation and nutrient reduction strategies, and water reuse case studies. After a full day of learning, participants enjoyed a guided boat tour on Lake Springfield where they were able to view the large scale of Springfield’s City, Water, Light and Power’s facility and learn more about the lake’s history and water quality.

To learn more about protecting drinking water at the source, please visit the Source Water Committee page at [www.isawwa.org](http://www.isawwa.org).





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# ISAWWA Veterans Initiative

## Workshops: Transitioning from Service to Industry

By Chris Rebone

Every quarter, members of the Veterans Initiative attend workshops hosted at *Rock Island Arsenal* and *Great Lakes Naval Base* for Service Members who are transitioning from military service back to civilian life. During our time at both bases, we highlight the benefits of working in Total Water and Public Works. We share available job opportunities in Illinois, as well as, resources that are available elsewhere.

America's Service Members are adaptive, resilient, and unwavering in pursuit of objectives. Those qualities, in addition to, the countless others developed over years of experience, home and abroad, should drive every organization to seek out Veterans to fill their ranks. Across generations of Veterans, one part of our commonality, unfortunately still includes the struggle of speaking to the civilian organizations on what Veterans can offer in support of their mission.

The groups we speak to range from 15 to 30 service members, and less than a quarter, on average, know what the Total Water and Public Works industries accomplish. For those who know, gained their prior knowledge before joining the service. By the end of our presentation, all have an understanding that their military service role has a place in Total Water and Public Works and step one is accomplished!

For the upcoming transition workshops, a new focus will be made on using common language in resumes and breaking down what skills truly correlate to working for municipalities. As we begin this new phase of outreach, I ask those who are directly involved in the hiring process to consider bringing a veteran into your organization. During the screening and interview process, a transitioning service member will be able to speak the language, ask the right questions when it comes to skill set, and will be a great translator to the rest of the onboarding team. ★



(Above) US Military Veterans were invited to attend WEFTEC in Chicago to learn all about the Total Water Sector and the opportunities available to them.

(Left) ISAWWA member, Jason Brianas shared his experience of transitioning from a military career to total water.



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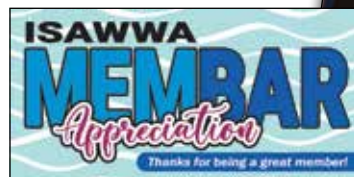




## MEMBER APPRECIATION!

November is for celebrating our members! We want to show our appreciation for your support. Board of Trustees will be delivering Section swag along with an opportunity for a few lucky members to find a **“GOLDEN TICKET”** earning them a *FREE Training* or possibly...*FREE WATERCON* registration!

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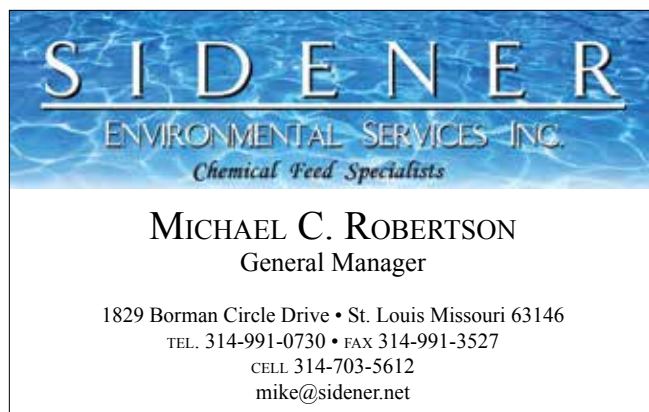


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HMG Engineers, Inc.	28	888-HMG-ENGR	<a href="http://www.hmgengineers.com">www.hmgengineers.com</a>
HR Green, Inc.	62	800-728-7805	<a href="http://www.hrgreen.com">www.hrgreen.com</a>
Illinois American Water	34	800-422-2782	<a href="http://www.illinoisamwater.com">www.illinoisamwater.com</a>
Illinois Public Service Institute	37	618-792-3508	<a href="http://www.ilspi.org">www.ilspi.org</a>
Integra Clear Co.	12, 27	253-479-7000	<a href="http://www.vita-d-chlor.com">www.vita-d-chlor.com</a>
KLM Engineering, Inc.	13	651-773-5111	<a href="https://klmengineering.com">https://klmengineering.com</a>

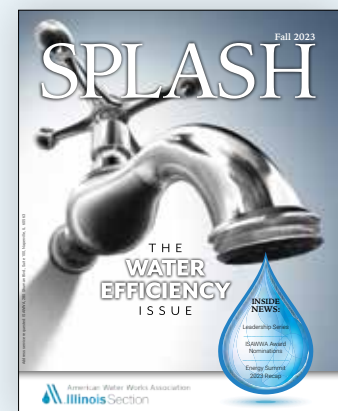
COMPANY	PAGE	PHONE	WEBSITE/EMAIL
Kraft Power Corporation	11	800-969-6121	www.kraftpower.com
M.E. Simpson Co., Inc.	46	800-255-1521	www.mesimpson.com
McMAHON	3	920-751-4200	www.mcmgrp.com
Metropolitan Industries, Inc.	26	815-886-9200	www.metropolitanind.com
Municipal Well & Pump	2	920-324-3400	www.municipalwellandpump.com
National Wash Authority	36	800-804-7517	www.watertowercleaners.com
Pace Analytical	48	800-752-6651	www.pacelabs.com
Pittsburg Tank	54	270-826-9000	www.pttg.com
R.E. Pedrotti Co. Inc.	11	636-349-7100	www.repedrotti.com
Seiler Instrument	47	888-263-8918	www.seilergeo.com
Sidener Environmental Services Inc.	61	800-528-2887	www.sidener.net
Strand Associates, Inc.	32	608-251-4843	www.strand.com
The Cahoy Group	13	563-578-1130	www.cahoyump.com
Tnemec/Taylor Coating Sales, Inc.	59	708-387-0305	www.tnemec.com/taylorcoatingcoating
Trotter and Associates, Inc.	24	630-587-0470	www.trotter-inc.com
USA Bluebook	68	800-548-1234	www.usabluebook.com
Vandevanter Engineering	4	636-343-8880	www.vandevanter.com
VEGA Americas, Inc.	7	513-272-0131	www.vega.com
Veolia Advanced Solutions	44	855-526-4413	www.veolianorthamerica.com
Water Solutions Unlimited	25	800-359-3570	www.getwsu.com
Water Well Solutions Illinois Division SUEZ	29	888-769-9009	www.wwssg.com
Waterly	15	833-492-8370	www.waterlyapp.com
Ziebell Water Service Products	43	847-364-0670	www.ziebellproducts.com

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# ***PORTABLE WITH PUNCH.***

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Unmatched Reliability

## ***CONDITIONING PUMPS***

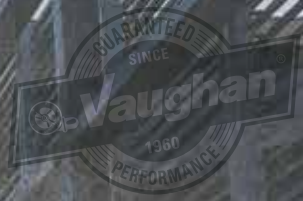
The Vaughan Conditioning Pump is a beast just below the surface. We mounted our submersible Chopper Pump to a portable stand and super-charged it with a high-velocity mixing nozzle. The result is a powerful pump that can be used in multiple applications at a single site.

*Choose the unmatched reliability of Vaughan.*

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# Your Lift Station Checklist

Routine maintenance is your best defense against costly downtime and repairs. Count on USABlueBook for everything you need to keep your lift stations in top condition!

- ✓ **Floats & Level Transmitters**
- ✓ **Pumps & Accessories**
- ✓ **Odor & Grease Control**



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