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The Clarifier

Chair's Column

Greetings from my home office/ dining room table! More than ever, I hope you are all doing well. I never thought I'd be preparing a Chair's Column for which there are no past or future Capital District events or activities to write about, but such is the world we live in right now. Instead of being excited about the Fireflies scoring on their should-have-been opening night, I was instead excited about personally scoring an eight-pack of toilet paper at Food Lion! Strange days indeed.

I have no idea what to tell you about the District's schedule going forward, but I don't foresee a return to normalcy any time real soon. Rescheduling the March District meeting looks extremely doubtful, but perhaps there is a chance we can reschedule Family Night at some point before the Fireflies baseball season is over. It's really hard to say, but of course we

will keep you posted on whatever we do.

One of our District activities that is staying on schedule is our scholarship process. The application deadline is June 1, so if you know of any students who may qualify, PLEASE have them apply! Scholarship information can be found in this issue and on the Capital District website.

With nothing much to report on, I hope you'll allow me to get a little sentimental. First, I'd like to give a shout out to those of you who are truly essential and have had to keep reporting to work every day during the pandemic, and have probably assumed that risk without complaining. I don't know how much you think about the importance and the value of your job, but times like these really put it into perspective. I know we try to bring up the significance of our

work fairly often in our association activities, but I hope the current situation has given you a renewed sense of your worth. Second, staying at home has given me a fresh perspective on what is truly valuable in my life. It turns out that if I have the basic necessities, some work to keep my brain and hands occupied, and the love of family, I can be happy without all the other stuff. I hope you've had time to reflect on that as well. Lastly, I hope you've considered those people who have been devastated by the pandemic, which may include some of you and your families. Please think about and pray for those folks, and help them wherever you can.

That is all. Please stay safe, and I will see y'all on the other side of the pandemic.

Take care, *Rick*



WEASC Capital District Schedule and Sponsors 2020

2020	Meeting / Sponsor
June 18th	EC Meeting @JMWSC TBD
July 16th	District Meeting @City of Newberry TBD
Aug 20th	EC Meeting @ American Engineering Consultants
Oct 8th	District Meeting @Pine Island



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STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS



Clean your hands often



Avoid close contact



Stay home if you're sick



Cover coughs and sneezes



Wear a facemask if you are sick



Clean and disinfect



SCHOLARSHIP NEWS!

Working on a college certificate, degree or diploma with environmental emphasis?

The WEASC Capital District will be awarding up to three
(3) \$2,500
scholarships this fall.

- > Scholarship funds will be issued for tuition, books, lab fees, and class or school required materials.
- > The criteria for the scholarship and an application package can be obtained at:
www.scwaters.org/group/capital
- > All applications must be received
by June 1, 2020.

Submittal instructions are included in the application package.



The Coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on Columbia Water's operations, and has altered the way we do business for the foreseeable future, as I'm sure it has for all water systems. The measures we have taken are numerous. First, only essential personnel, like water and wastewater operators, lab staff, and some managers are physically reporting to work, and they have been provided with masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer to protect themselves and others. Where possible, these workers are operating on alternating shifts to minimize exposure between employees. The drinking water lab has modified its sampling routine somewhat to better protect the lab staff when they are out in the field. The City is working on additional compensation for those essential employees who must continue to work, and has set up an employee coronavirus testing protocol. Some personnel have been set up to access the City's computer network from home so that they can work remotely. As far as the public front, no face-to-face interactions are being allowed, and no one's water service is being terminated for lack of payment. These are just some of the measures that Columbia Water is taking, and most water systems are probably doing likewise, but if you have any additional or unique ideas that you are implementing, please e-mail me and we can put them on the District website for the benefit of others.

Rick Hiers (rickey.hiers@columbiasc.gov)

News of Note:

Due to the cancellation of the SCEC, all 2020 SCEC awards will be presented at the 2020 Operator's Conference held **October 29-31** at the Myrtle Beach Hilton.

FROM ALL *of* US
THANK YOU!
to our Everyday
ESSENTIAL WORKERS
OUR WORLD
NEEDS YOU &
We Appreciate You!

*Plan to join us for the 2020
WEASC Meeting on*

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8
at Pine Island**

***The Best Tasting Water
of the Year award***
will be held during lunch
at this meeting. Don't miss it!!

SAVE THE DATE



Welcome New Members!

Marcus Bullock / Source Technologies, Inc.

Joshua Pinckney / Richland County

Paul Carmona / Town of Lexington

John Newsome / Town of Lexington

Shane Roof

Allen Clayborn / City of Cayce

Nathan Chappell

Jason Blount / City of Columbia



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SAVE THE DATE

Looking forward to our
annual golf tournament on

**WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 7, 2020
at The Windermere Club**
1101 Longtown Road East
Blythewood, SC

Look for details and registration
information coming soon!

WEASC Capital District Committee Assignments 2019-2020

At Large Member
At Large Member
At Large Member
At Large Member
Arrangements
Arrangements Support

Awards
Budget & Audit
Membership
Golf Support Team

Nominating
Programs
Publications
Rules
Scholarship
Website

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MEMBERS
IN THE NEWS!

Please keep Andy Metts (Town of Chapin)
in your thoughts and prayers
as he recovers from a recent medical issue.



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Progress Through Cooperation

4/15/2020

My Fellow WEASC Capital District Members:

All operators and those employed in the water/wastewater utility field routinely face changing job conditions and challenging assignments. The Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges to both our daily job assignments and home life as well. At Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission, we gradually implemented steps to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and ensure the health of our employees. We also implemented several operational changes in order to maintain service while meeting all regulatory requirements.

Some of the changes implemented included reduced office hours, closure of lobby, temporary relaxation of disconnect protocols, split shifts, staff working from home, online staff meetings, no onsite meetings, reduced personal interaction with customers in the field, social distancing at all times, and sanitizing work spaces/vehicles daily. System operational changes have included adjustments to meet higher residential water demand along with increased wastewater lift station cleaning due to the additional load of wipes being experienced. These adjustments have been challenging to say the least, but we have been able to adapt and provide a continual level of service to our customers.

In conclusion, I would like to thank not only Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission employees, but all Capital District members for their essential work during this pandemic. Providing safe drinking water and protecting the environment are two critical needs our communities must have in addressing this pandemic.

Thank You to All and Stay Safe,

Gene House

Gene House
Operations Manager

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