



Wisconsin
Rural Water
Journal

Spring 2024

Business Member Spotlights

Don't Fall for the Bait on Phishing Scams

Spring 2024 Transitions

Get Help with on the Job Reporting

Emergency Chlorination Plans

**36th Annual
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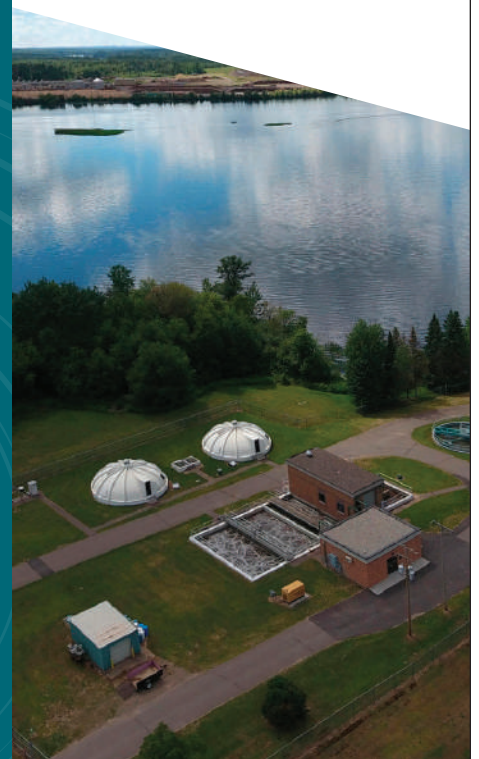
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Address all letters to the editor, advertising inquiries and correspondence to:
 Wisconsin Rural Water Association, 350 Water Way, Plover, WI 54467.



Dean Bergstrom,
WRWA President, Cumberland

Message from the President

It was another fantastic WRWA Annual Conference in La Crosse in March. We had a record turnout with 1,402 registered attendees, nearly 200 operators taking DNR tests on Tuesday, and we had our vendor booths all sold with 38 new vendors that had never been to the conference before!! It was a great time visiting with other operators and vendors. I would like once again to thank our staff as they put in a lot of extra time putting on this event and want to thank the Sportsman Raffle Committee and all those who volunteer time helping with that event. All the money from the raffle comes back to WRWA in which comes back to you the operators, to help with purchasing new equipment or help with making our training center better equipped to help make the learning experience better for you.

We are excited to get moving on our new property that was purchased this spring, to get the area tilled up and seeded, so we can get a good grass service established, so we can use the area for the Outdoor Expo this August. We already have vendors who are eager to help us with this project. We are working on a layout and what we want to include in this area to help with training in the future. Stay tuned for more details as we move forward!

I would also like to wish Sue Wojtalewicz and Kay Curtain a happy retirement as they both retired earlier this year. Thank you for all your years of dedicated service to WRWA!!

I hope you all have a great spring and summer season as you begin your projects. Again, if you need any assistance, you can reach out to your circuit rider, and they will be there to lend a hand.

Until next time, stay safe!

Dean



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WRWA Mission:
Assisting, educating
and representing
our members in the
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Industries.



Chris Groh,
WRWA Executive Director

Message from the Executive Director

I'm especially proud of this Spring's Journal. We are just coming off of our WRWA 36th Annual Technical Conference and we had an excellent one. It makes me pause and take count of all my thanks for all my staff, business members, regulatory and funding agencies, USDA Rural Development, EPA and especially all my fellow operators from both the Water and Wastewater fields. Without all of these wonderful people coming together, we wouldn't be near the Association that we are. This year we had 1400 people take part in all the learning, teaching, discussing and fun we shared at our 36th conference! Thank you to all who made this event so special.

Next year we are bringing our Conference to the Eastern side of the state. We have been aware that there are many operators and systems that won't travel to the far Western side of the state for our Conference, so we are bringing it to them. Now both sides will have a chance to experience our training, exhibitions, and fun for themselves. Those of you who won't travel to Green Bay please don't worry. We'll be back to La Crosse in 2027!

This last Winter (?), besides getting ready for our conference, I had a chance to attend the National Rural Water Association ED's Meeting in Puerto Rico. Here we discussed all kinds of aspects to our work and traded procedures and experiences within the group to bring out solutions to some of our issues. One of the more important discussions was the changing meanings of training and technical assistance. For the last few years we have been experiencing agencies that sees a different meaning to these ideas. Their ideas involve lowest bidder or political favors. Your technical assistance or training comes from someone that has never set foot in a plant like yours, or even know how your plant works. They may have a degree in some environmental field, but they couldn't begin to tell you how to solve your treatment problem. They will have clean hands when they offer you a handshake greeting though! And they know how to read PowerPoint slides.

Our training comes from your ranks. Operators that have years of experience, and dirty hands. They have seen your issue before and know exactly how to fix it. They have also taught many other operators how to fix, and prevent, these issue from happening again. They may not speak the King's English, but they speak our language. They know how to stay compliant and deal with regulatory agencies.

So, who would you rather see come through your front gate or at the front of your training session, someone wearing a shirt, tie, slacks and fine shoes, or someone with jeans, boots and a WRWA Operator Expo t-shirt from 2016? I thought so!

Chris



EDs from across the U.S. visiting water system in Puerto Rico


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We get letters and emails!

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Hey Kay,

I just heard you are retiring. I want to thank you for all the many times I've been at your trainings or just talking to you. The knowledge you have is unmatched. You will certainly be missed.

Also, I want to tell you that you are not allowed to retire!!!! Hopefully I will get to talk to you before you are officially retired.

Thanks for everything,

Nate from the Village of Star Prairie

Dear Ms. Curtin,

Thank you so much for your valuable input on the Village of Lake Holcombe septic treatment concerns. The information you have shared with Annika, Deanna, and Lauren has been very helpful in our understanding of the situation and provision of recommendations.

Best regards,

Crispin Pierce, PhD, MSc

Professor -- Environmental Public Health Program

Fulbright Scholar/NEHA Technical Advisor/2023 UWEC CAS

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Dear WRWA,

I just wanted to send this email thanking Tony for helping me with the transition to the HACH TNT843 phosphorous test. I reached out to Tony, and he was able to make it to our facility in a timely manner. Tony was very personable and great to work with. Fast forward a few weeks he was able to make another trip to assist with other issues I was having, once again resolving those issues. I have reached out via phone multiple times and Tony has had great response time. I just wanted to say thanks again for all your hard work and dedication, it was very appreciated.

Thanks,

Dylan Varo, Lead operator, Prairie du Chien WWTF

Dear Mr. Thomas,

As the Tribal Utility Consultant for Indian Health Service (IHS) to the Wisconsin Tribes for over 15 years, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the work conducted by Mrs. Brooke Klingbeil in her position as an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) contracted Wastewater Technician through the Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA). In the short time she has been providing assistance to the tribes, she has gained the respect of the tribal utility staff with her knowledge of wastewater treatment and testing and has proven her integrity by providing timely, quality deliverables.

Brooke approached me with an enthusiastic drive to provide technical assistance to the tribal wastewater utilities. An area of great need for the tribal wastewater systems in the development and maintenance of administrative documents such as Emergency Response Plans. Brooke pulled together several templates to develop a format that incorporates not only the necessary emergency response information to meet the EPA and IHS recommendations, but also lends to the development of an asset management program. She completed the data collection and population of the template for a simple utility in a matter of days and provided a high-quality draft to the Utility for review in 10 business days, a very impressive feat!

She has also been an invaluable resource for wastewater treatment and laboratory procedures. During site visits to the Oneida Nation and to the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Brooke fully enveloped herself into the wastewater treatment operations of the labs and treatment processes. She has extensive knowledge of lab procedures, reporting, and treatment process adjustment and is willing to help the utilities in tasks from developing Standard Operating Procedures to recommending process adjustments to increase treatment efficiency. She is very hands on and her sincere desire to assist the utilities is evident in her communication with the tribal staff.

Brooke has an infectious personality and displays a high level of respect for the native cultures. The tribal staff trust her and appreciate the resources she brings to the table. These attributes coupled with the provision of timely, high-quality deliverables has made Brooke an invaluable asset for the Wisconsin Tribes and I truly appreciate the services she provides.

Sincerely,

Shane Hoffmann, PE, Wisconsin Tribal Utility Consultant

To whom it may concern,

I had a water leak in my system that did not come to surface. Annie happened to be in my area and stopped down and located my problem. I have just taken over as superintendent on Oct 1st, 2023, Did not have any idea how to locate something I couldn't see. We proceeded to have the leak fixed, shortly after my levels went back up. I called Annie and she arranged for her and Dan Wundrow to come down and do a system survey. After a few hours of driving around they narrowed my search to a small 2 block area.

I really appreciate the time that they spent in the Village of Arena, and they saved me time and money that I don't have in my budget to spend.

THANKS A LOT ANNIE, VON RUEDEN and DAN WUNDROW.

Thanks for everything,

Richard Meili, Public Works Superintendent, Village of Arena

Hi Chris,

I want to thank WRWA and Seth especially for the training that was provided to two of our employees who took the water training classes for water distribution and ground water. Seth even stopped by our offices and went over the material again with my guys before they took the tests at the WRWA Convention. The guys are confident they did well.

Thanks again!!

Dean Bergstrom, Utility Manager, Cumberland Municipal Utility

SOME WATER LEAKS AREN'T SO EASY TO FIND




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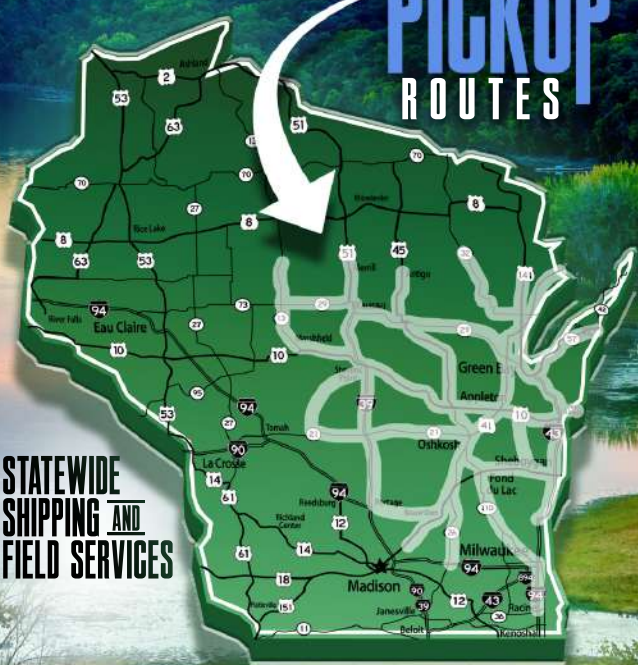
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From the survey services that guided the location of the new Lake Michigan water supply for the City of Waukesha to the design and construction-phase services for a new 200,000-gallon water tower in Medford, Ayres is helping communities around the state to deliver safe, reliable drinking water to their residents. Equally sought after is assistance with carving out a slice of the funding available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. Here's a glimpse of some of the work going on around the state.

Medford Water Tower and Interceptor

The City of Medford set out to construct a new 200,000-gallon water tower to create a high-pressure zone to boost water pressure on the



north side. The City also wanted to extend its east side interceptor from STH 64 to Allman Street. The Ayres-designed tower and interceptor were constructed in 2023, financed by borrowing through a tax incremental finance district.

Waukesha Water Supply Pipeline Mapping and Engineering

The Waukesha Water Utility's Great Water Alliance Program needed to identify an appropriate route for approximately 40 miles of pipeline in the City of Waukesha and Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties to supply Waukesha with Lake Michigan water and return treated water back to the lake. Starting in 2016, Ayres' geospatial services delivered fixed-wing acquisition and processing of 3-inch orthoimagery and digital terrain model extraction. Unmanned aerial systems (drones) were deployed for facility mapping. Traditional survey methods were used to support pipeline design, conflict determination/resolution, boundary determinations, platting, and easement acquisition. Utility and construction-related services were provided from 2020 through completion in 2023.

Helping Communities Gain CWFP, SDWLP, and CDBG Funding

Recent success stories fueled by significant infusions of funding assistance include:

- Washburn STH 13 water, sewer, and lighting design services and 2024 and 2026 construction phase services in sync with a Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) reconstruction project. Ayres helped the City win \$2,230,500 in Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) and \$3,017,400 in Safe Drinking Water Loan Fund (SDWLF) funding (with half the principal forgiven on each), \$286,600 in Lead Service Line funding (with \$204,550 of the principal forgiven), and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding of \$1 million.
- Mellen STH 13 replacement of nearly century-old water and sewer, synchronized with 2022 WisDOT roadway reconstruction, with Ayres helping the City to win a \$550,000 CWFP loan and a \$758,775 SDWLP loan (with 65% of the principal forgiven on each) and CDBG funding of \$1 million.



- Phillips 2024 Fifield Street and Ash Street roadway, water, and sanitary and storm sewer reconstruction, with Ayres helping the City win a \$1,239,500 SDWLP loan and a \$1,032,500 CWFPP loan (with 65% of each loan's principal forgiven).
- Medford STH 64 Water Main Replacement, with Ayres helping the City win a \$536,524 SDWLP loan (with half the principal forgiven).
- Baldwin 2023 Curtis Street and 8th Avenue roadway, sewer, and water reconstruction, with Ayres helping the Village get \$608,692 in SDWLP and \$540,000 in CWFPP low-interest loans.
- Colby STH 13 trenchless water main replacement and roadway restoration, funded through a \$720,050 SDWLP low-interest loan Ayres helped the City win.
- Stanley 2024 East Second Avenue reconstruction, with construction costs of \$717,300. Ayres helped the City win principal-forgiven CDBG loan of \$478,200.
- Edgar 2024 Wisconsin Avenue and George Wagner Drive roadway and utility reconstruction, with Ayres assisting the Village in winning SDWLP and CWFPP loans totaling \$1,231,000.

Please contact Gareth Shambeau at ShambeauG@AyresAssociates.com to discuss your community's water and wastewater needs and to get in the queue for funding as the BIL winds down in the 2025, 2026, and 2027 construction years.

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DON'T FALL for the BAIT on PHISHING SCAMS

Dan Wundrow,
WRWA Water Circuit Rider

In my last article, I talked about the basics of cybersecurity and the meaning of each item listed on the EPA cybersecurity checklist. Today, I will touch briefly on cybersecurity, dealing with potential email scams, and how to protect IT (information technology) and OT (operational technology) systems. We will be broaching Account Security and Other Accounts from the EPA checklist. For a down-and-dirty review of Account Security, it protects account users and helps keep security rock solid. Other accounts include phishing emails and other related data breaches. So why is this so important? This is the first line of defense for your IT and OT system. Many hackers hope you will take the bait and click on their dangerous email.

Many phishing emails are made to trick the average user or catch the user out of compliance. They happen very quickly and are not always done deliberately. Once they happen, you are either unaware or totally shut down. For many systems, it can be terrifying not knowing what is being leaked or happening behind the scenes.

The three main types of phishing emails are Clone, Spear, and Whaling. Each type has a particular task; the main goal is to lure the victim into clicking the bait. A clone phishing email is the attacker's ability to duplicate a previous message once sent from or with your email address. Spear phishing emails target specific individuals or departments in your community that appear to be from a trusted

Many phishing emails are made to trick the average user or catch the user out of compliance.

source. Whaling emails target high-profile executives to gain information that enables them to access sensitive IT and OT systems areas. How can you tell the difference between the three types when you receive them? Let's break each one down and show you what you should look for daily.

Clone phishing attempts are sometimes hard to spot as the hacker will make this email look similar to the authentic one. Don't worry; the hackers will make slight changes to the email, either in the address, wording, adding links that make no sense, or attaching documents when a document is not required per the email. Look for incorrect spelling, grammatical errors, or awkward formatting. Remember, hackers are computer-smart and, in most cases, foreign, which means they don't always know how their English language is written. In these emails, some things to look at are the address, subject, importance level, and what the email is talking about. For example, you should be on the lookout if the email address is from your friendly DNR person and ends in ".com" rather than ".gov." If the subject line is talking about something that doesn't make sense, you should also proceed cautiously. The importance level may be set to high. This is used to trick you into panic, so you believe this email is time-sensitive. It is not time-sensitive if the subject line indicates something that will not take place for months. Finally, the email's subject. Let's say the email is from, once again, your friendly DNR person. If they start the email with "Dearest Friend," "Valued Customer," or any odd-sounding lingo, beware. Think about who is sending you the email and your relationship with them.

Cloning emails are sometimes sent out in mass to many employees simultaneously. The odds are better in more significant numbers. They are just in hopes that one person will click on the attached document or link



provided. If the email goes out to 20 people and looks and sounds good to one person, the hackers now have an in.

Spear phishing emails use scouting to increase the odds of success. Hackers will use social media accounts like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and others to gain personal information on their targets. They will also go as far as mapping out their target network and contact list. This information will be used to complete a believable spear phishing email. This is needed to put your guard down as the email looks and feels like it is from a trusted source. Once you click on the attachments or links, you are susceptible to stolen personal information or malware infection.

Once again, looking out for the sense of urgency, incorrect email addresses, spelling mistakes, requiring sensitive information, unneeded attachments, and trying to instill panic. If the email you received seems too good to be true or scary, read further into it and look at some of the things I discussed here.

Whale Phishing combines clone and spear phishing emails but brings it to a new level. The attacker picks the "whale" of the company, usually the top executives, and completes all their needed reconnaissance. Once this is done, the attacker will create a compelling email from the whale's contact list. From there, the attacker will make what seems like small talk with the whale to gain trust. After a few email transactions, the attacker might send the whale a follow-up email indicating that he needs a specific file they had been working on or forgot the login for the VPN. As you can see, gaining trust is the fastest way for a hacker to gain access.

What is the goal of any of these phishing attacks? Besides these, hackers need a job; they are used to gain money and control, attacks on supply chains, corporate espionage, malware distribution, and personal vendettas. From this list, you can see what kind of impact this can have on your system, whether big or small.

How can you protect yourself from some of these phishing emails? The cheapest and easiest first few steps are to educate you and your staff on each of the potential phishing emails and create new policies indicating not to exchange passwords, account numbers, or any sensitive material. On a more technical end, regularly conduct proactive investigations, ensure that multifactor authentication is fully patched and configured, conduct phishing simulations with staff, search for malicious activity on your domain-based message authenticator, domain keys identified mail and sender policy framework for failures, scan properties of received messages and add banners for out of network domain names.

I have a few tricks to help me weed out the first two phishing emails. They are relatively simple to install on your email provider. Again, they are not proven methods, but currently, they have worked well for me. You can apply color filters to your contacts if you are an Outlook user. For example, when the office staff emails me, the email will turn a specific color, indicating that this sender is within my contact list. Then, I have a color filter for my program manager. This also helps me have a quick reference for who is sending me an email. However, this will not apply if the hacker is using a correct duplicate email. I still need to use what I know and look for anything unusual.

This can be a very dull and over-talked subject. With all the crazy scams going on now, applying some of these practices in your everyday life is worth your time and energy. If you need more assistance with this or have questions, please reach out, and we will help you get set on the right path. I hope you all enjoyed the conference a few weeks ago and are looking forward to a great fishing opener. *Dan*

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Spring 2024 Transitions

Kelly Thomas,
WRWA Technical Assistance Director

The 2024 Annual Technical Conference is in the books. Vendors from 182 companies blanketed the La Crosse Center with 218 booths this year. There were over 1400 water professionals attending classes, roaming the exhibit hall, and networking with other attendees.

As I look back over this year's conference, I cannot help but reminisce about the "good ol' days" of my early conferences in Green Bay. I remember entering the first day of my first conference under the "guidance" of Scott Giese and Joe Kniseley. Yep, those were the guys showing me the ropes. Along with Jeff La Belle, Ed Hendzel, Jesse Clafin, Dave Lawrence and our current leader, Chris Groh, this motley crew knew how to corral a thousand people, educate them, and keep them all somewhat entertained for three days. I really did not know what I was getting into. The office staff at the time, Ken Blomberg, Renee Koback, Sue Wojtalewicz, and Janis Klismith, were working hard planning all the behind-the-scenes duties that make everything appear

Yep, those were the guys showing me the ropes.

to run smoothly. As a WRWA staff member, one of my favorite parts of the conference was (and still is) is the debriefing immediately after the banquet on Thursday. This is the time our staff finally gets to relax and rehash all of the good and bad of the past few days. Then eventually the stories of past years' conferences are told by many. There is lots of foolish talk and laughter. What a team we had.

At this year's conference, you may have noticed some new faces to the WRWA staff. As we miss the experience of Sue and Kay Curtin, we continue to fill the voids with strong players. At registration you may have spotted three of our newer faces. Our new CFO, Andy Aspinwall was one to greet you at registration along with our new Energy Efficiency Technician, Matt Rettler, and Amy Falkowski, the new Executive Administrative Assistant. If you attended any wastewater classes, there was a good chance that Brook Klingbeil was moderating your session. She is our new EPA Wastewater Technician. These new



teammates are very strong additions to an already talented WRWA staff. Our field staff occasionally may change faces and personalities; however, one thing remains consistent, and that is the knowledge of the industry and commitment of our staff to you, our members.

While I miss the "good ol' days," I am excited to continue making new memories with our current staff. What a team we have!

Stay safe. Stay healthy, *Kelly*

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DECEMBER 1, 2023 – FEBRUARY 29, 2024

UTILITY NAME	ORDER ISSUED	OVERALL% INCREASE
Blair Municipal Water Utility	12/1/2023	24.18%
Village of Maple Bluff Municipal Water Utility	12/1/2023	22.71%
City of Shawano Water and Sewer Utility	12/4/2023	26.03%
Cleveland Water Utility	12/7/2023	65.96%
City of Pewaukee Water Utility	12/12/2023	29.54%
Antigo Utilities	12/15/2023	19.25%
Coleman Water Utility	12/15/2023	9.69%
Dresser Municipal Water Utility	12/15/2023	-16.12%
Elcho Sanitary District No 1	12/20/2023	75.47%
Browntown Municipal Water Utility	12/29/2023	9.37%
Lena Municipal Water and Sewer Utility	1/2/2024	20.2%
Town of Scott Water Utility	1/2/2024	18.74%
New Berlin Water Utility	1/16/2024	33.1%
Linden Municipal Water Utility	1/18/2024	24.76%
Stone Lake Sanitary District	1/18/2024	28.83%
Elkhorn Light And Water	1/31/2024	24.21%
Sparta Municipal Water Department	1/31/2024	10.55%
Lomira Municipal Water Utility	2/2/2024	94.49%
Windsor Water Utility	2/2/2024	43.44%
Village of East Troy Municipal Water Utility	2/6/2024	29.49%
Berlin Municipal Water And Sewer Utility	2/16/2024	18.4%
Fitchburg Water Utility	2/23/2024	7.88%

PSC CONSTRUCTION AUTHORIZATIONS ISSUED

DECEMBER 1, 2023 – FEBRUARY 29, 2024

UTILITY NAME	ORDER ISSUED	CONSTRUCTION COST
Adams Municipal Water and Sewer Utility	12/15/2023	\$5,078,388
City of Oshkosh Water Utility	1/10/2024	\$600,000
Appleton Water Department	2/2/2024	\$8,500
Elkhorn Light And Water	2/9/2024	\$4,200,000
Rib Mountain Water Utility	2/16/2024	\$13,700,000
City of Milton Municipal Water Utility	2/23/2024	\$950,000
New Glarus Light and Water Works	2/23/2024	\$3,212,500
Junction City Water Utility	2/23/2024	\$994,923



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Outside back cover	\$800	\$2,540	NA	NA
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New Wastewater Technician

Tony Roche,
WRWA Wastewater Trainer

Hello Western Wisconsin! This is Tony Roche – your new wastewater technician. I am sure many of you worked with Kay Curtin over the years doing various wastewater related tasks. Kay has retired from WRWA and I have replaced her as the wastewater technician for Western Wisconsin. I have been with WRWA since 2019. I started in the energy efficiency program and then was doing training for the last 3 years. When the opportunity came up to become the wastewater technician, I went for it and started my new role in February 2024. I am looking forward to meeting you at your plants and helping you with any technical assistance requests that you may have.

I come from an operations background and have experience with activated sludge plants, laboratory operations, biosolids management, and also industrial pretreatment. I really enjoy getting out there and helping communities with technical assistance requests. If any operators in the audience are having issues with your plants or with a problematic industry, please reach out to me and I will help you as best as I can.

I have only been in this new role for a couple months but I have seen that many systems are being required to submit standard operating procedures (SOPs) to their respective DNR representatives for tasks ranging from chemical addition, lagoon system operation and

I have seen that many systems are being required to submit standard operating procedures (SOPs) to their respective DNR representatives

maintenance, phosphorus analysis, and the list goes on. If you need help putting together an SOP or any kind of “optimization report” please reach out to me. I would love to come and help you out!

On more of a personal note, I am a fun-loving guy and I have a real passion for the natural resources in the great State of Wisconsin! I really enjoy hunting and fishing. The spring perch bite is in full swing on the Mississippi River, and spring turkey season is right around the corner. I have been hunting since I have been able to walk, and I love chasing whitetails in the Driftless Region of Wisconsin. I will throw in my love for Green Bay Packers football, cheese, and fermented beverages and that pretty much sums me up.

I have had an opportunity to meet many operators through my training role and I am eager to continue those working relationships and also make new friends. By the time this article is published our 2024 Annual Conference will have concluded, but hopefully I will see you all in La Crosse! The 2025 and 2026 Annual Conferences will be held in Green Bay (in the shadow of Lambeau Field) and I can guarantee we will learn a thing or two but we will also have a great time!

I will see you all further on up the road.

Tony

EC-SDC Grant Program For OTM/NON-PROFIT NN Systems

Today, I wanted to talk to everyone about the grant that is available for OTM and Non-Profit systems and hopefully answer any questions that you may have. In 2021 federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided funds to help with small water systems and communities. The Wisconsin DNR received grant funds from the Environmental Protection Agency in the amount of \$4,000,000. The program is based on treating PFAS or manganese issues.

What is an OTM?

OTM is short for: Other than Municipal public water systems that are not owned by a municipality or a government that has at least 25 or more around the year residents. Examples of some OTM systems may include mobile home parks, apartment buildings, and condo associations that are not on city or municipal water.

What is a Non-Profit NNS?

Non-Profit NNS is short for: Non- Transient Non-Community public water systems that are not residential and routinely serves groups of at least 25 of the same people over six months of the year. NNS can include schools or daycare centers that are not on city or municipal water.

Does your system qualify? You must:

- 1 - Own or operate an OTM or non-profit water system.
- 2 - Your water system must serve a community of less than 10,000 people.
- 3 - Your system must have PFAS or manganese contamination.

If you are interested in finding out more information or to apply for this grant, contact your local WI-DNR representative or myself, George Taylor at gtaylor@wrwa.org

Thank you everyone for taking the time to read.

George Taylor,
Small Water System Circuit Rider • 715-321-4145
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GET HELP with on the Job Reporting

Jesse Hass,
WRWA Wastewater Trainer

Over the years our organization has helped rural communities with a wide variety of reports.

Over the past few years, the job of a lead operator has required more time at the desk filling out paperwork and reports. Regulating agencies require various reports to keep your utility in compliance. For new operators, some of these reports may seem daunting, and honestly some of them are. Some of these reports require tons of data and precise ways to organize the information. Sometimes an operator will think they have completed a report only to find out more details are still needed. It can be an arduous task to complete some of these reports. Some operators just don't have the time to do their "in-the-field" job and the required paperwork. Some municipalities will seek outside consulting agencies to complete these reports, which helps save time, but can be quite expensive. Some of the reports I have seen utilities have to complete can range up to \$25,000. So, finding cost effective ways to complete some of these reports can be very beneficial to small utilities.

WRWA has a vast amount of experience in many different areas and a wide network of resources. If your utility has a report that needs to be done. You

may want to reach out to your water or wastewater circuit rider to see if they can help. We may not be able to help with every type of report, but I know we can help with some of them. Over the years our organization has helped rural communities with a wide variety of reports. On the water side our circuit riders are helping complete the lead and copper inventories that are due in October of 2024 and hydrant discharge reports. If you have any questions or need assistance with these reports, contact Dan, Todd, or Annie, our water circuit riders.



On the wastewater side you may have noticed an uptick in the number of plans and reports that need to be completed. If you are submitting a new permit or have just received a permit there may be dates and timelines to submit plans, reports, and data to meet future limits. If you need to apply for a new permit, you will need to fill out the required data the DNR is asking for. Depending on the size of your community and the possible new limits you

may be receiving, your utility may have to collect a lot of new information. Once a permit is renewed, the municipality might a checklist of dates to

submit pertinent information to the DNR. This information provides the DNR with data and plan a municipality is taking to comply with new limits. Some of these reports will require an engineer while others may be able to be done by the utility.

One of the reports that WRWA has been able to help some communities with is a Phosphorus Optimization study and report. With the help of a few communities that had done this report earlier, WRWA has been able to provide a template for small communities to help complete this report. This report will require graphs with a lot of pertinent information, but it may be able to be done by a small utility. Another report that may be required in a new permit is a Land Management Plan. A Land Management Plan is a report that may be required for utilities that discharge to groundwater in the form of seepage cells or irrigation. If this report pops up as a requirement on your new permit, give WRWA a call. This is another report that WRWA has developed a template to help small communities do it by themselves, in some cases.

A few other reports I have seen lately include, but are not limited to, Phosphorus Removal Plan, Chemical Feed Report, Sludge Removal Plan, and Operation Need Review. We have a Template for the Sludge Removal Plan and the Chemical Feed Report. WRWA has also provided advice for the Phosphorus Removal Plans. So, if you are required to do these reports give us a call. I'm not promising we will be able to help in every instance, but we have already helped a few communities.

Jesse

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Is Solar for your Water or Wastewater Plant Beneficial?

Matt Rettler,
WRWA Energy Efficiency Circuit Rider

Solar offers a cost-effective alternative to traditional electricity sources.

Water and wastewater treatment plants play a critical role in safeguarding public health and the environment. However, these treatment plants are often energy intensive and rely on the conventional electric grid to keep them operational. Our electric grid is very dependable, but prices will continue to rise, and this will continue to escalate the costs of treating both water and wastewater. Should your facility consider installing solar to offset the rising costs of electricity? I will try to answer that question for you in this article.

Solar has many benefits. Solar offers a cost-effective alternative to traditional electricity sources. Once installed, solar panels have minimal operating costs and can significantly reduce utility bills for your utility, leading to long term savings. It is important to realize that your utility bill will not be eliminated! Depending on your electricity provider, there may be restrictions on the amount of solar energy you can provide. In many cases you are supplementing the total electricity needed with solar. In most cases, a two-way meter is installed and if your solar panel array produces more power than is needed, the meter will run backwards feeding power back into the grid. Your energy utility will only buy this power back at a wholesale price and is not economical to do this. With

proper sizing your solar panel array will provide just enough power per month for your current consumption.

Beyond the savings you will see from the energy produced, treatment plants can reduce their carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels. Solar energy production produces no greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to cleaner air and the environment. This encompasses the exact reason a wastewater plant is in operation to begin with. Creating a more sustainable environment through the reduction of pathogens released. Community engagement by adopting solar energy initiatives can help with the public's perception of the goals for a community's utilities.

The last positive I want to discuss is the tax incentives available to the community for installing solar. Even with villages, towns, and cities being a non-profit government entity, they are still eligible for the 30% tax credits available to install solar. This means you can get 30% back for your project and payback times easily become less than 10 years with a 30-year service life of the panels.

Solar is not all positive. There are some drawbacks to solar and one of the biggest may be the area to install. While solar providers can install



the panels on roof tops or ground mounts, they need a required amount of space to meet the design output. Having this space available within a reasonable distance from your electric meter may be a challenge.

The cheapest option of installation is with a grid tied system without storage capability. What this means is that when you need all the energy produced from the system, you use it. If your system produces more energy than required, it goes back into the grid and a credit appears with your meter. Having batteries onsite to store the excess energy is much more expensive. A utility must decide between two options at this point. A grid tied system shuts down the output of energy from panels in a power outage and will not supply power to your facility in a power outage. This is for the safety of line workers fixing the electric grid after the outage. They cannot have power being back fed into their lines from solar providers. If you go with a much more expensive solar project, you can add batteries and storage for those few times of power outages.

Incorporating solar panels into your water or wastewater treatment plants presents a compelling opportunity to enhance sustainability, reduce costs, and promote energy independence. While implementation requires careful consideration of site sustainability, financial factors, technical requirements, and maintenance needs, the long-term benefits outweigh the challenges. By embracing solar energy solutions, water and wastewater plants can lead the way towards a cleaner, more resilient future, while fulfilling their vital role in protecting public health and the environment. In the end, each utility will need to decide whether there is a benefit for themselves or not for a solar installation. I have begun giving that option with my energy assessments to utilities where it makes the most sense. *Matt*

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SAFETY FIRST

Can A Public Employer Be Fined For Violating SPS Code 332 Public Employee Safety & Health Requirements

Vince Matarrese,
President
Advanced Safety Technology, Inc.

Employers are required to provide a safe working environment and complying with SPS Code 332, Public Employee Safety & Health.

People have asked me for years, “What does verbal orders mean?” In other words, the Department of Safety & Professional Service inspector never gives anything in writing. The short answer is, verbal means nothing! Compliance inspectors are required by State law to issue written orders upon finding violations. The biggest question is, “Why don’t they do their job?” The next question people also ask is, how come they never come back to follow up? Cannot answer those questions! But, I can tell you what the law says.

101.055 Public employee safety and health.

(6) Enforcement. (a) Orders.

1. Issuance. If, as a result of inspection, the department finds a violation of a safety and health standard or variance or a condition which poses a recognized hazard likely to cause death or serious physical harm to a public employee, the department shall issue an order to the employer. A public employer who is in compliance with any standards or variances is deemed to be in compliance to the extent of the condition, practice, means, method, operation or process covered by that standard. The order shall describe the nature of the violation and the period of time within which the employer shall correct the violation. The department

shall send a copy of the order to the top elected official of the political subdivision of which the public employer is a part and to the appropriate collective bargaining agent for the employees affected by the violation cited in the order, if a collective bargaining agent exists. If the order is issued as a result of an inspection requested by an employee or public employee representative, the department shall also send a copy of the order to that employee or public employee representative. Upon receipt of an order, the employer shall post the order at or near the site of violation for 3 days, or until the violation is abated, whichever is longer. The order shall be posted regardless of whether there has been a petition for a variance under sub. (4) or for a hearing under subd. 3. The employer shall ensure that the order is not altered, defaced or covered by other materials.

Can a public employer be fined if the violation is not abated? Yes, and I have dealt with these in the past. As per SPS Code 332:

SPS 332.09 Penalties. Penalties for violations of this chapter may be assessed in accordance with s. 101.02, Stats.

Note: Section 101.02 (12), Stats., reads: “Every day during which any person or corporation, or any officer, agent or employee of a person

or corporation, fails to observe and comply with any order of the department or to perform any duty specified under this subchapter shall constitute a separate and distinct violation of the order or of the requirements of this subchapter, whichever is applicable."

Note: Section 101.02 (13) (a), Stats., reads: "If any employer, employee, owner, or other person violates this subchapter, or fails or refuses to perform any duty specified under this subchapter, within the time prescribed by the department, for which no penalty has been specifically provided, or fails, neglects or refuses to obey any lawful order given or made by the department, or any judgment or decree made by any court in connection with this subchapter, for each such violation, failure or refusal, such employer, employee, owner or other person shall forfeit and pay into the state treasury a sum not less than \$10 nor more than \$100 for each such offense."

First, above all, are you doing your part? Are you complying, and implementing the required safety & health regulations, which includes training? Employers are required to provide a safe working environment and complying with SPS Code 332, Public Employee Safety & Health. Regardless if it is verbal or an official written order, correct it. It is always better to be pro-active, not wait until something happens.

Always remember, it's all about going home.

Vince

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North Park Public Water District PFAS PILOT STUDY



Figure 2. PFAS Pilot system built and provided by Stantec.

Andrew Aslesen,
WRWA Source Water Specialist

PFAS, it has become the latest buzzword and newest contaminant of concern when it comes to drinking water quality. With Wisconsin recently implementing water quality standards for several PFAS compounds in drinking water and the EPA proposing standards that are even lower, a number of utilities across Wisconsin are or will be faced with tough decisions on how to deal with PFAS contamination. As with any big issue, it can be helpful to look at what other communities have done to find innovative solutions. That's why I want to give an overview of North Park Public Water District's PFAS pilot study, and hopefully their story can help utilities that might be facing a similar situation.

A number of utilities across Wisconsin are or will be faced with tough decisions on how to deal with PFAS contamination.

North Park Public Water District (NPPWD) provides drinking water to approximately 33,500 people in Winnebago County, Illinois. They primarily serve the communities of Machesney Park and Roscoe and rely on groundwater from four wells to deliver an average of 3.6 million gallons daily. In October 2020 Illinois EPA sampled NPPWD's wells and found low levels of several PFAS compounds. Monthly follow up samples were taken and in February 2021 one backup well (Well #5) was found to have elevated PFAS concentrations, of most concern was PFOS around 90 ppt. The well was taken out of service, reducing the utilities' overall capacity by about 25%, and removing one of its primary redundant backup supplies. To mitigate the PFAS issue,

NPPWD developed a multi-phase approach. First, they developed a master plan to identify sources and solutions for the presence of PFAS. This report also was the guide for cost summary, and the basis for preliminary actions such as land acquisition. Second, based on the results of the report, they are in the process of developing an additional water supply well (Well #7) which will be brought online in 2025. Third, they plan to build two treatment plants, one for Wells #3 & #4 to be brought online in 2027 and one for Well #2 to be brought online in 2028. To ensure they choose the best treatment option they decided to do a pilot study to compare several treatment options.

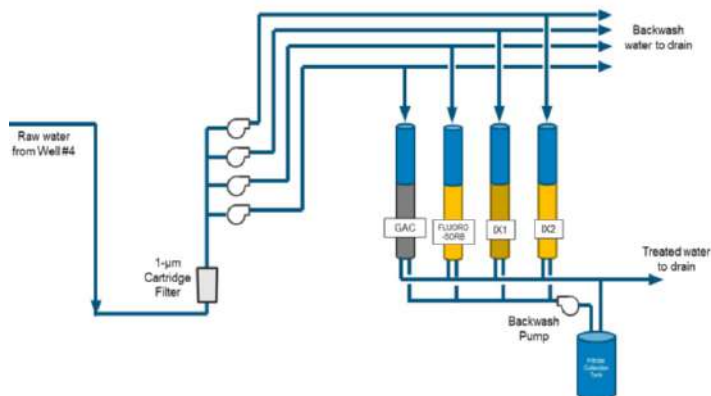


Figure 1. Schematic of North Park pilot project

The objective of NPPWD's pilot study are: 1) to compare pilot-scale PFAS removal efficacy by four treatment media; 2) assess any potential fouling of the media when operated on Well #4 water; and 3) develop reconnaissance level cost estimates for full-scale implementation of the best performing media. The four types of filter media being tested are granular activated carbon (GAC), an organo-clay adsorbent called FLUORO-SORB, and two anion exchange resins (DOWEX PSR-2 and CalRes 2301).

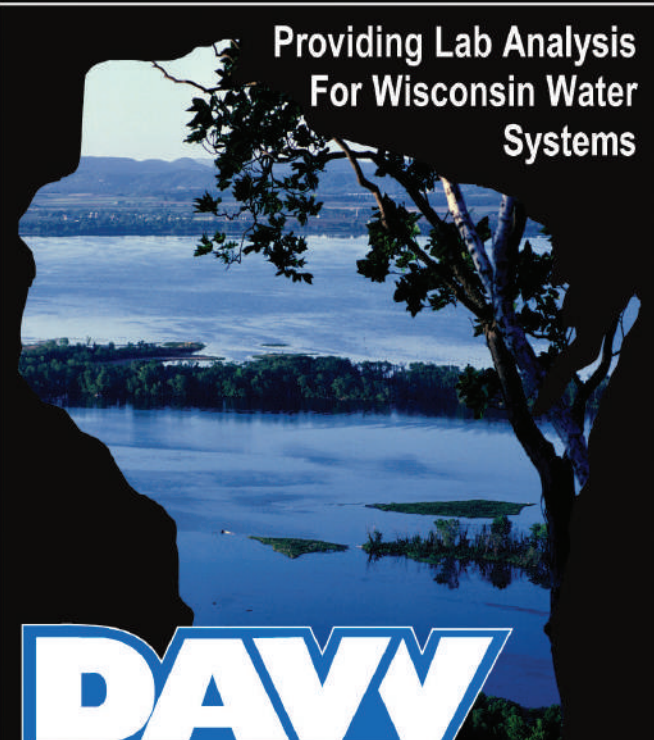
The pilot system is built on a skid that fits into the wellhouse at Well #4. It was designed and provided by Stantec and was previously used for a pilot study at Cottage Grove in Minnesota. The pilot system consists of four test columns loaded with the four filter media types listed above and operated in parallel. Well #4 serves as the primary feedwater, which flows through a 5-micron cartridge filter and in-line dissolved oxygen sensor before splitting into four filtration columns. The columns are constructed of 3" clear sch. 40 PVC pipe. The lower end of each column is fitted with a media retaining nozzle to prevent media loss and provide even flow distribution. Each column has three 1/4" stainless steel sample ports evenly distributed at 9" intervals along the column. Each column is fitted with a pressure differential transmitter for monitoring and data logging the pressure difference through the test resin. Water flow control is provided by four progressive cavity style feed pumps with variable speed capability and controlled via PID loop. Flow to each column is monitored by magnetic style flow meters. Periodic backwash of the media is done to remove solids retained between granules, eliminate possible biomass and recondition the filter media. A schematic of the pilot process is included in Figure 1.


NPPWD brought the pilot system online in August 2023. Initially outflow water from each column was sampled weekly but sampling has been backed off to by-weekly. At this point, there has been no breakthrough of any PFAS compounds at the lowest sampling port so in order to better assess the performance of each filter media they have started sampling at the ports higher up in the filter column. After six months of running the system the two filter medias that appear to be performing the best are the GAC and CalRes 2301. NPPWD plans to run the pilot system until June 2024, to continue to assess the effectiveness of the filter media before choosing which option is best suited for their needs.

In February, WRWA Water Circuit Rider Annie Von Rueden and myself visited the pilot study site to learn about the process and see how they are addressing PFAS in their system. North Park Public Water District's Chief Executive Officer Kelly Saunders stated that when they started looking at how to treat PFAS, other utilities were very helpful in pointing them in the right direction and if they can pay it forward and help other utilities that are facing similar challenges, they are happy to do so. If you are interested in more details and want to get in contact with NPPWD staff, feel free to reach out to me and I can put you in contact with them. I would like to thank the NPPWD staff for their time in showing us their pilot project and providing information.

Andrew

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Emergency Response Protocols for Wastewater Utilities

Brooke Klingbeil,
WRWA EPA Wastewater Technician

One key element in developing an ERP is the importance of updating it as often as needed.

Wisconsin experienced perhaps one of its mildest winters in history this year. I know majority of the industry was pleased with the minimal amounts of snow removal and absence of below freezing temperatures that can wreak havoc for water and wastewater utilities, but it sure did put a damper on some Wisconsin traditions such as snowmobiling and ice fishing. Despite the unfortunate loss of tourist income to Wisconsin communities and limited accessibility to get on the hard water, my family was still able to get a few ice fishing adventures in in quest of the elusive walleye successfully and safely. Onto open water, folks...but speaking of safety...I wanted to take this opportunity to discuss the importance of Emergency Response Plans for wastewater utilities.



under 40 CFR § 68.95 to develop and implement an emergency response program for the purpose of protecting public health and the environment. Additionally, the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (USDA/RD) is requiring that all systems that receive USDA/RD funding must complete a Security Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP).

Core Elements of ERP Guidance:

I've seen an area of great need for tribal and municipal wastewater systems in development and maintenance of administrative documents such as the ERP. One key element in developing an ERP is the importance of updating it as often as needed. Although an ERP can be basic, adding details such as pump specifications and listing significant equipment can lead to the development of an asset management program. The development of ERPs should contain the following core elements to ensure thorough coverage and effectiveness.

System-Specific Information: Detailed descriptions of wastewater treatment facilities, infrastructure, and potential hazards. Including addresses and exact GPS locations of the system, including lift stations and monitoring wells, will allow personnel responding to the emergency to identify critical components of the system. Especially in rural and tribal communities with small crews, this will serve as a roadmap to an individual responding to an emergency in the event of an absence. Develop your ERP in a manner that whoever picks it up can begin mitigating the emergency. Creating step by step protocols for specific events that cause emergencies will maximize efficiency.

Roles and Responsibilities: Clear delineation of responsibilities for personnel involved in emergency response, including designated leaders and points of contact. It is imperative to identify a chain of command in the event of an emergency, this will help staff remain organized and calm during a high-stress situation.

Developing Emergency Response Protocols for Wastewater Utilities

Wastewater utilities play a critical role in safeguarding public health and the environment by treating and disposing of wastewater safely. However, despite stringent operational protocols, certain events that can cause emergencies and disrupt operations can and do occur, posing risks to both human health and the environment. The ERP serves as a valuable resource, guiding utilities through the process of identifying potential hazards, establishing response protocols, and ensuring regulatory compliance. An ERP is a detailed document that outlines procedures to be followed before, during, and after an emergency to prevent, minimize, and mitigate injury and damage. ERPs serve as a roadmap for coordinated action, enabling personnel to handle crises efficiently while prioritizing safety and environmental protection and are recognized by regulatory agencies as a critical document for the proper management of a utility.

State and Federal Regulations

To address this, wastewater utilities are required to develop emergency response protocols (ERPs) for spill reporting under ch. 292, Wis. Stats. and

Communication Procedures: Established protocols for internal and external communication, including notification procedures for spill reporting. Be sure only authorized personnel give notice to the public and that reporting meets WPDES and NPDES requirements. Include a current and comprehensive emergency notification list that includes local first responders, state/federal/tribal contacts, priority customers, service and repair providers, and appropriate media sources.

Personnel Safety: Measures to ensure the safety of personnel involved in emergency response activities, including training, personal protective equipment (PPE), and evacuation procedures. List priority customers in the ERP (such as hospitals/clinics, schools/daycare centers, nursing homes/assisted living, and significant users) to ensure public safety and to notify customers that are significant users in the event of an emergency or repair to reduce use/flow and increase the system's capacity during and outage. Identifying PPE and listing the location of where items can be found is also of great importance.

Emergency Storage: Guidelines for the safe containment and storage of hazardous materials or contaminated wastewater during emergencies.

Contaminated Wastewater Disposal: Procedures for the proper disposal of contaminated wastewater to prevent environmental contamination.

Equipment and Chemical Supplies: Inventory and maintenance schedules for emergency response equipment and chemical supplies. It's a good idea to list pump specifications such as model number and serial number, and what section of the O&M manual specific equipment can be found. Additionally, listing information from the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or where

SDS's can be found for chemicals used throughout the system ensures safe handling of chemicals.

Property Protection: Measures to protect infrastructure, facilities, and surrounding properties from damage during emergencies. This includes the physical security, and cybersecurity of your overall system.

Response Capabilities: Assessment of the utility's response capabilities, including resource availability and mutual aid agreements. Identify your County Emergency Management or Tribal Emergency Management Departments and neighboring wastewater systems.

Sampling and Monitoring: Protocols for sampling and monitoring wastewater quality before, during, and after emergency events to assess environmental impact and guide response efforts. Sampling, monitoring, and reporting protocols can be found in your WPDES or NPDES permits.

I know that was a lot to digest, but you know the saying...safety is no accident! Developing and maintaining robust Emergency Response Plan is essential for wastewater utilities to effectively respond to spills and other emergencies. By adhering to federal and state regulations and incorporating core elements outlined in ERP guidance, utilities can enhance preparedness, minimize risks, and safeguard public health and the environment. WRWA has templates available to assist you in developing your ERP including vulnerability assessments under the resource tab. <https://www.wrwa.org/other-resources/>. If you would like assistance in updating or developing your systems wastewater ERP, please feel welcome to contact me at bklingbeil@wrwa.org or call me at 715-905-1006.

Stay safe & tight lines! *Brooke*

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Please reach out to one of the contacts below to learn more.

Chris Groh, Executive Director

Wisconsin Rural Water Association

cgroh@wrwa.org

715.340.2055

Gary Larimore, President & CEO

Rural Water Financing Agency

g.larimore@krwa.org

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615.770.4357

THE LEAD SERVICE LINE INVENTORY UPDATES

Seth Petersen,
WRWA EPA Water Technician/Training Specialist

It's experiences like this that make Wisconsin Rural Water employees so helpful to you in your daily work.

Ann Hirekatur, WIDNR Lead and Copper Section Manager joined a WRWA training on January 31, 2024 to present information and updates on the Lead and Copper Rule and the Lead Service Line Inventory. This journal article is a summary of the information from that training and includes edits and updated information by Ann, Herself.

Introduction

Lead contamination in drinking water is a well-known issue, primarily originating from the use of lead pipes in water distribution systems. Many States, including Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, New York, and Wisconsin, have over 329,000 service lines each that are still composed of lead, contributing to this problem.

Sources of Lead in Drinking Water:

Lead can infiltrate drinking water from various sources, including lead service lines, lead goosenecks, copper pipes soldered with lead, faucets, and galvanized pipes. Galvanized pipes can accumulate lead particles on their surfaces over time, which can subsequently contaminate drinking water.



Health Impacts of Lead Exposure:

Exposure to lead in drinking water can have severe health consequences, including damage to the brain and nervous system, increased risk of heart disease and high blood pressure, kidney problems, and nervous system disorders. Pregnant women and children are especially vulnerable, facing risks such as miscarriage, developmental issues in babies, and growth and learning impairments in children.

Historical Context:

The implementation of measures like unleaded gasoline and the banning of lead pipes between 1975 and 1985 resulted in a significant decline of blood lead levels in the US population by 94%.

Lead and Copper Regulation and Monitoring:

Public Water Systems regulated by the Lead and Copper Rule include:

1. Municipal Community Water Systems
 - e.g. Cities, Villages, Sanitary Districts and correctional facilities
2. Other-than-municipal community water systems (OTM)
 - e.g. Mobile Home communities, condominium complexes, rural subdivisions and convents
3. Non-transient, Non-Community water systems
 - e.g. Schools, truck stops, manufacturing, churches and daycares

The lead and copper rule requires public water systems to conduct regular Lead and Copper monitoring. This sampling must be

conducted at taps with the highest risk for lead and copper exposure like kitchen taps. The Federal Action Level for lead is 15 µg/L for lead and 1300 µg/L for copper. Compliance with the Lead and Copper Action Levels is based on the 90th percentile of lead and copper levels. If this is exceeded, the water system is required to take certain follow-up actions including additional monitoring, public education, evaluation of corrosion control treatment alternatives, and possibly begin lead service line replacements.

Lead and Copper Rule Improvements

On December 16, 2021, the EPA implemented the Lead and Copper Rule Revision (LCRR). With this rule came the Service Line Materials Inventory requirement which public water systems are required to comply with by October 16, 2024.

LCCR service line materials inventory requirements

By October 16th, 2024, all water systems must develop an inventory to identify the material of service lines connected to the public water distribution system regardless of service line ownership status (Utility vs Customer owned).

All service lines must be categorized as the following:

1. Confirmed lead- The portion of service line is Lead and has been confirmed as such.
2. Confirmed non-lead- The portion of service line is not lead and has been confirmed as such.

continued on page 30




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continued from page 29

- 3. Lead status unknown- Any portion of service line that the material is not known.
- 4. Galvanized-
 - a. Galvanized- Pipe material is galvanized and is confirmed to never have been down stream of lead.
 - b. Galvanized Requiring replacement (GRR)- The galvanized service line was downstream of a lead service line OR it is unknown if it ever was.

Lead Service Line Inventory (LSL) vs Monitoring Site Plan

The LSL Inventory differs from the Monitoring Site Plan Materials Worksheet because only the service line material needs to be reported, but it must be reported for every service line in the distribution system. Water systems that previously completed an inventory to update their lead and copper monitoring site plan are still required need to complete the service inventory, the LSL is a separate requirement.

LSL Inventory implementation

The LSL inventory must identify and list all water system service connections. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) has developed and shared a spreadsheet that systems can utilize for this inventory. Please reach out to your WIDNR field rep or WRWA for a copy of this spreadsheet if the utility doesn't have one.



The inventory must list all service lines regardless of their current or intended use including fire suppression lines and lines connected

to vacant or abandoned buildings, regardless of whether the line is actively in use or the building is occupied. The LSL inventory must include all portions of the service line connected to the water system, even if the system does not own any portion of that service line. If an entire system is made of the same material, an inventory must still be submitted, each service line location must be listed separately, and have its own identifier.

The LSL Inventory requires water systems to review existing Utility records to identify utility and customer side service line materials. These records should include previous service line materials evaluations, construction and plumbing codes, water system records (maps, drawings, etc.), meter installation records and historical capital improvement plans. If utility records are reliable enough that the service line material can be determined with certainty, the service line material should be inventoried along with the source of the information. Any services that can't be identified from records can be identified as "unknown" in the initial submission and the utility can continue to identify and track service line material as they are encountered during normal operations such as performing cross connections inspections, replacing water meters or other maintenance activities. A specific, identified process will allow the LSL inventory to be continuously improved.

LSL Inventory Submission

Utilities should submit their inventory to [dnrdglead.copperinventories@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnr.dglead.copperinventories@wisconsin.gov) and copy their DNR field rep by October 16th, 2024. In addition to submitting their inventory on or before this date, water





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systems should also submit the Service Line Inventory Completeness Verification Form - which was emailed to all water systems on November 6, 2023 - and the Inventory Public Accessibility Verification Form - which the DNR will email to all water systems in early April. Water systems that do not submit a complete service line inventory and these two supplementary forms may face federal enforcement. Since the LCRR is a federal requirement the USEPA - rather than the DNR - will take enforcement on systems that do not meet these requirements. After the Oct 2024 inventory submittal, water systems will be required to continuously improve their inventory and submit annual updates thereafter.

LSL Inventory Public Access

Utility LSL inventory is required to be publicly accessible. For example, the utility could mail or email a copy of the inventory to their customers or post a copy in the water system office. Only water systems serving 50,000 people or more are required to publish the inventory online. In addition, The Utilities yearly Consumer Confidence Report needs to include information on how water consumers can access the inventory (where to find it).

Customer Notice Requirements

An important requirement of the Lead Service Line Inventory is the Utility is required to send consumer notices to all customers served by lead service lines, galvanized requiring replacement (GRR) and unknowns within 30 days of submitting the inventory. EPA is currently working on developing consumer notice templates that water

systems can use to notify consumers served by these pipe materials.

Early LSL Inventory Submission

Although service line inventories aren't due until this October, the Wisconsin DNR is encouraging water systems to submit inventories early, to minimize the likelihood that water systems face federal enforcement for submitting an insufficient inventory. Submitting early will give the DNR time to review and respond to inventories before the deadline, and then subsequently give water systems time to address any deficiencies identified by the department before the deadline. Specifically, the DNR aims to review and respond to inventories submitted in June of this year by August 2024. The Department aims to review and respond to inventories submitted in July of this year by September 2024.

Conclusion

There is no doubt the Lead Service Line Inventory is a huge lift for a small utility. There are plenty of resources available to answer questions or assist with completing a LSL inventory. WRWA is available to answer questions, give recommendations and help get your Lead Service Line Inventory started. Please reach out to your EPA Water Technician or Circuit Rider if you need help. If you have service line inventory questions for the DNR you can send them to [dnrdleadcopperinventories@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrldleadcopperinventories@wisconsin.gov).

Seth

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Operator Certification Tests at WRWA Conference

A morning session and afternoon session of testing was held at the 2024 WRWA Technical Conference where almost 200 people took water and wastewater certification exams. The session, held by the DNR, is the first time that testing was held at the conference.

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Dave Pahl
Blackstone PortablePizza
Oven & 4 Person Tent
Ferguson



Chris Jensen
\$500 Cabelas Gift Card
MacQueen Equipment



Rick Stoviak
One Night Stay
at a Chula Vista Condo
General Engineering
Company



Joshua Greenwood
Milwaukee Heated
Jacket, Vest, & Charger
Cretex



Noah Oestreich
Milwaukee M18
Flashlights with Batteries
Xylem



Joe Kitelinger
Fish Camera
Mueller Co.



Jane Mueller
Dyna Glo Grill
Rehau Municipex



Lee Anderson
30th Annual
Sportsman's Raffle \$500
Sportsman's Raffle

WINNERS NOT PICTURED

Jeff Downs, 20V MAX 12in. Brushless Battery Powered Chainsaw Kit with (1) 5Ah Battery & Charger PLUS \$50 Gift Card - KLM Engineering, Inc.

Scott Kahle, Personalized Packer Jersey and Pro Shop Gift Card - Ayres & Associates

Matt Nellessen, SX4 Hybrid 12 Gauge - Municipal Well & Pump

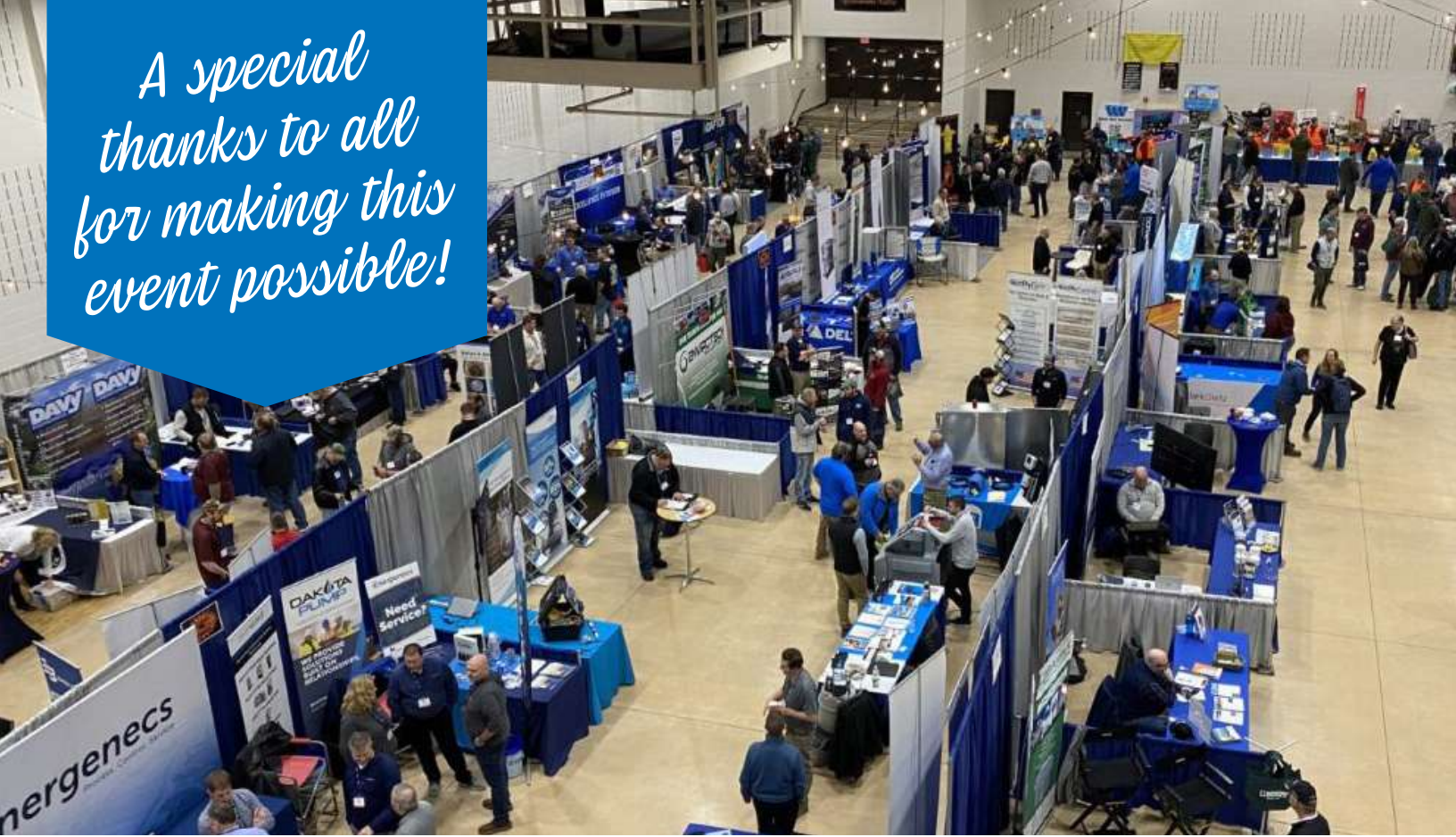
Ray Hartmann, \$400 in Cash - Northern Lake Service, Inc.

Scott Kahle, Generators - Core & Main

Erin Salmon, Kalahari Resorts Gift Card - MSA Professional Services, Inc.

Nicholas Lea, Browing A-Bolt .308 - Martelle Water Treatment Inc.

A special thanks to all for making this event possible!



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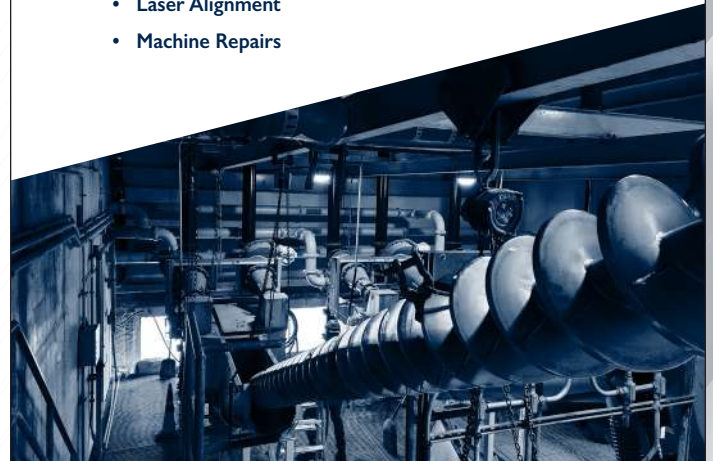
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15TH ANNUAL Water Conservation Poster Contest WINNERS

2nd Grade



1st Porter Pampuch
Whitehall Memorial

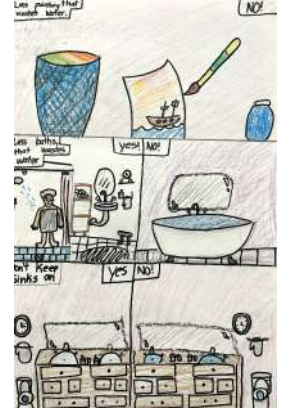


2nd Hazel Nolden
Pardeeville Elementary

3rd Grade

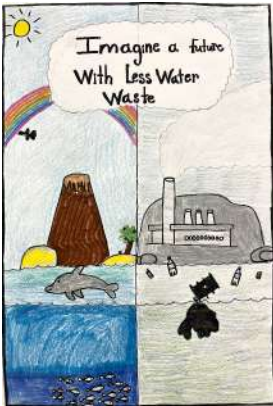


1st Victoria Martorelli
Whitehall Memorial



2nd Lily Augustson
Fontana Elementary

4th Grade

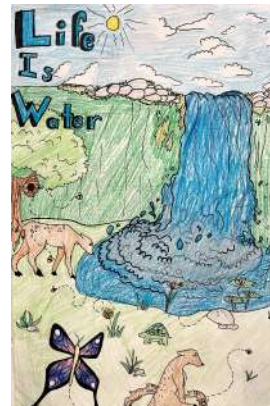


1st Emma Pampuch
Whitehall Memorial



2nd Ella Anderson
Holy Rosay (Medford)

5th Grade



1st Malory Floyd
Phillips Elementary



2nd Dan Morgan
Waunakee Intermediate

6th Grade



1st Piper Laszewski
Amherst Middle School



2nd Nayli Timmers
Holy Rosay (Medford)

2024 Poster Contest Winners

\$100 DRAWING WINNER

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Sean Kuske—Village of Hortonville



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In 1974 Ron & Winnie Krueger moved their young family to the shores of Hemlock Lake just outside of Crandon, Wisconsin to begin a lake management consulting business. Northern Lake Service began in a tiny office and lab room at the back of the family's garage. The three kids all had a turn at washing bottles for a penny a bottle (a practice that is GLADLY no more) and learning the value of a hard-earned dollar (at 100 bottles per dollar, this was their first of many Ron Krueger lessons in economics). NLS started providing lab services to wastewater clients and quickly ran out of space. In 1980, the company moved into the city of Crandon where it continued to grow.

A sense of community and integrity has always been paramount in the growth of Northern Lake Service. Many students, both high school and college, have worked summer jobs and internships; many youth groups have taken tours or gone "swamping" with RT; and many local residents have worked a greater span of their lives within the company walls—some even 2nd generation employees. Nothing makes founder Ron Krueger prouder than seeing the next generation return to Crandon to become part of the NLS family.

The three Krueger kids, not so young anymore—and very happy to not be washing bottles—are still active as the NLS Board of Directors, and still very focused on keeping the business in its current location, with the highest quality staff. It is therefore with much excitement that last year NLS began the transition from a family-owned business to affording staff the opportunity of employee buy-in. Five decades, two locations, three major additions and three generations later, the NLS facility is home to a company that sets the standard for environmental lab services. What has stood the test of time over the past 50 years, they are confident will continue for the next 50 and beyond. Congratulations Northern Lake Service and Ronald K. Krueger, on 50 years of service in the analytical services field.



Northern Lake Service, Inc.



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Municipal Well & Pump

Municipal Well & Pump is a company rich in values, it is what defines how the company is run. Those values grew out of a deep-rooted history, a mere 108-years old and counting. It is the people that make the company and how they develop others around them that define success.

We will take you back to 1916 when it all began.

Richard E Milaeger was the accountant with the F.M. Gray Drilling Company. The Company was drilling oil wells in Mount Pleasant, MI at the time. Four Bucyrus Erie 36L drill rigs were in operation in the swamps near Mt. Pleasant, MI drilling for oil. Mr. Gray started to experience severe health issues, and the Company began to experience

production issues. The financial institution at the time, Park State Bank, approached Richard Milaeger and had a plan. If Richard E. could get the equipment back to Milwaukee, the Bank would provide financing for Richard to start Milaeger Well & Pump.

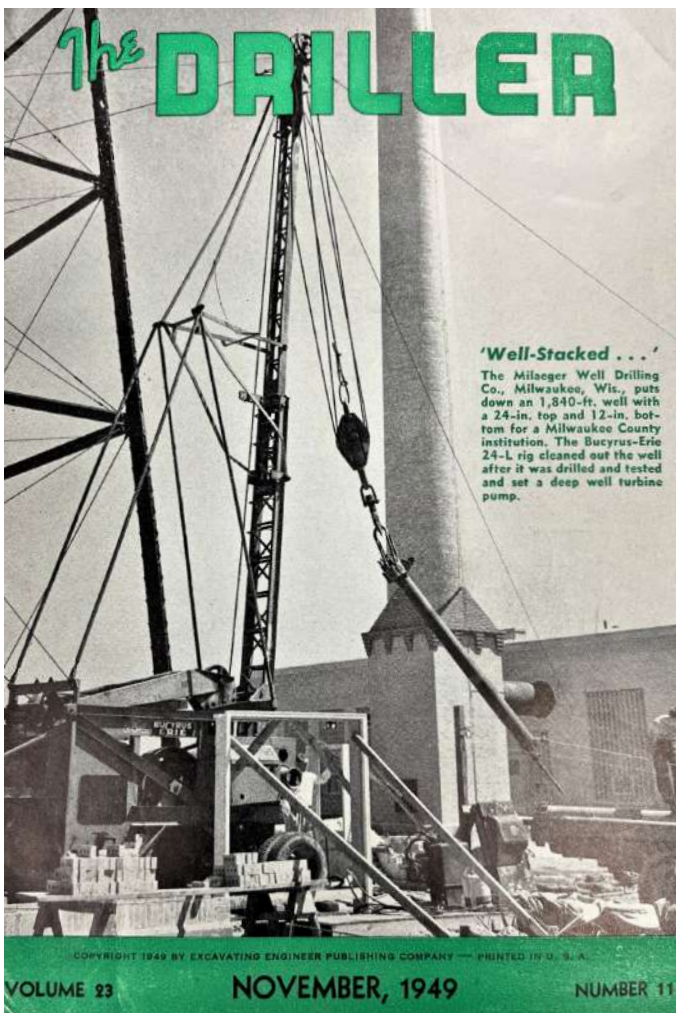
Floating the drill rigs out of the swamps on wooden barges and loading them onto rail cars, they headed for Milwaukee. The rest, as they say, is history. They survived the great depression by providing services to large companies, who determined it was more economical to drill your own water supply well than purchase from the municipalities. A large contract with the Chicago Stock yards in the early 1930's carried them through the depression.

Ralph Milaeger obtained his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Madison, served as Ensign in the U.S. Navy for WWII, then returned home, obtained his master's degree and joined the firm. Richard N. Milaeger received his Bachelors degree in Mining Engineering from Madison and joined the firm full time in 1979. Richard N. Milaeger purchased the J.P. Miller Company in 1984, adding a large well and pump company to its arsenal. Also in 1984, Bill Frazier started Municipal Well & Pump. Richard N joined forces with Municipal Well & Pump in 1992 after the employees went on strike and Milaeger Well & Pump shut the doors.



Tracy Greenfield, who grew up with his father drilling wells with his family business, Bloyer Well Company. Tracy joined the MWP team in 1987, bringing another strong Engineering background from UW Platteville with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering.

Municipal Well & Pump continued to grow successfully with other key additions to the team. Marty Van Ells was an early pump Superintendent at Municipal joining in 1986, later to become project manager with extensive experience in well rehabs and pumps. Darwin Schulz (37 years) and Andy Klemme (29 years) solidified our field crews as operators. Don Rens joined in 2001 as Operations Manager/President and Scott De Young as CFO in 2002 as final spokes in the wheel to solidify the team.





Since that point in time, MWP has grown dramatically. Not only in employees and sales, but also in capabilities and knowledge.

- **2005** – 16 Employees, 10 Owners, 3 Pump Crews, \$4.6M in Sales.
- **2007** – Purchased Pumpstation Professionals (PSP) – specializing in controls / pumpstations.
- **2007** – Purchased our first Foremost DR24HD drill rig - entering the rotary drilling market
- **2016** – Purchased Peerless Well & Pump (PWP), Dubuque IA – adding full services to Iowa.
- **2018** – Purchased our second Foremost drill rig – running two drilling crews.
- **2024** – 47 Employees, 16 Owners, 10 Pump Crews, 2 Drilling Crews, 3 Service Technicians, \$26M in Sales.

Another major value we cherish as a company is stewardship. We believe in giving back as we have been blessed. You would think that giving away 10% of Pre-Tax income to charitable causes would weaken the company financially. Why not invest that in equipment or send it back to owners. But no, that is not what we believe. Instead, God has blessed our company as a result beyond measure.

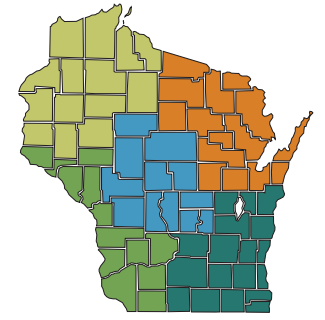
The combination of being centered on the right values with the right people in the right roles, teaching and motivating each other, and continually mentoring & handing off to the next generation is likely the single most important reason for our success. Key additions like Brian Brodersen, PE as Estimating Engineer, Mason Rens as Drilling Operations Manager, Andy Stelsel as MWP Operations Manager (after Don Rens retired), Patrick Harrington as PWP Operations Manager, and Tony Mathweg heading up PSP, along with so many others as project managers, operators and office staff create a team built for the future.

With MWP celebrating 40 years this summer and with a history going back 108 years overall, the company is in a solid position to continue growing as we provide water system services throughout the Midwest for one of our most important natural resources on earth – WATER.



Then, on August 31, 2005, the employees of Municipal Well & Pump stepped up big time, purchasing the company from the current owner. That move, as risky as it was at the time, was the major turning point in our history that catapulted MWP forward. There was a renewed vision, passion and yes, a sense of accountability that our own tails were now on the line. Looking back, it is amazing the difference it made defining our purpose, drive, and performance.

New values were established and printed on the back of everyone's business card – ***"Honest, Integrity and Complete Customer Satisfaction"***. This motto, centered in Christian morals, became the cornerstone of how we made decisions, from employees to vendors to clients – we attempted to do the right thing. We were not always perfect, but it provided a measuring stick of how we were to run our business.



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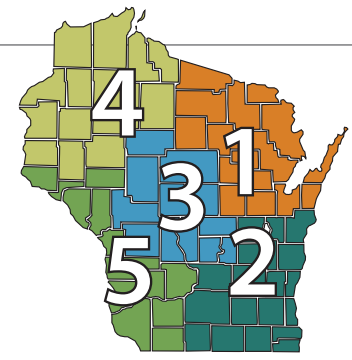


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 Nichols
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 Oconto Sanitary District #1
 Oconto Falls
 Oneida Nation Utility
 Peshtigo
 Phelps Sanitary District #1
 Pound
 Pulaski
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 Russell Sanitary District #1
 Scandinavia
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 Seymour
 Shawano
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 **Three Lakes Northernaire
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 **Thunder Properties, LLC
 Tigerton
 Tomahawk
 Wabeno Sanitary District No. 1
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 Allenton Sanitary District
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 **Asset Development Group Inc.
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 *Beloit
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 Brillion
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 Brodhead
 *Brookfield, Town of
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 Jefferson
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 Juda Sanitary District
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 Kellnersville
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 Kiel
 **Kikkoman Foods Inc
 Kohler
 Lake Como Sanitary District #1
 Lake Geneva
 **Lake Meadows Water Trust
 Lake Mills
 Lannon
 Larsen – Winchester Sanitary
 District
 LeRoy Sanitary District #1
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 **Natural Oven's Bakery Inc.
 *Neeah
 New Berlin
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 *Oak Creek
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 Palmyra
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 **Pat's Services, Inc.
 *Pewaukee, City of
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 *Pleasant Prairie
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 **Plymouth Joint School District
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 **Rainbow Lake Manor
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 Sheboygan, Town of
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Stoughton	Hatley	Birchwood	*River Falls	Highland
*Sun Prairie	Hixton	Bloomer	Roberts	Hillsboro
**Sunnyfield Acres Water Assoc	Hustler	Boyceville	Saxon Sanitary District #1	Hollandale
Sussex	Junction City	Boyd	Sheldon	Holmen
**The Knolls Water Co-Op	Kendall	Bruce	Shell Lake	Independence
Theresa	Kronenwetter	Butternut	Siren	Ironton
**Tremain Mobile Home Park	Little Green Lake Protection &	Cable Sanitary District #1	Solon Springs WWTF	Kieler Sanitary District #1
**Trevor-Wilmont Consolidated	Rehab. District	Cadott	Somerset	*La Crosse
Grade School District	Loyal	Cameron	Spooner	La Farge
Troy Center Sanitary District #1	Lyndon Station	Catawba-Kennan Joint	St. Croix Falls	La Valle
**Twin Lakes Park Co. Op. Inc	Maine	Sewage Commission	Stanley	Lake Delton
*Two Rivers	Marathon	Centuria	Star Prairie	Lancaster
Union Grove	Markesan	Chetek	Stone Lake Sanitary District	Lincoln Sanitary District #1
Valders	*Marshfield	*Chippewa Falls	**Stresau Lab Inc	Linden
Verona	Mauston	Clayton	*Superior Water Light & Power	Linden Sanitary District No. 1
Waldo	Medford	Clear Lake	Superior, Village of	Edmund
Walworth	Melrose	Clover Sanitary District #1	**T.A.P. Investments	Livingston
*Walworth County Metro	Merrillan	Colfax	Tony	Loganville
Sewerage District	Milan Sanitary District	Cornell	Trade Lake	Lone Rock
Waterford	Milladore	Cumberland	Turtle Lake	Maiden Rock
Waterloo	Montello	Dallas	Washburn	**Marell Mobile Home Courts
*Watertown	Mosinee	Deer Park WWTP	Webster	Merrimac
*Waukesha	Necedah	Downsville Sanitary District	Weyerhaeuser	Mineral Point
Waunakee	Neillsville	Dresser	Wheeler	Mondovi
*Waupun	Nekoosa	Drummond Sanitary District #1	Winter	Montfort
*Wauwatosa	Neshkoro	Elk Mound	**Wisconsin Structural Steel	Mount Hope
**Wendorf Enterprises 2 LLC	New Lisbon	Emerald – Greenwood	Woodville	Muscoda
*West Bend	Northfield Sanitary District #1	Sanitary District #1		Nelson
Westport	Norwalk	Exeland	DISTRICT 5 (Southwest)	North Freedom
**Wheatland Estates Mobile	Oakdale	Fifield Sanitary District #1	**Advanced Plumbing Systems	*Onalaska
Home Park	**Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.	Frederic	Alma	Ontario
**Wheel Estates, Inc Mobile	- Tomah	Glen Flora	Altoona	Osseo
Home Park	Owen	Glenwood City	Arcadia	Patch Grove
Whitelaw	**Pineland Park Enterprises LTD	Glidden Sanitary District	Arena	Pepin
*Whitewater	Pittsville	Grandview Sanitary District #1	Argyle	Pigeon Falls
Williams Bay	Plainfield	Grantsburg	Augusta	**Pinewood Court Inc.
Wind Point	Plover	Hammond	Avoca	Plain
Windsor Sanitary District #1	Port Edwards	Hawkins	Bagley	*Platteville
Winneconne	Princeton	Hayward	Bangor	Potosi-Tennyson
**Winneconne Community	Redgranite	Hudson	Baraboo	Prairie du Chien
School District	Rib Lake	Hurley	Barneveld	Prairie du Sac
Wyocena	Rib Mountain Sanitary District	Iron River Sanitary District #1	Bay City	Prescott
**Yorkville	Rome	Joint Water Quality Commission	Belmont	Readstown
	Rosholt Sewer Commission	of Danbury & St. Croix	Benton	Reedsburg
DISTRICT 3 (Central)	Rothschild	Chippewa Indians of WI	Blair	Rewey
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Adams	Silver Lake Sanitary District	Knight	Bloomington	Ridgeway
Alma Center	Sparta	Lac Courte Oreilles Public	Blue River	Rock Springs
Almond	Spencer	Works Department	Boscobel	Rockland
Amherst	Stetsonville	Ladysmith	Bridgeport Sanitary District	Sauk City
Athens	*Stevens Point	Lake Hallie	Campbell	Seneca Sanitary District #1
Berlin	Stratford	Lake Holcombe Sanitary	Cassville	Sextonville
Biron	Taylor	District #1	Cazenovia	Shelby Sanitary District #2
Black River Falls	Thorp	Luck	Chaseburg	Shullsburg
**Brakebush Brothers, Inc.	Tomah	Madeline Sanitary District	Cobb	Soldiers Grove
Brockway Sanitary District #1	Union Center	Manitou Falls Sanitary District #1	Cochrane	South Wayne
Camp Douglas	Unity	Mason	Coon Valley	Spring Green
Cashton	Vesper	Mellen	Cuba City	Spring Valley
**Cawley Creek Village Inc.	Volk Field	*Menomonie	Darlington	St. Joseph Sanitary District #1
Chelsea Sanitary District	Warrens	Mercer Sanitary District #1	**De Soto Area School District	Stoddard
Chili Sanitary District #1	*Wausau	Milltown	**Dell Creek Estates	Strum
**Clark Co Health Care Center	Wautoma	Minong	Dickeyville	Trempealeau
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Water Leaks Cost Money!

Annetta Von Rueden,
WRWA Water Circuit Rider

Hello to All! As I am writing this article, there is five inches of new snow on the ground, with another round behind it. We have not had a bad winter so far. As the old saying goes, March comes in like a lion, and out like a lamb. Opposite effect this year. We must admit, we all enjoyed 50's, 60's and a day or two of 70's in March. I know most of us enjoyed the light winter of plowing snow. I also hope it has been a light winter for leaks in the distribution system showing up.

Leaks and water loss in the distribution system cost the utility a lot of money. In determining overall water loss. Which is the difference between water produced and water billed to customers, the main causes of water loss, whether accounted for or not, stem from leaks. This does not necessarily mean that 25% of a system's

In the case of hidden leaks, other techniques must be used to locate the source because of the lack of any visible sign of the water.

water loss is due to leaks, it does stress the value and importance of a leak detection procedure for all water systems. If your utility does not have a documented procedure for leak detection, call your Circuit Rider for onsite assistance.

Before starting the process of dealing with a leak, it is good to be informed and learn why the leak occurred as well as the distinct types of leaks.

Here are some examples of the main causes of leaks: Improper installation, tying two different materials together that are not ideally compatible with each other, material defects, corrosion/erosion of the inner wall of pipes due to age, bedding material, if any, the pipe is laying on, or stress caused by the ground shifting, freezing and thawing, water hammer, and incorrect operation of system valves. Each





of these causes can create different types of leaks depending on the pipe material and can show up in different ways. Some are obvious, and others are unseen.

In the cases of obvious leaks, water penetrates through the ground layers above the break and emerges at the ground surface. These leaks are much easier to deal with because they involve water running on the ground in plain sight. Most of the time, the spot where the leak surfaces are not always where the leak is located. The time needed for water to emerge depends on the depth of the main, dimension of the break, water pressure and soil type. This can take several seconds or several days to surface. Luckily, Circuit Riders have tools for finding these leaks including sound listening devices, and correlators.

In the case of hidden leaks, other techniques must be used to locate the source because of the lack of any visible sign of the water. The water never makes a presence at the surface and may not even show any indications of dampness on the ground or pavement. It can make its way to a point of diversion through the sanitary sewer system, storm sewer, ditch, or waterway. This happens because the water under pressure works its way along and to ground layers between and alongside water distribution pipes, sewer lines, and storm sewer lines. Through the formed tunnels and connection of the different pipes, the water flows to an escape out of sight of detection by most usual means. This type of leak causes water utilities great difficulties since they are not easily detectable. In some cases, a leak like this can last many years

before becoming detected. Knowledge, patience, and sophisticated equipment are necessary to detect these types of leaks. Examples of equipment used to detect hidden leaks are acoustic dataloggers and correlators, acoustic listening devices, flow meters, and pressure dataloggers. WRWA has this leak detection equipment in its loaner equipment program. Call your Circuit Rider for assistance.

The goal of leak detection is to minimize costly water loss in doing so improving overall system efficiency, distribution system reliability, and customer satisfaction. Water loss can equate to tens of thousands in lost revenue annually. These are dollars that will become very necessary going forward as water utilities continue to be required to meet new regulatory requirements of regulatory agencies. Contact your Circuit Rider for their expertise, time and equipment can help close the gap in your water loss.

At the conclusion of this article, snow will be melted. The La Crosse Center will be full of water, wastewater operators, and vendors attending the Annual WRWA Technical Conference. Hope you all had a good time in the exhibit hall and were able to take advantage of great training sessions. Maybe even won a great prize at the Sportsman's raffle at the banquet. Preliminary numbers indicate that 2024 could be a record-breaking year. I would like to thank you for attending the conference to make it such a successful and great event.

See You on the road! *Annie*



Emergency Chlorination Plans

Todd Weich,
WRWA Water Circuit Rider

Emergency chlorination is a detailed action that a Water Utility takes to chemically treat a contamination event or an event that may have introduced contaminants.

Emergency Chlorination plans the “Y’s” and what is needed. First, I will tell you the “Y”. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources created a code to protect the municipality’s drinking water if the occasion arises. DNR code NR810.26(8) EMERGENCY CHLORINATION PLANS clearly states that “*an emergency chlorination plan is required for each community water system. Each municipal water system shall have appropriate chlorination infrastructure and chlorine available to obtain 0.5 mg/l free chlorine throughout its distribution system within 4 hours. A working chlorine meter shall also be available to measure chlorine concentrations. To ensure water systems are*

capable of emergency chlorination, the department may ask that an emergency chlorination test be conducted by the water supplier for a municipal water system.” The NR code then goes on to explain what the Emergency Chlorination Plan should include: “*At a minimum, the emergency chlorination plan shall include:*

- (a) Location and description of chlorine pumps, solution containers, chemical, and chlorine test meter.
- (b) Procedures for adding chlorine to the water system, flushing the water system to move chlorine to extremities, and testing chlorine levels.”

In addition to what the location and description of chlorine pumps are and the proper procedures is having quick access to contact names and phone numbers, as well as well and reservoir information.

When should you utilize an emergency chlorination plan?

Emergency chlorination is a detailed action that a Water Utility takes to chemically treat a contamination event or an event that may have introduced contaminants. The following situations require emergency chlorination:

- Bacteriological event or contamination.
- Pressure loss of more than 25% of the system (the WDNR **MUST** be notified immediately. The WDNR will require emergency chlorination, a boil water advisory, and additional sampling.)
- Any time a waterworks determines that there is a perceived or imminent biological contamination event. The waterworks will begin emergency chlorination if it has some knowledge that system integrity has been jeopardized.

The Emergency Chlorination Plan provides the steps necessary for the Water Department Operator to increase chlorination to the point at which a free chlorine level of 0.5 mg/l is reached throughout the municipality’s distribution system within four (4) hours of identifying a bacteriological threat. A procedure to achieve the 0.5 mg/l within your



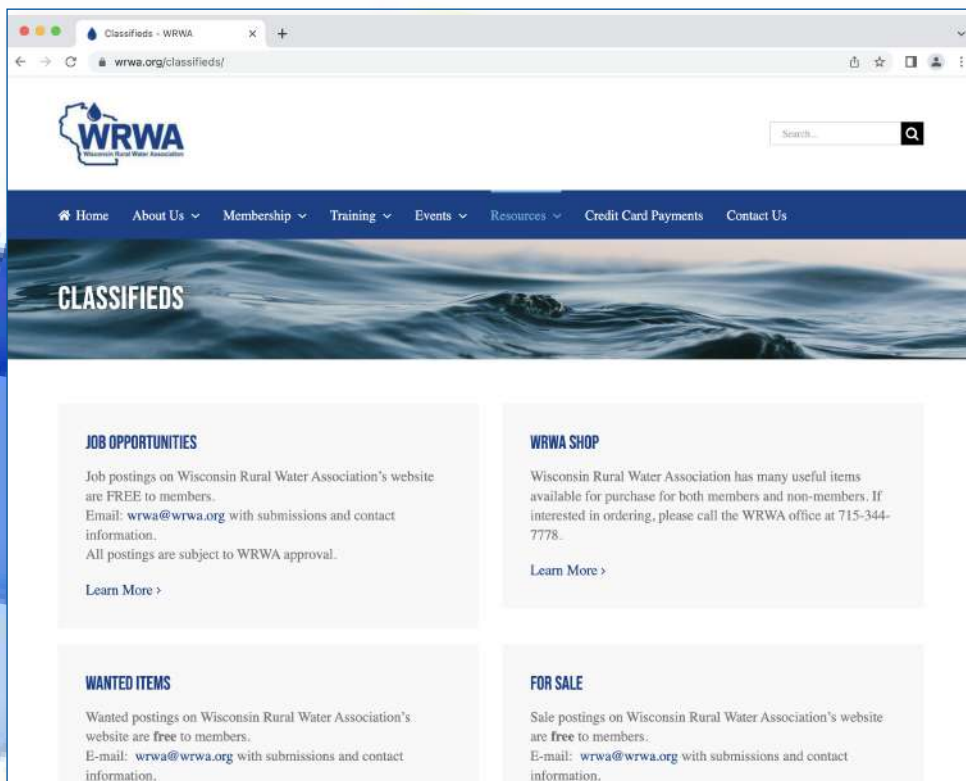
system is to open and close hydrants to move the disinfectant through the municipal water system.

These plans should be updated as the water system, staff, and equipment change or an attempt to review yearly. It is also helpful to practice the plan as well as make sure that all staff is aware of its location and has knowledge of what is needed in the crucial first 4 hours.

If you don’t have an Emergency Chlorination Plan or need an update plan because of change in staff or you have had an upgrade in your water system, always feel free to call your WRWA Water Municipal Circuit Rider for assistance in the creation of a new plan or update an older one.

Todd

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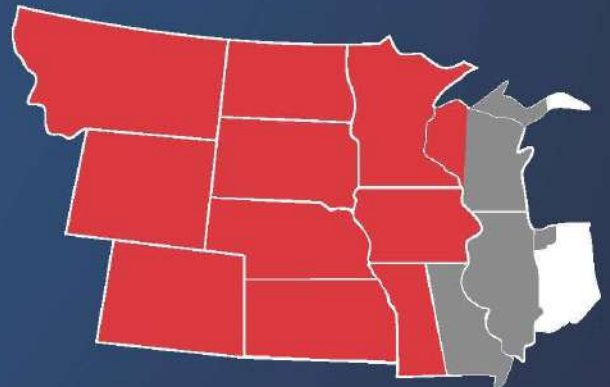
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UP THE CREEK

GRAVEL ROADS

Ken Blomberg,
WRWA past Executive Director

I remember walking into his office and taking a seat, all the while gazing at maps on the walls and books on the shelves. County Sanitarian Bob knew the township well and wondered out-loud, "Ken, why in the world would you want to buy a house in that area? It's plagued with high groundwater and bedrock and most of the septic systems are failing."

"That's exactly why I want to live there." I replied. "Less chance of other houses being built close by and that is the way I'd like it to stay."

Forty-five years later, guess what? I was right. Four decades ago, within one square mile of our home, only five other occupied dwellings existed. Today, that number remains the same.

According to county records, the population of our township peaked in 1920 at 1,126, then dipped to a low of 784 in 1970 and has slowly grown over the years to its current level of about 960.

In 1928, a home and cheese factory were built on the land we now occupy. It was a focal point for the immediate area and neighbor Cliff fondly remembered stopping occasionally for cheese or ice cream while en route to the one-room school house on Maple Road.

Both buildings still stand today. We reside in the house the cheesemaker built and later we remodeled and stored our "stuff" in the retired brick factory across the street. A gravel road runs between the two structures, neither one meeting modern road setbacks, but the distance makes for some cozy 'howdy-dos' to neighbors and passers-by while we sit on the front deck.

Our community has seen a rather controlled growth rate as of late. We have watched as family dairy farms dwindled, old timers passed on and youngsters moved to town, at the same time as available land along the waterways was split and settled by newcomers. Even as river

and lake frontage became sliced up and developed, farmland, for the most part, remains intact. The town planning committee has turned back attempts to subdivide farmland, instead leaning towards future small cluster development, with most forties remaining untouched.

Not long ago, however, something of note fell below my radar screen. Perhaps it happened at a past annual town meeting, or at a regularly scheduled board meeting. I'm not sure when, but an announcement in the local paper declared that a section of road not far from our place was to be surfaced with blacktop. This was big news - since most of our town roads have always been maintained in a crushed granite state. To some, the report was a sign of welcome progress. The boss, my wife, couldn't be happier. I, on the other hand, found the thought downright depressing.

You see, to me, a part of the rural character of our township has always been gravel roads. The idea of living where the blacktop ends carried with it a certain amount of romance, heck, they even wrote a song about it. I like the feel of crushed gravel under my feet and the sound vehicles and their tires create as they rumble past our place.

"The dust and the noise, you can have it," the boss exclaimed. "And the way they drive so fast past our house up to the corner, they can't pave it soon enough for me."

"Over my dead body," I retorted. "Our road will be the last one paved if I have anything to say in the matter."

"That might just work out fine," she giggled. "A speed bump right in front of our house - that will slow traffic down!"

When we first took possession of our place in the country, we acquired a rural route number, a party-line telephone and a working outhouse. Years before cell phones and computers, our only connection to the

outside world was controlled by the neighbor lady's gift of gab, a pair of rabbit ears on the TV and the postman.

Of the three, the roadside mailbox on a post continues steadfast, a true rural icon. Think about it. In 1737, Benjamin Franklin, referred to as the Father of the United States Postal System, was appointed postmaster of Philadelphia. For a fee of one penny, he delivered mail directly to the homes of Philadelphia citizens. By 1775, the Continental Congress appointed him Postmaster General of North America. Over time, communication technology has grown leaps and bounds, yet the mailbox has remained relatively the same since 1858 when street letter boxes were first installed.

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds," reads the adopted motto of the U.S. Postal Service. For nearly 30 years, our mailbox has stood tall and allowed the motto to ring true. Our letter box continues to link us to the outside printed world.

Blackberries, once only known for their contributions to pies and homemade wine, once became representative of the modern handheld communication world. In the blink of an eye, my friend from Washington, D.C., could visit our home personal computer via his pocket-sized Blackberry unit. They have now evolved into much advanced smartphones.

Pods, only a short time ago, were reserved for peas and beans. Today, for the new generation, they communicate music libraries, photos, videos, games and calendars. Those too evolved into tablets and laptops.

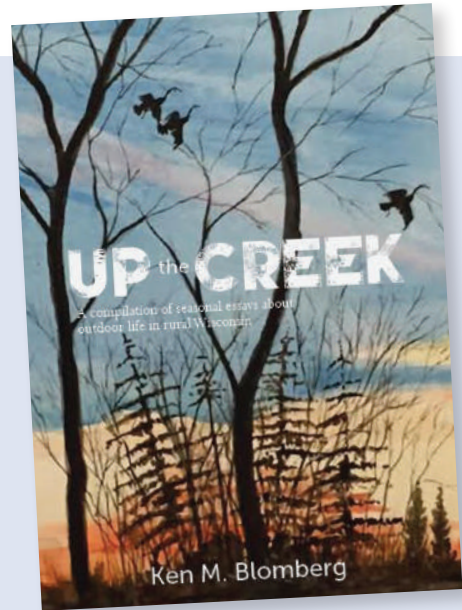
Satellites, once upon a time, served only to beam secrets from the sky to governments around the globe. Nowadays, dishes on every other rural home grab a hundred television channels out of thin air. Dishes are disappearing as high speed internet travels on wires and in the air to our cell phones and desktop routers.

Years ago, we broke down and purchased a satellite dish package to add to our own arsenal of personal computers, cell phones, telephones and the old standby, our mailbox. Today, the dish is out back in a trailer full of used metal. Hanging on the mailbox post is a newspaper tube, yet another daily source of information. That is the extent of our worldly communication possessions. All things electronic are fine until the power fails, batteries die or storms pass by, yet the mailbox endures until someone runs it over. That was the case one day a few years ago.

"Did you hear that noise?" the boss questioned.

Out front, in the predawn darkness, an inattentive driver had run the corner stop sign, skidded across our front lawn and driveway, barely missing the 100-year old locust tree, but did manage to take out the mailbox. When the sun rose, I found our faithful mailbox, crippled and in pieces, strewn across the lawn. I temporarily propped it up in hopes the mailman would honor his motto and deliver that day.

Later, the ill-fated driver apologized and offered to pay for a new post and box. By week's end, a new replacement was installed. Perhaps, some day down the line, I'll upgrade and discover a new-fangled model that plugs in and glows in the dark.



Autographed copies of Blomberg's *Up the Creek, Letters from Art and Wisconsin Bird Hunting Tales* are available from the author at eaupleinekennels@gmail.com.

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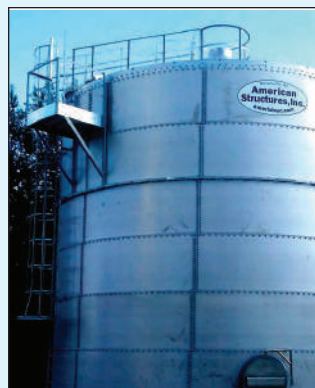
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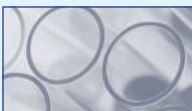
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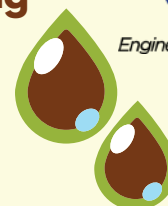
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Office Closed for Labor Day	September 2, 2024
Office Closed for Thanksgiving	November 28 & 29, 2024
Office Closed for Christmas Eve (1/2 Day)	December 24, 2024
Office Closed for Christmas Day	December 25, 2024
WRWA Annual Conference (Green Bay)	March 24 - 28, 2025

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