Wisconsin Rural Water Journal

Fall 2026



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Wisconsin Rural Water Journal is the official publication of the Wisconsin Rural Water Association, published quarterly by the WRWA, 350 Water Way, Plover, WI 54467. Non-profit third class bulk mailing permit paid at Plover, WI.

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Message from the President

Hershel Marks,
WRWA President, Boscobel

Hello everybody. Welcome to Fall 2026. My name is Hershel Marks, and I am now the Board President for Wisconsin Rural Water Association. I am the Director of Public Works for the city of Boscobel. Boscobel is located south of La Crosse and north of Platteville. We are on the Wisconsin River, and we have been a city since 1870. We have our own electric utility, along with strong water and wastewater systems. I have been an operator for 26 years and recently been put into the DPW position. My career in water started with a visit from Jeff LaBelle, and I learned how to be an operator from his experience and training. Since then, I have relied on WRWA for many years. My work led to me becoming a board member in 2013. This Summer I was selected as Board President of WRWA. This position allows me to further help Chris manage the Association and for me to give something back for all the help over the years.

I would like to thank former Presidents Ramon Knudtson and Dean Bergstrom for their leadership, and for setting good examples for the whole board over the years.

My first task involves one of the most important decisions our board must make in many years. That is, who is going to succeed Chris as Executive Director of WRWA. Since Chris has put in his retirement date, we have had to find, interview and appoint a new Executive Director. Certainly, an important task. News will be coming soon on the results of this work.

Until then, have a great Fall. Be sure to work with Rural Water to help get your systems ready for winter and enjoy the turning leaf colors and all the things a Wisconsin Autumn offers.

Hershel



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



Message from the Executive Director
What is Technical Assistance?

Chris Groh,
WRWA Executive Director

Fall is my favorite season. Cooler weather, colored forests, and the opportunity to spend lots of time outdoors thrills me to no end. While I was spending 17 years on the road for WRWA, I really enjoyed getting water and wastewater plants ready for the upcoming cold Winter. **When I helped someone get the plant into shape for the long cold, it seemed extra special knowing that the operator would be in for a much easier Winter season.** For the last 9 years these memories are relived for me when I see the articles in our journal which talk about getting ready throughout the Autumn season.

These days it seems like every season we are getting ready for something. Recently we have been getting ready for LCR processes and programs, PFAS testing, nitrate testing for drinking water, and always getting into shape for funding all these issues along with plant updates that are so needed in rural Wisconsin. And everything seems to be fighting back for all these occasions. LCRI is to the point where you should h with inventories, confirming all the unknowns that you have (or were given to you by the firm that did your inventory for you). Now it's moving into a confirmation stage where you need to see the unknown pipe to confirm what you have. "Potholing" is going to be the new word for the next couple of years. Digging in the streets is not going to be fun for sure. We have been finding that some of the alternatives to digging is not allowed by our state agency, but we are going to keep asking about them.

PFAS testing went well, but now we are working in towns that detected PFAS and must worry about the upcoming limits that may be exceptionally low, reasonable, or high. Treatments are already being studied for effectiveness and affordability. And now we are having to look at the PFAS in the wastewater sludge from our treatment plants. Another thing that raises the specter of affordability.

Mandatory nitrate testing in all our water systems is an easy thing to do, but we still need to get it done, reported, and filed away for regulatory use for some time in the future.

That leaves funding. Every interview I do for print, radio or TV eventually asks me where the money is going to come from or how small systems will be able to afford all these needs. For the last 9 years my answer has always been the same: There is nothing going to happen without funding from the regulatory agency or state/federal government. You can't get blood from a stone. Very unfortunately, it has not gotten easier to get grant funding for these issues. Even getting loans is more difficult to get than it has been in the past. You might be spending some Fall days gathering financial data, quotes and bids together to apply for any funding opportunities you may find.

But, in the end, it is our water and wastewater plants that must keep treating and thriving. Your customers count on the physical and financial work you do to keep supplying safe, clean water and a safe environment for their quality of life. And what better time of year to do that work and enjoy the rewards than Fall?

Chris

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We get letters and emails!

We'd love to hear from you…

Dear Daniel and Nate,

On behalf of the Drummond Sanitary District, I would like to sincerely thank you for organizing and bringing the recent continuing education class to Drummond.

The combination of a half day focused on line locating and a half day covering system maintenance provided valuable, practical training that operators can put to use immediately. The presentations were informative, well organized, and worthwhile.

I especially want to thank WRWA for offering this training free of charge. Providing quality continuing education at no cost is a tremendous benefit to small utilities and the communities they serve.

It was also great to see this class offered north of Highway 8. Too often, northern Wisconsin operators have to spend several hours traveling to attend required training. Bringing this class to Drummond made it much more convenient for local operators to earn their continuing education credits while reducing travel time and expense.

Thank you again for your commitment to supporting Wisconsin's water and wastewater professionals. We truly appreciate your efforts and hope to see more training opportunities like this offered in northern Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Mark Jerome, Operator, Drummond Sanitary District

Dear WRWA Staff,

The staff at Lakeland Sanitary District #1 would like to thank you and all the outstanding staff members at WRWA for all you do, with a special shout out to Todd Weich. He came to our district and helped us with fire hydrant issues last year, as well as helping us locate a leak in our water system this year.

Sincerely,

Wilber Peters, Superintendent, Lakeland Sanitary District #1

The Village of Nelson wishes to send a thank you to WRWA for all they do, from training, technical support, the annual Technical Conference and all the other services both in water and wastewater.

Special thanks to Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow who, at his earliest convenience, came to our village and pinpointed a water leak that had us stumped for months.

The WRWA is a valuable resource, and we are happy to have been a member since its earliest days.

Keep up the great work.

Bruce Brommer-DPW, Village of Nelson

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) for all the valuable assistance they have provided to both the Village of Taylor, and to myself. The WRWA staff have repeatedly demonstrated their eagerness to instruct, answer questions, and find solutions to any issues that present themselves.

I believe that the role WRWA has played in my pursuit of Waterworks and Wastewater Operator certifications exemplifies how helpful and necessary you are. I was able to pass all six of my exams on the first attempt due in large part to the help offered by WRWA. The training classes helped me to understand the information in the DNR study guide. More than that, the classes helped to illuminate what should be going on in a waterworks or wastewater system, and what should not. Thanks to WRWA, I felt prepared to take my exams.

Staff members made themselves available to answer questions via telephone and e-mail in a very timely fashion. They have reviewed topics and key points from the classes with me over e-mail, and in a one-on-one session with Tony Roche over Microsoft Teams. Tony and Brenda Staudenmaier offered tremendous encouragement, and after I had passed my exams, enthusiastic congratulations. My success is most assuredly a credit to you all.

Let me once again offer a heartfelt thank you for the excellent work that you do, have one, and will continue to do in the future. Carry on!

My Very Best Regards,

Shane Rose, Village of Taylor



To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to send a thank you to Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) for the help they have given me in studying for my certification exams, especially the one-on-one training.

Prior to taking the Iron Removal Examination, Dan Wundrow spent a few hours with me. I had a better understanding afterwards and I was able to pass the exam. In July I will be taking the Phosphorus Examination. The day before I take the exam Tony Roche has scheduled one-on-one training with me.

I also appreciated the tools and equipment they have which we can use. As a small municipality, we do not have a large enough budget to own all those things. Having them available through WRWA is a huge benefit.

Sincerely,

Adam Bush, Village of Taylor

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Pete Denn, Director of Public Works for the Village of Webster, our population is around 700 residents. I recently took over as director starting December 1, 2025.

Recently myself and staff had the opportunity for WRWA Nathan Licht to come to our village and give training to the EPA Water program and WI DNR Water training. This form of training I feel is an important step in keeping our village and surrounding waters as safe as possible. The training that was given was spot on and very clear to understand as well as answering any questions we did.

The service that WRWA holds is an important role in helping the Village of Webster keeping our residents and community safe and moving forward towards the future. I can honestly say that without the help and knowledge from Nathan as well as WRWA provides the village would not be able to run as efficiently as it currently is.

I know that I am new to this role as director, but I can say that having WRWA helping myself, my crew, and village residents is curtal part of our municipality. Thank you for taking the time in reading this, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself for any questions regarding Nathan and or WRWA.

Sincerely,

Pete Denn, Director of Public Works, Village of Webster

To Whom it May Concern:

I would like to sincerely thank Annie Von Rueden for taking the time to assist both myself and our DPW employee, Michell, in learning more about the information and resources available through WRWA. Annie has also been instrumental in guiding us through the DNR's additional resources and information pertaining to Eagle Waterworks.

Annie's knowledge, guidance and willingness to take the time to explain the information have been greatly appreciated. The education and guidance she has provided thus far have given us a much better understanding of DNR's requirements, resources and processes, which will be extremely helpful to us as we move forward.

Annie has also continued to provide follow-up support through phone calls and check-ins with Mitchell and me. Her continued communication, support, and willingness to answer our questions have been extremely valuable to both of us.

Thank you again Annie, for your time, assistance, and continued support. We truly appreciate your expertise, guidance, and dedication to helping us better understand and navigate these requirements.

Sincerely,

Tracy Hillenbrand, Clerk/Treasurer, Village of Eagle

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INTERIM STRATEGY *for Land Application of Biosolids & Industrial Sludges Containing PFAS*

Tony Roche,
WRWA Wastewater Trainer

Wastewater treatment facilities must also now implement cumulative PFAS tracking and calculations for their biosolids.

Hello Wisconsin! It seems like Fall has finally arrived. The days are getting shorter, the nights are getting cooler, crops are coming off the fields, and wastewater utilities are gearing up for land application of biosolids. Biosolids management has been a hot topic this year and the Department of Natural Resources updated the Interim Strategy for Land Application of Biosolids and Industrial Sludges Containing PFAS in July 2026. Let's take a look at the recent updates in the strategy.

PFAS are a group of over 9,000 manmade chemicals resistant to decomposition, found in many consumer and industrial products. PFAS are found in consumer and industrial products, like non-stick cookware, grease-resistant food packaging, dental floss, household cleaning products, cosmetic produces, water repellent & fire retardant clothing, carpeting, and upholstery just to name a few. These chemicals are concerning because they pose potential health and environmental risks which create legacy pollution at high concentrations.

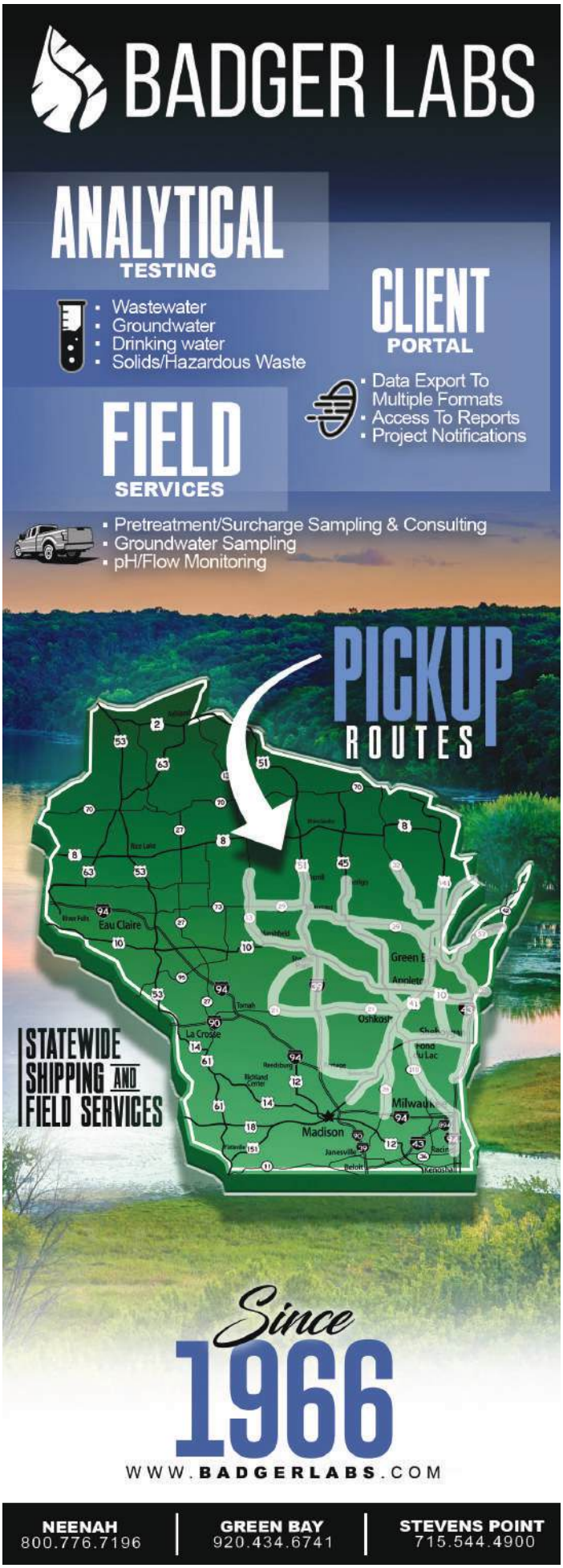
The updated interim PFAS strategy mandates limits for PFOA and PFOS in biosolids and also established thresholds triggering permit modifications and disposal restrictions. There are 40 PFAS analytes that must be reported and PFOA+PFOS concentration result is also now required. In addition, PFAS monitoring results need to be submitted to the DNR as well as the following email address: DNRWYPFASSludgeMonitoring@wisconsin.gov. The interim strategy has established tiers and corresponding actions that wastewater treatment facilities need to comply with. Here are the new tiers for PFOA+PFOS concentrations:

- **TIER 1 (≤20 UG/KG):** No additional requirements; notify landowners.
- **TIER 2 (20-50 UG/KG):** Track cumulative load, monitor effluent, and develop source reduction plans.
- **TIER 3 (50-100 UG/KG):** Track cumulative load, Reduce application rate, notify, and modify permits.
- **TIER 4 (>100 UG/KG):** No land application; arrange disposal and notify authorities.

Wastewater treatment facilities must also now implement cumulative PFAS tracking and calculations for their biosolids. Facilities must calculate and record PFAS loads per acre using sludge application data.

These are some big changes in biosolids management! If you need help please reach out to Rural Water and we will assist you in navigating these new requirements.

Thanks, and have a great Fall season! *Tony*


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Mutual Aid

Jesse Hass,
WRWA Wastewater Trainer

It's always amazing how much people are willing to offer in times of emergency

This summer, several central Wisconsin communities faced flooding at the same time, testing both local utilities and the spirit of mutual aid. Manawa, Shiocton, Clintonville, and New London were all dealing with rising water. These communities are all located within half an hour of one another, and all had an urgent need to protect critical assets and infrastructure.

The first municipality to reach out to WRWA for assistance was Clintonville, where floodwater threatened the wastewater treatment plant. With water moving toward essential equipment and operations, Clintonville requested a pump large enough to help control the situation. Waupaca was able to respond by sending a six-inch pump as a backup pump for Clintonville. Clintonville was able to get a few pumps from Shawano to keep water from destroying critical pumps at the plant. The water was coming through floor drains and the pumps were needed to keep the pumps dry.

By the next morning, the need had shifted. Manawa was facing its own emergency as floodwater nearly overwhelmed its wastewater treatment plant. The river level in Manawa had risen to record levels and water was threatening to come in from all sides into the wastewater plant. The pump that had helped Clintonville was now needed in Manawa, where utility staff and municipal crews worked to keep the plant protected and operating.

As the water continued to rise, the community came out to support the utility. Residents, staff, and local partners worked side by side to help hold back the floodwater and prevent the plant from flooding. Their response showed how important wastewater treatment facilities are during an emergency, even when much of the work happens out of sight.

The flooding demonstrated that emergencies do not stop at municipal boundaries. Equipment, staff, and support had to move quickly from one community to another as conditions changed. A pump in one town became a lifeline in the next, and each decision depended on communication, trust, and the willingness of neighboring communities to help.

For Clintonville, Manawa, Shiocton, New London, Waupaca, and the surrounding area, the flooding was a reminder that mutual aid is more than an agreement on paper. It is neighbors helping neighbors, communities sharing resources, and public servants working together to protect people, property, and critical infrastructure when the need is greatest.

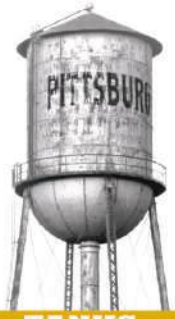
The flood also demonstrated that if all the communities in a small area are dealing with similar problems, then there is a strain on mutual aid. The pumps that came from Waupaca, Shawano and Iola were important but could have been needed at their home communities if flooding had been worse.

The thought that arose is that some communities may want to cast a wider net when thinking about mutual aid. With weather in Wisconsin having floods, blizzards, tornados and ice storms, among other things, aid may continue to be stretched thin in small pockets of the state. Municipal workers are always ready to lend a helping hand, but in some cases that hand may be needed at home. It's always amazing how much people are willing to offer in times of emergency but having a plan and support from many sources can make dealing with an emergency less stressful. *Jesse*

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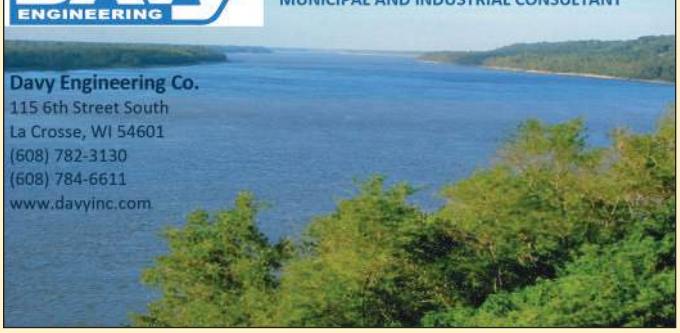
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HOW WATER SYSTEMS PREPARE FOR WINTER (2026 SUPER EL NINO)

Todd Weich,
WRWA Water Circuit Rider

Freezing and thawing cycles can worsen existing leaks or create new ones.

As another Wisconsin winter approaches, water utilities face the challenge of maintaining a safe and reliable water supply despite freezing temperatures, snow, and ice. Cold weather can cause pipes to freeze and burst, slow down water treatment processes, and create spikes in demand as residents try to protect their own plumbing. Preparing for winter is therefore a critical task for water systems, combining preventive maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, and public education to ensure uninterrupted service.

One of the biggest threats in winter is frozen pipes, which can cause service disruptions and costly damage. To prevent freezing, utilities can insulate exposed pipes in treatment plants, pumping stations, and distribution networks. Valves, hydrants, and meters are winterized so water does not remain in above-ground sections where it can freeze. In municipalities that require continuous operation, such as treatment plants or pumping stations, auxiliary heating systems maintain temperatures needed for equipment to function properly. This proactive approach reduces the risk of damage that could take days or weeks to repair.

Water treatment processes must also be adjusted for winter conditions. Cold water temperatures can slow down disinfection processes, making it harder to eliminate bacteria and other contaminants. Water Operators must monitor water temperatures continuously and may adjust chlorine levels or other chemical dosages to maintain water quality. Intake screens at reservoirs and rivers must be regularly cleared of ice to ensure water can flow into the system without obstruction. Even minor temperature changes can impact chemical reactions in treatment processes, so careful monitoring and recalibration are essential.

Maintaining a sufficient water supply during winter is another key concern. Utilities often increase storage levels in water towers and reservoirs ahead of severe weather to ensure backup capacity if pipes freeze or pumps fail. Emergency plans are developed to address power outages, frozen pumps, or pipe breaks, including the use of backup generators and alternate water sources. Seasonal usage trends are analyzed to predict periods of high demand, such as when residents leave faucets running to prevent their own pipes from freezing. Planning ahead ensures that water remains available even under extreme winter conditions.

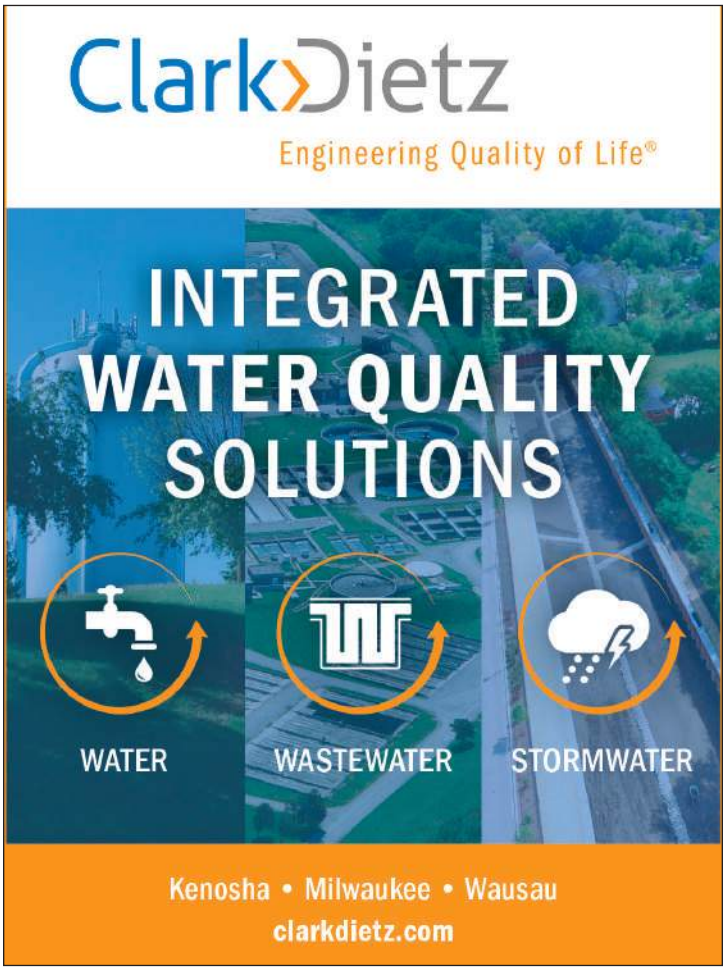
Protecting the distribution network is equally important. Freezing and thawing cycles can worsen existing leaks or create new ones, so utilities

may intensify leak detection and repair before winter. Additionally, utilities carefully manage system pressure to reduce the risk of pipe bursts caused by the expansion of frozen water. These measures not only prevent service interruptions but also extend the life of aging infrastructure.

Public education is a vital component of winter preparedness. Utilities provide residents with guidance on insulating exposed pipes, allowing faucets to drip during extreme cold, and storing emergency water supplies. Clear communication channels encourage residents to report leaks or low-pressure issues quickly, enabling rapid utility response.

Finally, modern technology is increasingly helping water systems prepare for winter more efficiently. Smart sensors monitor water temperature, flow, and pressure in real time, alerting operators to potential issues before they become emergencies. Predictive analytics use weather forecasts to adjust operations and chemical dosing in advance of cold snaps. Long-term infrastructure improvements, such as frost-resistant pipes, better insulation, and upgraded pumping systems, further reduce vulnerability to freezing conditions. Together, these strategies ensure that water systems remain resilient and capable of delivering safe water, no matter how harsh winter becomes. As everyone is aware, a Super El Nino is developing in the Pacific Ocean, and meteorologists are forecasting a disruption in "normal " weather patterns.

As we approach the unknown of another Wisconsin winter, feel free to reach out to your Circuit Rider with any concerns regarding winter preparations prior to them becoming a problem with unexpected expenses! *Todd*



CORPORATE GOLD MEMBERS









PSC WATER RATE INCREASE ORDERS ISSUED

7/1/2026 – 9/30/2026

UTILITY NAME	ORDER ISSUED	OVERALL% INCREASE
Clayton Municipal Water	7/7	17.11%
Shiocton Municipal	7/7	25.1%
Village of Allouez Water Department	8/7	9.58%
Cassville Water & Sewer	8/14	72.6%
La Crosse Water	8/20	63.45%
Gillett Water & Sewer Comm.	9/9	92.2%
Alma Municipal Water	9/14	45.3%
Stevens Point Municipal Water	9/25	47.59%
Janesville Water	9/29	26.74%

PSC CONSTRUCTION AUTHORIZATIONS ISSUED

7/1/2026 – 9/30/2026

UTILITY NAME	ORDER ISSUED	CONSTRUCTION COST
Reedsburg Utility Comm.	7/14	$525,310
Mukwonago Municipal Water	8/17	$579,209
Stanley Municipal Waterworks	9/22	$1,316,970

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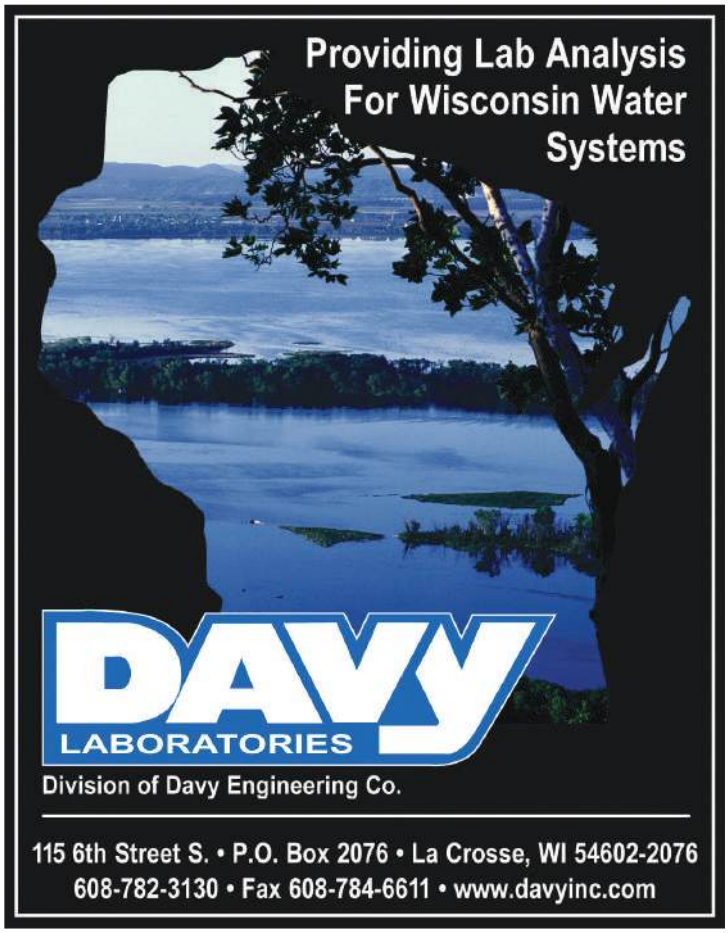
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Quarter page	$270	$860	$400	$1,400
Business card	$200	$600	$335	$1,000

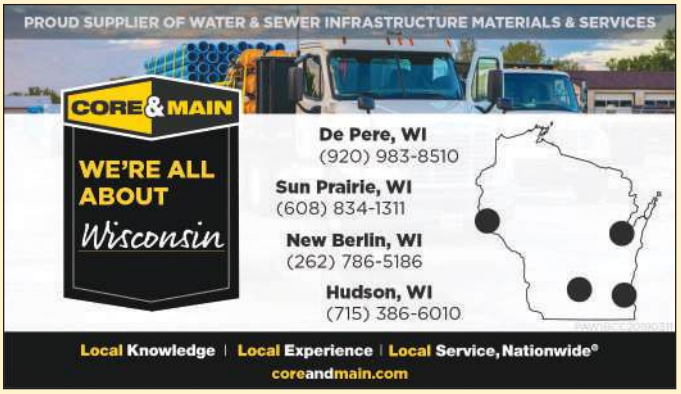
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Decentralized Wastewater for Small Systems: Empowering A Practical Guide for 10,000–15,000 GPD Flows

Dan Cooper,
WRWA EPA Wastewater Technical Assistance/Trainer

Systems handling 10,000–15,000 gpd occupy a regulatory and economic sweet spot demanding creative solutions.

If your Wisconsin wastewater system handles 10,000–15,000 gallons per day, you're in a challenging spot. You're too small for economy-of-scale advantages that favor centralized treatment, yet large enough that individual septic tanks fail consistently. Meeting DNR nutrient limits while keeping rates affordable feels impossible.

Why This Flow Range Matters

Systems processing 10,000–15,000 gpd (0.01–0.015 MGD) typically serve:

- 75–125 single-family homes
- Small commercial developments (motels, restaurants, schools)
- Unincorporated community clusters
- Retirement communities or manufactured home parks

At this scale, traditional plant upgrades cost $500,000–$2M, while decentralized alternatives run $200,000–$800,000. For rural communities, that's often the difference between proceeding and going bankrupt.

Appropriate Technologies for Small Flows

Technology	Daily Capacity	Strengths	Limitations
Advanced Package Plants	5,000–25,000 gpd	Pre-engineered, quick installation	Higher O&M requirements
Aerobic Treatment Units (ATUs)	5,000–20,000 gpd	Excellent nutrient removal	Sensitive to power outages
Small STEP Cluster	10,000–50,000 gpd	Low maintenance collection	Requires pressure pipe network
Constructed Wetland + Disinfection	10,000–30,000 gpd	Low energy, passive treatment	Needs available land (1–2 acres)
MABR Modular Unit	15,000–100,000 gpd	Retrofit into existing lagoons	Premium equipment cost



The Economics

Factor	Traditional	Decentralized
Capital/connection	$15,000–$25,000	$8,000–$15,000
Collection cost	60–70%	25–35%
O&M per MGD	$400–$600	$300–$500

Disadvantaged municipalities (population <10,000, income ≤80% of WI's $77,488 MHI) qualify for Clean Water Fund rates as low as 1.485%. Governor Evers and DNR announced $484 million in Clean Water Fund funding (January 2026) for 82 municipalities.

When to Consider Decentralized:

- ✓ Population density: 20–200 persons per square mile
- ✓ Sewer extension exceeds $20M or 20+ year bonds
- ✓ Individual systems failing at >5% rate
- ✓ Land available (0.5–2 acres)
- ✓ Operator capacity exists for remote monitoring
- ✓ Capital budget <$500,000

Regulatory Reality

Wisconsin DNR nutrient discharge limits don't scale by system size. A 15,000 gpd lagoon faces the same phosphorus thresholds as a 5 MGD facility. CMAR (Compliance Maintenance Annual Report) is still required regardless of system size.

Start with a DNR-approved 20-year Sewer Service Area Plan. Use Clean Water Fund application cycles strategically (quarterly: March, June, September, December).

Bottom Line

Systems handling 10,000–15,000 gpd occupy a regulatory and economic sweet spot demanding creative solutions. Decentralized wastewater trades capital expense for operational discipline. For communities squeezed between tightening DNR limits and limited taxpayer bases, it represents a viable path to compliance without financial ruin. *Dan*

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"Winter Preparation"

Winter Operations Small Water Systems OTM/NN 2026-2027

George Taylor,
Small Water System Circuit Rider
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Gtaylor@wrwa.org

Always have clean access to your facilities during winter.

As the leaves fall and change with lots of color, we hit that time of the year with freezing temperatures and lots of snow in Wisconsin. Water operators must now start thinking about "Winter Preparation" for their water systems. I'm here to give you some helpful insight to get you through these next few months of snowstorms and extreme temperature drops. Don't forget to dress for the situation. Waterproof insulated boots, winter jackets and Bibs, Face masks and gloves are always a must when responding on the chilly days or after hour late night emergencies calls.

First off, make sure all heaters and heat tapes are turned on within your facilities. I've seen it time and time again, operators forgetting to plug in or turn them on. Which turns into a frozen line situation or burst pipes. Keep your pump house well heated during the cold months. Depending on your system needs, decrease water levels for more turnover in your water towers or outdoor tanks. Make sure all controls are heated. Also, skirting around your mobile homes should also be in place. This will help keep the cold air from freezing water lines. Remember, try and make daily inspections routine during extremely cold months. This will help you identify or see any water main breaks or bursts.

Next, Keep a map of your distribution system handy with you. You never know when or where a frozen line or burst pipe will happen. But, when it does, you will be prepared to locate the service lines or curb stops fast and effectively. Some operators will even go out into the field and flag or GPS their service lines and curb stops. Remember heavy snow will be covering curb stops making them very difficult to locate. This will save time locating them during stressful emergency situations. Your distribution system map should include wells, storage tanks, treatment, distribution system piping, flushing devices and valve/shutoff locations.

Always have clean access to your facilities during winter. Remove, plow snow away from the most important parts of your water system. Well houses, hydrants, and valves. Be sure not to expose underground water service lines as the snow provides more extra insulation. If you need extra insulation for your service lines, frost blankets or hay bales can be used. Keeping your fire hydrants clear and visible of snow prevents damage from snowmobiles or plow trucks from hitting them. Keeping them visible also helps your local fire department when they are responding to emergencies.

Check your local weather forecast throughout the winter months. When the sub below temperatures move in it may be a good idea to send out a trickle water notice to customers. This will help prevent any future freeze-ups or lines bursts to customers.

To keep water samples from freezing during winter shipping while still meeting cooling requirements, use room-temperature or slightly chilled gel packs instead of hard ice packs and add extra insulation like bubble wrap. Your water laboratory will not except frozen water samples and will flag them.

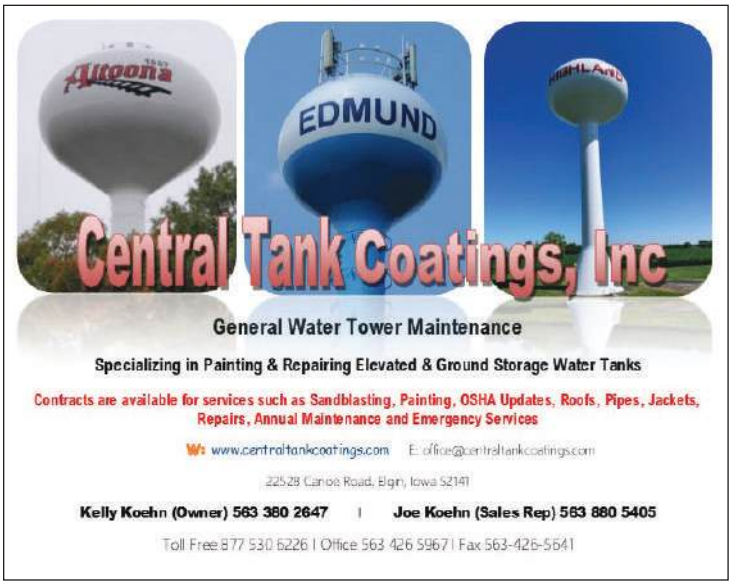
Keep a current Emergency Response Plan at the ready. Depending on the situation, it's always a good thing to have all your emergency contact information at the ready.

These are just only a few tips to help get you through the winter. Remember being proactive in identifying and preventing any potential problems within your water system.

We at Wisconsin Rural Water Association are always here to help you with any Technical Assistance you may need. Please feel free to Contact your nearest WI-Water Circuit Rider for any questions or concerns you may have. Also make sure you check our web site at www.wrwa.org for any Online or In-person training that you may need. We are the Leaders in your training needs.

Thanks for reading everyone!

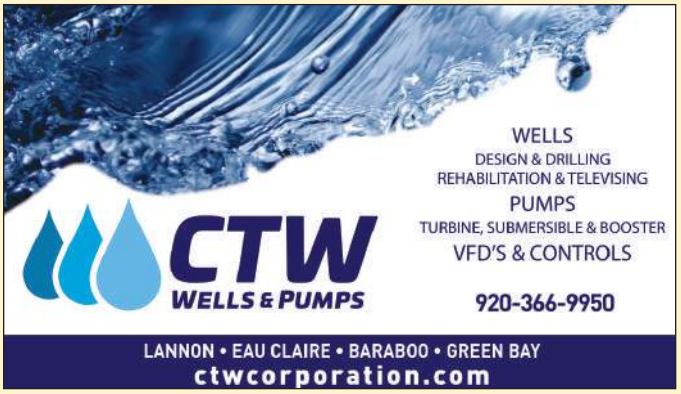




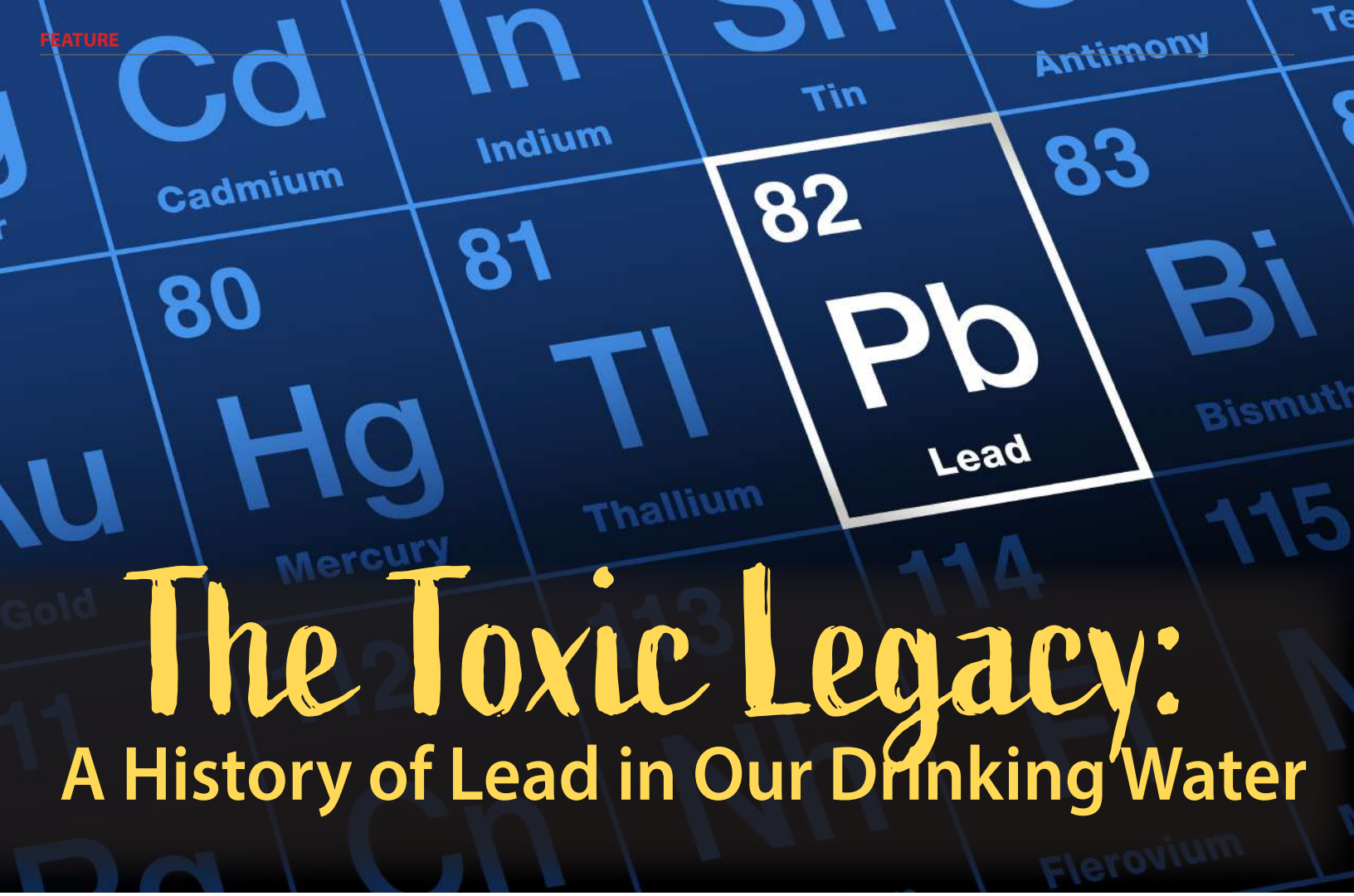
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The Toxic Legacy:
A History of Lead in Our Drinking Water

Nathan Licht,
WRWA EPA Water Technician/Trainer

You may find yourself wondering when did lead first introduce itself to water systems in the United States.

If you have followed my previous articles, you know that I primarily focus on the steps water systems are taking to comply with federal and state lead and copper requirements. Some readers, however, may be new to the topic or unfamiliar with the history of lead and its use in water systems. During a recent conversation about our journal articles, a colleague suggested that I write about the history of lead, noting that his wife had once prepared a report on the subject. I initially thought her report would make the task easier, but I never had the opportunity to read it. That conversation nevertheless inspired this article. So here is my take on "The Toxic Legacy: A History of Lead in Our Drinking Water."



Lead is a dense, soft, and durable metal represented by the chemical symbol Pb on the periodic table. Valued for infrastructure since ancient times, it was among the earliest metals used by humans and was first smelted around 6500 BC. Early people learned to extract the soft, malleable metal by heating naturally occurring lead sulfide over a fire. As ancient civilizations expanded, lead became widely used in Egypt, Asia, and the Roman Empire.

At the height of the Roman Empire, lead production reached an industrial scale, leaving pollution that scientists can still detect in Greenland's ice sheets. Although the Romans understood that lead could cause severe illness, they continued to value its convenience. Workers could easily cast lead into sheets, bend them, and solder the seams to create pipes, to create the early form of "plumbing". Workers often stamped the pipes with the name of the ruling emperor or property owner to identify and regulate water rights, almost like a "Roman Public Service Commission"…ok ok, probably not exactly the same… but you get what I was thinking. The earliest lead pipes used gravity to carry water to public basins, fountains, and elite homes, much like today's gravity sewer mains. Some have argued that widespread lead poisoning contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire. Although there is no proof that lead alone caused its collapse, workers exposed to the metal for years reportedly developed paralysis, while wine drinkers faced elevated risks of cognitive decline and colic because lead-containing vessels were used to sweeten wine.

Following the collapse of Roman infrastructure, organized water distribution largely disappeared across Britain during the Middle Ages. Structured water systems began returning to British cities in the 1500s, although political instability limited investment in public works until the 1800s. By the mid-1800s, lead had reemerged as a common material in the water industry, as private companies built extensive distribution networks that relied heavily on lead pipes. The Metropolitan Water Act of 1852 introduced measures intended to improve the quality and coverage of London's water supply. Although the legislation aimed to protect public health, the resulting expansion of water infrastructure inadvertently contributed to a surge in the use of lead service lines. Although the Metropolitan Water Act brought awareness to water quality, lead contamination went unnoticed because lead does not alter taste, color or smell of water.

At this point you may find yourself wondering when did lead first introduce itself to water systems in the United States. Pennsylvania is known for being the "first" in many aspects of this great country. Unfortunately, they are credited with the first public water system to use lead pipes in the US in 1754. As major cities expanded rapidly, many engineers stopped using iron and wooden mains and you guessed it, lead was the premier choice. By the early 1900s the use of lead became standard due to the invention of machinery that could press seamless lead pipes cheaper than any other material paving the way for the 20th century plumbing boom. Much like how the Tavern League of Wisconsin exists and operates, the Lead Industries Association was created with the core function of lobbying groups to protect and aggressively push the use of lead in the industry.

By the closing decades of the twentieth century, municipal water providers faced a quiet but monumental crisis: the toxic legacy of lead infrastructure. Although the installation of new lead service lines had slowed significantly by mid-century, millions of miles of legacy pipe, along with high-lead brass fixtures and lead-based solder, remained embedded beneath American streets and within household plumbing. A major turning point came with the 1986 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, which prohibited the use of lead materials in public water systems. Addressing the infrastructure already in place, however, required a different strategy. In 1991, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency introduced the landmark Lead and Copper Rule to reduce lead leaching. The rule shifted the focus from immediate pipe replacement to water chemistry by establishing an action level of 15 parts per billion and requiring corrosion control treatment. By adjusting pH or adding corrosion inhibitors such as orthophosphate, water providers could promote the formation of a protective mineral scale inside aging pipes, creating a critical chemical barrier between legacy infrastructure and the public's drinking water.

The catastrophic limits of this chemical defense became painfully clear during the 2014 water crisis in Flint, Michigan, where a failure to maintain proper corrosion control caused that protective scale to dissolve, leaching toxic lead directly into resident taps. This devastating failure exposed the structural loopholes of the 1991 rule and directly resulted in EPA's modern, zero-tolerance framework: the 2024 Lead and Copper Rule Improvements. Sparked by the lessons of Flint, the current LCRI completely shifts the national strategy from merely managing lead through chemistry to aggressively mandating the complete physical eradication of legacy infrastructure, and as we all know, forcing public water systems to fully replace 100% of lead service lines within a strict 10-year window. If you are dealing with lead in your system and find yourself stressed, angry or confused, just remember, thank the Roman Empire… *Nathan*

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COMPRESSED GASES

Vince Matarrese,
President, Advanced Safety Technology, Inc.

Seen it, they were moving it with a forklift, went through a block wall.

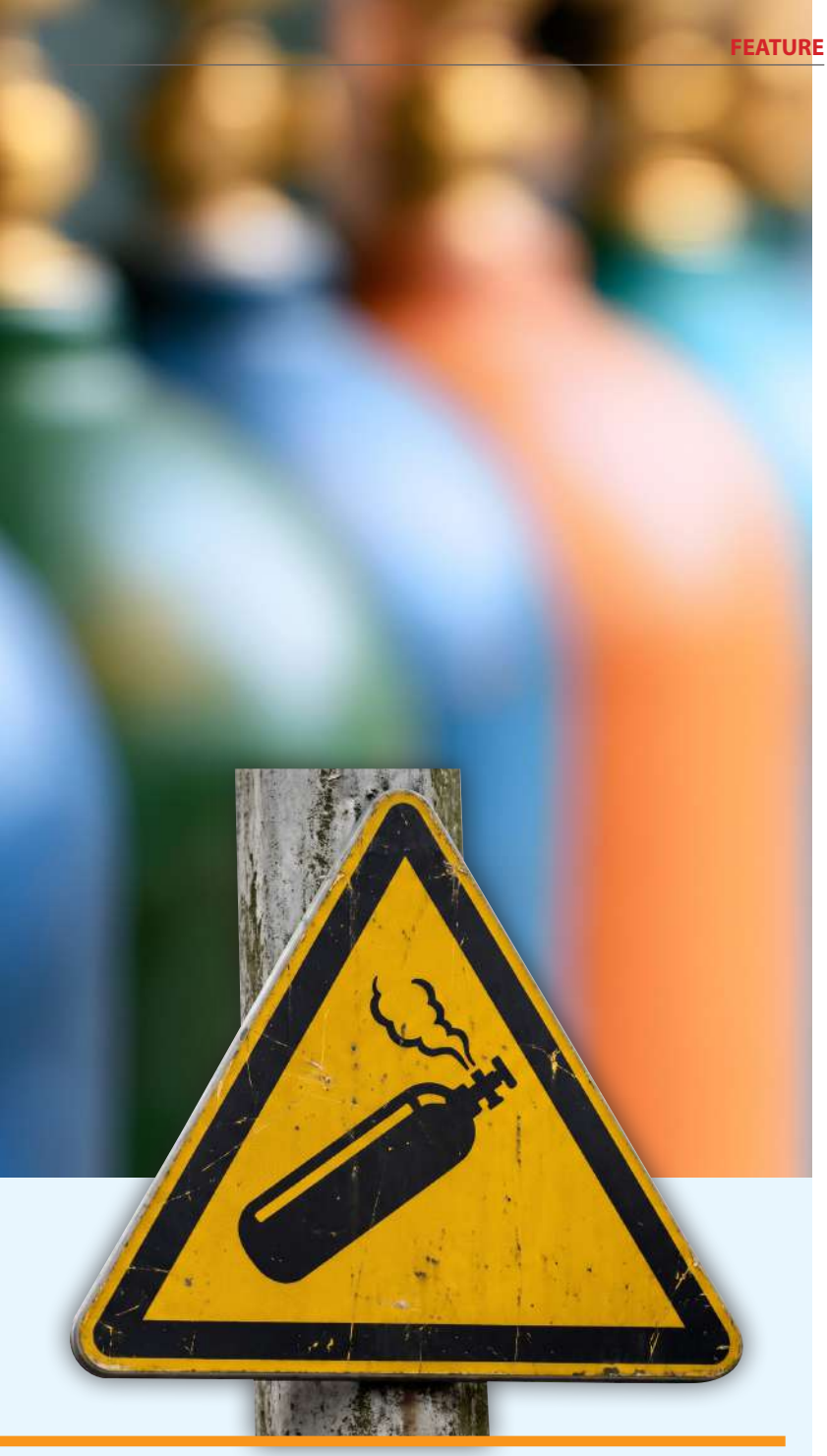
FACTS

- **The compressed gases most commonly found are:**
- Oxygen
- AcetylenE
- Nitrogen
- L.P. Gas
- Air

- These gases are handled in steel cylinders 3 to 5 feet tall and I or 2 feet in diameter.
- They can weigh up to 150 pounds and have an internal pressure greater than 2,000 pounds per square inch.

MOVING AND STORAGE

- The valve protection caps shall be in place when the cylinders are not in use.
  - Valve protection caps shall not be used for lifting cylinders.
- All cylinders shall be secured in an upright position at all times.
- Unless in use or on a welding cart, oxygen and acetylene shall be separated by a distance of 20 feet.
- Cylinders should not be placed where they might come in contact with live electrical parts.
- Store cylinders away from sources of heat.
- When cylinders are transported by powered vehicles, they shall be secured in a vertical position.
- Cylinders shall be moved by tilting and rolling them on their bottom edges.
- They shall not be intentionally dropped, struck, or permitted to strike each other violently.



- Cylinders containing oxygen or acetylene or other fuel gas shall not be taken into confined spaces.
- If the valve stem of a cylinder should be sheared off in a fall, the escaping gas would turn the cylinder into a rocket. Seen it, they were moving it with a forklift, went through a block wall.
- Escaping acetylene and L.P. Gas could result in a fire.
  - Never check for leaks with a flame.
- Escaping oxygen can greatly increase the potential for a fire hazard, make sure cylinders are kept clean from greases and oil.
- Nitrogen is an inert gas, it will displace oxygen in the air and cause an oxygen deficient atmosphere.
  - Never place cylinders in a confined space.

Remember, it's all about going home. *Vince*

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18th Annual Water Conservation Poster Contest



Andrew Aslesen,
WRWA Source Water Specialist

The water conservation poster contest can be a great way for utilities to connect with their local schools.

WRWA is pleased to announce the 18th annual Water Conservation Poster Contest. This year's theme is "From Data to Drinking Water". With this theme we are challenging students to think about the connection between water, technology, and our daily lives. How can we conserve and protect water today to ensure there is enough for our communities, our technology, and future generations.

> ***We invite and encourage all water operators, wastewater operators, municipal employees, board members or families to help promote the water conservation poster contest and distribute the informational flyer found in this issue of the journal or on our website (https://www.wrwa.org/wrwa-annual-technical-conference/).***

Please consider giving the flyer to the schools in your communities (both public and private schools) or giving it directly to teachers or other school staff that you know. Additionally, the water conservation poster contest can be a great way for utilities to connect with their local schools. It can provide an opportunity to educate students and the public on issues that utilities face every day and how water and wastewater utilities are working to protect the environment and conserve natural resources. The poster contest is open to public, private & home school students in 2nd through 6th grade anywhere in Wisconsin. Participants are asked to create a poster that depicts a message of water conservation that relates to this year's theme. As part of the project, teachers have the opportunity to discuss the importance of our water resources and water conservation with their students. Teachers can even request that Wisconsin Rural Water Association staff give a groundwater presentation at their school using our 3D sand tank groundwater model. Posters are submitted to the Rural Water office near the end of February, where they are reviewed and the top 15 posters from each grade are taken to and displayed at our Annual Technical Conference in March. Conference attendees choose the winning posters by voting for their favorite poster from each grade. The two posters from each grade that receive the most votes are awarded first and second prize. First place winners receive a $100 cash prize and second place winners receive a $50 cash prize. Again this year we are rewarding teachers who put the time and effort into participating in the contest by putting them in a drawing for one of five $100 Amazon gift cards. This incentive directly rewards teachers in a tangible way and has been well received by the winners.

In the last seventeen years, the Water Conservation Poster Contest has continued to be an outstanding success. Last year there were almost 700 participating students from 20 different schools. This year we would like to reach even more students, but we need your help! Please join us in promoting this year's poster contest by distributing the information on the contest to schools in your community and encouraging them to participate. If you have any questions or need additional entry forms, feel free to contact me; Andrew Aslesen, WRWA Source Water Specialist at Aaslesen@wrwa.org or calling 715-321-3451. *Andrew*



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2027 Water Conservation Poster Contest

'From Data to Drinking Water'

Presented by: Wisconsin Rural Water Association

- **WHO:** all 2nd – 6th grade students in Wisconsin
- **WHAT:** Posters drawn VERTICALLY (portrait) on either 11"x 17" or 12"x18" paper
- **WHEN:** Entries must be postmarked no later than Monday February 22, 2027

Prizes

First Place

- $100 Cash Prize

Second Place

- $50 Cash Prize

Teacher Prizes

- 5 - $100 Amazon Gift Cards



2026 5th Grade 1st Place Winner From Lodi Elementary School

This year's theme "From Data to Drinking Water" challenges students to think about the connection between water, technology, and our daily lives. How can we conserve and protect water today to ensure there is enough for our communities, our technology, and future generations.

Mail Entries To:
WI Rural Water Association
350 Water Way
Plover, WI 54467

***Resources, Rules & Submission Forms on Back**

Resources:

- Project WET Discover Water: https://www.discoverwater.org/
- US EPS Water Sense: https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-kids

Fun Facts:

- A person can survide about a month without food, but only 5 to 7 days without water
- Showering and bathing are the largest indoor water use (27%)
- It takes about 1.1 million gallons of water to grow enough food for an average family for a year (Some foods take more water to produce than others).
- 780 million people globally lack clean safe water (water.org).
- Only 1% of the Earth's water is available for drinking water.
- Each person in Wisconsin uses about 60 gallons of water every day.

Prizes:

- All participating **teachers** are placed in a raffle for 1 of 5 $100 Amazon gift cards
- One first and second place winner will be selected from each grade (2nd through 6th).
- Winners will be chosen by attendees at Wisconsin Rural Water Association's Annual Technical Conference March 23-26, 2026 and announced the first week of April 2026.

Water Conservation Poster Contest Entry Form

Contest Entry: **Submit the top 3 posters per class** Teachers who have multiple classes, such as art or science teachers, may submit 3 posters for each class they teach, combination classes may submit 3 posters per grade level. Please make sure to attach one student entry form (Right) to the back of each poster, then package the posters, along with one class entry form (below) and **mail by Monday February 22nd, 2027 to: *WRWA 350 Water Way, Plover WI 54467.*** Questions? Contact Andrew Aslesen at aaslesen@wrwa.org or 715-321-3451 or visit www.wrwa.org.

The Fine Print

1. Open to all public, private & home school students in grades 2-6 in WI.

2. Posters must be drawn VERTICALLY (portrait) on either 11"x 17" or 12"x18" paper. *Entries that are not the correct size paper or are drawn horizontally will be disqualified*.

3. Crayon, watercolor, poster paint, markers, ink, cut paper, tissue paper or fabric.

5. Only original *student* artwork will be accepted. Computer generated drawings will not be considered. Reproduction of popular cartoon characters or three-dimensional work will be disqualified.

6. Posters will not be returned and will remain the property of the WRWA and may be displayed publicly, published or reproduced.

7. Each participating teacher will be given one entry into the drawing for one of five #100 Amazon gift cards.

8. Package the posters, along with one class entry form (below) and mail to WRWA at the address above.

CLASS ENTRY FORM: SEND ONE WITH POSTERS

Teacher's Name_____

School_____Grade_____

Email Address_____

School Address _____

City_____zip_____

Teacher Phone # _____

Total Entries Submitted (up to 3 per class) _____

Total Number of Students who Participated_____

☐ ***Check here if interested in having WRWA staff give a ground water flow model demonstration at your school.***

STUDENT ENTRY FORM
ATTACH TO BACK OF STUDENT'S POSTER

Name _____Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Name_____

School _____

Teacher's Name_____

STUDENT ENTRY FORM
ATTACH TO BACK OF STUDENT'S POSTER

Name _____Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Name_____

School _____

Teacher's Name_____

STUDENT ENTRY FORM
ATTACH TO BACK OF STUDENT'S POSTER

Name _____Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Name_____

School _____

Teacher's Name_____

Rural Water

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Wisconsin Rural Water Association supports Rural Water Financing Agency

The Rural Water Financing Agency provides interim construction funding to borrowers with a USDA takeout (or other approved permanent lender).

The Agency* has made over $1 billion in interim loans to borrowers with a USDA takeout!

*Includes the Agency's predecessor organization (Kentucky Rural Water Finance Corporation)



STREAMLINED PROCESS

1. Submit an application online via ruralwaterfinance.com
2. Legal document preparation
3. Construction bidding, USDA takeout letter
4. Interim loan closing, funds available for disbursement
5. Construction completion, USDA loan closing/interim loan payoff

---

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
270.535.5921

Nick Roederer, Managing Director
Raymond James (Program Underwriter)
nick.roederer@raymondjames.com
502.741.3686

Kristen Millard, Director
Raymond James (Program Underwriter)
kristen.millard@raymondjames.com
859.232.8249

Daniel Olson, Corporate Trust Relationship
Consultant Regions Bank (Program Trustee)
daniel.olson@regions.com
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Operator Buy-In

Matt Rettler,
WRWA Energy Efficiency Circuit Rider

Operator buy-in is important because energy efficiency does not necessarily mean purchasing expensive new equipment.

Energy efficiency is becoming increasingly important for water and wastewater utilities as electricity, natural gas, chemicals, and other operating expenses continue to place pressure on municipal budgets. Water and wastewater facilities can be some of the largest energy users within a community. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), energy costs can represent approximately 25 to 30 percent of a utility's operation and maintenance costs and are often the largest controllable cost associated with providing water and wastewater services. While new equipment and technology can improve efficiency, one of the most important parts of a successful energy-management program is something much simpler: operator buy-in.

Operators are in a unique position because they work with the equipment every day. They know which pumps run continuously, which blowers seem to operate harder than necessary, which buildings are difficult to heat, and which pieces of equipment are





beginning to lose efficiency. For this reason, operators should be encouraged to look at monthly electric and natural-gas bills instead of leaving energy costs entirely to management or the municipality's financial department. Looking at energy consumption, not just the dollar amount, allows operators to establish a baseline and identify unusual changes. EPA recommends establishing baseline energy use and examining energy-intensive processes such as pumping and aeration as important first steps toward improving efficiency.

Operator buy-in is important because energy efficiency does not necessarily mean purchasing expensive new equipment. Many improvements come from changing how existing equipment is operated. Aeration is an excellent example. Aeration can be one of the largest electrical loads at a wastewater treatment facility, so supplying more air than the biological process requires can waste a significant amount of electricity. Operators who understand both the treatment process and energy costs can monitor dissolved oxygen levels and adjust aeration to match actual treatment requirements while still maintaining permit compliance. Other opportunities include properly sequencing pumps, maintaining pumps and blowers, cleaning diffusers, eliminating unnecessary equipment run time, and using variable-frequency drives (VFDs) where flow requirements vary. EPA guidance identifies pumping and aeration as major opportunities for energy savings and recommends matching equipment operation to actual process demands.

The upcoming Wisconsin winter months make operators' involvement even more important. As temperatures drop, facilities require

Continued on page 30

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additional energy for heating buildings, protecting equipment from freezing, operating ventilation systems, and maintaining treatment processes. Operators should inspect buildings before winter and look for damaged door seals, poorly fitting overhead doors, unnecessary ventilation, leaking windows, and areas where insulation could be improved. Unit heaters and thermostats should also be checked to make sure buildings are not being maintained at temperatures higher than necessary. However, temperature reductions must be made carefully because pipes, chemical-feed systems, instrumentation, and other equipment must remain protected from freezing.

Operators should also pay attention to winter operating conditions outside the buildings. Snow and ice can interfere with equipment, while freezing temperatures can increase the importance of heat tracing and space heaters. Portable heaters and heat tape that are installed temporarily sometimes remain energized long after they are needed. Checking these devices routinely and repairing insulation around exposed piping can prevent unnecessary energy consumption. At drinking-water facilities, operators should also monitor pumping schedules and distribution-system leakage. Every gallon of water that is unnecessarily pumped requires energy for treatment and distribution, and reducing leaks can therefore reduce energy consumption.

Perhaps most importantly, energy efficiency should become part of the facility's operating culture rather than a one-time project. A simple monthly review of electric and natural-gas bills can help accomplish this. Operators can compare kilowatt-hours, peak electrical demand, natural-gas consumption, water or wastewater flow, and weather conditions with previous months and previous years. If electricity consumption suddenly increases without a corresponding increase in flow, operators can investigate the cause. A pump may be losing efficiency, a blower may be running longer, controls may have been changed, or heating equipment may be operating unnecessarily. Finding these problems early can save energy while also identifying equipment problems before they become expensive failures.

Ultimately, operators are one of the utility's best resources for improving energy efficiency. Management can set energy goals and engineers can recommend new technology, but operators determine how equipment is used every day. When operators understand the facility's energy bills and recognize that electricity and natural gas are controllable operating expenses, small operational decisions can add up to substantial savings. This becomes especially important during Wisconsin winters, when heating, ventilation, pumping, and freeze protection can increase energy demand. Creating operator buy-in turns energy efficiency from a management objective into part of everyday plant operation—and that can reduce operating costs while maintaining reliable water and wastewater treatment.

Matt



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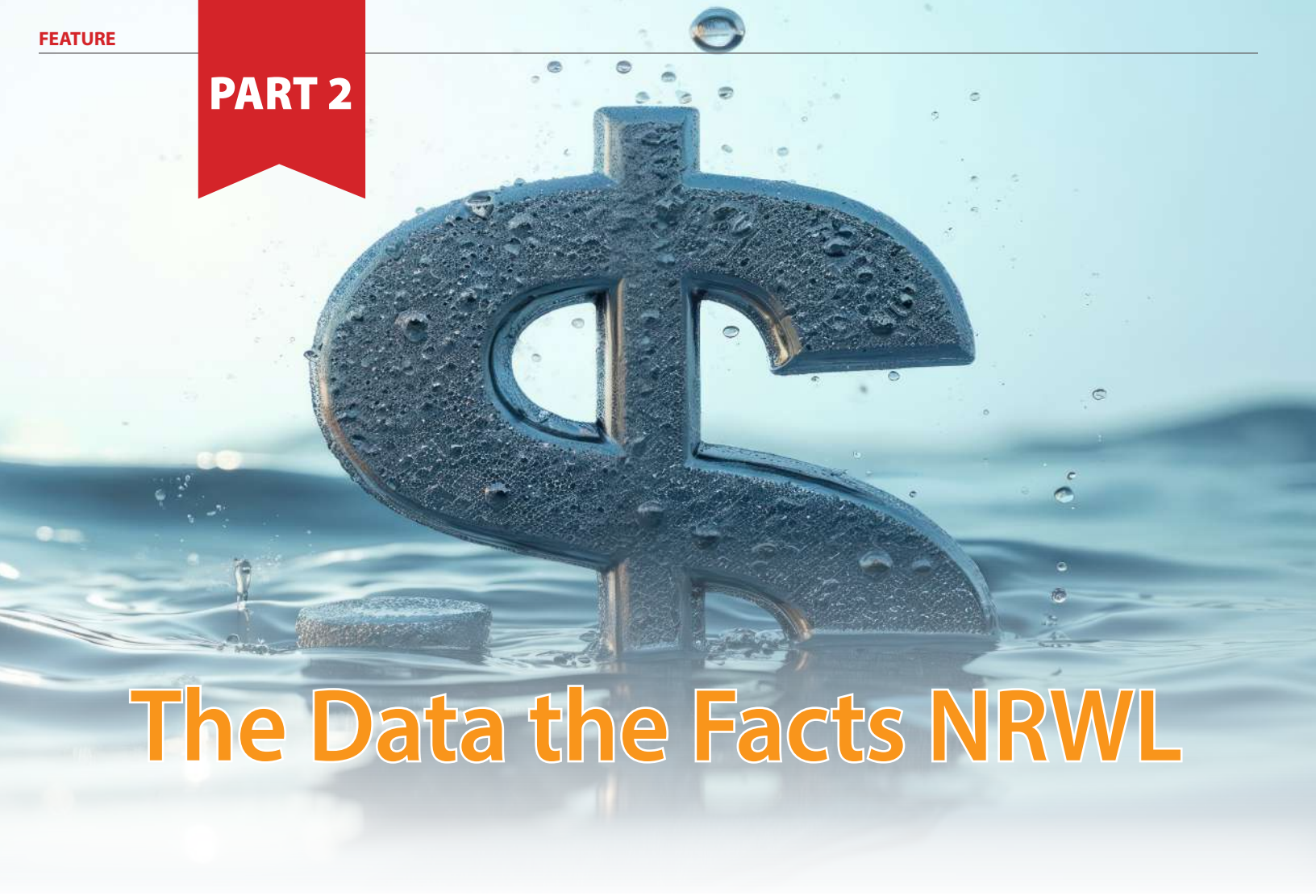
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PART 2



The Data the Facts NRWL

Dan Wundrow,
WRWA Circuit Rider

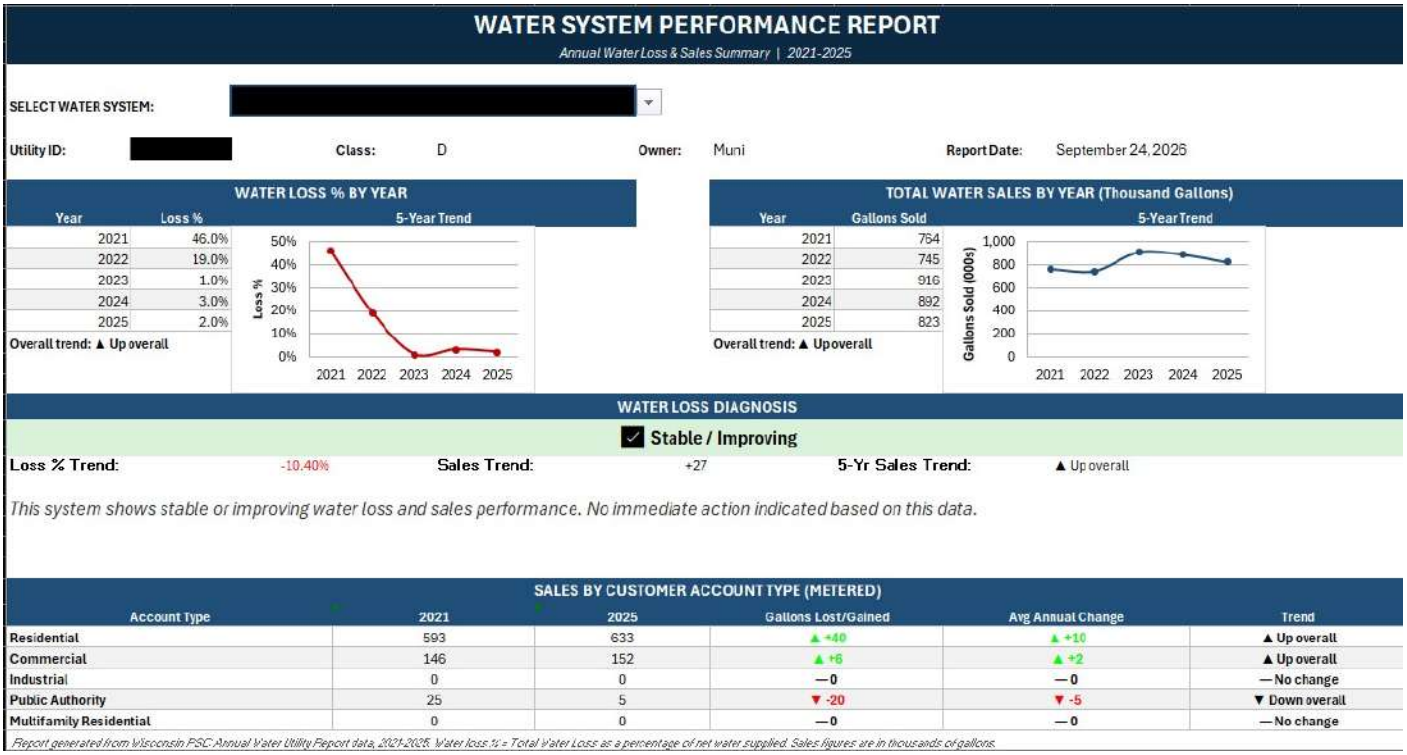
It wasn't practical or efficient for water systems to dig through five years of water records, given how much you all have on your plates.

In September, most of the WRWA staff attended Water Pro in Phoenix, Arizona. I will admit I wasn't a fan of the so-called "dry heat." However, I had the opportunity to learn a lot and talk with several other Water Circuit Riders from other states. I sat in on one of the opening sessions and watched a highlight video from another state. This opportunity always makes me want to dig deeper into what I've been working on. Over the last few years, I have been working on a statewide water loss tracker for C and D Class water systems. That's where I fell down a rabbit hole. I started to pull data from the PSC for D Class water systems.

A little background on the statewide water loss tracker. Then I'll give you the data for D Class water systems. I felt it wasn't practical or efficient for water systems to dig through five years of water records, given how much you all have on your plates. So, I spent some time pulling data from the PSC from 2021 through 2025 and built a sheet that has a drop-down list of most water systems. Within seconds, it generates a report showing water loss trends, total sales trends, and trends by meter class. The report also explains, in plain text, what is happening with your water system. I'll admit this turned out to be a bigger project than I anticipated.

Water systems fall into four categories: stable/improving, declining meter sales, mixed (rising losses & falling sales), and likely water leaks. Below, I will give an example of each. I redacted the system's name and ID because I didn't get permission to share the name, and I also don't want to embarrass any water system. All of us take pride in our water systems; most of the time, we are at the mercy of available funds or non-responsive boards. This report helps you learn more about your water system and plan with your Water Circuit Rider, whether it's meter-related or leak-related.

STABEL/IMPROVING REPORT. Significant improvements in the last four years. In 2021, the system lost 46% of its water; within two years, it reduced total water loss to 1%. Another interesting trend in this report is meter sales. I helped this system acquire newer water meters in 2023. In the years before that, you can see the trend heading downward. It also shows that this system's water sales are starting to decrease. At the bottom, the chart shows the meter sales trend by meter class. Residential and commercial sales are both positive, while public authority sales are decreasing.



WATER SYSTEM PERFORMANCE REPORT

Annual Water Loss & Sales Summary | 2021-2025

SELECT WATER SYSTEM: [redacted]

Utility ID: [redacted] Class: D Owner: Muni Report Date: September 24, 2026

WATER LOSS % BY YEAR

Year	Loss %
2021	46.0%
2022	19.0%
2023	1.0%
2024	3.0%
2025	2.0%

Overall trend: ▲ Up overall

5-Year Trend

TOTAL WATER SALES BY YEAR (Thousand Gallons)

Year	Gallons Sold
2021	764
2022	745
2023	916
2024	892
2025	823

Overall trend: ▲ Up overall

5-Year Trend

WATER LOSS DIAGNOSIS

✓ Stable / Improving

Loss % Trend: -10.40% Sales Trend: +27 5-Yr Sales Trend: ▲ Up overall

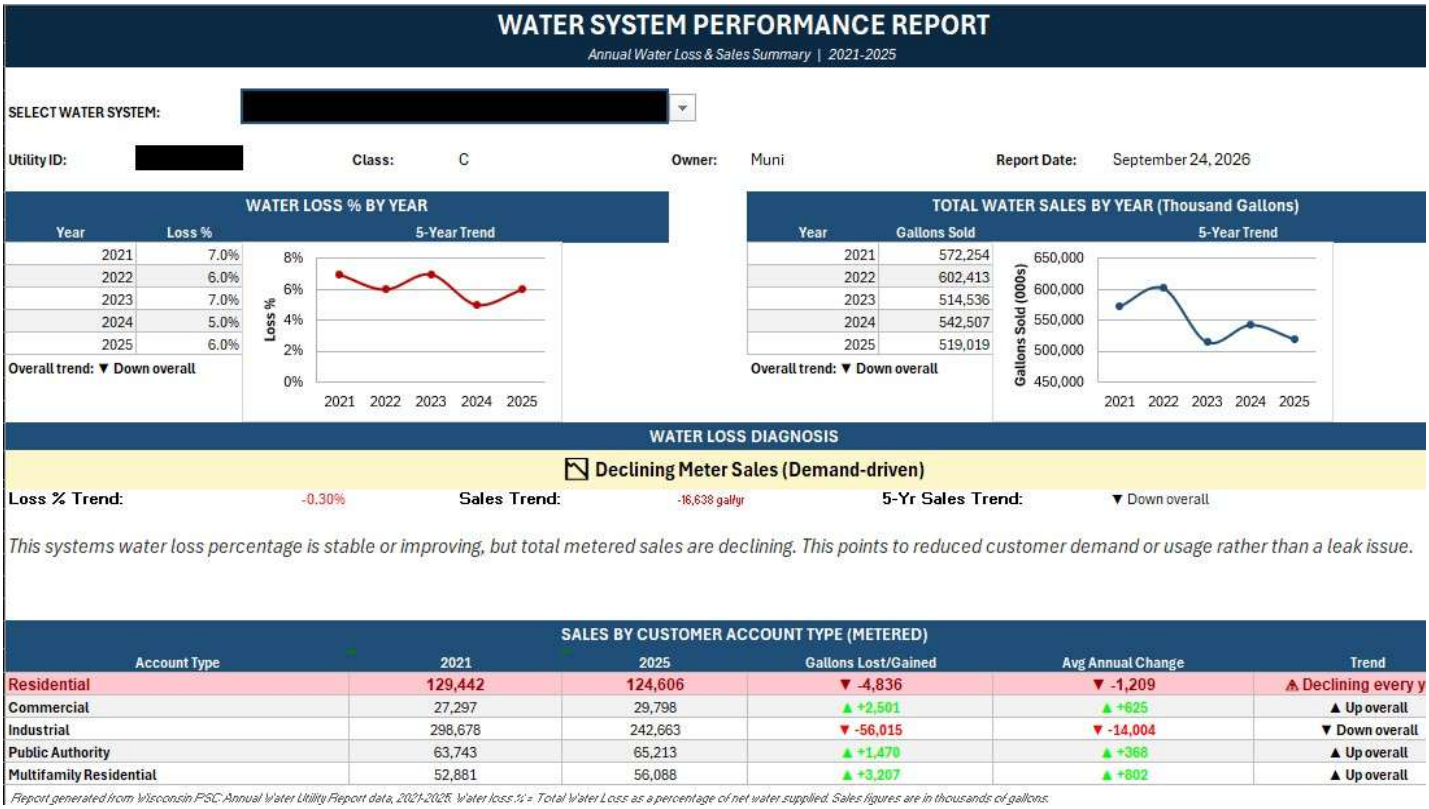
This system shows stable or improving water loss and sales performance. No immediate action indicated based on this data.

SALES BY CUSTOMER ACCOUNT TYPE (METERED)

Account Type	2021	2025	Gallons Lost/Gained	Avg Annual Change	Trend
Residential	593	633	▲ +40	▲ +10	▲ Up overall
Commercial	146	152	▲ +6	▲ +2	▲ Up overall
Industrial	0	0	— 0	— 0	— No change
Public Authority	25	5	▼ -20	▼ -5	▼ Down overall
Multifamily Residential	0	0	— 0	— 0	— No change

Report generated from Wisconsin PSC Annual Water Utility Report data, 2021-2025. 'Water loss %' = Total Water Loss as a percentage of net water supplied. Sales figures are in thousands of gallons.

DECLINING METER SALES REPORT. This water system shows stable or improving water loss with a significant decrease in water sales. This water system should start looking at a few different things. Does the decline in meter sales match the population decline, or has the population increased? What is the age of the water meters in each class showing the decline? What's neat about this report is that if a meter class declines every year, it flags that class as "Declining every year." In this water system, I would focus more time on the residential and industrial water meters.



WATER SYSTEM PERFORMANCE REPORT

Annual Water Loss & Sales Summary | 2021-2025

SELECT WATER SYSTEM: [redacted]

Utility ID: [redacted] Class: C Owner: Muni Report Date: September 24, 2026

WATER LOSS % BY YEAR

Year	Loss %
2021	7.0%
2022	6.0%
2023	7.0%
2024	5.0%
2025	6.0%

Overall trend: ▼ Down overall

5-Year Trend

TOTAL WATER SALES BY YEAR (Thousand Gallons)

Year	Gallons Sold
2021	572,254
2022	602,413
2023	514,536
2024	542,507
2025	519,019

Overall trend: ▼ Down overall

5-Year Trend

WATER LOSS DIAGNOSIS

Declining Meter Sales (Demand-driven)

Loss % Trend: -0.30% Sales Trend: -16,638 gal/yr 5-Yr Sales Trend: ▼ Down overall

This systems water loss percentage is stable or improving, but total metered sales are declining. This points to reduced customer demand or usage rather than a leak issue.

SALES BY CUSTOMER ACCOUNT TYPE (METERED)

Account Type	2021	2025	Gallons Lost/Gained	Avg Annual Change	Trend
Residential	129,442	124,606	▼ -4,836	▼ -1,209	⚠ Declining every y
Commercial	27,297	29,798	▲ +2,501	▲ +625	▲ Up overall
Industrial	298,678	242,663	▼ -56,015	▼ -14,004	▼ Down overall
Public Authority	63,743	65,213	▲ +1,470	▲ +368	▲ Up overall
Multifamily Residential	52,881	56,088	▲ +3,207	▲ +802	▲ Up overall

Report generated from Wisconsin PSC Annual Water Utility Report data, 2021-2025. 'Water loss %' = Total Water Loss as a percentage of net water supplied. Sales figures are in thousands of gallons.

MIXED (RISING LOSSES & FALLING SALES) REPORT. This water system shows significant water leaks and declining sales. Like the last example, I would be asking the same questions about the meters' age and population. In this case, I would start with the residential meters. At the same time, I would contact WRWA to schedule a leak detection audit or request the data loggers.

Continued on page 34

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WATER SYSTEM PERFORMANCE REPORT

Annual Water Loss & Sales Summary | 2021-2025

SELECT WATER SYSTEM: [redacted]

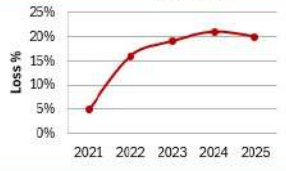
Utility ID: [redacted] **Class:** C **Owner:** Muni **Report Date:** September 24, 2026

WATER LOSS % BY YEAR

Year	Loss %
2021	5.0%
2022	16.0%
2023	19.0%
2024	21.0%
2025	20.0%

Overall trend: ▼ Down overall

5-Year Trend

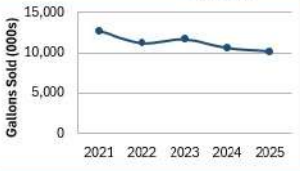


TOTAL WATER SALES BY YEAR (Thousand Gallons)

Year	Gallons Sold
2021	12,790
2022	11,245
2023	11,712
2024	10,645
2025	10,231

Overall trend: ▼ Down overall

5-Year Trend



WATER LOSS DIAGNOSIS

⚠ Mixed: Rising Losses & Falling Sales

Loss % Trend: +3.50% **Sales Trend:** -572 gal/yr **5-Yr Sales Trend:** ▼ Down overall

This system shows both rising water loss and falling metered sales. Further investigation is recommended to determine whether the cause is leaks, meter accuracy/aging meters, or declining customer demand.

SALES BY CUSTOMER ACCOUNT TYPE (METERED)

Account Type	2021	2025	Gallons Lost/Gained	Avg Annual Change	Trend
Residential	9,541	7,121	▼ -2,420	▼ -605	⚠ Declining every year
Commercial	831	995	▲ +164	▲ +41	▲ Up overall
Industrial	14	0	▼ -14	▼ -4	▼ Down overall
Public Authority	1,168	906	▼ -262	▼ -66	▼ Down overall
Multifamily Residential	1,236	1,209	▼ -27	▼ -7	▼ Down overall

Report generated from Wisconsin PSC Annual Water Utility Report data, 2021-2025. Water loss % = Total Water Loss as a percentage of net water supplied. Sales figures are in thousands of gallons.

WATER LEAKS ARE LIKELY REPORT. In this water system, we can see that the sales are on the incline. I want to point out something that should be investigated. In 2023, water loss decreased, and water sales increased. Since residential, commercial, and multifamily accounts have increased every year, the data suggests the system is actively working on water meters. However, water loss still shows signs of increasing. The water system should schedule a leak detection audit and request the data loggers.

WATER SYSTEM PERFORMANCE REPORT

Annual Water Loss & Sales Summary | 2021-2025

SELECT WATER SYSTEM: [redacted]

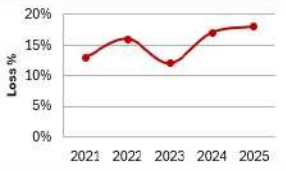
Utility ID: [redacted] **Class:** C **Owner:** Sani **Report Date:** September 24, 2026

WATER LOSS % BY YEAR

Year	Loss %
2021	13.0%
2022	16.0%
2023	12.0%
2024	17.0%
2025	18.0%

Overall trend: ▲ Up overall

5-Year Trend

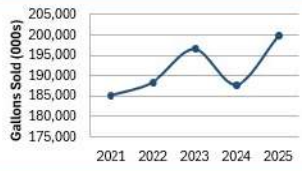


TOTAL WATER SALES BY YEAR (Thousand Gallons)

Year	Gallons Sold
2021	184,931
2022	188,298
2023	196,662
2024	187,668
2025	199,972

Overall trend: ▲ Up overall

5-Year Trend



WATER LOSS DIAGNOSIS

Water Leaks Likely (Loss Rising, Sales Stable/Up)

Loss % Trend: +1.10% **Sales Trend:** +2,945 **5-Yr Sales Trend:** ▲ Up overall

This system shows rising water loss without a corresponding drop in demand, suggesting active leaks or aging infrastructure. Recommend a leak detection survey and inspection of distribution infrastructure.

SALES BY CUSTOMER ACCOUNT TYPE (METERED)

Account Type	2021	2025	Gallons Lost/Gained	Avg Annual Change	Trend
Residential	136,967	142,306	▲ +5,339	▲ +1,335	▲ Up overall
Commercial	18,024	22,019	▲ +3,995	▲ +999	▲ Up overall
Industrial	0	0	— 0	— 0	— No change
Public Authority	2,528	1,929	▼ -599	▼ -150	▼ Down overall
Multifamily Residential	27,391	29,835	▲ +2,444	▲ +611	▲ Up overall

Report generated from Wisconsin PSC Annual Water Utility Report data, 2021-2025. Water loss % = Total Water Loss as a percentage of net water supplied. Sales figures are in thousands of gallons.

This is one of the bigger things I have been working on. After Water Pro, I wanted to see the magnitude of water loss. When I say I fell down a rabbit hole, that is an understatement. I spent a few days pulling PSC data on 310 D-Class water systems. I can tell you I wasn't prepared for those numbers. In 2025, those 310 systems pumped 9.523 billion gallons of water. Total water lost was 1.528 billion gallons. The total kilowatt-hours used to pump water is 25.056 million kilowatt-hours, costing $3.611 million. Total chemical costs are $1.734 million.

What does all this mean? The 1.528 billion gallons of water loss cost about $887 thousand in 2025 across the 310 D-Class water systems.

New and improving technologies and strategies for locating water leaks are available, and some are outside the box. I will say the one new strategy is wild, and for a water nerd like me, it makes so much sense. I won't go into that topic now; I'll save it for a later article.

I hope that you find this article interesting and useful. I hope that you all have a great fall, and to my fellow hunters, I wish you all a safe and successful hunting season. I can't wait to hear your stories and see the hunting pictures.

Dan



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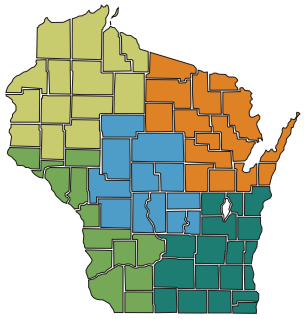
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Dan Gottschalk	$50 Kwik Trip Gift Card	*donated by* Altronix
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Henry Vian	DeWalt Jump Starter	*donated by* USG Water Solutions
Daryl Rutkowski	Milwaukee Pack Out & Hat	*donated by* Visu Sewer
Teri Lavender	Cooler & RTIC Mug	*donated by* American Flow Control
Troy Seidl	Milwaukee Tool Set	*donated by* SEH
Brian Abitz	32" Smart TV	*donated by* M & M Specified Products
Peter Mallek	$100 Menards Gift Card & Hat	*donated by* Ford Meter Box
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Colten Gaylord	$50 Fleet Farm Gift Card	*donated by* ESS Brothers & Sons, Inc.
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Mike Pinch	$50 Kwick Trip Gift Card & Hat	*donated by* Municipal Well & Pump
Ken Olson	$50 Kwick Trip Gift Card & Hat	*donated by* Municipal Well & Pump
Justin Sachse	$50 Kwick Trip Gift Card & Hat	*donated by* Municipal Well & Pump
Ben Blair (2)	$50 Kwick Trip Gift Card & Hat	*donated by* Municipal Well & Pump
Tony Kunz	$50 Kwick Trip Gift Card & Hat	*donated by* Municipal Well & Pump
Chris Zenner	Shimano Fishing Reel	*donated by* PJK Co.
Chad Kramer	RTIC Cooler	*donated by* CBS Squared
Jordan Huff	Milwaukee Pakout	*donated by* Ferguson Waterworks
Kyle Prey	Titleist Golf Balls & Ryder Cup Speaker	*donated by* Jim Jolly Sales
Ryan Flick	CVA Muzzleloader Gun	*donated by* Martelle Water Treatment
Mike Engel	Tackle Bag $50 Bass Pro Gift Card	*donated by* Midwest Pump Works
Fred Metzler	BOSE Speaker	*donated by* ASSA Abloy
Kayla Lumaye	$50 Menards Gift Cards	*donated by* Ayers
Troy Seidl	$50 Menards Gift Cards	*donated by* Ayers
Colten Gaylord	$100 Kwik Trip Gift Card	*donated by* ESI Water
Kris Spindler	DeWalt Wet-Dry Vac	*donated by* Badger Labs
Jon Trzebiatowski	$75 Kwik Trip Gift Card	*donated by* Tony Belden Co.

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UP THE CREEK

Ken Blomberg,
WRWA past Executive Director

"I Remember When"

For those of you that have followed my adventures along the creek for years know much of the following story. You see, for twenty-five of those years I worked for Rural Water. But this isn't a story about me. It's the tale of the birth of Rural Water in Wisconsin. A history lesson of sorts. A story some of you know. Many probably are hearing this for the first time. Either way, please bear with me as I reminisce.

My lifelong trip up the creek began after graduating from college and working for the Village of Whiting utilities in the middle of the state for ten years. There I learned the water and wastewater trade, served on the volunteer fire department and in the evenings wrote freelance magazine articles and an outdoor newspaper column "Up the Creek" for several local newspapers. After those ten years, I went on a hiatus of sorts.

In 1987, at the Mosinee airport restaurant, over morning coffee and eggs, I was reading the Sunday state paper's job classified ads. At the time my wife, bless her heart, thought I should find steady employment and put bird dog training and writing on the shelf for a while. I spotted a three-line ad in the Milwaukee Journal, "Looking for a Program Manager for a statewide water and wastewater utility organization. Contact the National Rural Water Association at xxx-xxx-xxxx for more information."

I made the call and the next week was interviewed in a Madison motel lobby by a fine gentleman, NRWA's Deputy CEO Sam Wade. Shortly thereafter, I was offered the job and found myself on a plane en route to the headquarters of NRWA in Duncan, Oklahoma. The rest they say is history.

After a week of orientation on the national association's history and mission, I was told, "You can locate your state office anywhere you'd like. First, find an office space and hire a secretary. Then, find yourself a couple of circuit riders, able to join you as you travel the state and provide training and technical assistance. And while you're at it, recruit community and business members."

I interviewed several secretarial candidates in my home kitchen and ended up hiring Janis Klismith. Our office ended up in the central Wisconsin Village of Whiting across from the local Village Cafe. Before the end of the year, we held our first operator training session in Plover. That fall, we published the first 7-page issue of the Wisconsin Rural Water Journal. And in December, the very first charter system member, Goodman Sanitary District, joined the association.

In the spring of 1988, the Journal listed 11 Charter members and 4 Associate industry members. Scott Giese was hired as our first water circuit rider in March and later in July, Vaughn Ableman was named the first wastewater circuit rider. Also during that month, a WRWA Board of Directors organizational meeting was held. Named to the Board were Jeff Schlegel (Whiting) as President, John Andler (Columbus) as Vice-President, Ron Jesse (Shawano) as Secretary-Treasurer, and Dave Lawrence (Baraboo) and John Campion (Clear Lake) as Board members. At that time, one Board member from each of 5 Districts were selected from across the state.

In January of 1989, Tina Schwebach was hired as Assistant Office Manager. And that April, WRWA held the 1st Annual Technical Conference at the Elizabeth Inn in Plover. Although attendance was minimal, we had a small exhibit hall that hosted an expanding industry associate membership. The writing was on the wall however, and by 1990, we knew we had to move to the closest conference center that could house our growing membership. The Holiday Inn in Stevens Point fit the bill for our 2nd Annual Technical Conference in April. We remained there for many years.

In 1991, Jill Jonas was hired as our first groundwater technician, and Sue Wojtalewicz as Accounting Assistant. This was also the year WRWA's Board of Directors was expanded from 5 to 10 members - 2 from each of 5 districts. A move that proved critical, as in 1993 they made a milestone decision to sign a land contract with the Village of Plover for 3 acres of land for a future office and training center. This, to meet the growing demands of an association that was growing leaps and bounds!

*Next issue - 1994 and beyond!



ANNOUNCING BOOK RELEASE

My fourth book, **COUNTRY JOURNAL - & OLD MAN'S MUSINGS** was released late last year.

In a review by Dan Small, host of Outdoor Wisconsin and contributing editor of Wisconsin Outdoor News, he noted; "In this series of short musings, reminiscent of Aldo Leopold's A Sand county Almanac, Blomberg, with his senses as keen as those of his beloved bird dogs, shares the lessons he has learned from a lifetime of observing the seasonal changes of the natural world."

Country Journal and Old Man's Musings: Publisher - Ten16Press, Waukesha, Wisconsin , 5.5 x 8.5, Paperback , 140 pages, $14.99
Available from Ten 16 Press, **www. ten16press.com**, 140 pages, paper, $14.99.
Also available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and can be ordered through Ingram at most independent book stores.

Autographed copies can be purchased for $14.99 plus tax and shipping by contacting the author at: 2099 Mayflower Road, Junction City, WI 54443 or by email at: eaupleinekennels@gmail.com.



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WHAT SMALL COMMUNITIES TOLD US…

Challenges of Providing Water & Wastewater Services

Brenda Staudenmaier,
WRWA Training Specialist

These workshops stem from an effort spearheaded by the River Alliance of Wisconsin (RAW) and include multiple partner organizations to look at managing water resources on a watershed basis.

As part of WRWA's work with small communities in the Upper Wisconsin River Basin, I surveyed water and wastewater professionals: What makes your job difficult, and what would make it better? The answers were not surprising, but they were consistent. Communities pointed to the same pressures—regulations, funding, aging infrastructure, staffing, wages, and the loss of institutional knowledge—and to the difficulty of finding solutions that fit a small budget.

Several respondents named rising regulatory requirements as a major strain. One operator said that when the combined radium standard dropped from 10.0 to 5.0, testing became quarterly at about $2,000 and squeezed money that would otherwise have gone to other needs. The same operator reported more than $10,000 pulled from the repair budget for PFAS testing. Another has spent about $25,000 a year on phosphorus removal for eight years and is now facing PFAS requirements as well. Increased sampling, tighter phosphorus limits, PFAS, and additional drinking-water testing all compete for the same limited dollars.

Aging infrastructure came up just as often. One operator called out "aging infrastructure and low pay to attract new employees." Another listed an updated headworks and screener system as a priority. A third described infrastructure roughly 25 years older than when the previous operator ran it—while the utility commission asked why more funding was suddenly necessary. Repairs and upgrades have to be paid for without falling behind on day-to-day operations.



Funding was a thread through almost every response. One respondent recommended that a share of DNR Clean Water funding be set aside for communities under 10,000 people, and described spending $25,000 only to receive nothing. Others noted that towns with little growth struggle to keep budgets whole and still attract qualified operators. A major repair often means postponing something else that also needs attention.



Staffing is the other half of that problem. One operator said a crew that once held about 120 years of combined experience now has fewer than 10 years among four employees. Respondents cited "lack of trained staff," "losing trained staff," and the difficulty of finding younger operators willing to work in smaller towns for pay that cannot match larger cities. One village offers state retirement, sick time, and compensatory time, but not health insurance.

When experienced operators leave, they take institutional knowledge with them: wells, pumps, treatment processes, problem spots, and the reasons behind past decisions. Training a replacement is essential. It does not instantly replace that history.

Asked what would help, respondents wanted practical tools: more funding, less paperwork, better pay, infrastructure improvements, and clearer regulatory direction. They asked for hands-on training on vulnerability assessments and emergency response plans; certification tests that reflect current practice; free training in electrical work, automation, security, and confined spaces; and more DNR help on specific compliance questions, including sanitary sewer overflows. Several wanted DNR to explain how to meet a requirement—not only what the end result should be.

The survey's most useful finding may be how tightly these problems lock together. Regulations pull from budgets. Aging systems need capital. Thin funding delays work. Lower wages make it harder to keep people. When veterans leave, knowledge leaves with them. As rules grow more complex, operators need training and help that they can actually use.

There is no single fix. Listening to the people who run these systems is a place to start. Small communities do not have the tax base or staff of larger cities, but their residents still expect the same thing when they turn on the tap or flush the toilet: that the system works.

We may also need to think differently about the product these operators deliver. Every day they produce something people need every day. Because it comes out of a faucet, most of us rarely treat it as valuable. Put the same water in a bottle, add a label and a price, and people understand that it is worth something.

That market is not hypothetical. I have spent more than $20 on a single 16.9-ounce glass bottle of water because it contained 5 ppm of deuterium—heavy hydrogen—and I have bought it by the case of 12 for $248, shipped to my house. Plenty of people are water nerds. They will pay for a story, a mineral profile, or a number on a label. The bottled-water industry has turned municipal water's basic product into something people are happy to buy. Communities, meanwhile, struggle to fund the pipes and plants that produce and deliver that same product every day.

The next time you taste water entered in WRWA's Best Tasting Water competition, look at the glass a little differently. If people will pay $20 for 17 ounces because of what is printed on the bottle, it is fair to ask: How much would they pay for ours? ~ *Brenda*

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OTM SYSTEMS

Consider Metering

Kelly Thomas,
WRWA Technical Assistance Director

Know where the water is going, recover the cost of providing it, identify problems sooner and have the resources available to maintain the water system.

For manufactured housing communities and all other than municipal (OTM) owners and managers, water is one of those expenses that can quietly become one of the largest operating costs. When customers are not individually metered, the community owner may be responsible for the entire cost of water regardless of how much water each household uses.

Installing individual household water meters can change that equation.

Metering each home gives owners something they often don't have with a master meter alone: **accountability, predictable cash flow, and early leak detection.**

IMPROVE CASH FLOW

One of the biggest advantages of individual water meters is the ability to charge customers based on their actual water usage.

Instead of including water in the monthly rent or absorbing the entire water bill, owners can establish a water billing system based on metered usage. This allows the cost of water to be passed along more directly to the customers using it.

Doing this can make a more predictable and sustainable cash flow for the property.

Water and sewer expenses can fluctuate from month to month. Individual metering allows the owner to recover those costs rather than having to absorb unexpected increases.

BUILD A BUDGET FOR WATER SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Water infrastructure requires ongoing maintenance. Water mains, valves, hydrants, service lines, meters and other components eventually need repair or replacement.

Revenue generated through water billing can help an owner establish a budget dedicated for these expenses.

Rather than facing a large repair bill unexpectedly, the owner can plan and set money aside for water system maintenance.

Metered water revenue can become part of a long-term plan for maintaining the water system's water infrastructure.

This is particularly important for older manufactured housing parks, where water mains and service lines may be approaching the end of their useful life.

HAVE MONEY AVAILABLE FOR UNEXPECTED REPAIRS

Every water system operator knows that unexpected problems happen.

Water mains break. A service line fails. A valve needs to be replaced. A leak develops under a roadway or home. A section of water main needs emergency repair.

These repairs almost never happen at a convenient time.

Having a water revenue account can help establish a reserve for unexpected maintenance. Instead of scrambling to find money when an emergency occurs, the owner has funds available to address the problem.

That can mean faster repairs, less disruption for residents and less financial stress for the property owner.

WATER ACCOUNTABILITY

A master meter tells an owner how much water the entire water system is using. Individual meters tell the owner **where that water is being used.**

That information can be extremely valuable.

For example, suppose a community has 50 homes. The master meter shows that the park used 1 million gallons of water during a particular billing period. Individual meters allow the owner to compare that total against the combined usage of the individual homes.

If the numbers don't match, the difference may indicate water loss somewhere in the system.

That loss could be caused by:

- A leaking water main
- A leaking service line
- A running toilet
- A leaking faucet
- Unauthorized water use
- A meter problem
- Other system leaks

Individual metering gives the owner information that can help identify these problems before they become much more expensive.

SAVE ELECTRICITY

Water leaks don't just waste water—they can also waste electricity.

Every gallon of water that leaks from a pressurized system has been pumped, treated or pressurized before it escapes.

If a community operates its own wells and pumps, reducing water loss can also reduce pump operation.

Finding and repairing leaks can reduce both **water loss and the energy required to produce and distribute that water.**



Even a small leak that continues around the clock can add up to thousands of gallons over time.

GET AN EARLY WARNING OF A WATER MAIN BREAK (Latest Technology)

One of the most valuable benefits of individual meters is the ability to monitor water usage.

Imagine that the community's master meter shows an unusually high amount of water being used overnight, while individual household meters show little or no corresponding increase.

That difference can be an early warning that something is wrong.

A significant increase in water usage could indicate a water main break or another major leak.

The sooner the problem is identified, the sooner it can be repaired.

Locating and repairing larger leaks can drastically reduce the wear and tear of pump motors as leaks can cause short cycling.

A leak that is discovered within hours can be much less expensive than one that goes unnoticed for days, weeks, or months.

HELP RESIDENTS BECOME MORE WATER-CONSCIOUS (Water Conservation)

Individual metering also creates awareness for customers.

When water is included in rent, residents have little financial incentive to pay attention to how much water they use. A dripping faucet or constantly

Continued on page 48



Continued from page 47

running toilet may seem insignificant when someone else is paying the water bill.

When residents receive a bill based on their actual usage, water use becomes more visible.

That visibility can urge residents to:

- Repair leaking toilets and faucets
- Take shorter showers
- Avoid unnecessary water use (watering the grass)
- Report leaks more quickly
- Pay greater attention to their household usage

Small changes across dozens of homes can produce significant savings for an entire community.

METERING TURNS WATER FROM AN EXPENSE INTO A MANAGED (CASHFLOW) UTILITY



For a manufactured housing park owner, installing individual water meters isn't simply about collecting money from residents.

It is about managing the water system as a utility.

Individual meters can provide:

Better cash flow — Recover water costs from the customers using the water.

Better budgeting — Establish funds for routine water system maintenance.

Emergency reserves — Have money available when unexpected repairs occur.

Water accountability — Compare individual usage with the master meter and identify unexplained water loss.

Energy savings — Reduce the amount of water and chemical that must be pumped and pressurized.

Leak detection — Identify unusual usage that could indicate a leaking service line or water main.

Resident awareness — Give residents a financial incentive to conserve water and report leaks.

AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

A community's water system is an important piece of its infrastructure—and like any infrastructure, it requires investment.

Individual household meters provide owners with information and a potential revenue tool that can help support that investment.

The goal isn't simply to sell more water. The goal is to **know where the water is going, recover the cost of providing it, identify problems sooner and have the resources available to maintain the water system.**

For community owners looking at ways to improve the financial and operational management of their property, individual household water meters deserve some serious consideration.

When you know how much water is being used—and where it is being used—you have the information needed to manage your water system instead of simply paying the bill.

Stay safe, stay healthy. *Kelly*



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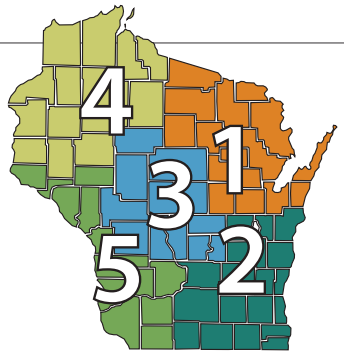
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Tomahawk
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Wittenberg
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Blue Mounds
Brandon
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**Cedar Crest Specialties Inc
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**Lake Meadows Water Trust
Lake Mills
Lannon
Larsen – Winchester Sanitary District
LeRoy Sanitary District #1
Liberty Sanitary District No. 1
Lodi
Lomira
Lowell
*Madison
*Manitowoc
Maple Bluff
Maribel
Marshall
Mayville
Mazomanie
McFarland
*Menasha
Menasha Utility District
Menomonee Falls
*Middleton
Milton
*Milwaukee
Mishicot
Monona
*Monroe
Monticello
Mount Horeb
Mukwonago
*Muskego
**Natural Oven's Bakery Inc.
*Neenah
New Berlin
New Glarus
New Holstein
Newburg
North Fond du Lac
Northern Moraine Utility Commission
*Oak Creek
Oakfield
*Oconomowoc
Omro
Oostburg
Oregon
Orfordville
*Oshkosh
Palmyra
Pardeeville
**Pat's Services, Inc.
*Pewaukee, City of
Pewaukee, Village of
*Pleasant Prairie
Plymouth
**Plymouth Joint School District
Plymouth Town Sanitary District #1
Portage
Poynette
*Racine
Randolph
Random Lake
Reedsville
Reeseville
Rio
Ripon
**Robert William Park Water Assoc
Rochester Sewer Department
**Rock Prairie Montessori School
**Rock River Leisure Estates Cooperative
Rosendale
**St. Benedict's Abbey
St. Cloud
St. Nazianz
Salem Utility District
Saukville
**Shady Hill Mobile Home Park
Sharon
Sheboygan, Town of
Sheboygan Falls
Sherwood
*Shorewood
Shorewood Hills
Slinger
Somers
*South Milwaukee
Stoughton

*Associate Members (Over 10,000 pop.) **Other Than Municipal

*Sun Prairie
**Sunnyfield Acres Water Association
Sussex
**The Knolls Water Co-Operative
Theresa
**Trevor-Wilmont Consolidated Grade School District
Troy Center Sanitary District #1
**Twin Lakes Park Co. Op. Inc
*Two Rivers
Union Grove
Valders
Verona
Waldo
Walworth
*Walworth County Metro Sewerage District
Waterford
Waterloo
*Watertown
*Waukesha
Waunakee
*Waupun
*Wauwatosa
**Wendorf Enterprises 2 LLC
*West Bend
Westport
Whitelaw
*Whitewater
Williams Bay
Wind Point
Windsor Sanitary District #1
Winneconne
Wyocena
**Yorkville

DISTRICT 3 (Central)

Abbotsford
Adams
Alma Center
Almond
Amherst
Athens
Berlin
Biron
Black River Falls
Blenker – Sherry Sanitary District
**Brakebush Brothers, Inc.
Brockway Sanitary District #1
Camp Douglas
Cashton
Chelsea Sanitary District
Chili Sanitary District #1
**Clark Co Health Care Center
Colby
Coloma
**Community Water & Sewer
Curtiss
Dorchester
Edgar
Elroy
Friendship
Gilman
Granton
Green Lake
**Green Lake Conference Center
Green Lake Sanitary District
Greenwood
Hancock
Hatfield Sanitary District 1
Hatley
Hewitt
Hixton
Hustler
Junction City
Kendall
Kronenwetter
Little Green Lake Protection & Rehab. District
Loyal
Lyndon Station
Maine
Marathon
Markesan
*Marshfield
Mauston
Medford
Melrose
Merrillan
Milan Sanitary District
Milladore
Montello
Mosinee
Necedah
Neillsville
Nekoosa
Neshkoro
New Lisbon
Northfield Sanitary District #1
Norwalk
Oakdale
**Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc. - Tomah
Owen
**Pineland Park Enterprises LTD
Pittsville
Plainfield
Plover
Port Edwards
Princeton
Redgranite
Rib Lake
Rib Mountain Sanitary District
Rome
Rosholt Sewer Commission
Rothschild
Schofield
Silver Lake Sanitary District
Sparta
Spencer
Stetsonville
*Stevens Point
Stratford
**Superior Fresh LLC
Taylor
Thorp
Tomah
Union Center
Unity
**Upper Room Properties
Vesper
Volk Field
Warrens
*Wausau
Wautoma
Westboro Sanitary District #1
Westfield
*Weston
Whiting
Wilton
Withee
Wonewoc

DISTRICT 4 (Northwest)

Almena
Amery
Ashland
Baldwin
Balsam Lake
Barron
Bayfield
Bell Sanitary District#1
Birchwood
Bloomer
Boyceville
Boyd
Bruce
Butternut
Cable Sanitary District #1
Cadott
Cameron
Catawba-Kennan Joint Sewage Commission
Centuria
Chetek
*Chippewa Falls
Clayton
Clear Lake
Clover Sanitary District #1
Colfax
Cornell
Cumberland
Dallas
Deer Park WWTP
Downsville Sanitary District
Dresser
Drummond Sanitary District #1
Elk Mound
Emerald – Greenwood Sanitary District #1
Exeland
Fifield Sanitary District #1
Frederic
Glen Flora
Glenwood City
Glidden Sanitary District
Grandview Sanitary District #1
Grantsburg
Hammond
Hawkins
Hayward
Hudson
Hurley
Iron River Sanitary District #1
Joint Water Quality Commission of Danbury & St. Croix Chippewa Indians of WI
Knapp
Knight
Lac Courte Oreilles Public Works Department
Ladysmith
Lake Hallie
Lake Holcombe Sanitary District #1
Luck
Madeline Sanitary District
Manitou Falls Sanitary District #1
Mason
Mellen
*Menomonie
Mercer Sanitary District #1
Milltown
Minong
Montreal
New Auburn
New Richmond
**Northwood School District
Ogema Sanitary District No. 1
Osceola
Park Falls
Phillips
**Pleasant Valley Properties of WI, LLC
Poplar Wastewater
Port Wing Sanitary District
Prentice
Radisson
Red Cliff North
Rice Lake
*River Falls
Roberts
Saxon Sanitary District #1
Sheldon
Shell Lake
Siren
Solon Springs WWTF
Somerset
Spooner
St. Croix Falls
Stanley
Star Prairie
Stone Lake Sanitary District
**Stresau Lab Inc
*Superior Water Light & Power
Superior, Village of
**T.A.P. Investments
Tony
Turtle Lake
Washburn
Webster
Weyerhaeuser
Wheeler
Winter
**Wisconsin Structural Steel
Woodville

DISTRICT 5 (Southwest)

Alma
Altoona
Arcadia
Arena
Argyle
Augusta
Avoca
Bagley
Bangor
Baraboo
Barneveld
Bay City
Belmont
Benton
Blair
Blanchardville
Bloomington
Blue River
Boscobel
Bridgeport Sanitary District
Campbell
Cassville
Cazenovia
Chaseburg
Cobb
Cochrane
Coon Valley
Cuba City
Darlington
**Dell Creek Estates
Dickeyville
Dodge Sanitary District #1
Dodgeville
Durand
Eastman
Eleva
Ellsworth
Elmwood
Ettrick
Fairchild
Fall Creek
Farmington Sanitary District
Fennimore
Fountain City
Galesville
Gays Mills
Genoa
Gratiot
Hazel Green
Highland
Hillpoint Sanitary District
Hillsboro
Hollandale
Holmen
Independence
Ironton
Kieler Sanitary District #1
*La Crosse
La Farge
La Valle
Lake Delton
Lancaster
Lincoln Sanitary District #1
Linden
Linden Sanitary District No. 1
Edmund
Livingston
Loganville
Lone Rock
Maiden Rock
**Marell Mobile Home Courts
Merrimac
Mineral Point
Mondovi
Montfort
Mount Hope
Mount Sterling
Muscoda
Nelson
North Freedom
*Onalaska
Ontario
Osseo
Patch Grove
Pepin
Pigeon Falls
**Pinewood Court Inc.
Plain
*Platteville
Potosi-Tennyson
Prairie du Chien
Prairie du Sac
Prescott
Readstown
Reedsburg
Rewey
Richland Center
Ridgeway
Rock Springs
Rockland
Sauk City
Seneca Sanitary District #1
Sextonville
Shelby Sanitary District #2
Shullsburg
Soldiers Grove
South Wayne
Spring Green
Spring Valley
St. Joseph Sanitary District #1
Stoddard
Strum
Trempealeau
Viola
Viroqua
Wauzeka
West Baraboo
West Central Wisconsin Biosolids Facility
West Salem
Westby
Whitehall
Wiota Sanitary District
Wisconsin Dells
Yuba

*Associate Members (Over 10,000 pop.) **Other Than Municipal

RURAL AMERICA RELIES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NRWA NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION



USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER PROGRAMS ENSURE AFFORDABILITY

AFFORDABILITY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Affordability is the key factor for small and rural communities in their decisions to upgrade and enhance water services for their customers.

Skyrocketing construction costs, disrupted supply chains, and ever increasing regulatory requirements are just a few of the roadblocks rural America faces when financing critical water infrastructure.

Rural Development's Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program is a lifeline for rural America, funding clean and reliable water systems nationwide.

America has 49,397 community water systems, most of which are small. Small and rural communities lack economies of scale. Passing the costs of unfunded mandates onto customers is not feasible without assistance from USDA Rural Development.

91%
of America's water systems are small

Grant costs can cover up to 75% of total development costs for the most vulnerable communities, which is necessary to provide affordable rates. For the majority of small and rural communities, a grant/loan mix is critical to keep projects affordable. USDA RD needs an adequate amount of baseline grant funding to maintain their mission to serve rural America.

Today's Congressional policies and funding decisions are jeopardizing the ability of every community in rural America to keep water and wastewater services affordable. Budget cuts will leave USDA WEP unable to accomplish its mission. WEP is instrumental in helping rural America maintain affordable and sustainable water access for all rural people.

PROMOTION BY THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS (WEP)

For many underserved communities, USDA Rural Development is the lender of first opportunity. RD exclusively serves small and rural communities. Without this program, many rural Americans will lose access to affordable safe and clean water.

In 2023, WEP excelled in their mission to serve rural America:

72% of WEP funded projects benefited communities with populations of 2,500 or less.

45% of WEP funded projects benefited communities with populations of 1,000 or less.

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RURAL AMERICA RELIES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER PROGRAMS DRIVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

ECONOMIC VITALITY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Critical infrastructure, including adequate water service, is a basic requirement for a healthy economy, encourages employment opportunities and makes a community a desired place to live and work. The nearly 45,000 water systems in rural America are anchor institutions in their communities.

In many rural communities water infrastructure is past its useful life. Without adequate water and sanitation services, businesses move out of our rural communities, forcing the next generation to leave to find better opportunities. Those left behind are robbed of hope for a prosperous future.

Rural America's economy is driven by entrepreneurship, and made of a diverse range of operations through over 700,000 businesses. Rural areas produce most of the food we consume, provide lumber and other forest products used to build our homes and furniture, and supply the energy we consume daily.

Rural economies are deeply connected to their urban counterparts

USDA RD WEP not only provides essential services to the families that live in rural America, but also all business activities. These include small businesses, farming, manufacturing, emergency services, and more. In rural America, nearly 85% of all business establishments are small. These small businesses are critical to local economies, employing 54% of workers in their communities. Rural communities need access to funding through USDA RD WEP to thrive.

Today's Congressional policies and funding decisions are jeopardizing the economic vitality of every community in rural America. Budget cuts will leave USDA WEP unable to accomplish its mission. WEP is instrumental in helping rural America increase economic opportunities for all rural people.

PROMOTION BY THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS (WEP)

In 2023, USDA RD WEP funded over $1.7 billion in projects to small and rural communities.

The average median household income for communities that received WEP funding was $37,029, half of the national average household income of $74,580.

In 2023, 308 WEP projects addressed health and sanitary challenges and 28,326 new connections provided drinking water to residents for the first time, resulting in over 400,000 individuals and households benefiting from this funding.

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER PROGRAMS PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

PUBLIC HEALTH FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Water is a vital resource and is required for all aspects of daily life, including drinking, cooking, washing, and flushing. In order to protect public health, all Americans should have access to this resource through reliable infrastructure.

Rural America's 46.1 million residents deserve safe drinking water and clean wastewater treatment just as much as urban or metropolitan residents. While access to basic water infrastructure may be taken for granted by many American citizens, it still is not a reality for approximately 146,000 rural households.

Over the last 70 years, through billions of dollars in financial assistance through USDA RD, the U.S. has made great advancements in the standard of living in rural America. Millions now have access to safe drinking water that their parents did not have. Thousands of rural communities now have modern wastewater systems, eliminating millions of failed septic tanks, cesspools, straight pipes, and worse.

For the 27,500 public elementary and secondary schools, approximately 9.8 million students, and 1,810 hospitals in rural America, public health would be immediately jeopardized without safe drinking water and clean wastewater treatment.

Even for established water and wastewater systems, new regulations such as EPA's recent PFAS and Lead and Copper Rules results in costly operational and infrastructure upgrades. USDA RD WEP ensures rural America and its communities have access to funding when they are faced with making these upgrades to remain in compliance.

Today's Congressional policies and funding decisions are jeopardizing the public health of every community in rural America. Budget cuts will leave USDA WEP unable to accomplish its mission. WEP is instrumental in helping rural America ensure public health is protected for all rural people.

PROMOTION BY THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS (WEP)

Since 1972, USDA RD WEP has been the consistent source of support for rural communities to complete necessary upgrades to their water and wastewater facilities.

During 2023, WEP obligated more than $1.6 billion in loans and grants, with 73.5% of projects addressing a health and sanitary issue.

The projects funded support more than 1.1 million rural residents, including approximately 28,326 new service connections.

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER PROGRAMS CREATE SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABILITY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Small and rural communities rely on access to affordable loan and grant opportunities through USDA Rural Development to make repairs, upgrades, and to build new critical infrastructure for their communities.

While affordable financing is a vital component for these communities, it is not the complete solution. After these projects are completed, the need for training for water and wastewater operators does not go away. Technical assistance ensures the government's and public's investment is secured. For small and rural communities to remain sustainable, they need ongoing training and technical assistance.

Last year, Circuit Riders directly helped to protect the health and safety of 30,721,691 people - 42% of rural America.

1 in 5
Americans Live in a Rural Community

Technical assistance for small and rural communities includes providing training, energy audits, certification, financial management, environmental compliance, governance, and on-site technical assistance necessary to ensure that water and wastewater facilities operate at the highest possible level. Through the grants provided through USDA WEP, these services are provided at no cost through technical assistance providers like NRWA and its State Affiliates. The loss of funding for this essential technical assistance will jeopardize the sustainability of rural water systems and their communities. System managers will be forced to choose between not addressing ongoing operational and management issues or contracting for these services at steep costs.

Today's Congressional policies and funding decisions are jeopardizing the sustainability of every community in rural America. Budget cuts will leave USDA WEP unable to accomplish its mission. WEP is instrumental in helping rural America ensure their communities are sustainable now and into the future.

PROMOTION BY THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS (WEP)

State Rural Water Associations in partnership with USDA RD WEP provide the following technical assistance to rural communities:

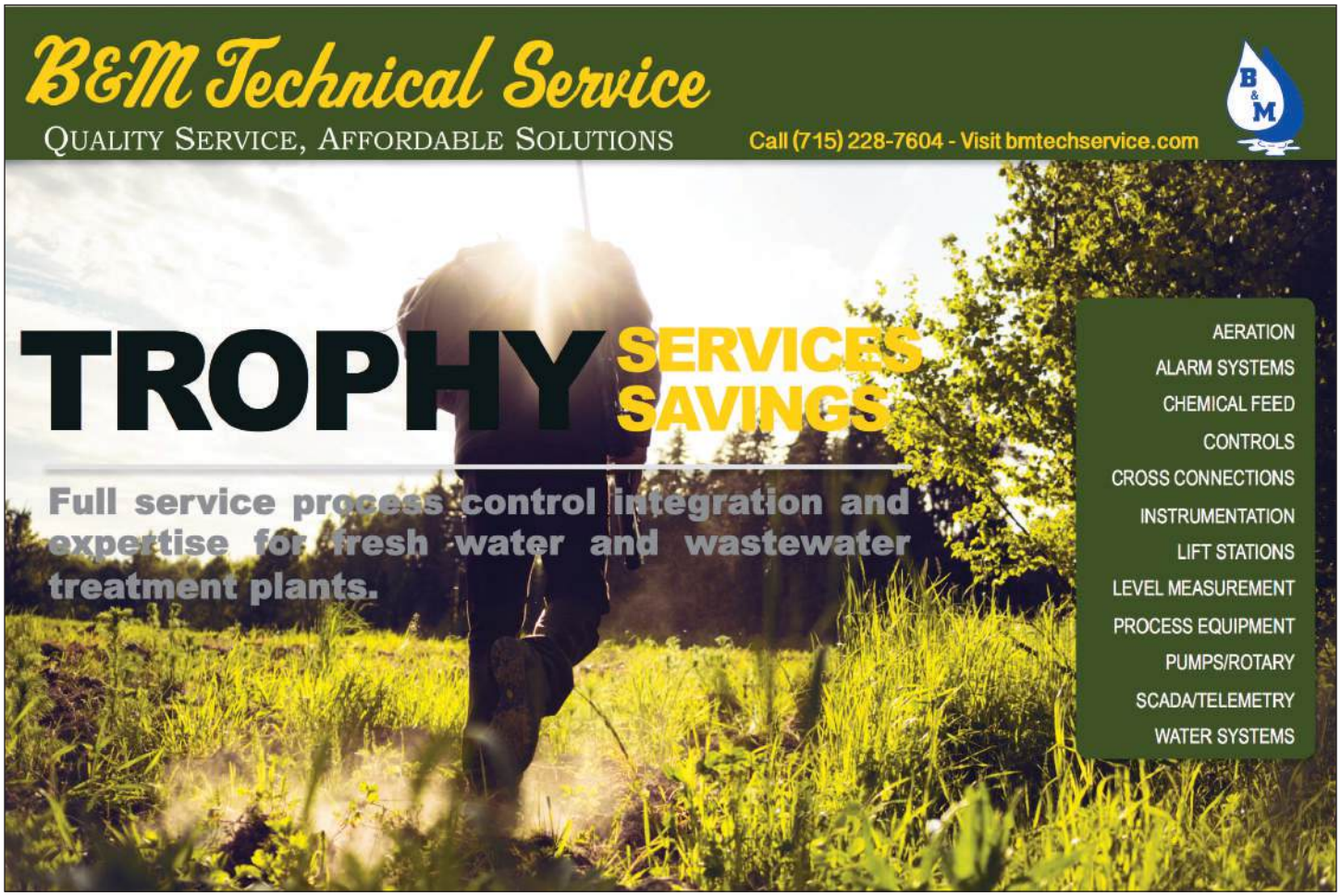
- Circuit Rider Program
- Disaster Recovery Circuit Rider Program
- Wastewater Technical Assistance and Training Program
- NRWA Apprenticeship Program
- Manufactured Housing Program
- Energy Efficiency Program
- Decentralized Wastewater Technical Assistance and Training Program

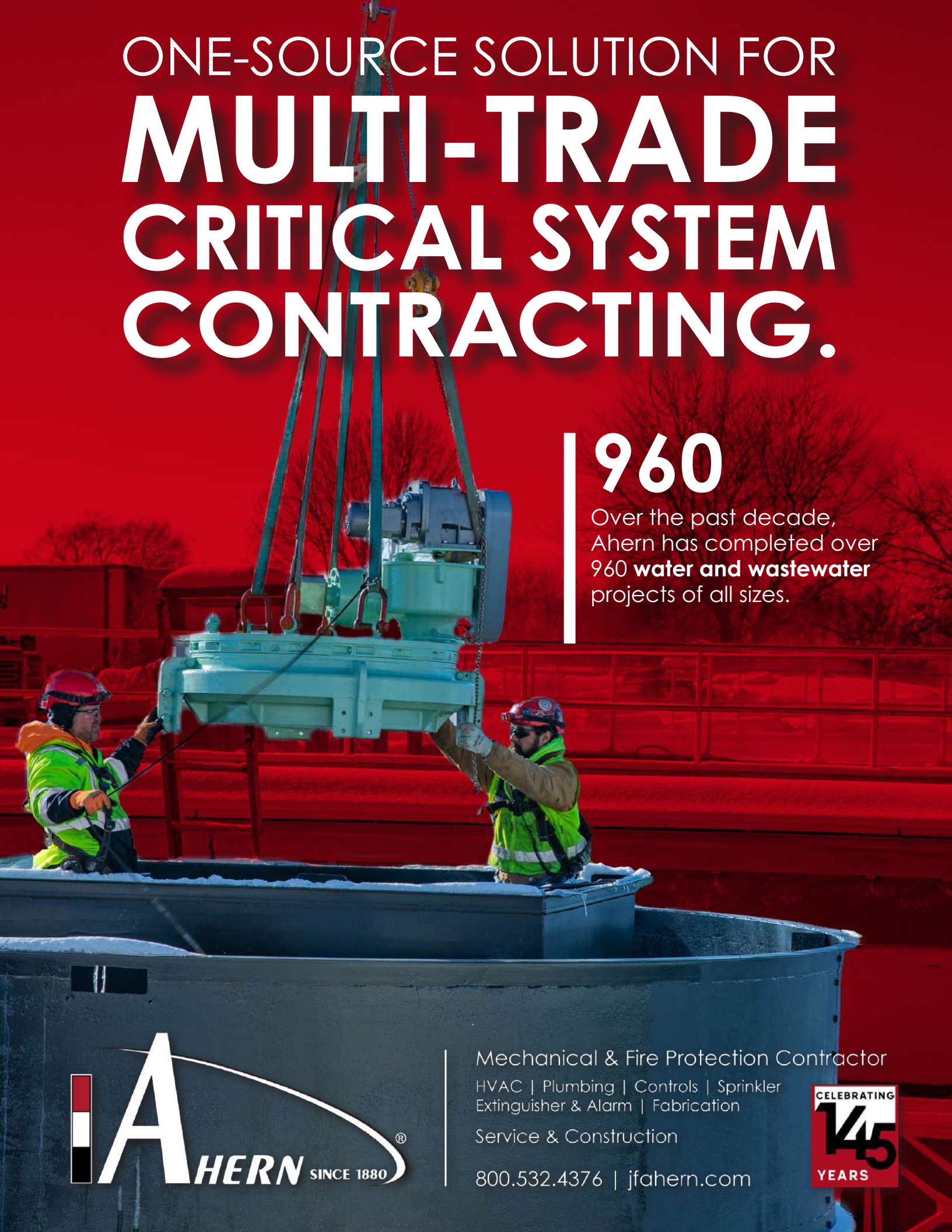
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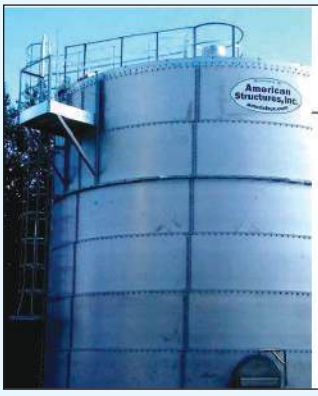
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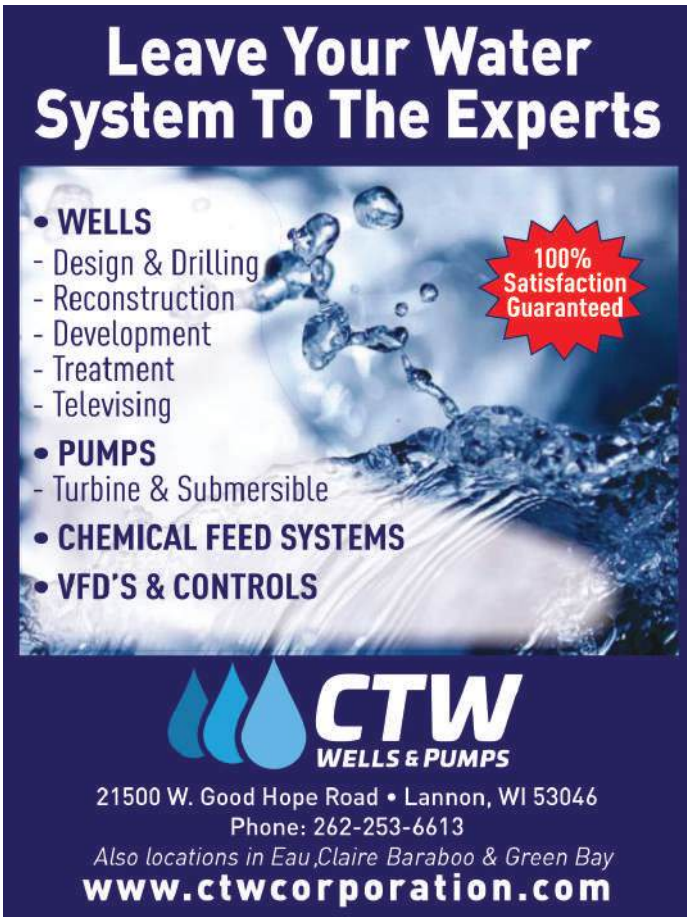
WRWA Calendar

Office Closed for Thanksgiving	November 26 & 27, 2026
Office Closed for Christmas Eve (1/2 Day)	December 24, 2026
Office Closed for Christmas Day	December 25, 2026
Office Closed for New Years Day	January 1, 2027
WRWA Annual Conference (La Crosse)	March 23 - 26, 2027

WRWA Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday 7:00am – 4:00 pm
Friday 7:00am – 11:00am

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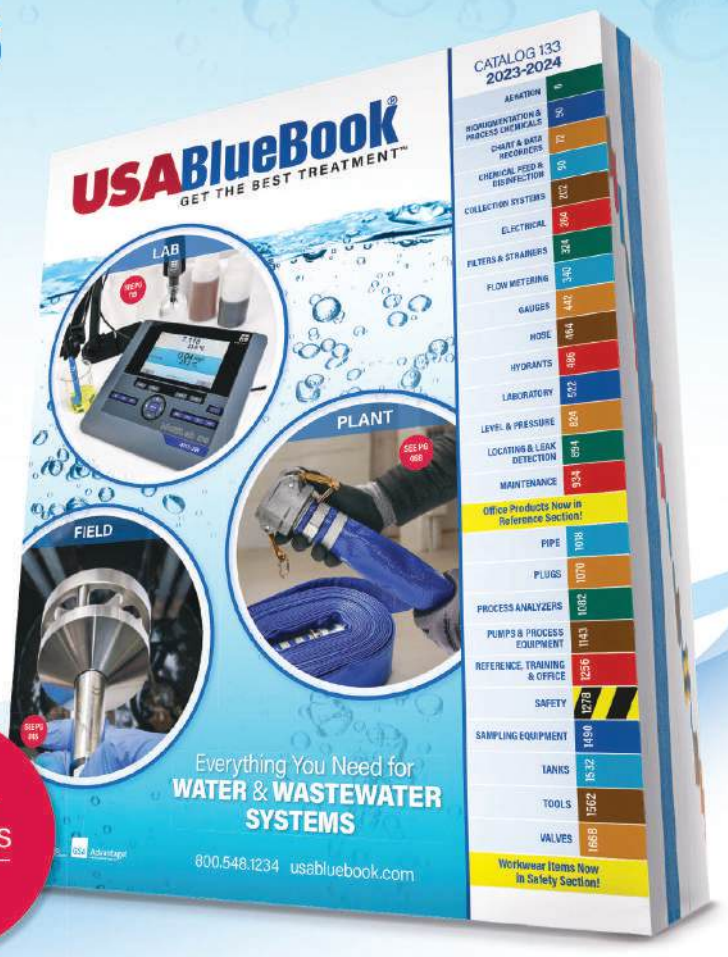
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