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## For Immediate Release

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### ***Wyoming drinking water judged among best in the Country***

(Washington, D.C.) – Wyoming's drinking water entry, The Town of Saratoga, finished in the top 15 today at the 25th Annual Great American Water Taste Test. The taste test is held each year on Capitol Hill in conjunction with the National Rural Water Association's Annual Rally in Washington, D.C. NRWA represents over 31,000 rural and small utilities across the nation. They competed against the top water systems from all 50 state rural water associations.

Wyoming Association of Rural Water Systems Executive Director Mark Pepper and Wyoming's National Director to NRWA, Chuck McVey from Saratoga hosted the state winner in Washington. Brandan Mistelske, Water Operator for the Town of Saratoga brought their state winning sample to Washington, D.C. They entered the national water taste test after winning the state competition at the Wyoming Association of Rural Water System's Annual Conference in 2023. Saratoga is a perennial top finisher at the state level and this is the second time the Town has represented Wyoming and made it to the top 10. This is their first trip to the final five taste off.

The entry from Wisconsin received the Gold Medal, the second year in a row for a Wisconsin entry. The entry from Kentucky received the Silver Medal while the entry from Louisiana finished with the Bronze Medal. The Town of Saratoga and the entry from Massachusetts completed the top 5. Wyoming's entries have finished at least in the top 10 for the last 18 years with the Town of Afton placing in the top five in 2005; Aspen-Pines Water and Sewer District winning the gold medal in 2018 and the Town of Ten Sleep winning the Silver Medal in 2022. Erica Anhalt from Senator Jeanne Shaheen's DC staff along with Nick Rockwell from the House Agriculture Committee Staff; Eric Slee from the Senate Agriculture Committee Staff and Michele Brooks, Assistant Administrator, USDA RD Rural Utilities Service served as judges for the competition. Each judge evaluated glasses of water from the state finalists measuring them on clarity, bouquet and taste.

Every year, the National Rural Water Association sponsors the Rural Water Rally and Great American Taste Test on Capitol Hill to give utility and state officials an opportunity to visit one-on-one with their Congressional representatives and discuss key water and wastewater issues. Wyoming's entrant met with Senator Barrasso and his staff, Senator Lummis's staff and Representative Hageman and her staff to discuss water quality and quantity issues facing all Wyoming rural systems. In addition, the delegation met with key officials from the Department of Agriculture and the EPA to discuss water industry issues for Wyoming.