



NEWS AND INFORMATION

FOR PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIERS IN MINNESOTA

## John Kriesel to be Keynote Speaker for 2022 Metro Water Operators School

The Metro Water Operators School is back after a two-year absence because of COVID-19. It will be at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center from Tuesday, April 5 to Thursday, April 7, 2022.

The keynote speaker the opening morning will be John Kriesel (pictured at right), who is a former member of the Minnesota House of Representatives and currently a motivational speaker, author, and part-time personality on KFAN Radio. In 2006 Kriesel lost his legs in Iraq when an improvised explosive device detonated. He was at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for nine months and will share his stories and lessons with the water operators April 5. He is the author of the book, *Still Standing: The Story of SSG John Kriesel*, which will be available to buy at the school.

Half-day sessions will cover distribution, treatment, leadership, regulatory issues, operations, and emerging technologies.



The breakfast and lunch on Wednesday, April 6 will include speakers on the topics of an update on commercial driver's licenses and on diversity and inclusion.

A study class for those taking the exams for Class C and D licenses will be Wednesday with exams for all classes on Thursday morning, April 7.

### *Special Session for Superintendents*

The annual vendor exposition will happen Thursday morning along with mini-sessions and Gimmicks and Gadgets. In addition, all superintendents are invited to attend on Thursday morning at a special price. In addition to admission to the vendor exposition and lunch that day, a special session for supervisors and superintendents will be held.

A tentative agenda for the school, which will be updated as speakers are confirmed, is at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wateroperator/metro.html>.

Registration is available at [https://www.mnawwa.org/events/event\\_list.asp](https://www.mnawwa.org/events/event_list.asp).

## Reminder to All Water Operators

When submitting water samples for analyses, remember to do the following:

- Take coliform samples on the distribution system, not at the wells or entry points.
- Write the Date Collected, Time Collected, and Collector's Name on the laboratory request form.
- Attach the label to each bottle (do not attach labels to the lab form).
- Include laboratory request forms with submitted samples.
- Use something other than a rollerball or gel pen (the ink may run).
- Consult your monitoring plan(s) prior to collecting required compliance samples.

Notify your Minnesota Department of Health district engineer of any changes to your system.

If you have questions, call the Minnesota Department of Health contact on the back of all sample instruction forms.

# Water-Wastewater Utilities Treatment and Technology (WUTT) Program Update

By Carol Kaszynski, Chair, WUTT Advisory Board

A newly created water and wastewater training and education training program is underway at St Paul College. This program was created, in part, due to the immediate and long-term need to hire qualified and competent water/wastewater professionals. The need for candidates is growing due to the increased number of job openings related to retirements.

Endorsed by the Minnesota Health Department and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Water-Wastewater-Utility Treatment and Technology (WUTT) program provides students with a water/wastewater-focused education and training opportunity.

## Benefits

The WUTT program:

- Provides training on basic water distribution, water treatment, wastewater collection, and wastewater treatment. It also provides supplemental training for working water/wastewater professionals.
- Provides a college training facility that is centrally located. The college is located on the bus line and near light rail, in addition to having convenient vehicle parking.
- Offers an improved set of options in the course schedule. The program schedule provides more flexibility, such as online and nights.
- Offers more diversity. The program is aimed at all potential students. This focus includes people of all backgrounds, genders, and economic statuses. Partnerships between the advisory board, the college, counties, and non-profits allow an expanded network for recruitment opportunities.
- Provides hands-on experience in the laboratory and in the field. Being centrally located in the metro area provides greater access to partnering agencies, such as St. Paul Regional Water Services, the city of Minneapolis, and others.
- Provides a career pathway, with curriculum, that allows cities and other agencies to meet their continuous and critical hiring needs. Students who successfully complete the WUTT program and pass the Class D water and/or Class D wastewater examination will become certified operators. Cities will have their employment needs addressed and fulfilled, once again.

Overall, the WUTT program is an innovative, relevant, and vital career pathway for people new to the water-wastewater industry as well as a training option for current industry professionals.

Students and water/wastewater agencies will benefit greatly from this program.

## Next Cohort Begins

Two cohorts (modules) are underway. The goal is to begin another one in March 2022 if eight students register. We hope people will share the information of the WUTT program with friends, family members, peers, etc.



The WUTT Advisory Board (with Pat Shea, Carol Kaszynski, Eric Volk, Rick Whalen, Joe Wokson, and Joe Hansen shown above) received the Andrew Sullivan Outstanding Service Award at the annual conference of the Minnesota Section of American Water Works Association in Duluth. The other advisory board members are Bert Tracy, Bill Schluenz, George Kraynick, Paul Coone, Dave Lemke, Dolly Ludden, Dave Stifter, Jim Bode, Steve Grossman, Chris Voeltz, Paul Christensen, Amy Schraeder, Bob Smude, Stew Thornley, Jodi Wallin, Dave Simons, and Bill Spain.

## Donation Requests

The WUTT program is always seeking donations of materials, equipment, and parts. If you are able to contribute, please contact Steve Grossman at the city of Lakeville, [sgrossman@lakevillemn.gov](mailto:sgrossman@lakevillemn.gov).

Financial support of the WUTT program is also needed. As a non-profit, the WUTT program seeks funds to support students with conference registration, travel arrangements, and scholarships.

In addition, we are seeking qualified instructors to teach a five-week course. All course materials will be provided, and the pay is \$50 an hour.

If you are interested in attending, spreading the word, donating, and/or instructing and would like additional information or details, please contact me at [carol.kaszynski@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:carol.kaszynski@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

## Words to Live By

If I knew I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself.

—Mickey Mantle

Ego is just an overdressed insecurity.

—Quincy Jones

There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact.

—Sherlock Holmes

I don't vote. It just encourages them.

—Maine woman

Do not ruin an apology with an excuse.

—Benjamin Franklin

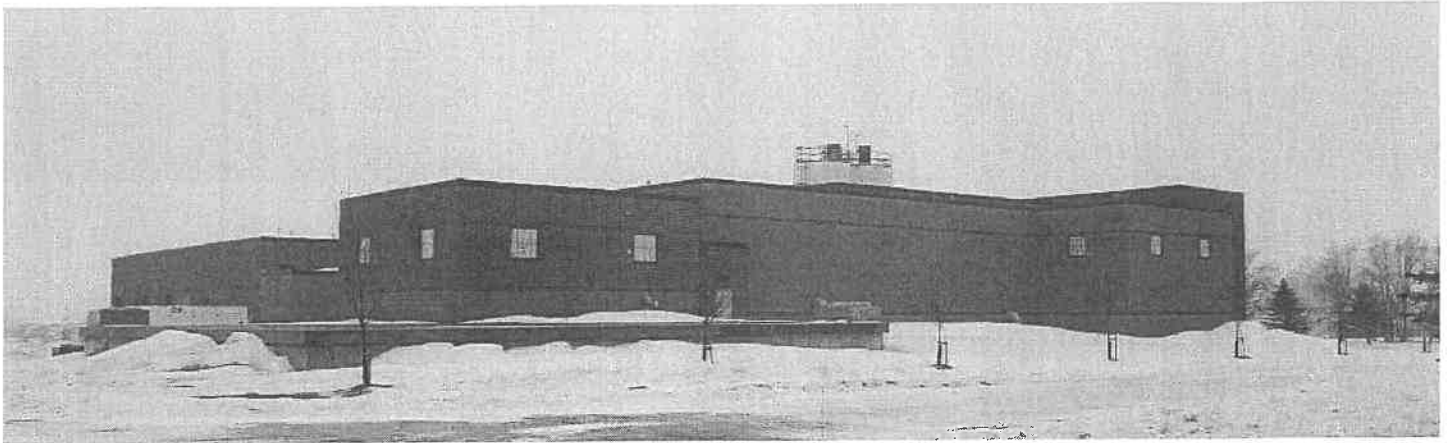
You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do.

—Henry Ford

I love mankind. It's people I can't stand.

—Linus Van Pelt

## Pipestone Presented with EPA Aquarius Award



Pipestone's new water treatment facility

Minnesota Department of Health engineer Chad Kolstad presented the city of Pipestone with the Aquarius Award from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Aquarius Award recognizes exceptional projects for excellence in innovative financing, problem solving, and protection of public health and that serves as an example of the high level of innovation possible with the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), which provides below-market-rate loans to water systems to achieve and maintain compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Pipestone was recognized for its excellence and leadership in the financing and construction of a new water treatment plant to reduce the concentration of gross alpha emitters in its drinking water to protect public health. The new treatment plant was also designed to reduce the hardness of water leaving the plant, eliminating the need for residents to have home water softeners, which contribute to chloride concentrations at the city's wastewater plant. Reducing the chloride concentration protects the environment in surface and groundwater downstream from the wastewater facility.

The Pipestone project was one of the first in Minnesota to deal with a wastewater issue by treating the drinking water supply. As the program coordinator of the Minnesota DWSRF, Kolstad said, "By taking a holistic approach to solving their problem, the city was able to meet both their public health and environmental standards far more cost effectively."

The award presentation was held at the We Are Water exhibit at the Pipestone library and was the culmination of a Clean Water Council tour of drinking water systems in southwest Minnesota. The visits to Nobles, Rock, and Pipestone counties provided a first-hand look at a number of projects to improve water quality with funding from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment.

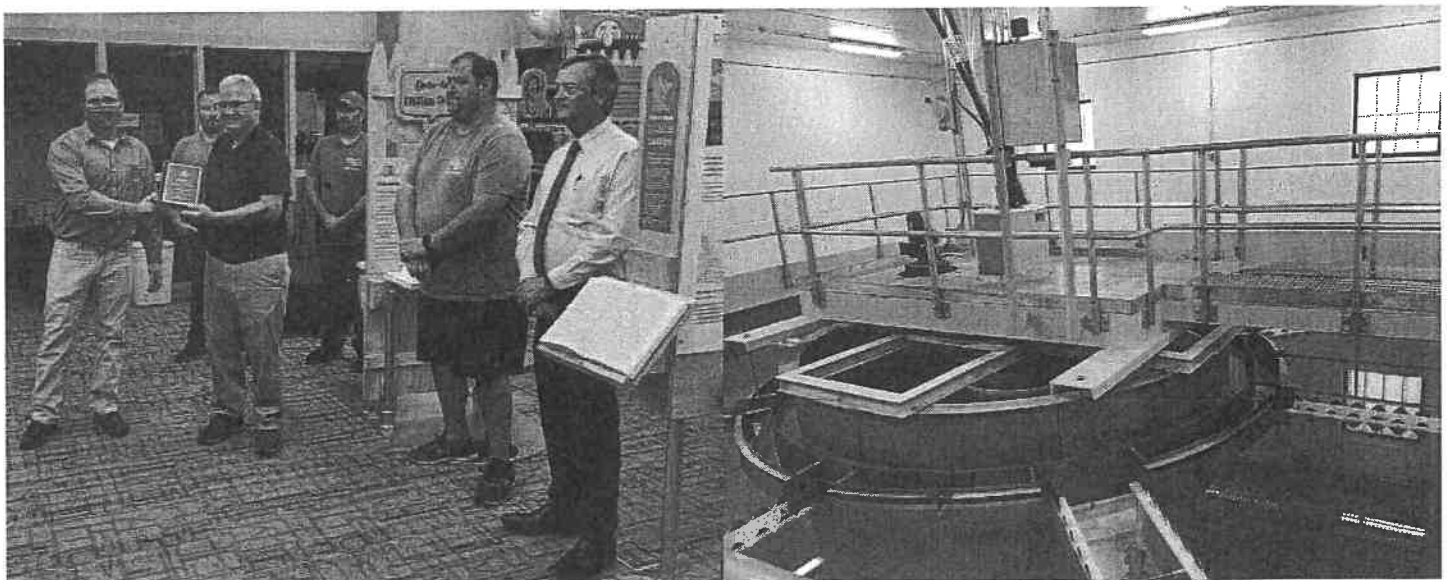
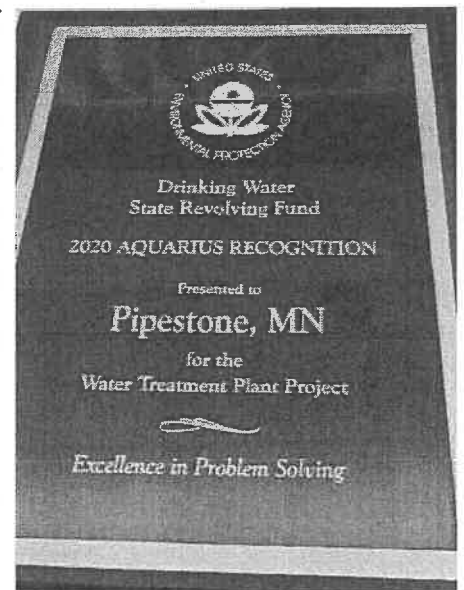
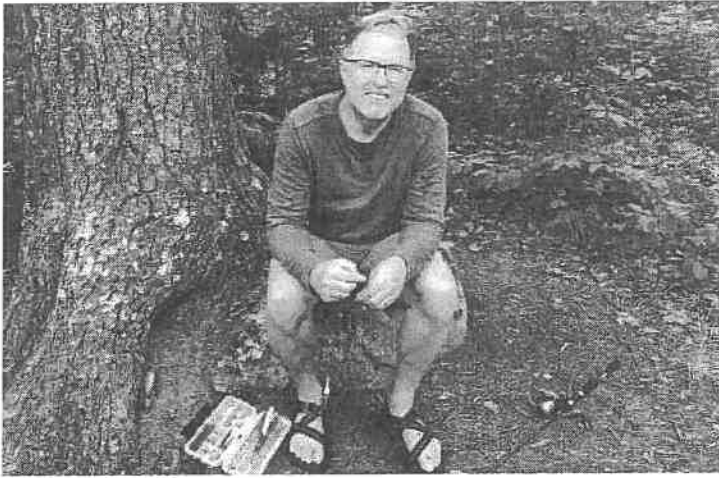


Photo at left: Chad Kolstad (far left) presents the EPA Aquarius Award to Pipestone mayor Myron Koets.

Photo at right: The clarifier at the Pipestone plant.

## DWP Profiles: David Vaaler, Stephanie Voeller, and Indran Kamalanathan

The Drinking Water Protection (DWP) Section at the Minnesota Department of Health has welcomed new employees:



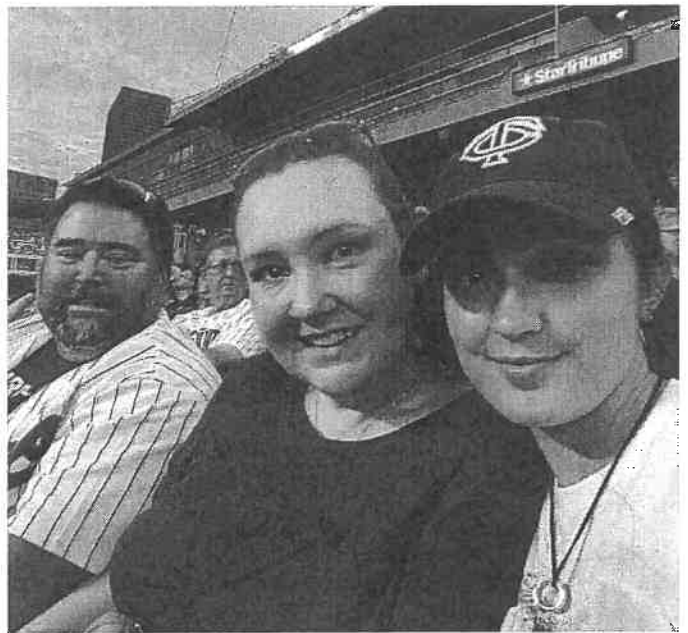
**David Vaaler** has rejoined the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and is now a compliance officer in the Community Public Water Supply Unit. He will be working with water systems on compliance issues related to organic and inorganic chemicals as well as disinfection byproducts. He had worked for MDH before moving to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

David and his wife, Kelly, have several children: son Ethan (age 20), daughters Lauren and Anna (18 and 15), and dog Cooper (11). David made it through the pandemic with a variety of activities, including being the self-appointed chef at his house with one of his dishes getting a family score of 9.8 out of 10. He also did some Tik Tok videos with his youngest (Anna presumably, not Cooper) that generated a small fan base.

**Stephanie Voeller** has joined the Drinking Water Protection Section as the compliance officer for the Lead and Copper Rule. She has been involved in health-related roles her entire career and had worked for Allina as a provider coordinator and compliance administrative assistant for hospice.

After living in Wyoming and Colorado, her family moved to Minnesota when Stephanie was in elementary school, and she grew up in Coon Rapids. Stephanie and her husband just moved their kiddo, Amanda, into their dorm at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where they will be studying psychology. Stephanie volunteers for Wags and Whiskers, an animal rescue organization. They have fostered kittens for many years and have adopted two of them, Crowley and Meowser.

Stephanie's hobbies include knitting and crafts, casual gaming, and travel. She will be going on a Caribbean cruise, one that was rescheduled due to COVID. She also made it back to the Renaissance Festival and State Fair, events that she missed last year because of the pandemic. Stephanie and her family also look forward to rooting for the Twins in person each year. Attending a Twins game on Star Wars Night has been a family tradition.



**Indran Kamalanathan** has joined the Community Water Supply Unit as a compliance engineer, focusing on the fecal coliform and disinfection byproducts rules.

Indran has a Bachelor's of Science degree in chemical engineering from the University of Arkansas and a Master of Science degree in environmental engineering from the University of Illinois. He previously worked for Strand Associates in Joliet, Illinois, focusing on wastewater treatment.

Indran and his partner, Kaylee Smith, Ph.D., are both chemical engineers from Arkansas who now live in St. Paul. The photo at the left shows them hiking on the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska.

Indran has lived in England, Hong Kong, Arkansas, Illinois, and now Minnesota. Being new to the area, he is excited to explore winter hobbies. Besides hiking, Indran enjoys woodworking, board games, and comics.

### Waterline

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Drinking Water Protection Section,  
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**Editor:** Stew Thornley

**Staff:** Noel Hansen, Erin Culver

### Past Waterlines Archived at [wateroperator.org](http://wateroperator.org)

The Minnesota Department of Health is archiving past issues of the *Waterline* for only the previous three years at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/com/waterline/index.html>. However, [wateroperator.org](http://wateroperator.org) is hosting past issues back to 1997. To access these, go to <http://wateroperator.org/documents>. Select the following filter criteria: HOST – Minnesota Department of Health; TYPE – Newsletters/Magazines; STATE – Minnesota. Click the "Retrieve Documents" button.



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## CALENDAR

COVID-19 has created uncertainty about upcoming training and schools.

*For an up-to-date list of events, see the training calendar on the MDH web site:*

[https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wateroperator/wat\\_op\\_sched.html](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wateroperator/wat_op_sched.html)

### **Minnesota Section, American Water Works Association**

\*March 9-11, Southeast Water Operators School, Rochester International Event Center. Contact Keven Maxa, [kevenm@austinutilities.com](mailto:kevenm@austinutilities.com).

\*April 5-7, Metro Water Operators School, Earle Brown Conference Center, Brooklyn Center. Contact Stew Thornley, 651-201-4655, or Erin Culver, 651-201-4697.

\*Northeast Water Operators School, Timberlake Lodge, Grand Rapids. Contact Stew Thornley, 651-201-4655, or Erin Culver, 651-201-4697.

**\*Includes a water operator certification exam.**

Information for all district schools, including agendas:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/water/wateroperator/trng/schoolagendas.html>

Registration information is available at:

[https://www.mnawwa.org/events/event\\_list.asp](https://www.mnawwa.org/events/event_list.asp)

### **Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA)**

Contact Bob Klug, 800-367-6792

\*March 1-3, St. Cloud

**Note:** Only the MRWA workshops with water operator certification exams are listed above. For more workshops, go to:

<http://mrwa.com/trainingcalendar.html>