



THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TIMES

2023 Rural Water Rally Recap



Photos above are courtesy of National Rural Water Association



MRWA Board & Team visits to the Capitol

Left - Representative Pete Stauber, Center - Representative Michelle Fishbach, Right - Representative Brad Finstad

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Thank you

to all vendors, speakers
and attendees
for another fantastic
Techinal Conference!

Watch for the recap in the
spring edition of
MRWA Today Magazine!





2023 Rural Water Rally Recap

Washington, D.C. – The National Rural Water Association hosted the annual Rural Water Rally on February 7-9, 2023, in Washington, D.C. This event gives Rural Water advocates from across the country an opportunity to gather in our nation's capital and progress our grassroots agenda in the halls of Congress. The Opening Session took place on Tuesday, February 7, where the audience heard from multiple influential government officials. Among the distinguished guest speakers were Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV); Radhika Fox, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water, U.S. EPA; and Andrew Berke, Administrator for Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

Great American Water Taste Test

The 24th annual Great American Water Taste Test (GAWTT) was held in Washington, D.C. on February 8, 2023. Throughout the year, utilities from across the country vie for a spot to represent their state during the National Rural Water Association's Rural Water Rally each year in Washington, D.C. GAWTT is the nation's most prestigious competition for the best-tasting water in the United States.

Each state holds its own competition at its annual conference and the winner of the statewide contest moves on to compete in the national contest. This year, NRWA received a record of 44 entries from winning utilities across the country. During the Rural Water Rally, the preliminary judging narrowed the field of contestants to the top five.

The top five finalists were evaluated by these industry leaders:

- Bruno Pigott, Deputy Administrator, U.S. EPA Office of Water
- Steve Polacek, Water Programs Director, USDA Rural Development
- Joe Brown, Professional Staff Member
- Lizzy Olson, Counsel for Senator Tammy Duckworth

The 24th Great American Water Taste Test Winners are as follows:

- Gold Medal Champion: Pueblo of Zia Community Water System, New Mexico
- Silver Medal Champion (tie): Stephens County Rural Water District #5, Oklahoma
- Silver Medal Champion (tie): City of Zillah, Washington
- Bronze Medal Champion: Farmington Water Department, New Hampshire
- Finalist: City of Walker, Iowa

The Gold Medal Champion, Pueblo of Zia Community Water System, is a tribal system located in Zia Pueblo, New Mexico. NRWA offers congratulations to all the contestants on their success this year!

NRWA would like to thank long-time sponsor of the Great American Water Taste Test, CST Industries. CST, the manufacturer of the iconic AQUASTORE glass-fused-to-steel storage tanks, supplied commemorative glass etched bottles to each system that participated in the event, which listed the names of their utility on the bottle.

Moving Forward

More than 300 Rural Water advocates flooded Capitol Hill during the Rural Water Rally and met with numerous senators, representatives, and congressional staffers to tell them our story and inform them about important issues in our industry. We hope to continue this success throughout the year and bring more passionate Rural Water supporters back to Washington, D.C. next year.

About NRWA

The National Rural Water Association is the largest public drinking water and sanitation utility organization representing the interests of more than 31,000 water and wastewater utilities nationwide. NRWA provides training and technical assistance through 50 affiliated State Rural Water Associations dedicated to supporting and promoting the water and wastewater professionals that serve small communities across the United States. NRWA and the State Affiliates provide training on operator certification, financial sustainability, environmental compliance, utility management and governance to over 80,000 water professionals annually in all 50 states. To learn more, visit www.nrwa.org.

MRWA WATER OPERATION & MAINTENANCE TRAINING SESSION



AGENDA

- 8:00am Low Income Household Water Assistance Program**
Gain a better understanding of LIHWAP which will include the purpose of the program, legislative authority over the program, government appropriations, eligible applicant of the program and what the program funds can be used for.
- 9:00am Utility Line Locating and Operator Safety**
Locating is done in every system and is constantly evolving with better technology available to operations specialists. Learn the proper way to efficiently locate your water mains and service lines to help eliminate damage to them from other utilities and contractors. Aspects of the tracer wire specification will also be explained to better help operations specialists understand the proper installation of locating infrastructure.
- 10:00am Flow Meter Calibration**
This session will cover the different types of flow metering technologies used in your facilities, the proper techniques used to calibrate and verify your flow meters, the difference between calibration and verification, and the test equipment that is utilized to perform the calibrations and verifications.
- 11:00am Minnesota Department of Health Updates**
Minnesota Department of Health will discuss what you should be doing to keep your water system in compliance and what to do in certain emergency situations. New requirements regarding the Revised Lead and Copper Rule will also be discussed.
- 12:00pm Lunch (On Your Own)**
- 1:00pm Wellhead Protection - What Does it Mean to You?**
A Wellhead Protection Plan is written to address the fundamental goal of preventing human caused contaminants from entering the drinking water supply. In this session, you will learn what is included in a Wellhead Protection Plan and how to use the plan to better protect your drinking water source. This session will also cover funding opportunities to help offset the cost of implementing such plans.
- 2:00pm Source to Tap: What You Need to Know.**
It's never been more important than now to understand and review your system and its chemistry. We will cover: emerging contaminants, chemical availability and costs fluctuations and new regulations.
- 3:00pm Lead and Copper Rule Revisions**
New revisions to the EPA Lead and Copper Rule are going into effect. Learn what those changes are and what they mean to your utility.
- 4:00pm End of Day**

April 4, 2023
Gorecki
Community Center
435 2nd St NW
Milaca, MN

About the Class:

Get valuable information you need from our expert trainers to maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and state regulations.

Technical assistance to address compliance issues is available from Minnesota Rural Water Association at no cost.

Support Minnesota Rural Water Association
Training | Technical Assistance

6 WATER certification hours |
FREE of charge!

Instructors:

AE2S
Calibrations and Controls (a subsidiary of
First Systems Technology, Inc.)
Minnesota Department of Health
UtilityLogic
and
Minnesota Rural Water Association

This Safe Drinking Water Act training is brought to you through a grant by the National Rural Water Association and US EPA.

Attend this session and learn how to keep your water system in compliance with state and federal drinking water regulations!

To Register For Any Training Session:

Online: www.mrwa.com

or call the MRWA office: 800-367-6792



LEAD & COPPER RULE REVISION WEBINAR

April 11, 2023

10:00 am - 11:00 am

“An Informational Overview of the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions”

There is no charge for this session.

You **MUST** watch the full session **on your own device** to get 1 Water Certification Hour awarded.

Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA) is providing webinars for public water systems.

These online training webinars are accredited and can be used towards your water operator certification renewal.

Our next webinar will be held on April 11, 2023, at 10am. John Nelson, MRWA Lead and Copper Technical Advisor, will be the presenter at this training session. This training session will provide an overview of the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions. Topics will include identification of service lines, the inventory process, the replacement procedures, and financial resources.

If you have any questions that you would like to email us prior to the webinar, please send them to us at mrwa@mrwa.com and we will include them in the webinar.

To register for this webinar, please click on the link below. Each operator must register and sign-in separately to receive credit for attending the webinar. If you have any questions about the webinar or how to register, please feel free to call our office at 800-367-6792. We hope you will join us!

Instructor: John Nelson, Minnesota Rural Water Association

TO REGISTER FOR ZOOM MEETING:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZULcemprijkpGNFR2S4NSiyuXazVOVKbwZKl>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



April 12, 2023

EMERGING CONTAMINANTS: PFAS WORKSHOP

8:00 am - 9:30 am

Introductions and PFAS Regulatory Updates

Speaker: Paul Kimman, MPCA

Learn about Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances and regulatory information

9:30am - 10:30am

Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Facts, Findings & Funding

Speaker: Meghan Brockman, Ph.D., Environmental Design Engineer, Bolton & Menk, Inc.

PFAS substances are everywhere. Discover what PFAS is, where we are finding them, their impact on you and potential funding sources to address PFAS concerns.

10:30am - 11:30am

Sampling and Its Process

Speaker: Lindsey Boone, Pace Analytical

Learn more about sampling methods and the process involved.

TO REGISTER:

Call the MRWA office at 800-367-6792 or go online to www.mrwa.com.

Use the Training Calendar link.

**EMERGING
CONTAMINANTS:
PFAS WORKSHOP**

**3 DIRECT
WASTEWATER
CREDITS**

**There Is
No Charge For
This Session!**

LOCATION:

Red Baron Arena
1651 Victory Drive
Marshall, MN



Welcome,

Jolene Leither
Source Water Specialist
to the MRWA Team!

Email: jolene.leither@mrwa.com Cell: 218-671-3818

MRWA Sustainable Utility Management



Minnesota Rural Water Association in conjunction with USDA Rural Development, invite you to attend this Sustainable Management Workshop.

Workshop Agenda

- * Introductions & Workshop Objectives
- * Overview of Key Management Areas
- * Energy Efficiency
- * Asset Management
- * Compliance and Case Studies
- * Workshop Feedback

Objectives:

- ◆ *How to deliver increasingly efficient, and higher quality services.*
- ◆ *How to improve long-term sustainability and increase resiliency.*
- ◆ *How to set rates and pay for your projects!!!*
- ◆ *How to use the Small Systems Guidebook to Effective Utility Management to make improvements at your system.*

Workshop Details:

Date: April 12, 2023
Time: 12:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Location: Red Baron Arena
1651 Victory Drive
Marshall, MN 56258
Fee: There is **NO** fee for this session
Register: Call 800-367-6792 or online at:
<https://www.mrwa.com/training/trainingcalendar/>

Speakers:

UtilityLogic

USDA Rural Development

and Minnesota Rural Water Association

This workshop will help utilities address a full range of challenges and improve the management of their operation and infrastructure.

Utilities will learn to make improvements in the ten key management areas, focusing first on their most pressing challenges.

Ten Key Management Areas:

1. Product Quality
2. Customer Satisfaction
3. Employee Leadership & Development
4. Operational Optimization
5. Financial Viability (including setting rates)
6. Operational Resiliency
7. Infrastructure Stability
8. Community Sustainability
9. Water Resource Adequacy
10. Customer Understanding & Support

3 credit hours awarded for full attendance.



MRWA WATER OPERATION & MAINTENANCE TRAINING SESSION



AGENDA

- 8:00am Low Income Household Water Assistance Program**
Gain a better understanding of LIHWAP which will include the purpose of the program, legislative authority over the program, government appropriations, eligible applicant of the program and what the program funds can be used for.
- 9:00am Leak Detection Basics**
We will be covering some of the basic aspects of leak detection. Listening devices as well as leak detection correlators will be discussed and issues that may arise when looking for a leak.
- 10:00am Water Products and Lead & Copper**
You will learn how the industry is working on eliminating the use of lead and copper in their product lines.
- 11:00am Minnesota Department of Health Updates**
Minnesota Department of Health will discuss what you should be doing to keep your water system in compliance and what to do in certain emergency situations. New requirements regarding the Revised Lead and Copper Rule will also be discussed.
- 12:00pm Lunch (On Your Own)**
- 1:00pm Asset Management**
An asset management plan can be used to help effectively manage the water system assets to maintain the desired level of service and ensure long term sustainability. Attendees will learn the five core components of asset management, how to get started on a plan, and review MRWA's free asset management template.
- 2:00pm Utility Line Locating and Operator Safety**
Locating is done in every system and is constantly evolving with better technology available to operations specialists. Learn the proper way to efficiently locate your water mains and service lines to help eliminate damage to them from other utilities and contractors. Aspects of the tracer wire specification will also be explained to better help operations specialists understand the proper installation of locating infrastructure.
- 3:00pm Source to Tap: What You Need to Know.**
It's never been more important than now to understand and review your system and its chemistry. We will cover: emerging contaminants, chemical availability and costs fluctuations and new regulations.
- 4:00pm End of Day**

April 26, 2023

**Cobblestone Hotel
2602 Pleasant Ave
International Falls, MN**

About the Class:

Get valuable information you need from our expert trainers to maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and state regulations.

Technical assistance to address compliance issues is available from Minnesota Rural Water Association at no cost.

Support Minnesota Rural Water Association
Training | Technical Assistance

**6 WATER certification hours
FREE of charge!**

Instructors:

**AE2S
Minnesota Department of Health
Mueller Company
UtilityLogic
and
Minnesota Rural Water Association**

This Safe Drinking Water Act training is brought to you through a grant by the National Rural Water Association and US EPA.

Attend this session and learn how to keep your water system in compliance with state and federal drinking water regulations!

To Register For Any Training Session:

Online: www.mrwa.com

or call the MRWA office: 800-367-6792

MRWA WASTEWATER OPERATION & MAINTENANCE TRAINING SESSION



AGENDA

- 8:00am** **Introductions**
- 8:10am** **Air Release Valves**
You will learn about the key components, common operational problems, and best practices for maintenance and operation of air release valves.
- 9:00am** **Bio-Augmentation for Wastewater**
Learn how bio-augmentation can help reduce bio-solids, control FOG, and improve the overall operation of your wastewater system.
- 10:00am** **Product Evolutions for Operations Specialists Safety**
Discussion on best practices in the area of operations specialists safety and how equipment has evolved in the water & wastewater industry.
- 11:00 am** **Failing Wastewater Infrastructure**
Learn about the current state of the water/wastewater industry and how that has impacted systems in the areas of infrastructure, chemical supplies, and electrical/mechanical components.
- 12:00pm** **Lunch (On Your Own)**
- 1:00pm** **Rehabilitation of Liftstations**
Discover what you should consider when evaluating liftstations and the need for rehabilitation.
- 2:00pm** **Compliance & Operations Specialist Resources**
We will explore common compliance topics and resources available to operations specialists to assist in running their systems.
- 3:00pm** **MRWA Updates, Services, and Operations Specialist's Resources**
See what's new in the industry and learn about the changes in store for wastewater operations specialists. Get the latest on MRWA training, events, and technology. Learn about resources available to wastewater operations specialists.
- 3:30 pm** **End of Day**

April 27, 2023

**Cobblestone Hotel
2602 Pleasant Ave
International Falls, MN**



Course Instructors:

**AE2S
Minnesota Pump Works
Mueller Company
Team Lab
UtilityLogic
and**

Minnesota Rural Water Association

**Six Wastewater Certification
Hours for Full Day Attendance**

There is NO charge for this session

**To Register For Any Training Session: Online: www.mrwa.com
or call the MRWA office: 800-367-6792**



Energy Efficiency Advisor Receives Regional Award

Written by Kaylyn Snow, NRWA
Content & Communications Specialist

Paul Hoeschen, Energy Efficiency Advisor for Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA), received the Central States Water Environment Association (CSWEA) Resource Recovery and Energy Award in recognition of his achievements in energy conservation.

The award is presented to an individual who has implemented an outstanding, novel or otherwise especially impactful project to increase renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, and/or resource recovery from industrial, agricultural, municipal or domestic wastewater or wastewater residuals. Individuals are nominated and then interviewed as a part of the selection process.

“I truly was not expecting this, but I am very grateful,” Hoeschen said.

Hoeschen has been in the wastewater industry since 1985, and in his current position with MRWA for four and a half years, where he has managed the Energy Efficiency Program since its inception.

“I remember the pain and difficulty of starting this program and having nothing to work with,” Hoeschen said. “I feel compelled to help new Energy Efficiency Technicians have the tools they need to succeed in their positions because I understand the difficulties they are facing.”

*“People helping people
is what it is all about.”*

In his position, Hoeschen provides energy assessments and works with utilities get the help they need for free, which is one of his favorite parts about his job. He serves as an unbiased opinion when it comes to upgrading equipment, which he says helps councils and boards approve the necessary funding.

“People helping people is what it is all about,” Hoeschen said.

While this is an individual award, Hoeschen said it wouldn’t be possible without MRWA, all the Energy Efficiency Advisors, the cities and councils he works with, and the University of Minnesota.

“Paul is very dependable and a joy to work with,” said Barbara Merrill, NRWA Energy Efficiency Program Manager and Compliance Officer. “He is always willing to do anything that anyone needs.”

Outside of helping people at his job, Hoeschen and his wife, Sara, enjoy helping their neighbors with things they need. When they are not helping someone, they enjoy traveling and riding their Harley motorcycle.



Trevor Prater (L) and Paul Hoeschen (R)



NRWA Hires Charles Stephens

Formerly with USDA Rural Development, he will act as policy expert in water infrastructure funding and financing, and implementation of technical assistance and training programs

DUNCAN, Okla. — NRWA is excited to announce Charles Stephens will be joining the [NRWA team](#) as Senior Executive Policy Director. He will begin his role on February 27, 2023. In this role, Charles will act as a policy expert in rural development, water infrastructure funding and financing, and implementation of USDA's technical assistance and training programs.

Charles has served his country for over 25 years, having begun his career in the U.S. Army. After serving ten years in the military, he started his civilian career as a Budget Analyst for the Defense Logistics Agency. Most recently, Charles served as Assistant Administrator for Water and Environmental Programs for USDA Rural Development where he oversaw the funding programs that provided financing to thousands of rural communities across the country. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Wayland Baptist University and a master's degree in public administration from Strayer University. In 2015, Charles completed the Leadership for a Democratic Society program at the Federal Executive Institute.

He has been a true champion for Rural Water at USDA Rural Development, building important relationships with industry leaders and attending numerous NRWA events, including WaterPro Conference, Rural Water Rally and In-Service Training. We are excited to add his expertise and experience to the ranks as we navigate ongoing policy changes and federal grants and contracts.

U.S. EPA Releases Proposed Rule on PFAS MCL

Just announced, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) to establish Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for six PFAS in drinking water. These include PFOA and PFOS as individual contaminants, and PFHxS, PFNA, PFBS, and HFPO-DA (or GenX Chemicals) as a PFAS mixture. Additionally, EPA is proposing health-based, non-enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) for these six PFAS.

The proposed MCL levels for PFOA and PFOS are four parts per trillion (4.0 ppt). The other four PFAS proposed MCLs will be calculated using a hazard index, a tool to evaluate potential health risks from exposure to chemical mixtures. The proposed rule would require public water systems to monitor for these PFAS, notify the public of these levels of PFAS, and reduce the levels of these PFAS in drinking water if they exceed the proposed standards.

Until this proposed rule is finalized, there is no action required. There will be a public comment period of 60 days to provide input on this proposed rule. The rule is expected to be finalized at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024. Compliance will begin three years after the rule is promulgated. It is anticipated by EPA that the rule will prevent tens of thousands of deaths and illnesses due to PFAS exposure in drinking water, and provide a net benefit of \$1.2 billion annually. Costs to public water systems were estimated at \$772 million annually.

To view more about the proposed rule and additional resources, please visit EPA's website [here](#).

Link to read full press release: <https://content.nrwa.org/home/news/15352490/us-epa-releases-proposed-rule-on-pfas-mcl>



DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

DNR opens application period for reimbursement of well interference costs resulting from the 2021 drought

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources encourages well owners, high-capacity water appropriators and water suppliers to apply for reimbursement of costs associated with the resolution of well interferences that occurred during the 2021 drought.

As part of a relief package to address impacts of the 2021 drought, the Minnesota Legislature provided funding to the DNR to reimburse people who paid for costs associated with restoring a water supply as a result of a well interference. A well interference happens when a high-capacity water user causes the water level in an aquifer to fall to a level that adversely affects the availability of water to shallower wells. Dry conditions in 2021 caused some high-capacity water appropriators to pump groundwater more frequently in some areas of the state, resulting in numerous well interferences.

The DNR received \$300,000 from the 2022 legislature to reimburse eligible expenses for domestic well owners, high-capacity water appropriators and public and private water suppliers. Those who wish to apply to the DNR for reimbursement will need to provide copies of receipts for work performed. The DNR will review the applications and determine eligibility for reimbursement.

The well interference situation must have happened between May 1, 2021 and Dec. 30, 2021 to be eligible for reimbursement.

Minnesota Statute [103G.265](#) requires the DNR to manage water resources to ensure an adequate supply to meet long-range seasonal requirements for domestic, agricultural, fish and wildlife, recreational, power, navigation, and quality control purposes. The Water Appropriation Permit Program exists to balance competing management objectives that include both development and protection of Minnesota's water resources.

The application period is now open. Applications should be submitted by 4:30 p.m. May 1, 2023. If applications for reimbursement exceed the total funding available, the available funds will be allocated proportionately to all eligible applicants based on their receipts submitted.

For more information, including how to apply, visit the [well interference resolution process page of the DNR website](#).

EPA Updates Guidance to Support Communities with Rate Affordability



Update available here:

<https://www.epa.gov/waterfinancecenter/clean-water-act-financial-capability-assessment-guidance>