

SUMMER
2023

The Official Publication of the Water Environment Association of Utah

DIGESTED news

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2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SUMMARY

APRIL 25-28, 2023

Central Valley WRF
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INSIDE:

What Does AI Know? (About Wastewater) | WEAU 2023-2024 Leadership Series



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Schoonover Case Study

The Schoonover Plumbing ACO Stormbrixx project was brought to Mountain Supply out of a need to find a cost-effective way to eliminate an on-site drainage pond, while staying in compliance with the current State of Utah Stormwater Requirements. In order to eliminate the pond, it was determined that an underground stormwater detention system would be necessary. Working with Mustang Design and ACO an appropriately sized below ground retention system was designed for the site that included two access and maintenance points. Once approved, the system was installed with on-site assistance from Mountainland Supply.

By using Stormbrixx the owner was able to eliminate the pond by detaining the stormwater under their parking lot in a Stormbrixx system. This system not only saved the owner from wasting land but created a structurally sound “modular vault” that will be able to be maintained for years to come. By retaining and infiltrating the storm water 100% on site the owner was able to eliminate the extra cost incurred by connecting to the city’s storm sewer system.



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CUT-OFF DATE: 7/14/2023



Sherry Sheffield

Be Part of Something Great

2022-2023 was an awesome year for WEAU, culminating in an amazing Annual Conference. Thank you to all who made this possible, especially Ben Skousen and his dedicated Conference Committee. A special thank you to all of the judges, teams, and PWO committee members who participated in the Operations Challenge, plus the managers, boards, and coworkers who supported them in this effort. I'd also like to thank our outstanding sponsors, vendors, and presenters who enhanced the conference in so many ways. And thank you to each of you who either attended or supported those who attended. The conference isn't the conference without each of you.

I also want to send out an extra loud shout-out to Sarah Ward, our WEAU President for 2022-2023. Her passion and enthusiasm for WEAU was evident in everything she did. She worked hard to support and train our committee chairs so they can be successful in their volunteer duties. She brought in the EPA for two Effective Utility Management trainings that have given many of us a starting point for improving our utilities. She worked diligently to introduce a new leadership training course, which started in June. I can't express enough how grateful I am for all Sarah has done for this association.

This year, I intend to build on the momentum of Sarah's presidency to hopefully make WEAU even better. I have two main goals for this year. First, I want to increase the visibility of WEAU to our members and to every person who works in the wastewater field in Utah. I am always amazed when I meet someone who works in our field who has never heard of WEAU. We work in a vital, but unheralded, field. Often, when I tell someone I've just met what I

do for a job, they give me a funny look or make a joke. We need to stick together, to help each other remember that we are important, what we do is important, and that society needs us even if they don't want to acknowledge that fact. Every person who works in wastewater should know about WEAU and the benefits of being a member of this association.

My second goal is to increase the visibility of WEAU and the importance of wastewater treatment to every person who lives in Utah. I hope to accomplish both goals, or at least get a good start on them, by increasing the number of items with the WEAU brand on them available to give away or sell. We are creating two new committees, Public Outreach and Membership Outreach, to aid in these goals. If anyone would like to participate in these committees, please email me at ssheffield@svwater.com. I welcome any and all ideas on how to accomplish these goals.

Sarah ended each of her president's messages by saying, "We are great because of each of you." That is 100% true. Without our members, this association would not exist. WE Are, quite literally, U. I invite each of you to engage more fully in the association by attending more events, volunteering on committees, and inviting coworkers and others to get involved and become members. Be part of something great!

P.S. I'm curious to know how many people actually read the president's message, so the first five people who email me the answer to the following riddle will receive a prize: "Why do toilets run?" [Dn](#)





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Don't Sleep on It

Bryan Mansell

The onslaught of mattress commercials these days emphasize keeping your body in the 'perfect' sleeping position so you can get the best night sleep. Most of these mattresses are drastically overpriced but, admittedly, some are much better than others in terms of quality and support. Still, all of the commercials seem to assume we sleep with picture perfect posture. After a recent surgery to correct my septum and remove a nasal polyp, I found myself having to pay more attention to my body position as I was required to sleep slightly inclined at night (or try to, anyway). The same occurred a few years back after shoulder surgery. My daughter, who broke her arm a few weeks ago, has had to do the same.

Our body position during sleep could probably be a field of study all on its own, but there are only a handful of basic positions that most humans use – on their back, on their front, or on their side. I'm excluding astronauts here, who sleep standing up, since only a true narcoleptic can identify. The variations of the three common positions are endless (e.g., arms/legs straight or bent, pillow or no pillow, arms and hands straight or curled up, pillow or blanket between the legs, full spoon with body pillow, etc.). I suspect that



a person's typical sleeping position changes over the course of their life. When I was young and thin, I slept on my stomach. With my adult "dad bod," I tend to sleep on my side unless I'm recovering from surgery, in which case I try to sleep at an incline on my back and end up not sleeping much or slowly sinking down to my side anyhow.

Human sleeping positions are relatively boring when compared to the rest of the animal kingdom. Cows can sleep standing up. Bats sleep hanging upside down. Dogs... well normal dogs, sleep in a curled-up position. My dogs only do that occasionally. They're notorious for sleeping in the most awe-inspiring, weird positions that leave you thinking they should be stars

in the world's worst mattress infomercial. Of course, this might be a byproduct of us letting them both sleep on our bed when they want, essentially trying to fit four adult-sized mammals on one mattress. By morning, on a good day, our bed looks like the grandparents' bed from the Willy Wonka movie, but more often like the morning-after scene of a drunken brawl. Good thing we paid extra for the pillow top with matrix technology.

What does any of this have to do with the wastewater industry, you ask? Only this: the best technology can only get us as far as we use it correctly. So, with new technologies, be sure to invest in sufficient training of personnel. Also, kick the dogs out of your bed. [bn](#)

FIND THE HIDDEN GOLDEN SLUDGE SHOVEL!*

Each quarter, *Digested News* has this golden sludge shovel icon hidden somewhere in the content of its pages.

Be the first to find it and email the editor (digestednews@weau.org) the correct page number to **win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card.**

Emails should include:

- Subject: I found the golden shovel
- Correct page number
- Your name and work address

Winners will be notified directly and named in the next issue of *Digested News*.

*For those of you new to WEAU, volunteers who give notable time and service to WEAU are awarded a "5S" golden lapel pin shovel. With that award, they become members of the Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers. WEAU is always looking for volunteers and maybe one day, you too can become a 5S member. [bn](#)



**CONGRATS TO:
AMANDA STOUTD OF
BROWN AND CALDWELL
FOR FINDING THE GOLDEN
SHOVEL ON PAGE 21 OF
DIGESTED NEWS SPRING 2023.
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Have feedback or suggestions? We'd love to hear from you about what parts of *Digested News* you find helpful, or about what you'd like to see. Email us at digestednews@weau.org.



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Collections Classes Coming Up This Fall

WEAU Collections College Southern Utah Fall 2023 Class Schedule

Classes start at 11:30 am and go until 2:30 pm

| Date | Presenter | Chapter | Tests |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| August 18, 2023 (Thursday) | Mike Chandler | | Math Review Packet |
| August 25, 2023 | Heath Ruesch | 1 and 2 | Chapters 1 and 2, B Math 1, A Math 2 |
| September 1, 2023 | | Free Week | |
| September 8, 2023 | Gary Wilcox | 2, 5, and 6 | Chapter 4, B Math 4, A Math 5 Chapter 5 and 6, B Math 5. A Math 6 |
| September 15, 2023 | Steve Hirschi | 3 and 11 | Chapter 3 and 11, B Math 2, A Math 4 |
| September 22, 2023 | Logan Murphy | 8 | Chapter 8, B Math 6, A Math 7 |
| September 29, 2023 | Jason Stevens | 9 – Turn in test application to DEQ | Chapter 9, B Math 7, A Math 8 |
| October 6, 2023 | Matt Goodrich | 10 and 12 | Chapter 10, B Math 8, Mini Review Chapter 12, Advance Practice Problems |
| October 13, 2023 | | Free Week/Fall Break | |
| October 20, 2023 | Mike Chandler | 13 and 14 | Chapter 13 and 14, 100 Question Test |
| October 27, 2023 | All | Review All | Final Review/Lunch |
| November 2, 2023 (Thursday) | | | Test (Good Luck) |

Read the Sacramento, Ken Kerri manuals titled *Operation and Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems, 8th Edition, Volume 1 and 7th Edition Volume 2*. The manuals can be purchased from the Office of Water Products, California State University, Sacramento.

Do the chapter tests as you read. For example, by the August 25, 2023 class, you should have read chapters 1 and 2 and finished the test. Along with the chapter test you will get two sets of

math sheets each week. The B (beginning) math series is for people just starting out. The A (advanced) math is for people who have taken and passed a test before and need training for a higher test.

Taking this class does not guarantee you will pass. The more you study outside of class the better the chances are of passing.

Class limited to 25 people. Cost is a ream of paper.

Register online at www.wEAU.org

WEAU Collections College Northern Utah Fall 2023 Class Schedule

Classes start at 12:00 pm and go until 3:00 pm

| Date | Topics/Chapters |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| August 3, 2023 | Volume 1, Chapters 1 and 2 |
| August 10, 2023 | Introduction to Math |
| August 17, 2023 | Chapter 3 |
| August 24, 2023 | Chapter 4 |
| August 31, 2023 | Chapter 5 |
| September 7, 2023 | Chapter 6 |
| September 14, 2023 | Volume 2, Chapter 1 |
| September 21, 2023 | Chapter 2 |
| September 28, 2023 | Math Continued |
| October 5, 2023 | Chapter 3 |
| October 12, 2023 | Chapter 4 |
| October 19, 2023 | Chapter 5 |
| October 26, 2023 | Math Continued |
| November 1, 2023 | Last Minute Review |
| November 2, 2023 | Exam Day |

Read the Sacramento, Ken Kerri manuals titled *Operation and Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems, 8th Edition, Volume 1 and 7th Edition, Volume 2*. The manuals can be purchased from the Office of Water Products, California State University, Sacramento.

Attempt the chapter tests as you read. For example, by the August 3, 2023 class, you should have read chapters 1 and 2 and finished the test. Along with the chapter test, you will receive two sets of math sheets each week. The B (beginning) math series is for people just starting out. The A (advanced) math is for people who have taken and passed a test before and need training for a higher test.

Dan Olson from Snyderville Basin will be providing the training for the Northern Utah Collections College. Classes are limited to 50 people.

Taking this class does not guarantee you will pass. The more you study outside of class, the better your chances are of passing.

| Cost | WEAU Member | Non-Member |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Option I Full 14-week course, including all materials and supplies. | \$425 | \$495 |
| Option II 14-week course/handout (no text) <i>Best for those who own or can borrow the text.</i> | \$225 | \$295 |
| Option III 14-week course only. | \$150 | \$200 |

Register online at www.wEAU.org

Location: Snyderville Basin East Canyon Training Room, 2909 Sackett Drive, Park City, UT



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Certification Training Quiz

By Dan Olson

- Domestic wastewater can include contributions from (select all that apply):**
 - Significant industrial users
 - Categorical industrial users
 - Homes and businesses
 - Heavy industrial users
- Fresh domestic wastewater will typically be:**
 - White to pale yellow
 - Light brown to grey
 - Gray to black
 - Orange, yellow, or blue
- Hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) is a concern for all of these reasons EXCEPT:**
 - Poisonous at low concentrations
 - Corrodes concrete and metal
 - Potentially explosive
 - Smells strongly of garlic
- Turbidity is a measurement of:**
 - Light scatter
 - Cloudiness
 - Solids concentration
 - Organic matter
- Alkalinity is a measurement of:**
 - pH
 - Buffering capacity
 - Calcium carbonate concentration
 - Hydroxide content
- Which of the following pH values would be considered acidic?**
 - 4.6
 - 7.1
 - 8.3
 - 9.4
- If all alkalinity is consumed, what will the pH be?**
 - 1.2
 - 4.5
 - 7.0
 - 8.3
- An influent sample is analyzed for both COD and BOD. Which of the following statements must be true?**
 - BOD is equal to or greater than COD
 - The BOD test was completed before the COD test
 - COD is equal to or greater than BOD
 - The COD test was performed at 20°C
- The laboratory reported a phosphorus concentration in the final effluent of 2.5 mg/L as PO₄-3. What is this in milligrams per liter of PO₄-P?**
 - 0.25 mg/L PO₄-P
 - 0.81 mg/L PO₄-P
 - 2.5 mg/L PO₄-P
 - 7.7 mg/L PO₄-P
- All WRRF headworks include screening, grit removal, and flow measurement.**
 - True
 - False
- Screening and grit removal must be completed before flow measurement.**
 - True
 - False
- This device may be used to direct flow to or around a screen or grit basin:**
 - Cogwheel
 - Slide gate
 - Weir block
 - Fraser valve
- A bar screen may not prevent this type of material from entering the WRRF:**
 - Sticks
 - Large rocks
 - Rags
 - Pallets
- Grit basins typically remove sand, gravel, eggshells, and coffee grounds by:**
 - Placing wire mesh in the flow path as a strainer
 - Scooping the surface of the water
 - Introducing microorganisms to consume them
 - Decreasing water velocity and allowing them to settle
- Removal of grit, rags, and other debris is often necessary to protect downstream equipment from harm.**
 - True
 - False
- If too much organic material is removed at the WRRF headworks, the downstream biological process can be affected.**
 - True
 - False

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17. Head loss is the difference in water level between the upstream and downstream sides of a screen.
 A. True B. False
18. One consequence of allowing excess organic material to be removed along with rags and other inert debris is:
 A. Oxygen generation B. Reduced capture of rags
 C. Generation of odors D. Reduced disposal costs
19. This type of screen has the widest openings and only stops the largest debris.
 A. Trash rack B. Manual bar screen
 C. Mechanical bar screen D. Step screen
20. A WRRF currently has a bar screen with 50-mm (2-in.) openings. Operators of the WRRF are considering replacing the screen with one that has 25-mm (1-in.) openings. How much should they expect the volume of screenings removed to change?
 A. Volume will remain about the same
 B. Screening volume will double
 C. Screening volume will increase by a factor of 4
 D. Screening volume will decrease by 50%
21. What is the most likely effect of receiving large quantities of grease on a perforated plate-type screen?
 A. Blinding of the screen
 B. Decreased cleaning frequency
 C. Passage of hair and rags into the WRRF
 D. Improved cog lubrication
22. Place the following screen types in order from the smallest opening size to the largest.
 A. Fine screen B. Trash rack
 C. Bar screen D. Micro screen
23. Trash and bar racks are installed at a 30- to 45-deg angle from the vertical.
 A. True B. False
24. Mechanical cleaning of bar screens increases labor costs because of increased maintenance.
 A. True B. False
25. Fine screens capture fewer organic solids than coarse screens.
 A. True B. False

Answers

1-A/C, 2-B, 3-D, 4-A, 5-B, 6-A, 7-B, 8-C, 9-B, 10-False (Headworks may contain all or none of these depending on the size and complexity of the WRRF), 11-False (Flow measurement can come before either screening or grit removal), 12-B, 13-C, 14-D, 15-True, 16-True, 17-True, 18-C, 19-A, 20-C (The amount of screened material doubles for every 13-mm [0.5-in.] reduction of clear opening size. Here, the size was reduced twice so the number of screenings will go up by a factor of 4), 21-A, 22-D = micro screen/A = fine screen/C = bar screen/B = trash rack, 23-True, 24-False (Mechanical cleaning reduces labor costs), 25-False (Fine screens capture more of everything than coarse screens, including organic material).



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Congratulations, Ops Teams

By Nate Cloward

The Operations Challenge practice started on the first of January, and we have had a great turnout of teams this year, including both returning teams and new composite teams. Everyone is really excited to get practicing.

There is one new part of the safety event this year. This new element is a virtual reality task that one guy will have to complete. It will be interesting to see how that goes for the guys. Also, after this year's WEAU Annual Conference, we are getting all new equipment for the new maintenance event that will take place as part of the National Operations Challenge to be held in Chicago. Since it's a totally new event from Vaughan, it will be fun to have everyone learn it and have something new to look forward to.

We had another great Midyear Conference this past November and the PWO would like to thank all the presenters for their great presentations, as well as the organizing committees and James Dixon for all the hard work that was put into making it a great conference. [DN](#)



TeamWork

“It has been great to see all the support we are getting from managers, board members, and – in particular – all the operators who remained at their facilities, keeping their plants running while short on staff.”



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“I’ve been in your shoes and I’ve worn the regulatory hat. I understand the things that keep you up at night. You deserve a resource in your corner that truly understands your organization and where the industry is going, and who can help you navigate both the deep and shallow waters.”

Marie Owens, PE, AE2S Engineer



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Young Professional Spotlight

Colby Willoughby, Operator, Snyderville Basin Water Reclamation District

Colby has been with SBWRF for 4.5 years as a Grade 2 Certified Treatment Operator. As a wastewater treatment operator, he performs a variety of tasks including taking water samples, running lab tests, operating dewatering equipment, hauling solids to disposal sites, performing pump and motor repairs, and overall plant maintenance. Colby is a valuable part of the SBWRF team and is dedicated to his job and the industry.

“He has a great sense of humor and gets along well with his fellow employees and management.” – Chad Burrell, SBWRF Operations and Safety Manager

Colby’s Thoughts:

My favorite part about working in the water industry is learning about new systems and how processes work within wastewater. I enjoy the challenge of fixing equipment and the day-to-day operations. I enjoy working under great leaders and role models at SBWRD.

Working at SBWRD, you get great training and an awesome job environment. The best satisfaction that comes with knowing you are directly benefiting your community.

Fun fact: I have always wanted a motor home. My retirement plan is to buy a motor home and travel the world with my wife and family. [D11](#)



“ I enjoy the challenge of fixing equipment and the day-to-day operations.”

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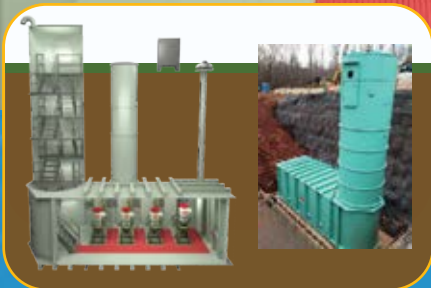
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WEAU's outgoing president Sarah Ward poses with incoming president Sherry Sheffield.



Sarah Ward gives her final address as WEAU President.



Sherry Sheffield's first address as WEAU President.



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GOLF TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Team Winners

1st Place

Russ Claiborn
 David Deachin
 Drew Geiger
 Ryan Mcleod

2nd Place

Paul Mora
 Mike Chandler
 Aaron Anderson
 Cody Neilson

3rd Place

Dean Gibbs
 Mike Dofelimre
 Jeff Beckman

Individual Winners

Long Drive
 Jarolen Brough
 Steve Alston
 Dallas Henline

Closest to the Hole

Paul Mora
 Kurt Rosenburg



6TH ANNUAL SPORTING CLAY SHOOT RESULTS

1st Place

Russ Morse – 33

2nd Place

Lance Smith – 30

3rd Place

Dustin Lewis – 29
 Josh Surrat – 29

Benchwarmer

Woodrow Campbell – 2

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YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' CONFERENCE FUN

The Young Professionals (YPs) were all-in at the 2023 Annual Conference. With a YP event planned for each day of the conference, there were several opportunities for networking and building of the YP community. On Tuesday, the YPs embarked on an afternoon hike, with views overlooking downtown St. George. The WEF President, Ifetayo Venner, was in attendance and shared great insight into the national-level WEF organization with YPs.

On Wednesday evening, the YPs hosted a social event at BigShots Golf. The event included a taco par-tee, plenty of

swings, and a cornhole tournament to finish off the night. Over 20 YPs golfed the night away with several board members in attendance, showing their support for the YP group.

Thursday morning saw the YPs gather for lunch in the Exhibit Hall and play a game of Icebreaker Bingo to get to know their peers. To finish off the week, the YP group visited the local St. George Wastewater Treatment Plant for a Friday morning tour. The YP Committee extends their thanks to everyone who attended the YP events at the conference. We are looking forward to another YP jam-packed conference week in 2024!



Young Professional Committee Chairs (L-R): Katie Reams, Lauren Schmidt, and Amanda Stoult.



The YPs socialized over lunch.



The YPs pose during the Tuesday afternoon hike.



The YPs socializing at Bigshots Golf.



Chad Burrell getting lightheaded during YP Blood Drive.



It was a beautiful night to play plenty of swings at Bigshots Golf.



The YP group visited the local St. George Wastewater Treatment Plant on Friday morning.

OPERATIONS CHALLENGE 2023

Thank you to all Ops Challenge Teams who participated in the event, and judges who were on their toes as they kept their eyes on the events.



OPS CHALLENGE WINNERS

Collections Challenge

1st Place

Central Weber Sewer Improvement District



2nd Place

North Davis Sanitary District



3rd Place

South Valley Water Reclamation Facility



Labor Challenge

1st Place

North Davis Sanitary District



2nd Place

Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility



3rd Place

Central Weber Sewer Improvement District



Maintenance Challenge

1st Place

Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility



2nd Place

North Davis Sanitary District



3rd Place

South Valley Water Reclamation Facility



Safety Challenge

1st Place

South Valley Water Reclamation Facility



2nd Place

Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility



3rd Place

Central Weber Sewer Improvement District



Process Challenge

1st Place

Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility



2nd Place

Central Weber Sewer Improvement District



3rd Place

South Valley Water Reclamation Facility



Overall Ops Challenge Winners

1st Place

Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility



2nd Place

Central Weber Sewer Improvement District



3rd Place

North Davis Sanitary District



Sportsmanship

North Davis Sanitary District



Ops Challenge Chair
 Hadley Gunn presents
 Ops Challenge winners.



**CONGRATULATIONS
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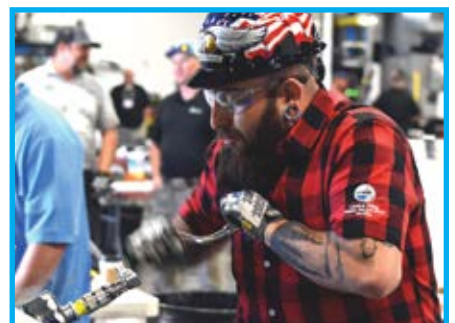
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WEAU ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022-2023 AWARDS LIST

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS



Presenter
 Tiffini Adams introducing award winners



Outstanding Collections Operator (over 5 MGD)
 Jeff Edgington – Mt. Olympus ID



Outstanding Collections Operator (under 5 MGD)
 Mario Campos – Ash Creek SSD



Outstanding Maintenance Specialist
 Lance Smith – Central Weber SID



Outstanding Water Reclamation Operator (over 5 MGD)
 Tim Lindsay – Logan Region WWTF



Outstanding Water Reclamation Operator (under 5 MGD)
 Scott Beck – Magna Water District



Outstanding Pretreatment Specialist
 Eric Price – Central Valley WRF



Outstanding Young Professional
 Lauren Schmidt – J-U-B Engineers



Outstanding Supervisor
 Joel Thompson – Jordan Basin WRF (SVSD)



Outstanding Pretreatment Specialist
 Cody Snyder – Snyderville Basin WRD



Outstanding Laboratory Technician
 Shane Gunnerson – Provo City WRF



Grant K. Borg Extraordinary Service and WEAU Mentor Award
 Lonn Rasmussen – Cottonwood ID

WEAU ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022-2023 AWARDS LIST

FACILITY/PROGRAM AWARDS



**Outstanding Collections System
 (Over 5 MGD)**

Snyderville Basin Water Reclamation District



**Outstanding Collections System
 (Under 5 MGD)**

Magna Water District



**Outstanding Lagoon System,
 Discharging**

Plain City



**Outstanding Lagoon System,
 Non-Discharging**

Ash Creek Special Service District



Outstanding Biosolids Program

Orem City



Outstanding Laboratory

Timpanogos Special Services District



Outstanding Pretreatment Program

Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility



Outstanding Safety Program

Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility



**Outstanding Water Reclamation
 Facility (Over 5 MGD)**

Timpanogos Special Services District



**Outstanding Water Reclamation
 Facility Award (Under 5 MGD)**

Salem City



WEAU Excellence Award

Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility

**GREAT
 WORK!**

WEAU ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022-2023 AWARDS LIST

WEF MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATION AWARDS



WEF Quarter Century Club
 Spencer Parkinson – South Valley WRF



WEF Quarter Century Club
 Alan Robinson – Timpanogos SSD



WEF Quarter Century Club
 Cliff Medler – Snyderville Basin WRD



WEF Quarter Century Club
 Eric Nemeck – South Davis SD



WEF Quarter Century Club
 Kevin Gallagher – Central Valley WRF



WEF Quarter Century Club
 Craig White – South Valley SD
 and
 Shellie Turnbow – Provo City



WEF Lab Analyst Award
 Leslie Wentland – St. George WTP



Hatfield Award
 Sharon Burton – Central Valley WRF



Bedell Award Winner
 Chris Reilley – Central Valley WRF

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Ritualistic head plunge



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WEAU YP SUMMIT

Hyatt Place Salt Lake City/Cottonwood Heights
 November 7, 2023, 5:30-8:30 pm

WEAU MIDYEAR CONFERENCE

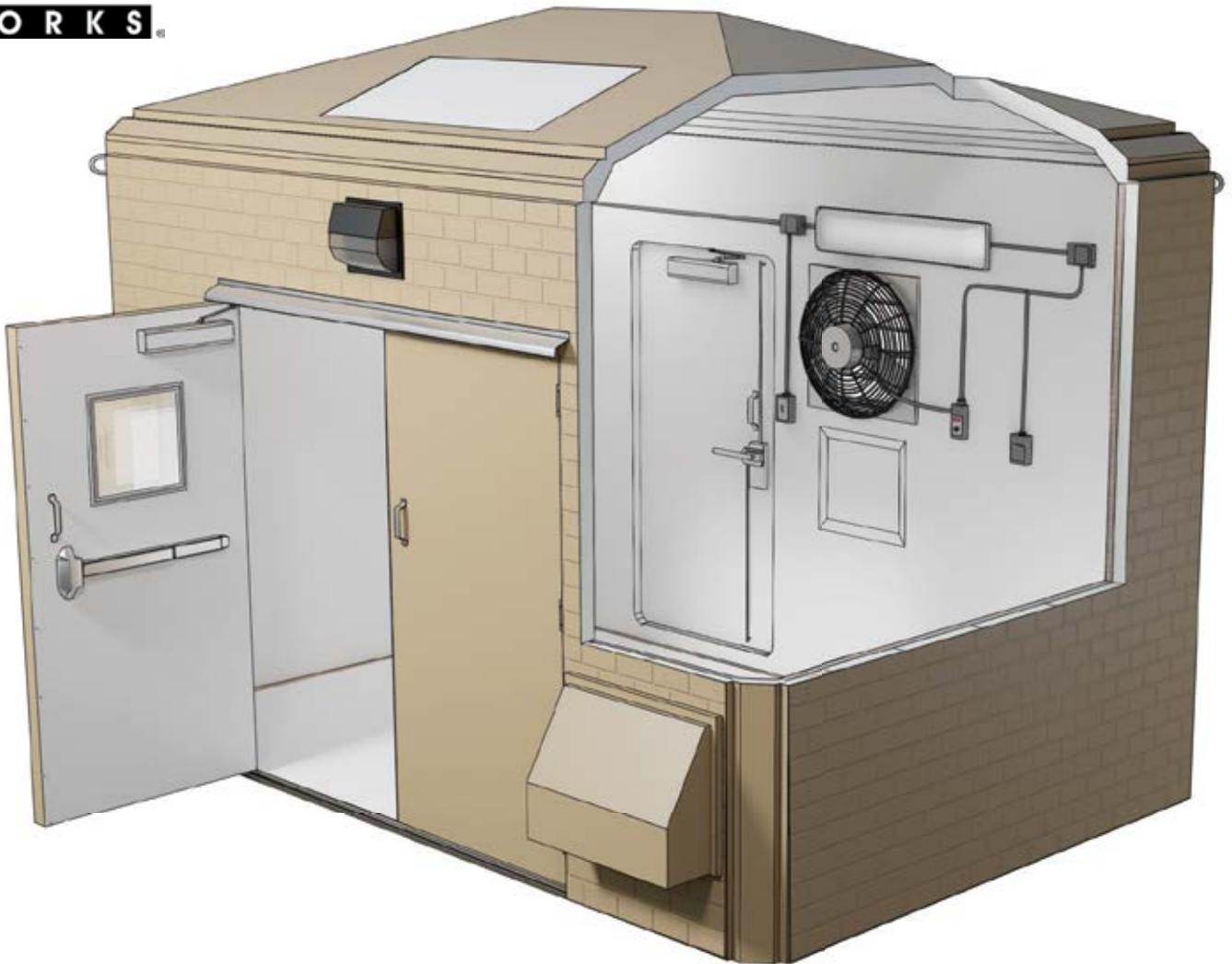
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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



Attendees gather for final raffle



Jill and Manjot see how they measure up.



Millennial test drives RC camera



Raffle winner celebrates



Secretary Jared Obrien presents membership update



Treasurer Myron Bachman presents financial update



USU Student Design Team (L to R) Parker Price, Matt Farley, Abby Johnson, and Ross Allen.




WEF President Ifetayo Venner addresses banquet attendees.



WEAU Board Members at Banquet



THANKS FOR ANOTHER GREAT CONFERENCE!



What Does AI Know? (About Wastewater)

Introduction and prompts by Ben Skousen, and responses by ChatGPT

Hello *Digested News* readers. Welcome to a new series about artificial intelligence (AI), written mostly by AI. Microsoft, Google, Apple, Amazon, IBM, Oracle, and many others are investing in and developing AI. This focus hasn't gone unnoticed by the media, governmental organizations, or the public. Perhaps you've seen a news segment on AI or heard someone discuss it and wanted to know more. Well, you're in luck! This series will use one form of AI, a conversational AI called ChatGPT, to learn more about AI. I'll let ChatGPT introduce itself shortly, but before we begin, you should know ChatGPT works on a prompt/response basis. Basically, the user (me) provides a prompt and the AI (ChatGPT) responds in a natural way using information found on the internet. Because ChatGPT uses the internet, I will always ask for references that you can use to verify the information in its response. For fun, I'll make a wastewater-related prompt to highlight how ChatGPT works using something we all know and love. Let's begin!

PROMPT (Ben): What is ChatGPT and how does it work?

RESPONSE (ChatGPT): In recent years, the field of artificial intelligence (AI) has made significant strides in creating systems that can interact with humans in a natural and intuitive way. Among these advancements is ChatGPT, a powerful language model developed by OpenAI, which has been making waves in the world of conversational AI.

ChatGPT is built on the GPT-3.5 architecture, which allows it to generate human-like responses to natural language input. With a massive amount of data and computational power at its disposal, ChatGPT can understand complex sentences and even generate new text that mimics human speech patterns. This has made it a valuable tool for a wide range of applications, including customer service, virtual assistants, and language translation.

One of the key features of ChatGPT is its ability to learn from context. It can take into account previous interactions with a user and use that information to generate more accurate and relevant responses. This has made it particularly effective in situations where the user's needs or preferences may change over time.

Another advantage of ChatGPT is its ability to handle multiple languages. It has been trained on a diverse set of texts, allowing it to understand and generate text in dozens of different languages. This has made it a popular choice for companies operating in multiple countries or for individuals who need to communicate across language barriers.

However, as with any AI system, there are also concerns around ChatGPT's potential biases and ethical implications. Researchers are working to address these issues and ensure that ChatGPT remains a force for good in the world of AI.

Overall, ChatGPT represents a major breakthrough in the field of conversational AI. Its ability to understand and generate natural language has made it a powerful tool for businesses and individuals alike. As AI technology continues to evolve, we can expect ChatGPT and other language models to play an increasingly important role in our daily lives.

PROMPT (Ben): What is wastewater and how is it treated? Please include your references.

RESPONSE (ChatGPT): Wastewater refers to any water that has been contaminated by human activities and requires treatment before being safely returned to the environment or reused. It includes water from various sources such as domestic, industrial, and agricultural activities, as well as stormwater runoff.

Wastewater treatment involves several processes that aim to remove contaminants and pollutants from the water, making it safe for disposal or reuse. The specific treatment methods may vary depending on the type and level of contaminants present in the wastewater, as well as local regulations and infrastructure. Here is a general overview of the typical steps involved in wastewater treatment:

Preliminary Treatment: The wastewater goes through a screening process to remove large objects like debris, stones, and sticks. This is followed by grit removal to eliminate heavy inorganic solids such as sand and gravel.

Primary Treatment: In this step, the wastewater is allowed to settle in large basins or tanks. During this settling process,

suspended solids and heavy particles, known as sludge, settle to the bottom, forming a layer of sludge called primary sludge. The clarified water, known as effluent, is skimmed from the top.

Secondary Treatment: The effluent from the primary treatment is subjected to secondary treatment, which focuses on the biological breakdown of organic matter and the removal of dissolved and colloidal substances. One common secondary treatment method is activated sludge process, where microorganisms break down organic matter in the presence of oxygen. Other methods like trickling filters and rotating biological contactors are also used.

Tertiary Treatment: Sometimes, an additional treatment step is required to further enhance the quality of the effluent. Tertiary treatment involves advanced processes to remove remaining impurities such as nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), heavy metals, and fine particles. Techniques like filtration, disinfection (e.g., chlorination or ultraviolet light), and advanced oxidation may be employed.

Sludge Treatment: The sludge generated during the treatment process undergoes separate treatment. It is often treated through processes like digestion, which breaks down organic matter, and dewatering, which removes excess water. The resulting sludge can be used for energy generation (e.g., through anaerobic digestion) or further processed into biosolids for agricultural or other beneficial uses.

It's important to note that the specific processes and technologies used in wastewater treatment can vary depending on the location, available resources, and regulatory requirements. The above steps provide a general overview, but the details may differ from one wastewater treatment plant to another.

For more in-depth information and references, I recommend consulting reputable sources such as:

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Wastewater Treatment Basics: www.epa.gov/eg/wastewater-treatment-basics
- Introduction to Wastewater Treatment: www.epa.gov/npdes/introduction-wastewater-treatment

World Health Organization (WHO)

- Wastewater Treatment: www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/wastewater-treatment

European Commission

- Wastewater Treatment: www.ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-waste/index.html

These sources provide comprehensive information on wastewater treatment processes, technologies, and regulations.

Thanks for reading. In the future, we will dive deeper into AI and find out what it knows about wastewater operators, Water Environment Association of Utah (WEAU), the Great Salt Lake, per and polyfluorinated substances (PFAS), and other topics related to wastewater. [DII](#)

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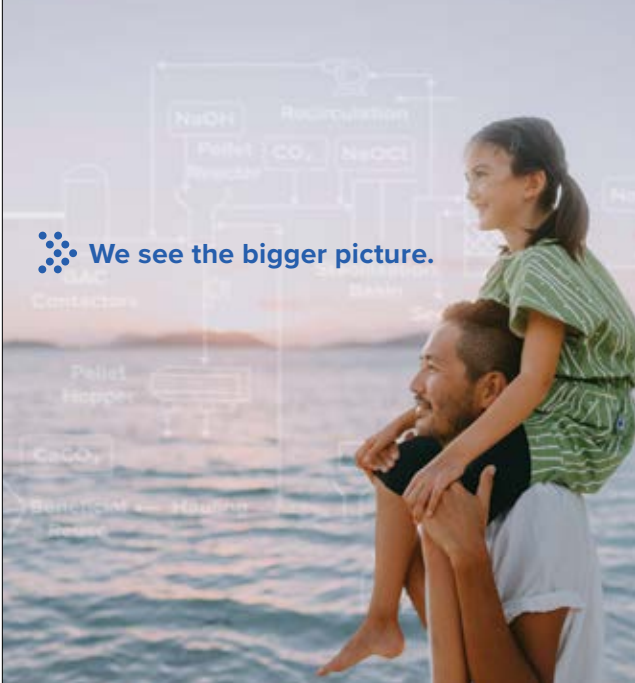


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Introducing the WEAU 2023-2024 Leadership Series

By Mike Chandler

As a volunteer led organization, WEAU understands the challenges of trust and team building as each year we rely on volunteer contributions to organize and execute multiple conferences, workshops, and trainings. Leadership of the individual committees is based on the availability and willingness to serve of each individual. With each new year we navigate the highs and lows of any organization. There is no better feeling than when a team comes together to deliver a great product and there are few lows to compare with the endless unreturned phone calls, texts, or emails when a committee comes unwound. Maybe it comes as no surprise to you, but in many ways the organizations we work for are not that

dissimilar. As a collection of human beings, all organizations have the opportunity to benefit from individual and collective strengths or the disadvantage of the various quirks and idiosyncrasies, petty jealousies, and disengagement of its members.

In our organizations, we deal with Federal delegation of responsibility (from EPA to the State) to protect the environment and public health through our state and local entities. We have a responsibility to our rate payers to perform a professional service without imposing an unsustainable cost burden. Seasoned operators with appropriate certifications and technical competence are given “direct responsible charge.” It is clear to see that in our industry

“leadership” is more often associated with “liability” and “accountability” than with effective execution, thriving company culture, and employee development.

In a recent webcast, I watched as the facilitator flashed a slide in front of the group that suggested the following:

75% of organizations believe they are not effective in developing their leaders.

71% of organizations do not believe their current leaders will help them navigate successfully into the future.

This is a staggering realization as we look at the significant shifts we have in our workforce’s generational demographics. We simply cannot afford to have mediocre leaders, and, just as importantly, we need employees that are engaged and understand how to lead from the middle of an organization.

In his book, *The 360° Leader*, John Maxwell says, “The reality is that 99% of all leadership occurs not from the top but from the middle of an organization. Usually, an organization has only one person who is *the* leader. So, what do you do if you are not that one person?”

Do you have the desire to innovate or improve your systems? The desire to create and to find better solutions is a leadership characteristic. The last decade’s explosion in genetic profiling technology has led us to significant discoveries in innovative applications of old technologies as well as entirely new technologies in wastewater treatment, energy efficiency, nutrient removal, and so many more aspects of our profession. Add to that the public’s increasing awareness and expectations of our professionals to protect the environment and public health. We are seeing a boom in our industry unprecedented since the introduction of the *Clean Water Act*.

Each person that participates in our leadership series will enrich the other participant’s experiences. We look forward to seeing everyone who is able to participate in this first series! If you can’t do it this time, please mark your calendars for next year as we will look forward to working with all of you.

Do you have the desire to innovate or improve your systems? The desire to create and to find better solutions is a leadership characteristic.

COME JOIN industry professionals to develop and refine your ability to:

- Gain confidence
- Improve organization
- Network effectively
- Retain employees
- Find a sense of purpose

What is leadership?
Why is leadership important?
Why do leaders need to train others to take their place?

Go to weau.org

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WEAU Leadership Training Workshop Schedule

Classes will be held at the South Valley Sewer District in the Uinta Training Room (1253 Jordan Basin Lane, Bluffdale, UT 84065), though the location is subject to change.

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Module #1 – Self-Awareness | June 29, 2023 |
| Module #2 – Foundations of Habit | July 13, 2023 |
| Module #3 – Resilience | August 10, 2023 |
| Module #4 – Deliberate Apprenticeship | September 7, 2023 |
| Module #5 – Team Building | October 12, 2023 |
| Module #6 – Communication | January 11, 2024 |
| Module #7 – Technical Skills vs. Relational Skills | February 8, 2024 |
| Module #8 – Positive Culture vs. Servant Leadership | March 7, 2024 |
| Module #9 – Leadership in Local Government and Volunteer Organizations | April 11, 2024 |

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WEF Strategic Plan

Our Mission

Inspiring the water community in pursuit of human and environmental well-being

Our Vision

Life free of water challenges

Our Three-Year Outcome Statement

Amplify the stories of water to grow, strengthen, and diversify the water community



Our Strategic Goals

Goal 1

Attract and develop a diverse and passionate water workforce

Goal 1 Strategies

1. Raise public awareness about the importance of water and the water workforce
2. Reduce barriers to workforce entry and retention
3. Provide extraordinary opportunities for connection, growth, and education
4. Cultivate strategic partnerships

Goal 2

Cultivate a purpose-driven community to sustainably solve water challenges for all

Goal 2 Strategies

1. Drive connection and collaboration for the development of innovative solutions
2. Deliver best-in-class member experience
3. Creatively develop and deliver content and programming

Goal 3

Lead the transformation to the Circular Water Economy

Goal 3 Strategies

1. Convene stakeholders to craft WEF's Circular Water Economy framework and best practices
2. Proliferate WEF's Circular Water Economy framework and best practices
3. Champion adoption of Circular Water Economy
4. Eliminate barriers to Circular Water Economy adoption

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WEAU'S OPERATOR AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

The WEAU Scholarship Award is available to members of WEAU and serving in Utah's wastewater field. The scholarship funds are intended for the applicants' education, trade school classes, education books, or student loans. The Operator and Professional Scholarship can only be received once. WEAU reserves the right to verify with the applicant how the funds helped advance their career goals.

Applications for the 2023 Operator and Professional Scholarship will be accepted until September 30, 2023.

Scan for the scholarship application:



Meet the Recipients of the 2022 Operator and Professional Scholarship



TAYLOR BYRUM

My name is Taylor Byrum. I've been at North Davis Sewer District for six years, and I am a recipient of the WEAU Scholarship. At the age of 32, an opportunity to advance my career presented itself, but required that I return to school. I was hesitant, but after receiving support from those around me, I enrolled in the Electrician course at the Davis Technical College (DATC).

Not long after starting school, I applied for the WEAU Scholarship, with hopes that it would help ease the financial burden of school and allow

me to continue supporting my young family. To my surprise, I was granted a scholarship in 2022. Not having to worry so much about the financial strain of school with a busy family has been a tremendous weight lifted from my shoulders.

I have been so grateful for the opportunity to further my education, and I plan to continue school for another three years so I can pass the Journeyman Electrician exam.

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BRADLEY JOHNSON

My name is Bradley Johnson. I am 31 years old, have been married for 10 years, and have two sons that are two and five years old. I love music, riding dirt bikes, fishing, running, swimming, eating delicious food, and so many other things. I have been working for Ash Creek Special Services District in Hurricane, UT, for three years. I have really enjoyed all

of the experiences I have had, the things that I have learned, and the people I have worked with. I have some awesome coworkers.

In 2014, I received my associates degree and decided to take a “little” break from school. Seven years later, I decided the break had been long enough, and I returned to school at Utah Tech University where I am working toward a bachelor’s degree in biochemistry/ molecular biology. It’s hard. It’s hard juggling school and work and kids and everything else, but it’s been good for me to push myself and continue learning. I’m so grateful for the scholarship I received from WEAU. School is not cheap, and every bit counts. If you are going to school, or thinking about going to school, I would highly recommend applying for the WEAU scholarship. The application process is super easy and will be well worth your time.



MATT GOODRICH

Growing up I didn’t think I would have such a crappy job and love it. No one thinks: “when I grow up, I want to work with the stuff discarded down toilets and drains.” I always wanted a career that would make a difference in the world. The wastewater industry allowed me the realization of this dream.

Before Mike Rowe and Dirty Jobs was a thing, I learned to push through long hours of wading waist-deep in human sewage or working through the night repairing equipment. I have progressed in leadership and management skills, finding a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction within the wastewater industry. Transforming water that is unfit for human use into something usable again has been enjoyable and fulfilling.

Associating with great mentors and leaders has helped me understand the service that comes with leadership responsibilities. Helping manage, lead, and serve in Eagle Mountain City and Ash Creek Special Service District has had its challenges and rewards. Working with great people is uplifting, while managing growth can be difficult. I appreciate the opportunities both provide; learning comes quicker when we must figure out hard situations.

Along with many colleagues and mentors, the WEAU organization has been instrumental in my growth. They provide many beneficial training sessions, which have helped me pass wastewater certification exams. WEAU also offers scholarships for people seeking college education within the wastewater industry. It’s comforting knowing WEAU is dedicated to helping people succeed, even older ones like me, in getting a formal education later in our career.

Working towards my Business Management (BS) degree, promotes more confidence, competence, and proficiency as the Assistant Superintendent at Ash Creek SSD. I am gaining the knowledge I need to perform my job well, while securing the understanding and skills needed for success moving forward. Receiving a WEAU Operator and Professional Scholarship is an honor. It has given me a great resource to accomplish my goal of obtaining more education and acquiring attributes of a great leader.

With the support of WEAU and the wastewater community, I have been given the opportunity to help people in ways I never imagined and in ways many people don’t realize. I thank WEAU, the scholarship committee, and all those who have helped me achieve my career and personal goals. May we all have the fortitude to take people’s crap and love it! [DW](#)



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— Matthew Hutchings

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Congratulations to Magna Water

By Tiffini Adams, WEAU Awards Co-Chair

I got to work with so many great people through the Awards Committee this year. Presenting the awards at the Annual Conference and seeing the recipients in-person was lots of fun, too. There were a few recipients that were unable to attend the conference and receive their rewards. As a representative of WEAU, I attended the Magna Water board meeting to present their awards. It was a privilege to be present to hear their board recognize their crew and let them know how much they appreciate them. These pictures are from the Magna Water board meeting on May 11, 2023, and recognize Scott Beck, Outstanding Water Reclamation Operator Under 5 MGD and Magna Water District, Outstanding Collections System Under 5 MGD.



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