



Energy Savings

By: Frank Dunmire, Executive Director

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The Illinois Rural Water Association is constantly looking for ways to better enhance the benefits it is able to offer its members. Last year IRWA introduced its property and casualty insurance program through Assurance and many of our members were able to save 10% - 20% on their P & C policies. This year, the Board of Directors authorized an agreement between IRWA and Integrys Energy Services creating a Preferred Provider Energy Program for IRWA members. This program is intended to provide IRWA members that have not already chosen an alternative energy supplier with a resource to learn about electricity supply choice and the opportunity to receive discounted energy rates from a competitive retail electric supplier.

In 1997 the Illinois General Assembly deregulated the electric market in Illinois giving customers the ability to choose an energy supplier. This deregulation gives businesses, municipalities, and residents alike the opportunity to choose how they purchase for their electricity needs. It is through this choice that users are offered the opportunity to receive rates lower than the default service rates being offered through Ameren or ComEd. Electricity deregulation can sometimes be a little complicated, but for the most part it's pretty simple. The basic idea behind deregulation is that "competition will provide an incentive for cheaper electricity." In a deregulated market, although residential and commercial customers can continue to buy electricity from their utilities, customers are allowed to buy electricity from competing retail electric providers, called alternative retail electric suppliers (ARES). In a deregulated market, the utility remains responsible for transmitting electricity and distributing it to homes and businesses, regardless of which electric provider supplies it. Whether you want to learn the basics about how energy choice works or to receive a proposal to

see if you may be able to reduce your energy costs, Integrys Energy Services can help.

One of the most frequently asked questions is what happens if my power goes out? The answer is simple. If your power goes out, you will still call the electric utility that bills you for services. They are still in charge of the delivery of safe and reliable service to your home or business.

With this new program, there is no need to commit to anything up front! In the coming weeks Integrys Energy Services will be sending out a packet of information that will include the process to receive a no-obligation proposal for your energy needs and an application. In order to provide a customized proposal for your energy needs, they will ask for some assistance gathering some basic information and a copy of your most recent electricity bill. Details on how to return the requested information will also be included

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in the mailing. Once they receive the requested information, they will then be able to provide you with a proposal for services and explain how it works and possible next steps. At that time, you will have the opportunity to decide whether to participate in the program or decline the offer.

Be sure to watch your mail in the coming weeks for all of the program details. If you're ready to talk about your electricity needs today or if you have questions on the program, please contact Kevin Ritter at Integrys Energy Services at (630) 319-1215 or kritter@integrysenergy.com.

IRWA'S MISSION STATEMENT

"Protecting and preserving the water and wastewater resources of Rural Illinois through education, representation and on-site technical assistance"

Water
Quality
Assurance
Protection
Education
Representation
Technical Assistance

By: Wayne Nelson, IRWA Training Specialist



From regulations to training needs to just daily life, things are constantly changing. In this article, I want to cover ten changes that will (or may) affect the way we do our jobs as operators or as decision-makers.

1. No-lead Rule in Brass Parts. Effective January 4, 2014, we can no longer legally install brass parts in our water systems that contain lead in excess of 0.25%. This is a federal requirement that will affect every state. All companies that produce brass waterworks parts have changed over and meet the new limits but, literally, millions of old parts remain on shelves, both at vendor's factories and in our system's inventory.

2. Contractual Operations. As of last July, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is taking a new look at systems that utilize an independent certified operator in a contractual agreement. The new agreement has five steps that must be covered to receive approval from the IEPA. The IEPA Sample Collectors Handbook's chapter on Contractual Operations has a link to our website showing an approved agreement. Go to www.ilrwa.org, click on "Downloads", then "Other Stuff" to find the agreement. It is in Word document so that changes, additions, or deletions may be easily made.

3. Electronic Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). Congress and the USEPA are now allowing a system to issue its CCR on a website, if the system had no violations of certain types. For example, a Tier 3 monitoring violation would not prevent a system from doing this. Systems that meet specific criteria would not have to issue the CCR via direct-mail, by hand-delivery, or by publishing the report in a newspaper or circular that covers the system's service area. This change would allow systems to save hundreds of dollars every year in costs of printing and/or publishing the report. Systems would need to notify customers of the on-site availability and also provide hard-copies to customers requesting them. One of the most important conditions is that the website listed must take the customer DIRECTLY to the CCR.

If you meet all conditions, you may be able to use this method of delivery even if you don't have your own website. The Illinois Rural Water Association is developing a website that you would be able to utilize for issuing your CCR. We have had very good results when we conducted trial runs this spring. More information regarding this procedure will be coming later in the year.

4. EMOR (Electronic Monthly Operations Reports). An

other computer-related program will soon be available for use by Illinois public water supplies. Operators will soon have access to a program that will allow them to complete their monthly operations report and submit it to the IEPA in an approved format. The Illinois State Water Survey's Kathy Rodgers has completed and is now field testing the report program for Class C and D water systems. If you would like to learn more about this program or to participate in the testing procedure, you can contact Kathy at rodgersk@illinois.edu. Class A and B system report forms will next be developed and tested.

5. Back-up Power Source. The IEPA performs a field inspection of every public water supply in the state. One of the items that is addressed is the availability of a back-up power source for the water treatment plant in the event of an electrical power outage. In the past, this item was always listed on the IEPA inspection report under "Attachment B" as a recommendation or suggestion that the system consider implementing the item.

Now, if a system has no back-up power source, this will most likely be listed under "Attachment A" as a system deficiency and will have to be addressed in the system's response letter.

6. IEPA Operator Certification System. Certified operators can now create an account that will enable them to track the training sessions and hours that they have attended during their renewal cycle. Operators will be able to add training sessions that they have attended. First, operators will need to create their own individual accounts and submit for review. Upon review, an email will be sent back announcing the approval of the account. Like every new endeavor, this program has not been without its flaws. When filling out the initial information form, the screen showed many operators that it didn't approve of their user name, causing many (including me) to keep trying to submit. Submitting just one time should be enough for you to get the response email. Another problem is that some operators (again, including me) have been refused entry into the site after using it several times with no problems. I have been assured that these bugs are being hunted down and killed.

7. Course ID Numbers for Credit Hours. Any training hours submitted by paper or on-line must have an approved course ID number. To obtain the number the course title, content, length of course, date, and location must be submitted to the IEPA for approval. Usually, this work is done by the course facilitator before the session date but can be done after the session.

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8. What Will Count As Approved Renewal Hours. Currently, certified operators are able to submit a wide range of topics to the IEPA that count toward operator certification renewal. As of July 1, 2016, it is anticipated that currently proposed changes will take effect that will restrict the number of hours of certain topics that will be allowed.

For Class A and B certification renewal: Minimum of 20 hours related to technical aspects of water treatment and/or distribution. Maximum of 10 hours of professional responsibilities of utilities, including computer workshop, emergency planning, first aid, safety issues, and utility administration management.

For Class C and D certification renewal: Minimum of 10 hours related to technical aspects of water treatment and/or distribution. Maximum of 5 hours of related to professional responsibilities of utilities, including computer workshop, emergency planning, safety issues, and utility administration management.

9. Operator-in-Training. With the growing tide of retirements in our field, ideas to get more people into the pro-

fession are being considered. One would be the newly proposed Operator-in-Training. This would allow individuals with some or no “hands-on” experience to take the certification exam. If that person passes the exam, he (or she) would be listed as an Operator-in-Training making that person more attractive as a potential employee of a system. If hired and after working the required amount of time, that person would then be a certified operator.

10. Source Water Protection program. Currently, implementing a source water protection program is a voluntary thing. Proposals are being considered to require each public water system to have a program protecting its source water, be it groundwater or surface water. It is not expected that this requirement will present an undue burden or any cost to systems. In fact, it may save systems untold dollars in the event of future contamination. Trust me, I can tell you what can happen when you don't have such a program.

I've covered a lot of new and proposed topics here. Each could be an article in itself. To learn more about every one of these items, I invite you to attend our Northern Conference near Utica, Illinois on October 22-23, 2013. Hope to see you there.



Hail! Hail! Rock and Roll!

By: John Bell, Wastewater Technician

Many of you wastewater operators may remember Chuck Berry and his proclamation of the age of Rock and Roll. Some of you may be asking who in the world is Chuck Berry? If you know the Dude then you are probably over 55. If you may have heard of Chuck, but are not quite sure who he is or was, then you are a lot younger than—well you're a lot younger.

Noting something I heard on the radio, the other day, it was stated that in the year 2030, half the population of the US of A will be over 65. Some of us are already there!! What's my point? The Illinois wastewater operators, as a group, are in need of a fresh crop. Nothing new stated here. Yet, the subject bears repeating. I know, you really don't want to hear that “old saw” again and I'm not going to go down that road.

So the road I choose to go down is “memory lane” and I hope that you have read this far and will go with me a few more words. In 1965 I started working in the wastewater, water or utility field, whatever you would like to call what we do for fun. Yip, that's what I said-FUN. I know

that some things you would love to change, but all professions run into things that “you just have to do.” For me this has been a Rock and Roll fun ride and I feel fortunate to have stumbled into this field. I suggest that you not tell the young folk about this deal and keep all the good things to just us fortunate few. Something this cool will eventually get out and all those youngsters will be trying to get in on the act. Do the best that you can to not let them know what's happening. But if you must, I guess you should let them know a few of the good tid-bits that may interest an outdoors soul. First of all, the boss is a good guy, water runs downhill and payday is on Friday!!! After all that, well it's what you want to make of it and brother it's a fun ride. There is something new and different every day. Every day you have new challenges, new ideas and new experiences. It's hard to beat monotony but this is the place-ace. Ooops! I almost forgot to wish all of you good luck on taking the wastewater exam. If you need help, don't hesitate to contact us at IRWA, we are glad to help in any way that we can.

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IRWA UPCOMING CONFERENCES

October 22 & 23, 2013—Northern Conference, Grand Bear Lodge; Utica, IL—This conference is for water and wastewater operators. The exhibit hall is sold out with 40 exhibitors who will be waiting for you to visit with them. We will also have water and wastewater sessions. 10.75 credit hours are available.

November 21 & 22, 2013—Fall Admin Conference, Par-a-Dice Hotel & Casino E. Peoria, IL —This day and a half conference is for the clerks and admin staff to learn about healthcare reform, risk management, public records, E-pay and much more!

See full agendas for both of these conferences on www.ilrwa.org. Then print out a registration form and mail it in with your payment, or pay on-line by credit card.