



**A New Chapter**  
**By: Don Craig, IRWA Executive Director**

**June 2024**  
**Newsletter**

One ends, and a new chapter has begun for Illinois Rural Water Association.

First of all, I want to personally thank outgoing Executive Director, Frank Dunmire.... Not only for his years of service to IRWA, beginning as a Board Member in the fall of 1985 and becoming the E.D. in 2004, then to go on admirably serving in that position until the end of this past April; but also, for having the confidence in me in 2009, to come back to work for the state association in the newly developed position of Deputy Executive Director.

I say 'come back', as I had previously worked for IRWA many years before as the Circuit Rider beginning in April of 1985, and then in January of 1988, I went to work for our parent organization, the National Rural Water Association in the Asset Management Program for 21 years, before making that move back in June of 2009.

Frank, myself, the board, and the entire staff through those years and to this point in time, have all contributed to and catapulted our Association into a prominent organization, not only in the state of Illinois, but as one of the strongest state affiliates of the NRWA.

Yet, it's important to remember, that Frank was the lead in this heralded 'chapter' in the history of IRWA, and his

contribution to that end should not be forgotten. I not only consider him as my past boss, but more importantly as a friend. He will be missed, to say the least.

My chapter taking the lead, has only just begun. This past month, has been a fairly new learning experience for me, but it has helped that I had a good general and working knowledge of the position of Executive Director; and also, that we have a great office staff that has already helped and guided me immensely.

None of us are perfect...especially me. I will make mistakes, miscues, and have bumps in the road as time goes on through the coming years; but I will put my best foot forward, learn from any mistakes, and continue my strong belief in, and the purpose of the Illinois Rural Water Association.

I appreciate the IRWA Board for putting their confidence in me to take over as Executive Director, and I look forward to this new segment of my career, and my life. I want to ensure the positive forward path for the Association, our members, the board, and especially the entire staff of the organization.

Like I always tell the staff in regard to their work, and even life.... "Plan your work, and work your plan". Now, that's more important than ever for me to do!

## The Water Board Bible Series

You have been entrusted with providing a critical service and protecting the public's investment. The purpose of this series of handbooks are to aid you as board/council members and utility employees who are stewards of your communities.

**The Water Board Bible**-For a quick overview of the do's and don'ts city administrators and clerks look to this handbook. If operators, managers and superintendents wish to develop a better working relationship with their boards/councils, they use the Water Board Bible.

**Personnel Management** -This Handbook has three purposes. 1) To help supervisors, boards/city councils and employees review the basics. 2) To provide practical tips and examples concerning personnel problems and issues. 3) To look beyond the rush of daily affairs to the future and your relationship with your customers.

**Financial Accounting Guide for Small Water Utilities** -strives to take the mystery out of accounting. It moves from basics through key concepts such as the general ledger, monthly financial results, the balance sheet, etc. This includes sample formats and examples, as well as case histories telling "how we do it here".

**Getting Results from your Experts** -Construction projects are the theme of this handbook. That's because capital improvement construction projects bring together most of the experts you work with. It is your job to make sure your experts do theirs.

**The Operator's Handbook: Facts, Figures & More** -This handbook presents graphs, tables, charts, equations and formulas. The goal? To save time for these very busy people.

Each book is \$20.00 (includes shipping). Order your copy today at [ilrwa.org/IRWA\\_Store.html](http://ilrwa.org/IRWA_Store.html). (credit cards are accepted for payment on the website or download the order form to pay by check.)

RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION



## The Value of Free Training

By: Steve Vance, IRWA Training Specialist

In an era where inflation is a common concern and every-one's dollar is stretched to the max, there remains a few potential bargains out there. One example that comes to mind is the cost of water. While there is an expense associated with producing potable water, that price is minimal when evaluated as a cost benefit analysis. A simple comparison represents this assertion: Typically, my wife and I spend approximately \$50 per month on water and sewer service. Conversely, our Friday nights usually consist of dinner and a few drinks with friends that often exceeds \$100 for that single evening out. It seems that cost/benefit of the utility service represents a much greater bargain.

While it is becoming difficult to find goods or services that could be considered a good deal, Illinois Rural Water Association (IRWA) does provide extensive experience and numerous services for a relatively low cost. Specifically, regulatory requirements in Illinois dictate that certified water professionals must receive a specified number of hours of approved training (CEUs – Continued Education Units) for certification renewal. While there are numerous avenues for receiving CEUs, many of these resources or training providers come with a cost.

However, there remains at least one resource available for “free” training in Illinois. Dave McMillan and I have conducted approximately 120 hours of cost-free training during the past two years at numerous locations throughout the State. Training topics are typically related to industry areas of concern, recommended by Illinois EPA, or simply

random thoughts that are contrived from Dave and my experiences. These experiences include an accumulation of over sixty years working at the Illinois EPA and more than seven years at Illinois Rural Water Association.

While the years and the miles are catching up with us, we are still happy to share our experiences and knowledge to navigate the way to compliance with regulatory requirements. Our duties with IRWA allow us to provide direct assistance and guidance through the maze of regulations.

For those that have attended some of the training sessions conducted by Dave and I, you are probably aware that we prefer an interactive environment where there are no “dumb” questions. Hopefully, you have gained some tidbit of knowledge from attending a IRWA training session. After listening to our banter and making fun of each other, it's the least that we can do to provide a semblance of useful knowledge that can help with the daily duties of a water operator. I guess at the end of the day, you have to ask yourself, “what is the value of free training?”. If you have been disappointed in a training session that you've attended, our apologies are offered and the post-training questionnaire can be used to offer constructive criticism. However, if you have enjoyed the training sessions, hope to see you again in the near future and let us know if you have any training topics that would be helpful. Keep up the great work that you do!!!



## Administrative Conference

### July 11 & 12, 2024

### Keller Convention Center - Effingham, IL

Agenda and registration information can be found at [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org) under the upcoming events on the home page. Topics include:

- ◆ *IMRF*
- ◆ *Grants*
- ◆ *Health Benefit Options Update*
- ◆ *Cybersecurity*
- ◆ *Dealing with Customers and Board members*
- ◆ *Enhancing Communication Between Field Crew and Office Staff*
- ◆ *Billing*
- ◆ *Loan Options*
- ◆ *ILWARN*
- ◆ *Prevailing Wage*
- ◆ *Asset Management*
- ◆ *Credit/Debit Card Payments*



## Custom MOR's

By: Marc Lemrise, IRWA Apprenticeship Training Instructor

Every month operators must submit an MOR, also known as a monthly operating report for their system. The EPA certainly loves their three-lettered abbreviations. MOR's, DMR's, CCR's, CCA's and on and on. But submitting a complete and accurate MOR is an important duty of the responsible operator in charge. This spreadsheet should contain all the information needed to determine compliance and portray water quality.

Standard MOR forms supplied by the EPA have rows and columns for any type of plant imaginable. That's why they're huge. The standard MOR form contains much more than most systems need, resulting in a lot of empty space on a form the size of a road map.

Creating a custom MOR form is a fairly simple task for anyone familiar with creating Excel spreadsheets. A typical class B plant can fit all required information on a standard sheet of paper while making the rows and columns large enough to easily write on. A more popular approach is to skip the printing and writing altogether and enter the data electronically with a tablet or laptop. This not only makes for a neater and easier to read MOR but also eliminates totalizing and averaging the data at the end of the month. The bottom line will keep a running tab on the minimum, maximum, total, and average for each column. Dosage calculations can also be made by the software automatically if so programmed. Dosage calculations are required

for each chemical used, and the EPA may start scrutinizing these more in the future as many systems leave the dosage columns blank.

I have never learned every conceivable task one can perform with Excel. Creating a form is fairly straightforward. Programming the calculations into each column or row is a bit trickier. I must admit I would have to swallow my pride and have someone help me with that part. Well worth it for a customized MOR with no empty spaces and shrunk to the size of a standard sheet of paper.

The next step is to have it approved. The EPA needs to know that you are including all the required data on your form. Examples of these data points are meter readings for each day followed by the flow, expressed in Million gallons, the date and time read, each type of chemical added and the strength of the solution. Another column would list the calculated dosage of each chemical in mg/l. Each daily bench test, such as chlorine and fluoride residuals in the finished water require a separate column. Distribution chlorine residuals can be reported on a separate sheet, also requiring approval.

Tackling an office project like this may seem like a troublesome task but once approved, you will have a more concise report, and if using a tablet, save some time at the end of the month.



## IRWA Support Letters Are Needed

IRWA employees are dedicated in helping the water and wastewater systems throughout the state in making onsite visits and providing technical assistance in helping to ensure your systems have safe and quality water. Please take a moment to thank any or all of the IRWA employees who have helped your system by writing an appreciation letter on your letterhead and mail to:

Illinois Rural Water Association  
P.O. Box 49  
Taylorville, IL 62568

## IRWA'S MISSION STATEMENT

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

**Illinois Rural Water Association**  
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**Taylorville, IL 62568**  
**217-287-2115**

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**QUALITY ON TAP**

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**PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!**

**ILLINOIS RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION**

**21ST ANNUAL GOLF OUTING**

**WHEN: FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 2024**

**10:00 A.M. SHOT GUN START**

**EDGEWOOD GOLF CLUB**

**AUBURN, ILLINOIS**



**PLEASE JOIN US FOR ANOTHER FUN FILLED DAY WITH PEERS!**

Look for more information on our website at [www.ilrwa.org](http://www.ilrwa.org) and in the mail.